



Our Prize Essay.

We are pleased to see the general attention attracted by our offer of one hundred dollars for an Essay on the Patent Laws of the United States. This is a work which will not only be of benefit to the author in a pecuniary point of view, but one which will add greatly to the reputation of the successful competitor.

The artists and inventors of this country are particularly interested in this matter and the revision of the Patent Laws is to them not only necessary but demanded from the present imperfect operation of these laws, and while we would urge upon those competent to the performance of the work of preparing this essay a careful study of the law as it is now compiled we would also suggest the most thorough preparation of a code which shall be comprehensive, full, and complete, and so arranged that there be no loop holes by which the real inventor may be deprived of the benefit accruing from the embodiment of his genius upon machinery or other successful inventions.

It has ever been a source of regret to the true friends of the inventor that unprincipled men have in some instances derived all the benefits resulting from the inventions of others, who from a want of the means of perfecting their works have been obliged to sacrifice them and thereby enabled capitalists to amass fortunes, and the cases are not of rare occurrence in which the productions of genius have been unjustly appropriated without consideration, fee, or reward.

To meet these exigencies some measures should be devised and we particularly direct attention to such alterations as shall cover the entire surface of the wants of inventors. That such revision of the laws is much needed does not admit of a doubt and when the work is commenced it were better it should be thorough and effective rather than it should have to be again amended.

We are not prepared to say how far or upon what points the present laws are defective but that they may be greatly improved we know and to facilitate a labor of such importance to those who are to be benefited by them is the inducement of our offer for the essay.

Patent Case.

A verdict has been rendered in the U. S. Circuit Court at Boston, for the infringement of a patent for a Railroad Car Wheel, in favor of W. V. Many, of Albany, N. Y. against Mr. J. Sizer, of Springfield, Mass. Both parties had patents, but the defendant's was considered an infringement on the original one. The verdict rendered is a heavy one, \$81,718 68—not paid, however,—the case goes up to the Supreme Court as it should, although we do not like the position assumed by the defence—finding fault with the specification, a lawyer's we believe, but a very good one.

The Great Telegraph Case.

The great Telegraph case between Morse & Co. and O'Reilly & Co., an application for injunction on the O'Reilly line through Tennessee (from Louisville to New-Orleans,) as an infringement of Morse's Patent is now before the Supreme Court of the U. S. at Washington. The Counsel for Morse & Co. are W. H. Seward, Ex-Governor, N. Y. and P. S. Loughborough, Ky., and for O'Reilly & Co. Hon. Ransom H. Gillett.

Since the above was written Judge Catron has decided against Morse & Co. and in favor of O'Reilly & Co.,—the injunction of Judge Munroe will thus be removed we suppose.

Homestead Exemption.

They are talking about the passage of a law for the exemption of the homestead in Missouri to the value of five hundred dollars. The policy of many States of the confederacy seems now to be in favor of allowing the hard working man of small means to hold inviolate a sufficient amount of property to supply the pressing wants of his family.

LITERARY NOTICES.

It is truly astonishing what mighty results have been accomplished by the introduction of the water cure system. It exceeds the once popular notions of Graham's system of dietetics, aside from the prejudices that seem to exist in many minds against the increasing popularity of this system. All acknowledge the beneficial effect of daily bathing, it increases the action of the physical powers by allowing all unhealthy collections to escape through the pores of the body.

Messrs. Fowlers and Wells of this city are now engaged in publishing a monthly Water Cure Journal at \$1 per year, which "Shews" more light upon the subject than any thing within our knowledge. It is worth a careful study.

Morfit's Chemical and Pharmaceutical Manipulator.

This is a beautiful volume and as useful as beautiful, just issued from the press of Lindsay & Blakeston, publishers, Philadelphia.—It is edited by Campbell Morfit, the well known and able chemist and author of "Applied Chemistry," assisted by Alex. Muckle, an excellent chemist also. This a rare work and one that was just wanting to fill up a gap in the chemical student's library. It is a book of near 500 pages with 423 beautiful engravings. It is a minute Directory of the Laboratory describing all the apparatus, the manner of using them and conducting experiments so particularly, that "he who runneth may read." There is not a chemical student, nor school in this country that would be without this work a day if they but knew its really useful and practical nature. It is for sale by the publishers Philadelphia, and by Geo. P. Putnam, 155 Broadway this city.

American Phrenological Journal.

This able Journal for February contains a likeness of Andrew Combe, the celebrated Scotch Phrenologist, with a descriptive account of his organization, &c. and a short biography. It is an excellent number.

The February number of the You'h's Cabinet, published by D. A. Woodworth, New York, at \$1 per year, has appeared upon our table, and is a pleasant companion for our youthful readers. It is worthy the attention of parents.

American Pencils.

At the last Exhibition of the Franklin Institute, a medal was awarded to Mr. A. G. Fay, of Concord, Mass., for an improvement in the form and material of the common crayon or lead pencil. They are made of various sizes and forms, one of which is a flat oval, which prevents the pencil from rolling from a desk of the ordinary inclination and the lead may be cut, shaped and worked without liability to break or crumble. For common purposes, the American pencils of Mr. Fay have no superior. We have tried them and find them to be good.

Separation of Iron from the ore by permanent Magnets.

Mr. A. Wilkinson of R. I., has invented a new way of applying permanent magnets on a revolving cylinder to separate the iron from the ore. One of Mr. Wilkinson's machines is in successful operation, as he informed us in Charlottenburg, N. J., with great profit. It is well known that ores have been separated by electro magnets—the circuit closed to attract the iron,—and broken to remove the iron from the magnets. This however, is the first permanent magnet ore machine that has been successful or used at all—to our knowledge. The ore is brushed from the magnets by brushes while the cylinder is moving. The economy of this magnetic machine is apparent. The magnets are cheaper than the electro kinds—no battery is required, and the machine is more simple. Measures have been taken to secure a patent.

Disasters on the Western Rivers.

According to the St. Louis Union, the total number of steamboats which have met with disasters on the Western Rivers during the past year is 109. Of this number 59 were totally lost. By the various accidents 205 lives were lost. No estimate is attempted of the loss of property. On 14 of the boats \$118,800 were insured.

Westwardly Current along the North Shore of Cuba.

The Washington Union, speaking of Lieut. Maury's wind and chart current, says:

We observe by the letter of Lieut Maury to the New England whalemens, that he has been led to suspect the existence of a westwardly current of from two to three miles the hour along the north shore of Cuba, and that the usual route of the sailing vessels from the Havana to New Orleans, and other Gulf ports, is for much of the way. The average rate of sail vessels is not more, we are told, than five miles the hour, and the difference which this newly discovered current would make is five miles for two-thirds the distance to New Orleans.

Our Ship owners and merchants are praying to have this current thoroughly examined and reported on by the vessels of the Gulf Squadron. This they could do without the least inconvenience or expense; for it would be only necessary for them to place themselves, when cruising about the Gulf, within the influence of this current.

Children Born Blind.

There is a court in Boston called "Limeric Place" which is about 80 feet long and the buildings are erected upon ground 50 feet wide with a 12 foot passage way taken off. The narrow opening is bounded on each side by a four story brick building divided into 28 tenements occupied by a miserable and poor population. A short time ago the Rev. Theodore Parker declared that "all the children born there were blind." This statement has been found to be incorrect in part, only. Most of the children are diseased and no wonder. In these United States, no city should allow such places to be inhabited by human beings. We want our country in every sense to be the abode of comfort, cleanliness and liberty, and when there is any portion of our citizens, or strangers that do not conform to wise and just regulations, why we must make them do it by the strong arm of law. Light, ventilation, and cleanliness are just as necessary to sustain life as food and water. The want of the former may take more time to complete the work of destruction, but the result is no less certain on that account.

Remington Again.

The sympathies of our people were very much excited some months ago by a letter from Mr. Remington, an ingenious American in England, to the late Hon. Dixon H. Lewis, which went the rounds. Mr. Tyler, the proprietor of the Surrey Gardens, London, has come out in the London papers, and denied that portion of Mr. Remington's statement, in which he says that, during the time he was erecting the bridge, he slept in a lion's deserted cage, and depended upon the charity of the carpenters for his dinner.

Mr. T. says he boarded regularly at a Mr. Ladd's, and his board was regularly paid.

A Golden Rock.

A runaway soldier in California discovered a rock of gold that weighed 899 pounds and as he was afraid to leave it, he mounted guard upon it; and at the last account had sat 67 days, and had offered \$27,000 for a plate of beans and pork, but his offer had always been indignantly refused, and the poor fellow only laughed at, for the niggardliness of his offer, by parties going on, where the article was said to be more abundant.

Tunnelling the Alps.

The Gazette de France says that the engineer Mans, commenced operations with his machine perforating a rock to the thickness of 48½ centimetres in thirty five minutes. If this process was applied to the perforation of Mount Cenis, it is calculated that by working at the two opposite ends three years would be sufficient to complete the work, thus opening a free intercourse between Italy and the continent.

A Healthy Town.

The Manchester (N. H.) Democrat says that during the first twelve days of the year 1849 there was but a single instance of death in the city of Manchester among a population of 13,000.

Three new powerful engines have been put on the Erie Railroad and the whole motive power of the road put in perfect repair.

New Parliamentary Rule.

It is said that the Ministers of Canada intend to propose that the House of Assembly shall sit for only three days in each week, for the purpose of debating and deciding on the measures brought before it. It is intended that on the other three days the House shall be divided into a number of Committees, who shall consider and prepare all these measures, so that when they come before the whole House, they may be carried with as little trouble and altercation as possible. We think the plan a very sensible one.

Death by Anthracite Coal Gas.

An old man named Thomas Fitzpatrick recently lost his life from the effects of Anthracite Coal gas, inhaled by him during night. His son was likewise affected by it, but is in a fair way of recovery.

It seems that before going to bed, they made up a fire and turned the damper of the stove, so that in a short time thereafter the fumes must have spread through their apartment and rendered them unconscious.

Queen Ann's Farthing.

It is reported that Mr. A. C. Davis, of Flemington, N. J. has discovered a relic, being nothing less than a Queen Ann's farthing, in a copper mine which was opened a short time ago after being closed one hundred and forty five years. This is the first time we have heard of four Queen Ann's farthings. There were only three cast, and there must certainly be some mistake about this one. Jersey beats all for ancient discoveries.

It has been eloquently and truly said, that if Christianity were compelled to flee from the mansions of the great, the academies of philosophers, the halls of legislators, or the throngs of busy men, we should find her last retreat with woman at the fireside. Her last audience would be the children gathering around the knees of a mother; her last sacrifice, the secret prayer, escaping in silence from her lips, and heard, perhaps only at the throne of God!

The Thermometer and Winter Items.

At Montreal during the past few weeks the weather has been extremely cold, the thermometer ranging from zero to ten or twelve degrees below. At Boston on Thursday, last week, at 2 P. M. thermometer at 45°. Winter sports are all the go, at Toledo, Ohio. The river is covered with a sheet of smooth ice of 15 inches thickness, which can be traversed by the heaviest-laden teams with perfect safety. The weather continues very cold, and the prospect is fair for the ice to remain for weeks.

Virginia Coal.

In a speech recently made in the Virginia legislature, in favor of a bill to incorporate the Virginia Coal Company, Mr. Faulkner, of Berkeley, stated that the coal fields of that state covered 21,000 square miles out of the total area of 64,000—an extent equal to that of England, Ireland, and Wales combined! Cannel, or purely bituminous coal abounded throughout the basin of the Kanawha; and was so accessible that a single hand could dig with ease two hundred bushels of coal per day.

Trial of Factory Girls.

Seventeen factory operatives were lately tried in Pittsburg, Pa., for rioting, in holding out for the ten hour law. Eight men and five girls were convicted and four acquitted. One of the persons was a little girl 13 years old.

The stock for the Chemung Railroad is all subscribed, and it is believed that it will be completed in time to connect with the New York and Erie Extension at Elmira, in October next.

A bill has passed the New Jersey Legislature incorporating the Newark Orphans' Asylum Association, which is composed entirely of ladies. By a provision of the charter, their husbands are exempt from liability of any results of their management.

An exchange says that machinery for a cotton factory is going out to Francisco Bay, on account of a New England Company.

Doubtful,—if true still a doubtful experiment.