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**It is the intention** of the publishers of the **SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN** to make the paper next year better and handsomer than any previous year during the last quarter century it has been published.

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An ingenious Frenchman has invented a process for treating common woods, which makes them of a closer texture, harder grain, and greater density, and so enables the cheaper kinds of wood to take a polish. The mode is as follows: The surface is first planed perfectly smooth, and then rubbed with diluted nitrous acid. An ounce and a half of dragons blood, dissolved in half a pint of spirits of wine, and half an ounce of carbonate of soda are mixed together and filtered; and the liquid is then laid on the wood with a soft brush. The treatment should be repeated after a short interval, and the wood will then possess the outward appearance of mahogany. If the polish is not sufficiently brilliant, rubbing with cold drawn linseed oil will improve it.

Mr. A. A. Low, treasurer of the New York Chamber of Commerce Chicago fund, acknowledges the receipt thus far of \$906,310.67—nearly a million dollars.

You cannot escape from anxiety and labor; they are the destiny of humanity.

NEW BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS.

**THE SCIOPTICON MANUAL.** Explaining Marcy's New Magic Lantern, and Light; including Magic Lantern Optics, Experiments, Photographing and Coloring Slides, etc. By J. L. Marcy, Optician, No. 1340 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

This little work, which may be obtained of the author, is calculated to assist those who need instruction in the use of the sciopticon or magic lantern. This instrument, in its improved form, affords a means of much instruction and amusement; and the above work, while in itself interesting and instructive, will be found an invaluable guide to the use of the most entertaining apparatus yet invented by opticians.

**ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF CARPENTRY.** By Thomas Tredgold. Revised from the original edition, and partly re-written by John Thomas Hurst. London: E. & F. N. Spon, 48 Charing Cross. New York: 446 Broome Street.

Mr. Tredgold lived to revise the second edition of his original work on *Carpentry*; but the time that has elapsed since his death has increased the general knowledge upon the strength of materials, and has also given birth to new inventions and appliances, which have made another revision imperative, in order to bring the work up to the improvements of the time. The large and increasing use of iron, in connection with wood in bridge building and in general architecture, is one of the advances made since the second edition was published. On this account, the editor of the present edition has entirely re-written the chapters on pillars, bridges, and timber, and has added sections to the chapters on coffer dams, scaffolds, etc., besides making such alterations, wherever needed, as will adapt the work to present needs. A very comprehensive work in its revised form, it supplies a want long felt, and will, we have no doubt, meet with a large sale. The carpenter will find a great variety of useful information in the chapters treating of the equality and distribution of forces, resistance of timber, construction of floors, roofs, domes or cupolas, partitions, scaffolds, staking, and gentries; construction of centers for bridges, coffer dams, shoring and strutting; wooden bridges and viaducts; joints, straps, and other fastenings, timber, etc. To these chapters are appended twenty-one useful tables, calculated to facilitate computation in all departments of carpentry, and a copious index, which renders every thing in the book available for easy reference.

The work contains 517 printed pages, and 48 full page plates, besides numerous smaller engravings throughout the text. It is printed in excellent style, and is handsomely bound in cloth.

**ANNALS OF THE DUDLEY OBSERVATORY.** Vol. II. Albany: The Argus Company, Printers. 1871.

The most important and interesting feature of this volume is the record of the meteorological observations made during a period of five years, from 1862 to 1871, under the supervision of G. W. Hough, A. M., Director of the Dudley Observatory. Nothing like such a continuous and accurate series of observations for so long a period has ever before been published or made. In fact, they could not have been made with any less perfect and automatically registering and printing instrument than the "Automatic Registering and Printing Barometer," invented and perfected by Professor Hough, and used by him during the period named. This instrument not only traces a continuous curve of the varying height of the barometric column, but so proportionally magnifies the fluctuations of the column that even the smallest variations become apparent. The importance of this will be appreciated when we state that frequent fluctuations of the column, though almost imperceptible, seem to always precede, for some time, the occurrence of violent disturbances in the atmosphere, and that this fact has been discovered by the use of Mr. Hough's instrument. In his remarks upon this point, Professor Hough says:

Some years since, we pointed out the intimate relation existing between the barometric disturbance and the weather. We remarked that this element of disturbance was a better guide in prognosticating storms, than the mere change of barometric height. An examination of the mean daily and mean monthly curves for barometric disturbance shows that this opinion is founded in nature.

It will also be seen, by an inspection of the tables exhibiting the mean daily disturbance, that storms are invariably accompanied with excessive barometric fluctuation. In fact, a pretty correct history of the weather may be determined by an examination of this element alone; and when taken in connection with changes of pressure, it indicates, in a very marked manner, the atmospheric phenomena.

Some hours previous to the arrival of a great storm, the "barometric disturbance" increases, amounting, in some cases, to seven times the change of pressure in a given interval of time. It is our opinion that the waves of pressure are propagated in the upper regions of the atmosphere, some hours before the storm reaches any given locality at the surface of the earth.

The record is made for each hour during the five years, and the curve of hourly disturbance, when compared with the weather record accompanying, clearly sustains the views expressed by Professor Hough. Diagrams are given, showing the mean hourly barometric disturbance, the mean monthly disturbance, simultaneous barometric curves at different points, mean hourly velocity of the wind, mean monthly temperature for nine years, etc. A most interesting part of the report is the account of observations at the time of the total eclipse of the sun in 1869. The book contains, also, much other important and interesting matter pertaining to the regular work of the observatory. It is, probably, the most important contribution to meteorological science yet published.

**A REPORT OF SURGICAL CASES TREATED IN THE ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES, FROM 1865 TO 1871.** Washington Government Printing Office. 1871.

This is a large quarto with illustrations, the character of which is set forth in its title. Its importance will, however, only be apparent to physicians and surgeons, who will find in it statistics of great value. The minute details given of operations which, a few years since, were scarcely known to surgery, are especially important as guides in the treatment of similar cases hereafter. The compiler and editor of the work, George A. Otis, Assistant Surgeon U. S. A., has done his work with scrupulous ability.

The Thanksgiving Number of *HEARTH AND HOME*, published by Orange Judd & Co., 245 Broadway, New York, is an evidence of the liberality and good taste which have secured for this journal a well deserved popularity and large circulation. As a family paper, for large and small, it has purity of tone, originality, and beauty, to recommend it, while it is edited with intelligent appreciation of what the masses of rural and city readers like to read. Its illustrations are excellent; in short, we shall have sufficiently described each of its features when we say they are all, of their kind, excellent. The more such papers are circulated, the better it will be for the mental and moral health of the rising generation.

**THE ELEMENTARY MUSIC READER.** A Progressive Series of Lessons, prepared expressly for use in Public Schools. Book First. By B. Jepson, Instructor of Vocal Music in the New Haven Public Schools. New Haven, Conn.: Charles C. Chatfield & Co., 458 Chapel Street, opposite Yale College.

We have long been impressed with the importance of substituting the reading of music for the rote singing practiced very generally in public schools. The importance of a knowledge of musical notation, and the power of reading it with facility to satisfactory progress in music, needs no argument. The system of teaching this branch of the art, generally employed in this country, is, in our opinion, very defective, its chief fault being the transposition of the syllables used in solfeggio exercises, with the transposition of the scales, instead of maintaining them, without regard to key, in one position on the staff, as in the Italian method. We are sorry to see that, in Mr. Jepson's work, this error is retained—the more so, as it is in all other respects a capital book for the field it is intended to occupy, giving evidence that its author is a practical and thorough teacher.

**HALF HOURS WITH MODERN SCIENTISTS.** Huxley—Barker—Stirling—Tyndall. New Haven, Conn.: Charles C. Chatfield & Co.

This is one of, what the publishers style, the University Scientific Series of Publications, designed to place, in a cheap form, the advance thought in the scientific world. It contains the following essays: "On the Physical Basis of Life"—Professor T. H. Huxley. "Correlation of Physical and Vital Forces"—Professor G. F. Barker, M.D. "As Regards Protoplasm—Reply to Huxley"—James Hutchison Stirling. "On the Hypothesis of Evolution"—Professor E. D. Cope. Scientific Addresses, by Professor John Tyndall. "On the Methods and Tendencies of Physical Investigation. "On Haze and Dust," and "On the Scientific Use of the Imagination."

The names of these celebrated scientists and authors are so well known, and their popular style of discussion is so favorably appreciated, that it is hardly necessary to say this work possesses an interest and value, second to no other of its size ever issued from the American press. It is a medium octavo, plainly bound, but handsomely printed, and will meet with an extensive sale.

**SERVING OUR GENERATION, and GOD'S GUIDANCE IN YOUTH.** Two Sermons, preached in the College Chapel, Yale College, by President Woolsey. New Haven, Conn.: Charles C. Chatfield & Co.

This is a beautiful little volume, printed on tinted paper, and neatly bound in cloth. As the work of one of our most celebrated scholars and divines, it will be eagerly sought by those who delight in pulpit literature.

**THE CIVIL ENGINEER'S POCKET BOOK OF MENSURATION** Trigonometry, Surveying, Hydraulics, Hydrostatics, Instruments and their Adjustments, Strength of Materials, Masonry, Principles of Wooden and Iron Roof and Bridge Trusses, Stone Bridges and Culverts, Trestles, Pillars, Suspension Bridges, Dams, Railroads, Turnouts, Turning Platforms, Water Stations, Cost of Earthwork, Foundations, Retaining Walls, etc., etc. In addition to which, the *Elucidation of Certain Important Principles of Construction* is made in a More Simple Manner than heretofore. By John C. Trautwine, Civil Engineer. Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen & Haffelinger, 819 and 821 Market street.

The above comprehensive title relieves us of the necessity of an analysis of this work, and the name of its author is a sufficient guarantee of the value of its contents to any engineer and mechanic. The book is bound in Morocco, with clasp, in the pocket book style, and is copiously indexed. It is in every way, in matter, style of publication, and binding, worthy of commendation, being in itself a complete compendium of engineering science, by the use of which much time and labor can be saved to any practical mechanic.

Declined.

Communications upon the following subjects have been received and examined by the Editor, but their publication is respectfully declined:

- DIMENSIONS OF BOILERS.—J. McC.
- PROTECTION OF BUILDINGS FROM FIRE.—R. B. B.
- RAILROAD ACCIDENTS.—G. T. F.
- SLIDE VALVES.—F. A.
- SPIRITUALISM.—J. L. V.
- ASTRONOMICAL DISCOVERY.—L. B. D.
- BOILER EXPLOSIONS.—K. H.
- DISEASE AND DIET.—F. H. B.
- MODERN SURGERY.—X. F. W.
- WASTE OF WATER.—H. B. P.
- ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—F. D. C.—F. S. C.—R. V. P. W. J. W.
- QUERIES.—L. D.—O. S.—R. V. P.—T. E. L.—W. H. G.

Business and Personal.

The Charge for Insertion under this head is One Dollar a Line. If the Notices exceed Four Lines, One Dollar and a Half per Line will be charged.

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