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THE VIENNA EXPOSITION.

We have had occasion of late to present to our readers a variety of evidence, showing that if the American inventor were to go to the trouble of exhibiting new improvements at the coming Exhibition, as desired by the Austrian officials, he would be simply a carrier of novel patterns to Vienna for Austrians to copy, for which they would make no acknowledgment and give him no compensation.

We have shown how fully the laws of the United States protect and encourage Austrian inventors when they come here for patents, and we have urged upon the Austrian government the propriety of simple reciprocity.

We have shown that American inventors could not be expected to take an active interest in the Exposition until the obnoxious Austrian laws are modified; and, until the change has been accomplished, we have urged that Congress ought to refuse to grant appropriations in furtherance of the Exposition undertaking. We have further indicated that there is no necessity for the office of United States Commissioner, supplemented by a host of subordinate officials; that American exhibitors, if they believe they can profit by forwarding their goods to Vienna, will need no solicitation from government employees to induce them to look after their own interests, nor should they require national assistance in pursuing their ends of private gain; and finally, that any setting aside of the public funds, to pay office-holders for services of no greater value or utility than pleasure trips to Europe, would be both unadvisable and impolitic. Such is about the substance of our hitherto expressed opinions, in answer to which the United States Commissioner, General T. B. Van Buren, sends the letter printed in another column.

Our correspondent does us an injustice in supposing that we would descend to personalities or couple the official acts with the private character of a gentleman, whose ability and patriotism we would not impugn, and to whose eloquent and forcible addresses we have listened with great pleasure and approval during the late campaign.

There are certain assertions in his letter, however, which seem to require comment at our hands. We are there stigmatized as a "show" paper, and as an illustration, reference is made to a large and handsome engraving of an improved loom, displayed on the first page of a recent issue of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, of which ninety thousand copies have been printed. We admit that we are a "show" paper, and as such we take pride in presenting such fine illustrations as the one referred to. We know of no better means of laying before the public the best products of the national inventive genius, and we but perform a duty when we publish the same in the most attractive and complete manner. But the Commissioner is somewhat unfortunate in the selection of this particular device as evidence of our being a "show" paper. It happens that the loom is of remarkable and exceptional excellence and ingenuity, and has accordingly been patented in the United States and in some parts of Europe, but not in Austria. Americans avoid that country, because they can get no proper protection for their inventions. If the Austrian laws only offered suitable protection, doubtless the inventor of the large and splendid loom, to which the Commissioner alludes, would have made haste to apply for space at the Exposition; and we are free to say that the presence of that remarkable machine in the Vienna "show" would form a more novel and attractive feature, in the display of textile machinery, than anything of the kind that is likely to be there presented.

As the "especial champion" of inventors, a title in which we confess a pride, and which it is our aim to deserve, we consider that we advocate the cause of the entire country, and believe it to be to General Van Buren's direct personal interest, as well as that of every other American citizen, that the rights of our inventors be fostered, sustained and defended.

Special stress is laid upon a trade mark treaty, with which the Commissioner had nothing to do, and which is of little importance compared with the interests of American inventors, still open to infringement and piracy by the Austrians. In a widely distributed circular, issued from General Van Buren's office, we find the following remarkable statement:

"The Austrian government is exceedingly desirous that the United States shall be well represented, and makes extraordinary concessions to American manufacturers. The Austrian patent law is practically abrogated for the six months of the exhibition and two months following, and inventors are protected, by a special ordinance, against piracy of their inventions." Is there not a slight discrepancy between the intimation now made to us that a treaty may at some future time be concluded, and the direct assertion to the public in the above circular, that the objects of such treaty are now absolutely accomplished?

Would it not be well for the Commission to send out a new circular to manufacturers, showing that the previous circular of the Commissioner is incorrect; that the Austrians have not granted any "extraordinary concessions;" that the Austrian law has not been "practically abrogated," and that all that has been done in the premises, as the result of the zealous labors of the Commissioner on that point, consists, as he now states, in the sending of a draft of a proposed treaty from 51 Chambers street, New York, to the city of Washington?

The question of personal remuneration, General Van Buren places in a rather singular light. He states that he entered upon his duties, very well knowing there was no salary attached thereto, and actuated by a laudable motive to render service to his country. In the very next sentence he forgets his patriotic desires, and says he cannot, and insinuates will not, continue his functions at his own expense. Why did he undertake them? Moreover, he says that he has no claim for past services, and wants compensation for the future. But he has already boasted that a large number of articles for exhibition have been entered. Now, surely, it will not require a very extensive assortment of machines to fill thirteen thousand feet of floor space, and consequently the Commissioner's labors must be nearly completed. Therefore, having given a fair amount of time and trouble to his duties, why does he not, as he says he is willing to do, resign? We presume there are other gentlemen of leisure and means, and possibly of equal ability, who will accept the position. Why, we further ask, does our correspondent now appoint sixty-five assistants to perform work which he was able to prosecute zealously, even when otherwise occupied in laborious political duties? Why seek to induce Congress to appropriate a large sum to pay a number of men for doing nothing, except making pleasure trips to Europe?

The word "show," and the insinuation that the Exposition is a grand advertisement, seems to wound our correspondent's sensibilities. "Show" is a plain Saxon term, and is synonymous with the high sounding "Exposition," while, as to the advertising question, we beg to refer the Commissioner to the following paragraph from a recent oration by Professor Barnard: "Since extensive advertising is admitted to be an essential condition to every industrial success, what possible expedient can be conceived better adapted to create expeditiously a demand, for any article having in it merit enough to recommend itself, than that of placing it before the world in a great international exposition?"

Since the above was written, we observe, by the daily papers, that Mr. Van Buren has made his appearance in Washington to advocate the appropriation of half a million of dollars for the expenses of himself and others to go to the Vienna show. In his remarks before some of the teachers of the District, he said that the Austrian Director of the Exposition, Baron Schwartz, had written several letters to him, urgently asking that models of American school buildings and apparatus might be sent to Vienna. But Mr. Van Buren intimated that, out of the proposed five hundred thousand dollars, only a small portion could be allotted for such purposes. We have no doubt of the latter fact. The most of the money will be required to pay for the European pleasure travels and hotel bills of the Commissioner and his superabundant retinue of assistants.

THE NOSE STRAIGHTENER.

Among the recent triumphs of mind over matter is the invention of a device for straightening crooked noses. We are not advised as to whether it will reduce the pug nose to the more elongated form, impart the stylish Grecian bend to vulgar noses, or transform the common-place idiotic nose into a thing of beauty, which is a joy forever. But we presume it will, for the patentee says so. Here is his advertisement, which we find in a London paper:

NOSE MACHINE.—This is a successful contrivance which, applied to the nose for an hour daily, so directs the soft cartilage of which the member consists, that an ill-formed nose is quickly shaped to perfection. 10s. 6d., sent free.—ALEX. ROSS, 248, High Holborn, London. Pamphlet, 2 stamps.

REMARKABLE STUPIDITY.

Through the courtesy of the Board of Management of the recent Fair of the American Institute, we have been forwarded a copy of a very singular circular lately submitted to that body. It consists in a petition, and begins by reciting the trite fact of the value of the compound marine engine, then goes on to state that the opinion of English engineers regarding the same is not conclusive, ingeniously remarks that if our merchant navy had the best engines it could compete with established rivals, and concludes with the remarkable request that tests be initiated in the machinery department of the Fair to determine the advantages of the compound system. The document bears the signatures of such firms as

Williams & Guion, Pacific Mail Steamship Company, Spofford Brothers, Wm. K. Garrison, Murray, Ferris & Co., C. H. Mallory & Co., Atlantic Mail Steamship Co., H. B. Cromwell & Co., and others.

The only words which seem applicable to this astonishing composition are ignorance and effrontery. That men high in the mercantile world should not be posted in the fact that, for several years back, every new steamer that has been added to the foreign lines plying between this city and European ports has been provided with compound engines, has proved the same advantageous above all others, and has made equal speed with half the former consumption of fuel, is simply amazing. The logs of these vessels are open to their inspection, and if to this excellent evidence we add the long-since expressed opinions of not only the best European, but the first American, engineers, that the compound engine is by far the best machine extant for marine purposes, we should like to be informed what better proof these modern Rip Van Winkles require.

Were it not for the gratuitous slur upon the whole engineering profession, the concluding request would be actually funny. Here is a body of well known citizens, and among them the publishers of a scientific periodical, who at least ought to know better, deliberately asking the American Institute to require its judges to undertake experiments which are to be "of the highest value." Can anything, we ask, be more absurd? Do we understand that these gentlemen believe that the Institute, of all societies, through the medium of three civilian judges, presumably not the best talent the country can afford, backed by a mixed board of managers, the majority of whom know little or nothing on the subject, can give an opinion worthy of a moment's serious consideration, and above all of being placed superior to that of the best English and American scientific and mechanical authorities?

Were it not for the fact that this petition has been published and made the subject of comment by the daily press, we should pass it by in silence as an inconsidered emanation signed by men who were ignorant of the views it expressed; but as it has been given to the public, it is as well that its remarkable contents and purport be understood.

THE HORSE DISEASE.

The epizootic still prevails in many places throughout the country, occasioning great inconvenience in the transaction of business, and throwing many laboring persons out of employment. In this city the distemper has abated; but a new form of disease has set in, having the character of dropsy. It has been attended with fatal results in many cases.

In respect to the epizootic, the experience here was that the more quiet the animals could be kept, until their health and strength were fully restored, the better. In many instances, where horses were used contrary to medical advice, bad results followed. Commodore Vanderbilt has lost a twenty thousand dollar horse—Mountain Boy. The animal was so well that the Commodore drove him out. But immediately on returning, the horse sickened and died of pneumonia.

Dr. J. J. Woodward, of the United States Army, Washington, has made a careful microscopic examination of the organic forms derived from the air of stables, in that city, in which numbers of epizootic horses are kept. He was unable to detect the presence of any germs other than those ordinarily encountered. Examination of the mucous discharge from the nostrils of the sick horses gave the same result. The popular belief that the sickness is due to the presence of certain spores of fungi, floating in the air, is not regarded as correct by Dr. Woodward and other microscopists.

OXYHYDRIC ILLUMINATION.

We have before alluded to the introduction of the oxyhydrogen light in this city, and the endeavors which are being made to supplant by it the ordinary gas now in use. In this connection the French *Bulletin du Musée* publishes a report of Mr. Felix Le Blanc, of Paris, based upon experiments made in that city and in Brussels, upon the gas of the *Société Tessié du Motay*, which is the same as that made by the New York Oxygen Gas Company. A flame of common illuminating gas is fed with a certain quantity of oxygen, by means of special burners delivering the common gas at the circumference, while the oxygen passes through the axis. The two gases, passing through distinct tubes, mix at the extremity of the burner.

The following is a brief *resumé* of the conclusions of Mr. Le Blanc, based on experiments made along one side of the Boulevards des Italiens and des Capucines, in Paris. He says: First: This illumination would not be possible over any extended surface with the gas used. Neither is the method economical, as it is notably more expensive than a quantity of ordinary gas giving equal light. The system should not be recommended for the lighting of public streets. Second: The assertions made by the society are not substantiated. It is inexact to say that, in the oxyhydric system, the combustion by the oxygen would be complete. It would require much more oxygen than could be consumed with effect, while the light would be greatly weakened. Third: If the ordinary gas be enriched by volatile hydrocarburetted vapors, previous to mixing it with oxygen, it will be necessary to surmount many difficulties in carburetting systems already well studied. The report goes on to give other reasons of the same tenor against the use of the gas, and finally considers its hygienic effect. M. Le Blanc says that without doubt such a means of illumination does not impoverish the air within circumscribed limits so rapidly of its oxygen as does ordinary gas. But to ensure complete combustion, the flame requires much more oxygen than is supplied, and consequently the light is much enfeebled; so that for this reason, he considers the healthfulness of the system to be by no means as great as is claimed. For uses in hospitals, ordinary