For the Scientific American.
Rumsey the : The Mr. Editor:-The history of Fitci: and his steamboat in $\mathrm{N}_{\mathrm{o}} .17$, reminded me of a con-
versation I had lately with an old gentleman of the name of Durham, who has been spending the winter in our place. He said he had seen the first steamboat ever built (as he supposed) and that it was built at Shepardstown, Virginia, by Charles Rumsey. During the time Rumsey was building his boat, Dunham was attending school one or two hundred yards from the river and had an opportunity of seeing itevery day. This boat resembled a canal boat, and the only part of the machinery visible on the outside was the top of the boiler, which rose above the deck, and some pipes from the top of the boiler which bent down into the inside. The boiler was made of two hollow halt globes with a wide flange on each by which they were bolted together, and holding a barrel or more apiece. One half of the boiler was afterwards used at Shepherd's mill to cook hog feed in, and was still there some ten years ago. Dunham did not see the inside worke and could not say any thing about them. The boiler and other castings were made at a furnace just below Harper's Ferry. He told me the names of the persons who worked the boat, but I do not remember them. He remembers distinctly the time the boat was first started. There were something near five thousand persons collected on the banks of the river to see Rumsey's folly, as
was called. When all was ready to start Rumsey invited all who wished, to get on board, sey invited all who wished, to get on board,
but there were but five who did so, Colonel Morrow, then a member of Congress, Colonel Drake and son, Henry Bedinger, and one other whose name hedoes not remember. The boat first started downstream but soon turned and went up four or five miles and back at a rate that the people walked up and down stream and kept alongside. A short time after this the riverrose suddenly, and the boat breaking from its fastenings, was carried down stream a short distance and dashed to pieces, where parts of it remained for several years. Shortly after this trial Col. Morrow took Rumsey to Congress with him and endeavored to have an appropriation made for him, but did not succeed. Mr. Bunham thinks this boat was built as early as 1784 , but is not certain.

Mr. Rumsey was a tall, spare, dark complectioned man, and very sedate.

Yours respectfully,
L. G. M.

Bellefontaine, Logan Co., Ohio.
More about Gutta Percha.
Thetree from which Gutta Percha is procured, belongs to the natural order sapotacea found in abundance in the Island of Singapore, and in some dense forests at the extremity of the Malayan Peninsula. It attains a considerable size, even as large as six feet
in diameter; is plentiful in Sarawak, and in diameter; is plentiful in Sarawak, and
most probably all over the Island of Borneo. The timber is toolloose and open for building purposes: but the tree bears a fruit which yields a concrete oil, used for food.
Gutta Percha is contained in the sap and milky juice which quickly coagulates on exposure to the air, from 20 to 30 pounds being about the average produce of one tree. For
collecting the sap, the trees used to be felled, barked, and left dry and useless.
This way of getting the sap would soon, from the great demand of the article, have destroyed entirely the source from whence it is procured, but from late accounts the
are forbid to be felled, and the sur is only are forbid to be felled, and the suj is only
taken from them like as from the caoutche taken
tree.
The gutta is received in scraps, or in rolls of thin layers. It is first freed from impurities by devilng or kneading in $h_{0}$ t water, when it is left soft and plastir, and of a whitish gray color.

Whea thus prepared, the Gutta has many curious praperties. Below the temperature of 50 degrees, it is as hard as wood, but it will receive an indentation from the finger nail. When softened in hot water, it may easily be cutand moulded; and it whll harden, as it cools, to its former rigidity ; and it may be softered and laardened any number of times without.injury tr the material. Unlike ca. outchouc it has no elasticity; but it has such
tenacity, that a slip one eighth o! an inch
thickness, sustained 42 lbs . weight, and only broke with a pressure of 56 lbs . Whendraw cut, it remains without contracting.
Coal Field on James River Virginia.
This coal field, which is about twenty miles lung from north to south, and from 4 to 12 miles in breadth from east to west, is situated 12 miles west of Richmond, in Virgin. ia, in the midst of a granitic region. The rocks consisting of quartzose grits, sandstones and shales, precisely agree in character with : the ordinary coal-measures of Europe. Several rich seams of bituminous coal (the principal one being occasionally from 30 to 40 ft . thick,) occur in the lower division of the strata, which are arranged in a trough, and are much disturbed and dislocated on the margin of the basin, where they have a steep dip, while they are horizontal towards the centre. The fossil plants which have been determined by Mr. C. Bunberry, differ specifically, and most of them generically, from those found fossil in the older or paleozoic coal formatiors of Europe and North America, and esemble the plants of the oolite, of Whitby in Yorkshire: some few, however, being allied, to fossils of the European trias. From the upright position of the Calamiteand Equiseta, it has been inferred that the vegetables which produced the coal, grew on the spots where the coal is now found, and that the strata were formed during the continued subsidence and repeated submergence of this part of Virginia. The shells consist of count less indıviduals, of a species of Possidonomya, much resembling P. minuta, of the English trias. The fossil fish are nomocercal, and differ from those previously found in the new red sandstone (trias) of the United States. Two of them belong to a new genus, and one to Tetragonolepis, and they are considered by Prof. Agassiz, and Sir P. Egerton, to indicate the liassic period. The analysis of the coal made by Dr. Percy, and Mr. Henry, shows that it contains the same elements -carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen, in the same proportions as the older bitumi nous coal, of Europe and North America Alternating layers of crystalline coal, and oth: ers like charcoal, are observed in many places, and in the charcoal Dr. Booker has detected vegetable structure, not of Ferns or Zamites, or any Conifer, but perhaps of Calamites. The coal yields abundance of gas used for lighting the streets of New York and Philadelphia, and some fatal explosions have taken place in the mines, some of which are 900 feet deep. Volcanic rocks, dikes, and beds of intrusive green stone, intersect the coal measures, in several places, hardening the shales, and hardening the associated coal, the latter being in some places turned into a coke used largely for furnaces.

## An Alabama Coal Field.

Near Mr. Camp's bloomery a few miles below Scottsville, the junction of the coal may be seen, the latter being al most vertical while the coal measures are inclined at an angle of 20 degrees. Near this place fragments of coal are imbedded in the sandstone. My examination of the Cahawba coal field extended as high up as Lacy's ferry, about thirty miles above Centreville. In this distance its greatest breadth is directly west of Montevallo and is about twelve miles. From the little Cahawba which is its southern boundary, to Lacy's ferry, is 20 miles An undulating line drawn from Shultz's creek near Scottsville, and following the ridge east of the limestone to Roup's creek, will mark its western boundary. On the east it extends to within one or two miles of Montevello, from which point it gradually contracts till it reaches within three miles of the ferry.
The coal of the Cahawba differs in many respects from that of the Warrior. It is more lamellar in its structure, seldom breaking up into fragments of regular form like the atter. The beds are generally more highly inclined, being often vertical, and they are also much thicker than any I have yet seen on the Warrior. On the right bank of the Cahawba, I have determined the super-posiion of at least four beds, varying in thickness oen ten and four feet, and within one
low in the series-some of them below the millstone grit, which leads me to think we have not yet reached the corresponding thick beds on the Warrior.
Between the coal and iron ore I had the pleasure to find an excellent fire-stone that must one day be of great value. You have, then, limestone, iron ore, fire-proof stone, coal and water power side by side and within the limits of a few miles.-Professor Tu oney.

## Customs and Things.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, ood manners required that persons of differnt sexes, when invited to parties, should sit down in couples, and each couple should have one plate between them. In families, ne goblet was deemed sufficient for all; and St. Bertrand was disinherited by his father, who was afflicted with the leprosy, for having wiped the edge of the goblet before he drank. Beds, now such indispensable pieces of furniture, were to the Greeks and Romans ar ticles of great luxury. When they exchanged the leaves, and skins of beasts, on which heir heroic ancestors reposed, for matresses, and feather birds, the bedsteads were sometimes ivory, sometimes of cedar, and sometimes of silver. It would be difficult, now-adays, in the middle ranks of life, to find beds such as our ancestors slept on, not only with their wives and their children, but with their dogs and their friends. An invitation to such a couch was then considered the strongest procf of a ffection and confidence that could be given.

The first mirrors were made of metal. Cicero carres the origin of them up to Esculapius. Moses, too, makes mention of them. It was in the time of Pompey that the first mirror was made of silver at Rome. Pliny mentions a brilliant stone, probably talc, thin slices of which being fixed upon a bright metal reflected objects with great perfection. The first mirror of glass appeared in Europe in the latter end of the Crusades.

Give parsuits the best Cure of Grief. Grief, of whatever measure it may exist, allways be most obstinate and dangerous is those unengaged in active pursuits, and who have consequently leisure to brood over their troubles. Bodily and mental activity, and more especially, when the result of necessity must, by creating fresh trains of association, and diverting the thoughts into new channels, tend to weaken the poignancy of affliction. Nothing in truth, serves more effectively to lighten the calamities of life, than steady and interesting employment. It is, as we conceive for the reason thatfemales are ge. nerally exempt from the cares and excite. ments of busiuess, and confined at home to their own relatively tranquil domestic duties, that they so muchoftener pine and sicken under wounded affections than our own more active and busy sex. Dr. Good observes that suicide is frequent in the distress of sieges, where they have subsided into a state of calmness, and the mischiefs they induced are well pondered; but it seldom takes place in the activity of a campaign, whatever may be the fatigue, the privations, or the sufferings endured. On the fall of the Roman empire, and throughout the revolution of France, selfdestruction was so common at home, as at last to excite but little attention. It dees not appear, however, to have stained the retreat of the ten thousand under Xenophon, and accor ding to $M$ Falret, was rare in the French a my during its dight from Moscow."

## Geologicat.

Mr. W. B Findlay, a farmer near Columbus, Illinois, in digging a well on his premi ses, at the distance of sixty-two feet below the surface came upon two pieces or portions of a $\log$, of what was once no doubt a large tree. The bark upon it resembled that of the pine of the northern latitudes. The ground on which the well was sunk, is a high rolling prairce, and it would appear that the whole country was once covered 'vith water, for before coming upon the piece of timber, about 55 feet below the suiface, the diggers cane ed of appeared to be a new son, compo ter.

The Clasp Coaping Joint.
This invention of Messrs. West \& Thomp son, is creating no small excitement among our most eminent engineers and soientific men. The British Attorney General has signed his name to an English Patent, and we shall soon be able to herald one from our own Patent Office. This would have been done already had Congress granted at an earlier date the necessary increase of force in the Patent Office. This joint has just been experimented with at the navy yard at Washington and the following testimonials and opinions regarding the qualities, is something of which the inventors may well feel proud. Coming as they do from men who are so justly able to form correct opiniors, and who are above uttering anything but unbiassed opinions.
U. S. Navy Yard, Washington March 28, 1848.
This is tn certify that by order of the Hon. Secretary of the Navy I have applied one of West \& Thompsons newly invented "Clasp Coupling Joint" on the steam pipe of one of the steam engines of the yard, for the purpose of testıng its merits. It gives me pleasure to state that its application has been entirely saccessful, and also, that it is in my opinion, far superior to any method of connecting pipes that I am acquainted with. Its great superiority consists in the facility of its appli$c$ ation and the entire certainty of its efficacy, as well as in the economy of its manufacture, the saving of material in its construction, and of time in its application in any situation where it may be used, compared with any of the old methods.
I would further state that I subjected one of these joints (2 1-2 inchesdiameter) connec ting twopieces of English cap welded tube to hydrostatic pressure for the purpose of ascertaining its strength and efficiencr, and do also certify that the joint so connected stood a pressure without leaking or giving way, of $2,566 \mathrm{lbs}$. to the square inch.
Wm. M. Ellis, Chief Eng'r. \& Machinist.
I agree with the above statement.
C. S. McCauly, Commandant.

Having witnessed the trial of the above named joint when subjected to the pressure amed above, I certify to its correctness. Wm. Sewel, Jr., Chief Eng'r. U. S. N

## Sound Visible.

In this age of wonders, what will the world think when we assure it that a method has been discovered and matured by which sound will be made visible to the human eye, its various forms and ways demonstrated to sight and the power to discriminate between the tones of one musical instrument and another be as complete as to observe the action of water when disturbed by any material cause ? The experiments, 've believe, are likely to be, ere long, repeated in the Royal Society. The exhibition of effects on fine sand has pro bably led to this astonishing issue.-Literary
[Wonders will indeed, never cease, and truths can never be forgotten, and verily the act of sound becoming visible reminds us of "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.
© M. C. of Lebannon."一We have not been able to get what you desired, or we should have been happy to do so. We may be able at some othertime, but then it may be too ate for your purpose.
"S. K. of Mass."-For the relativestrength of pillars see Tredgold and Hodgkisson's work, and make out the calculations for yourself.The experiments of Hodgkisson are valuable. "S. W. of N. Y."-The tinned lead pipe can be had for the same as the other kind. Address Lowber \& Leroy, No. 261 Water st New York.
"R. S. W. of S. C."-The cement for Mill stones can be made of plaster of Paris, ground marble and soda, mixed together in a suitable quantity of hot water and applied hot or dried in an oven.
"A R. of N. H."-You were answered by mail on the 31st ult.
"J. M. of Mass."-There was a machine patented in England in 1816 tor rolling iron pipes. What difference there may be between yours and it we cannot tell.
"E. A. D. of N. Y."-Your plan for saw
ing curves by patteras is both ingenious and feasible to all appearance. An operative model would, however, as in all such cases afford ground for pruning all that is extraneous.
E. F. S. of Geo."-We have received your's, have obeyed your orders and are much obliged for your kindness. You will see an engraving of Mr. Winder's pump in No. 1 o his vol. Scientific American. We do no city
"S. L. of N. Y."-We shall be able to in form you in four weeks, not before.
R. J. of Ohio."-Your plan is not novel. Gutta Percha bands have already been used for the same purpose.
"C.D. of Vermont."-We will give your communication due attention.
" M. McN. of Va."-Look at the water wheel of Messrs: Teller \& Dillenback in another part of this paper. We think that would suit you exactly.
S. J. G. of Ky."-Seven dollars would get a good cut, and the cut yours. This is the best thing you can do.

Ranlett's Architect.
No. 2 Volume 2, of this splendid work just published and like its predecessors, it is worths of being truly called a "nationa work on archice This number con splendid Italian Villa, and not only the views of the Villa, but the manner of laying out the ornamental grounds around the building, with full specifications. For sale at this office, price 50 cents.

## Universal History,

No. 2 of this valuable work has just come to hand fresh from the press and fresh with interesting events of the days of yore. It treats mostly upon the times when the earth was young and those gigantic kingdoms of oriental grandeur, Babylon, and Ninevah, and published by Graham of the Tribune Build ings.

American Rallroad Journal.
We receive this Journal regularly, and the publishers would hear from us it we did not. It is filled with sound information especially relative to Railroads. It is published in Philadelphia, No. 105 Chessnut straet, price $\$ 5$ perannum.

## American Phrenoiogical Journal

This Magazine for Apral is very interestin as all the numbers are. There is a cut in it of F. Hunt, Editor of the Merchant's Magazine, and a phrenological description of his character, which must be interesting to all who have a taste for this Science

## The Minstrel Piggrim.

A neat little book of poems bearing the above title, has just been published by Clark and Austin, 205 Broadway.

## Patent Agency

Applications for Patents made at this office, on the most reaso nable terms. Neat drawings, specifications, and engravings of the first character, and cheaper than anywhere else. Notices of new inventions, Agency for the sale of Patent Rights, and all business of that na ture, promptly attended to. Those who have patent rights todispose of will find a good opportunity and field for their sale-sucla as Horse Power Machines and Waterwheels of every description. The largest circulation in the werlilfor ad vertisements of inventions, \&c.

## Aovertisements.

20, This paper circulates in every State in the Union, and is seen principally by mechanics and medium of advertising, for those who import or manufacture machinery, mechanics tools, or such wares and materials as are generally used by those classes. The few advertisements in this paper are regarded with much more attention than those in closely printed dailies.

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 a 100 horse power, to be finished in June and July fhe subscriber has been long engaged in the manufacturing of Stationary Engines, and makes a busi better article. He feels assured that he can make
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wroughtiron. The piston is an entirely new article
making it doubly fecure against leakage and will making it doubly secure against leakage and wil off, of an entire new construction, simple in its ar
rangement, not liable to get out of order, and can be
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adjusted to cut of with any length of stroke whil
the engine is in operation, or thrown off entirely i the engine is in operation, or thrown off entirely ir
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P. S. I have made arrangeraents for the manufac Muring of D. Badreamsrangernents for the manufac
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## To Mill Owners.

HAVILAND \& TUTTLE'S Patent Centre Ven n successful operation in many towns in Mane Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, and are found to surpass in power and facility of adaptation any wa
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Nos. 0 , J. O. FAY has just received from the manufactory ment of Solar Lamps for Parlors, warranted perfect
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forms of manufacture, and has been adopted by th Yorms of manuracture, and has been adopted oy the
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Ne vous and Physical Energy, and all Nervous Dis
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firmed cases of Scrofula. Dropsy Erisypelas Deaf. is conidenty recommended, and in the most con-
firmed cases of Scrofula, Dropsy, Erisypelas. Deaf
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stean and steam and other pipes together, by which means any
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of their Clasp Joints will be found cheaper than the others, as they do not require any flanges, braized or
soldered on the pipe, no holes to drill, $\boldsymbol{\rho} \mathrm{r}$ grummets
tole to make, nor white or red lead used to make them
tight and their weight is not one halfthat ot the
old Flange Joint, They may be seen and obtained
ol ort the ottice of the Patentee, 29 Centre send obetained near
at
the City Hall, where all orders left will be punctually a tended to to This is to certify that $I$ have examined what is cal. led West \& Thompson's Clasp Coupling Joint, fo
pipes to conduct steam and other fluids, and consider it to be a new and most invaluable improvement.
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Washington Stores, No. 139 William street, New York, (one No. 139 Wiliam AR manufacturing and have always on hand, a
full assortment of articles in their
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Solar Lamps-Gilt, Bronze.! and Silvered, in great variety.
Suspendıng Solar Lamps, gilt and bronzed.
Urent $\begin{array}{llll} & \text { Sracket } & \text { do } & \text { do } \\ \text { Bo } & \text { do } \\ \text { Side } & \text { do } & \text { do } & \text { do } \\ \text { Solar Chandeliers, } & \text { do } & \text { do } 2,342 \mathrm{nd}\end{array}$ 6 lights. $\begin{gathered}\text { Camphene } \\ \text { do } \\ \text { Sracket } \\ \text { do } \\ \text { do spending } \\ \text { damps, gilt and bronzed. }\end{gathered}$ $\begin{array}{lll}\text { do Bracket } & \begin{array}{l}\text { do } \\ \text { do } \\ \text { do } \\ \text { Chandeliers }\end{array} & \text { do } \\ \text { do } & \text { do } 2,3,4 \text { and }\end{array}$ lights.
 Hall Lanterns, a large assortment, plainand cut.
with sta ined and Bohemian Glass Lights.
Lamp Wicks, Chimneys and Shades of allkind
Paper Shades, a large assortment of new pat and styles. Whale and Lard, of the best quallty Superior Camphene and Burning Fluid. d18 $\mathbf{6 m}$
November 29. 1847.

Gutta Percha Bands.
THE undersigned have been appointed Agents by The American Gutta Percha Company, and are
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ize or length at the follo ize or at the following
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All Bands of extra thickness willbe made by kpe
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Mdress \& Co. New York. mals
MINN Lap welded WroughtIron Tubes for tubulan boilers,
From 11-4 to 6 inches diameter, and any length, not exceeding 17 feet. ThESETubesare of the same quaIity and mana rine and other Steam Engine Boilers.
THOMAS PROSSER, Patentee d26

## Johnson's Improved Shingle

 Machine.THE Subscriber having received Litte Paten now ready to furnish them at short notic e, and he
would request all those who want and would request all those who want a goo 1 machine
for sawing shingles, to call on him and
improvements he has made, as one eight $h$ mere shin gles can be sawed in the same give., time than b any other machine now in use.
Augusta, Maine, Oct. 1, 1847. J. G. JOHNSON.


TGO The above is prepared to execute all ordersat
the shortest notice and on the most reasonable termg. ENGRAVING ON WOOD, DESIGNING
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