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Contents:

(Illustrated articles are marked with an asterisk.)

Table listing various articles and their page numbers, including 'Adjustable Spring Bed Bottom', 'A New Anemometer', 'Notes and Queries', 'Official List of Patents', etc.

THE GREAT SEWING MACHINE JOB BEFORE CONGRESS.

We recently alluded to the application now pending before Congress for the extension of the Wilson sewing machine patent which covers the feeding device, a feature which all sewing machines must have.

The Sewing Machine Ring, consisting of the Wheeler & Wilson Company, the Singer Company, the Grover & Baker Company, and the Howe Company have had the almost exclusive monopoly of the sewing machine business for the past quarter of a century.

Under the shadow of these patents, Wilson's patent being a chief one, they have wrung from our people many millions of dollars in profits, and to-day they charge American citizens sixty-five dollars for the same machines that they sell on the other side of the Atlantic for half the money.

In the memorial of W. L. Groot and others, we find the following interesting particulars:—

The corporations above named "are now selling machines in England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Belgium, Holland, Austria, Russia, Prussia, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, and other countries of Europe, at one half the price they offer the same sewing machines to our own people, and cheaper than they can be produced by the poorly paid labor of Europe, where the manufacturer, who has no patents to dread and no 'combination' to interfere, realizes, even at the price of one half what we must pay, a profit of 100 per cent.

NUMBER AND PRICE OF SEWING MACHINES.

Not counting the great number of sewing machines made and sold since the origin of the business, the chief patent of which has expired and is now sought to be renewed by Congressional legislation, your memorialists annex the number made in 1870 only by the companies forming this 'combination,' the statement being made under oath:

Table with 2 columns: Company Name and Number Sold. Includes Singer Manufacturing Company (127,833), Wheeler & Wilson Manufacturing Company (83,208), Grover & Baker Sewing Machine Company (57,402), and The Howe Sewing Machine Company (75,156).

Total 343,599

These were retailed at an average price of \$65 each, making in the aggregate \$22,333,935. The same number of sewing machines would have retailed in Europe at half the price charged here, and our people must pay for this number sold them \$11,166,967.50 more than the people of Europe are charged.

at \$65 must be reduced to \$32.50, and there will be no difference between our people and those in Europe, as there is an abundance of capital anxious to produce better sewing machines at \$35 than are now sold at \$65, and to have liberal, legitimate reward for both labor and capital.

Your memorialists will be ready at any time to appear before Congress, both in person and by attorney, to give such additional proofs, and to propound such questions, to the applicants or their attorney, as it is impossible to present in the limits of this memorial.

SEWING MACHINES AND THEIR EFFECT UPON HEALTH.

It is one of the accompaniments of almost every change in human habits, brought about by advances in civilization, that the health of the public is influenced in some way. Often new complaints are engendered, or old ones are complicated, so that medical science is kept constantly on the alert to combat attacks from unexpected quarters.

In 1860, Dr. A. K. Gardner expressed, in the American Medical Times, his opinion that the exercise of propelling sewing machines with the feet, so far from being injurious, is really beneficial inasmuch as it gives exercise, which, though it affects only part of the body, is still better than no exercise at all.

Dr. Vernois stated, in 1862, in the Annales d'Hygiène Publique, that, both in males and females, the motion produced cramps, partial paralysis, and, in females just beginning to operate, a peculiar and injurious nervous excitement.

Dr. William Ord, in a report on the sanitary condition of dressmakers and needlewomen in London, 1863, states that, while in general the exercise is beneficial and tends to improve the health of females, the cramped position sometimes causes pain in the chest and indigestion, and that delicate women are greatly exhausted by this particular work.

This testimony was followed by something far different in 1866, from M. Guibout, physician to the Hôpital Saint Louis, in Paris, who, in a paper read before the Société Médicale des Hôpitaux, made such strong statements, in regard to the effect of sewing machines upon female health, that general apprehension resulted.

The opinions of Dr. Espagne, Professor at the Montpellier University in France, were published in 1869, in which he denies that any injuries result, from the use of the feet on sewing machines, other than general fatigue and muscular pain.

Next follow the published opinions of the celebrated Dr. Decaisne, who has done so much toward enlightening the world upon the effects, of various trades, professions, and callings, upon the health of those engaged in them.

"The effects of this work upon the muscular system differ in no respect from those of any other kind of excessive labor involving the use of certain portions of the body to the exclusion of others. The affections most commonly complained of are muscular pains, pain in the region of the kidneys, and cramps in the lower extremities; none of which, however, are developed among those working three or four hours daily.

The use of the sewing machine, when employed within moderate limits, without overworking, as is too often done, is attended with no greater inconvenience to health than working with the needle, as was shown by the examination of 28 women between the ages of 18 and 40, employed from three to four hours daily."

We now come to the investigations of the Massachusetts State Board of Health. The Board circulated widely this printed question, "Have you observed any injury to health from the use of sewing machines moved by foot power? If so, please to send us all the information you may have on the subject." To this question, 138 replies were received, representing 120 different towns.

We cannot give place to even a synopsis of the various replies. They however establish the fact that, among operatives on sewing machines, certain complaints do exist in greater proportion than with other females, while they as plainly show that this results not from the exercise itself but from its excess. It is avowed by Dr. Nichols that these complaints are not inseparable from the propulsion of the sewing machine by the feet, but that excessive work of this kind is very likely to be followed by injury, if not by total prostration.

The number of hours per day these operators work would not injure them were the machines driven by steam power. Anything more than from five to ten minutes labor, without rest, on the brakes of the old style fire engine would be excessive for most men. But because this labor is too much, it does not follow that an engine cannot be made upon which a man might work six hours without over fatigue.

Operators at sewing machines are obliged to sit with backs entirely unsupported and the knees elevated, thus keeping the spinal muscles constantly on the stretch, inducing the pain in the small of the back which is the most constant effect of work of this kind. This irritation is reflected by sympathy to other parts, and general debility finally results. We have never seen any satisfactory reason why the tables of sewing machines which are operated by foot power should not be brought up over the lap, so that the operator might sit leaning slightly backward, with the spine thoroughly supported and the limbs extended.

Those who tried our plan of raising and bringing the table up nearer the person, and placing the treadles farther away, found no difficulty, in handling the work or in keeping it properly placed on the table, as the manufacturer above alluded to seemed to apprehend. The whole body was placed in an easy unconstrained position, and so supported as to rest rather than fatigue the back.

DEATH OF SAMUEL F. B. MORSE.

After a few days' illness which, with his great age, led to anticipation of a fatal result, Professor Morse died at ten minutes before eight o'clock in the evening of Tuesday, the 2d of April. His long and varied life, and his universal renown, will give interest to the following particulars:

He was born at Charlestown, Mass., on April 27, 1791. His early education was acquired at Yale College, and his career would have been through life that of a painter, had not circumstances directed his attention to scientific pursuits. With a view of following the first named vocation, he left the United States in 1811, in company with Washington Allston, to study his art under the tuition of the well known Benjamin West. The Society of Arts, of London, recognized the merits of the young artist, and awarded him a medal for a piece of sculpture, a "Dying Hercules." After four years' absence, he returned to his native country and subsequently established an association which, after many changes and against much opposition, became, in 1826, the National Academy of Design.

In the year 1826 or 1827, his attention had reverted to electro-magnetism and cognate subjects, of which his education at Yale had given him a sound practical knowledge; and he had an additional incentive to this pursuit in his close and intimate acquaintance with John Freeman Dana, then a collaborer with Morse in the lecture theater of the New York Athenæum. He returned from his second visit to Europe in 1832, and in conversation with his fellow passengers on the ship (the Sully) concerning the recent obtaining of an electric spark from a magnet, mentioned the idea of an electro-magnetic and chemical recording telegraph.

It is hardly necessary, just now, to describe the difficulties against which Morse fought so courageously. Recent events