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CONFUSION AT THE PATENT OFFICE.

The clerical force at the Patent Office seems to be in a most confused state; and while the Commissioner and the Examiners seem to be trying to do their duty, the mailing department of the office seems to be managed in a very indifferent manner. For the credit of the Patent Office and the convenience of persons having business with the department, we ask the Commissioner, in behalf of the inventor throughout our country, to have the following abuses which have recently crept into the office, corrected.

Formerly, all patents issued during a week were mailed on Tuesday, and bore date corresponding with the time they were sent from the office. Lately, we are receiving patents scattering along every day in the week—instead of the whole weekly issue by one mail—and we presume other attorneys suffer the same inconvenience. The lists of claims are very irregular in reaching us, sometimes coming on Monday, some-

times on Wednesday, and sometimes not at all, and then again two week's issue reach us by the same mail. And, again, we are continually having letters from the Office alleging that a specification or drawing accompanies the letter, which is not enclosed; and as often we receive specifications and drawings without any letter to indicate for what purpose they are returned, in both of which cases we are obliged to write to the department for explanation, which consumes time, causes unnecessary delay in the issue of the patent, besides rendering unnecessary trouble to the attorney. We are also in constant receipt of letters from the Patent Office designed for other persons. We call to mind six such letters which have come to us this week. There is nothing like system in every department of business; and while we were willing to bear the inconvenience of some irregularities in the Patent Office while the troops were quartered there, and while the department was experimenting with the printing of the specifications, now the soldiers having left, and adequate time for systematizing the printing department has elapsed, we call upon the Commissioner to martial his forces, and see that every man does his duty.

INSPECTORS OF SUPPLIES.

There are no duties connected with the prosecution of the war requiring higher moral and business qualities than the inspection of the various articles of arms, equipments, and supplies. The officers of the regular army, who are educated at West Point, are perfectly trained to the performance of this duty, as they are to all the duties pertaining to their profession. Nothing can exceed the thoroughness with which swords, bayonets, muskets, &c., are tested at our national armories before they are passed to the soldiers for use. The swords are bent point and handle together, they are whipped over a log, and tried in every possible manner by the severest tests. Weights are suspended upon the bayonets, their points are struck into the floor and pried with, in a way to certainly break them unless they are made of the very best metal and of the truest temper. The muskets are fired with enormous proof charges, and, in short, every article entering into the service of the army is subjected to the most rigid and minute examination.

It requires very little experience to demonstrate the importance of this thorough inspection, and if the government cannot detail a sufficient number of officers from the regular army to perform the service, could not the commanders of our volunteer regiments be instructed in this most essential duty? We have no doubt that a very large proportion of our business men who are offering contracts to the government would scorn to palm off worthless articles upon the brave defenders of the nation, but the community is swarming with adventurers from all nations whose only aim in coming here was to make as much money as possible in the shortest time, and it is possible that there are even American-born citizens who would be guilty of the immeasurable baseness of trifling with the comfort, health and lives of our soldiers for the sake of gain. We hear of numerous efforts being made to either palm off worthless rubbish upon the army, or to obtain double pay from the nation in this hour of need for articles which will serve their purpose. For instance, an officer tells us that the knapsacks for his regiment were contracted for by a sample which was stitched together in the firmest manner and well made in every respect, while those actually furnished were merely pasted together and soon came to pieces. The officer said that he expected to be sued for the pay for these knapsacks by the scoundrel who made them! We hope that the law may take the opposite course, and that the villain may be arrested and sent to the State prison for the remainder of his days. In some cases respectable shoe-dealers have been approached with an offer of a contract, if the merchant would make his bills for nearly double the price usually charged wholesale dealers.

Under the able administration of Secretary Cameron, we presume that these disorders will soon be corrected, and to aid in the reform, we would suggest that Congress should pass, among the few acts of its extra session, a law providing that every dishonest contractor and conniving inspector should be subject to trial by a drum-head court martial and instant military execution.

DEATH OF SENATOR DOUGLAS.

The Hon. Stephen A. Douglas, United States Senator from the State of Illinois, died at nine o'clock on the morning of June 3d, in the city of Chicago, after an illness of several days.

No other public man in this country has filled so large a page in its history or stood so prominently before the people's gaze for the last ten years as did Mr. Douglas.

He was born in the town of Brandon, Vt., on April 23, 1813, and was therefore, at the time of his death, in the forty-eighth year of his age. His history is one of striking interest, and to undertake to recite it in detail would require volumes.

His father was a physician of eminence, but died young, leaving two children, one of whom—the late Senator—was then but two months old. He served an apprenticeship at cabinet making, and worked at this trade for a couple of years. He seemed determined to have an education, and on the removal of his mother to Ontario county, this State, he entered the Canandaigua Academy, and studied law in that beautiful town.

He began life a poor boy, and by the force of his own will, worked his way along from the cabinet maker's bench to the desk of the school house, to the bar, to the Attorney-Generalship of Illinois at the age of only twenty-two years, to the Land Office, to the State Legislature, to the State Judgeship of the Supreme Court, to the House of Representatives, to the Senate of the United States, which latter position he has held successively for fourteen years.

Mr. Douglas was a candidate for the Presidency at the last election, and received the next highest number of votes of the four candidates. He was an able and powerful debater, moving into the arena like a gladiator; and as a stump orator, probably he had not an equal in the country. The last public act of his life was his address to the Illinois Legislature, urging upon them to sustain the government, and avenge the insults to our country's flag. The speech in question is a model of perspicuous eloquence.

He was a generous-hearted man, and had his faults; but his death covers them all, and he will be mourned as a patriot and friend of his country. The Secretary of War, General Cameron, published a marked tribute to the memory of the dead Senator, and ordered it to be read to all the regiments, and that the national colors be draped in mourning.

ABSURDITY OF STEAM AND CENTRIFUGAL GUNS.

The public mind has been somewhat exercised respecting the steam gun which was captured on its trip from Baltimore to Harper's Ferry, but nothing can be more absurd than the attempts which have been made to apply steam directly and indirectly in projecting bullets—large and small—for purposes of warfare. To project 32-pound balls by centrifugal mechanism, a steam engine of no less than 60-horse power is necessary. With a cannon, we can obtain the same result with eight pounds of gunpowder for every shot. For discharging bullets by steam power, a furnace, a boiler, steam engine and centrifugal machine are required; with gunpowder, the cannon answers for furnace, boiler, engine and projecting machine. How complicated the mechanism by the former method—how simple the latter.

The principles of science lead us to pronounce emphatically against steam when compared with gunpowder, as an expansive agent for projecting shot. The ignition and expansion of gunpowder is almost instantaneous, and it is applied directly to project the missile. The heat of burning fuel used in generating steam is really the primary force in the boiler, just as the heat of the ignited gunpowder is in the cannon. The difference between the instantaneous combustion of the powder and the slow combustion of the coal will convince any person how superior the former is to the latter as a force for projecting missiles of war. The powder is more expensive than coal, but it is no more expensive than it is superlatively effective.

Jacob Perkins (our countryman, residing in London), obtained a patent May 15, 1824. The shell was filled partially with water, and was closed at the rear end with a fusible metal plug. It was placed in a highly heated furnace, and so arranged in connection with a discharging tube that, when it attained to a very high temperature, the plug melted, the steam then