Scientific American.

NEW YORK, MAY 7, 1859.

Enlargement and Improvement of the "Scientific American."

After the somewhat elaborate exposition of the rise, progress, and influence of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN which we published three weeks ago, it would be superfluous to enlarge more upon this subject at present. We may say, however, that, during the fourteen years of its existence, it has had a steady and progressive success, and a hearty support from a class of readers as intelligent as can be claimed for any other journal. It has been our aim at all times to make its columns truthful, reliable and useful and we can point with satisfaction to the fact that not a single instance can be named wherein its independence has been purposely prostituted to subserve the private interests of any individual or corporation at the expense of principle. Occasions have not been wanting on which we have been urged to advocate schemes of questionable character; and by declining to do so, we have incurred the opposition of some of the most influential men connected with the interests of patents. Without fear or favor, however, we have pursued one independent course, as the columns of this journal bear testimony. In our advertising department we have endeavored to exercise the same rigor by uniformly rejecting what has seemed to us noxious and doubtful; so that we may assert that the integrity of our advertising patrons has been vouched for, in some degree, by the admission of their advertisements.

Our present purpose, however, is not with the past, but relates more to the present and the future. On the first point we may state that the circulation of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN was never larger than at this time and the business prospects of the office were never more encouraging; and we take this opportunity to thank our numerous friends and patrons, heartily and sincerely, for their continued confidence, support and good will. There is an old adage which is both trite and forcible, and which it is safe generally to practice: "let well enough alone;" and while in the enjoyment of the almost unbounded confidence of our readers, with a circulation larger than that of any other journal of the kind in the world, and a large and constantly increasing business, we have apparently good reasons for pursuing "the even tenor of our way." *Progress*, however, is still the watchword! and after the most mature deliberation we have determined to enlarge and otherwise greatly improve the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, so that it shall stand alone, not only as the most useful and interesting, but also as the largest journal of its kind in the United States, and nearly equal, in the quantity of its reading matter, to the largest five-dollar scientific journal now issued in Europe. To enable us fully to carry out our designs, we have determined that the present volume shall terminate with the last number to be published in June next—No. 42—at which time the Index will be issued, and thus the numbers will be in condition for binding into a volume. In size this volume will contain nearly as many pages as any of the preceding ones, in consequence of the supplements issued during the year. The new form which we have decided to adopt will be a great improvement upon the present one, and exactly meets our views of what the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN should be in this respect; and if it equally pleases our readers, we shall be much gratified. It will make a more convenient sheet to handle, and will possess decided advantages over the present form for binding the volume for preservation; and instead of eight pages as now, each number will contain sixteen, thus making a yearly volume of 832 pages, instead of 416 pages, which is the present number. It is our present intention to publish two volumes per year, commencing on the first days of July and January; thus affording our readers the advantages of two complete Indexes every year, and enabling them to bind their numbers either into two volumes or one, as suits their convenience. The *greatest* advantage, however, to be gained by the proposed enlargement will be the increased amount of reading matter, thus opening a wider field for the discussion of topics of vital interest to all of our readers: and as this is the most essential point of all, we shall reserve what we have to say upon this subject to a future issue. We may remark, in passing, that we are fully determined to spare neither pains nor expense to make the future of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN worthy of the confidence and admiration of all.

We come now to the most serious question involved in this whole matter, viz., dollars and cents. By the lowest possible estimate, which is based upon our present circulation, the increased cost of this change will amount, in the aggregate, to nearly eight thousand dollars per annum; the difference in the item of pure white paper alone will amount to six thousand dollars. Now the question we have to ask our readers is this: How shall we be remunerated for this greatly increased expenditure? Shall we increase the subscription price to $3 a year, which, if added to our present receipts, would amount to about $20,000 more than we now receive; or shall we keep it where it now is, namely, $2 a year, or, to clubs of twenty subscribers, only $1 40, which is a fraction less than three cents per single number? *We have firmly resolved not to raise the terms of subscription, but to keep them where they now are;* and we shall throw ourselves wholly upon the generosity of our readers. Will not the friends of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN take hold and increase its circulation on the new volume? Will not each and all of you give us a little of your time in endeavoring to procure clubs, or, if you cannot do this, get one other person to take the paper from the publishers or purchase it from the news-vender at your place of residence? We believe that our appeal *will* be heeded; and that before the commencement of the new volume in July, we shall have entered thousands of new names upon our books. The same opportunity to commence a new subscription is not likely to again occur for many years; as, at the time specified, we shall begin "Volume I., No. 1, New Series," which will be like the beginning of a new work; and as the numbers will not be stereotyped, it is important for us to know, in advance, how large an edition of the first number we shall need to print, in order to supply the demand. News-agents also should bear this fact in mind, and send in their orders accordingly.

A friend at our elbow jogs us with two pertinent inquiries, viz., "Why do you commence a new volume in *July*, instead of waiting till the usual close of the volume in September?" and "What do you propose to do with those of your present subscribers whose subscriptions will not expire till that period?" We answer, first: our volume now commences at the wrong season of the year—just at harvest, when people are generally too busy to canvass for even their favorite newspaper; aside from this, there are advantages to be gained by subscribers, under this new arrangement, growing out of the fact that most journals commence their volumes either with the year or on the first day of July, and the precise date of subscription is thus better remembered. With the above facts in view, therefore, the *second* volume of the new series of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN will commence on New Year's Day, 1860. Enough on this point; so now to answer the other inquiry. We intend, of course, to send our journal to all subscribers who are entitled to receive the same, until their subscriptions expire; and at that period we hope that they will all not only re-subscribe but also induce some of their friends and neighbors to do likewise. We shall aim to render the new volume so exceedingly interesting and instructive that all our old patrons and many new ones will regard the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN as an indispensable weekly visitor.

Friends! our scheme of enlargement and improvement is partially before you; can we rely on your earnest co-operation? We believe we can; and we shall be pleased to receive suggestions touching our new volume, and also to furnish prospectuses to any and all who may feel disposed to aid us in carrying out our new project.

Science Honoring Princes.

The day was, and that not long ago, when kings and queens esteemed the votaries of science just in proportion as they believed in their capabilities for producing gold or healing the royal sickness by their knowledge of the medicinal properties of herbs or minerals No old romance was complete without an astrologer and alchemist; the one to sit in the top chamber of a turret, surrounded by telescopes, sextants, quadrants, globes, big books and corresponding spectacles—a stuffed crocodile depending from the ceiling—calculating horoscopes, and telling fortunes for the family and country round: the other was generally located in a cellar; furnaces, alembics, retorts, a little lamp, monstrosities in bottles, and strange looking carboys, with the ever-present book and spectacles, being the furniture, and a dirty old man the philosopher, ever seeking for the grand arcana, the Elixir of Life or the Philosopher's Stone. When Royalty did visit them, it was usually to obtain a poison, or a love philter, to have a curse pronounced, or to learn the fate of an army or empire—to be told that the stars approved of their unhallowed deeds, and that they would be prosperous in their wholesale robbery. Thus the princes honored science—thus the kings patronized philosophy.

The investigation of natural phenomena inculcates patience, and patience is the forerunner of success.

Mistaken and credulous as these *savans* of old were, they laid the foundation of a system of research which has worked wonders in the world. They bore their hard lots with resignation, always working for the future, and aspiring to discover some new truth, that their names might be remembered when their patrons were buried in a deserved oblivion. And such is really the result. In this day we see the tables turned, and philosophy patronizing the prince, science honoring the noble. Dr. Faraday recently lectured in the Royal Institution, London to an audience composed of princes and princesses, dukes and duchesses, marquises and marchionesses, lords and ladies, prelates and vicars, the remainder being common folks and their wives. The chairman was Prince Albert, the husband of England's Queen, the father of her future Kings. Thinking of nothing save the subject in hand, the professor made an eloquent appeal for experimental science, stating that it exerts an immediate and powerful influence on the progress and welfare of society. It has been fashionable for persons of all classes to consider the devotees of experimental science as a class who feel no interest in, and have no care for, the practical arts and industries of life. But this shallow and fanciful habit is heartily denounced by Professor Faraday, a man who has the best right to speak upon it. It is not alone, he tells us, for the educational benefits which arise from the study of physical phenomena and laws that he and others pursue their scientific inquiries. These benefits are undoubtedly valued, and are felt to be of themselves worth far more labor than is bestowed on their acquisition. But in addition to these, the experimentalist looks with pride upon those practical fruits which his devotion has fostered, and with confidence anticipates like harvests for the future. The steam-engine, the electric telegraph, and other world-transforming and world-bettering agencies declare his honor, and it is folly to suppose him insensible to the fact.

Notwithstanding that our sphere is more with the practical than the abstract, we would not for one moment deny the utility of the abstract, or oppose the statement that it is the very life of the practical; and such men as Faraday, Agassiz, Wagner, and others, we truly honor and esteem. To come back to our title, let us suggest two subjects for cartoons to decorate, in color or in print, the palace of the rich and the home of the poor—

GALILEO AND THE INQUISITION, 1615.
FARADAY AND PRINCE ALBERT, 1859.

Wanted by Government!

The government of the United States, not unlike those of some other countries, pursues a somewhat blind system of making known its wants; therefore few of our enterprising citizens understand how varied are the needs of the different departments of its service. The system in vogue is one universally known under the familiar phrase of "kissing goes by favor;" hence we see that, if the extension of a patent is desired to be obtained, or if candles, beeswax or mustard, are wanted for the army or navy, the government organ must needs be the medium of making known these facts; and as a natural result of this blind system of procedure, few comparatively, save hungry politicians, know anything about the matter. Now, we do not object to the government organ, neither do we purpose to interfere with its patronage, for we want no such advertising; but we insist upon it that it would be for the interest of both government and constituent, if a more comprehensive policy were pursued. We find in a recent issue of the *Constitution*, published at Washington, several advertisements of applications for the extension of patents, which are noticed elsewhere, and but for which few interested in them would know of such applications; also, "proposals," issued under authority of the navy, for certain supplies; thus, for instance, the Bureau of Construction wants over eight hundred lanterns for marine purposes. The Bureau of Provision and Clothing wants boxes, brushes, buttons, blacking, combs, beeswax, jack-knives, razors, strops, scissors, spoons, grass for hats, tape, thimbles, needles, soap, candles, mustard seed, black pepper, bottles, corks, &c. Here is a chance for the competition and reward of honest industry, and if government could but get direct access to our workshops, and thus avoid all unnecessary circumlocution, it would save a vast amount in brokerage, and there would be less need of investigating or "white-washing" committees.

Telegraphs in the West Indies.

The first line of electric telegraph in the island of Porto Rico was inaugurated at Aroyo on the 1st of last month, by Professor Morse, who has been sojourning in the West Indies during the past winter. On that occasion the authorities of the town gave him a public breakfast, at which there were present a great number of the dignitaries of the island, who paid the professor some very high compliments.

THE COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS.—No appointment has as yet been made to fill this office. The Providence *Journal*, in speaking of the probability that Hon. Wm. D. Bishop, ex-Member of Congress from Connecticut, had been appointed, says that "fortunately for the public service he is a man of excellent abilities, and will doubtless fill, to the general satisfaction, the very important position to which he has been assigned. There is a propriety, too, in selecting the head of the Patent Office from a State conspicuous for its inventive genius."

CANADIAN CENTS.—These coins, which have been lately thrown off at the British Mint, possess a remarkable peculiarity. They are not only tokens of value, but also standards of weight and measure. One hundred cents weigh exactly one pound, and one cent measures one inch.