



NEW YORK, JUNE 9, 1849.

The Cholera.

This terrible disease appears to be a native of Asia, and is generally confined to the tropical regions of that continent, and those of Europe and Africa which belt its unhealthy borders. It seldom travels beyond its pestilential precincts and we may say it never does, unless some more than common cause pollutes the gale that wafts it across the steppes of the Don down to the plains of Sarmatia, across the British Channel and then away to us here over the wide Atlantic. History informs us that Europe has suffered at various times from awful plagues. The plague which in 1665 swept off 100,000 of the inhabitants of London, was a terrible disease. It was no doubt a species of cholera. The plagues which used to visit Europe at intervals during the dark ages, left both cities and villages a wilderness of death behind them. In modern times its ravages does not appear to be so severe.—This may be attributed in cities to well paved streets, better ventilation, and greater skill in our physicians to treat it.

War seems to be the grand pestilential mother of this disease. The course of the disease which is now among us may be traced from the Rio Grande to the Punjab in the East Indies, where the atmosphere was polluted by the corpses of 30,000 men who fell in battle before the ambitious army of England. The typhus fever was engendered in the hospitals of Russia, during the retreat of Napoleon from Moscow, and it stopped not till it had polluted the whole earth, and it is still among us as a terrible monument of man's most baneful passions.

The cholera seems to gloat upon the weakest and most miserable of the human family. There are exceptions, but this is the rule.—This is certainly strong evidence, that health is the handmaid of virtue, peace and plenty, while pestilence is the attendant of war and famine. The Apocalypse represents the terrible scene of war, by death on the pale horse, followed by gaunt famine and withering pestilence. These scourges should not afflict the human family to no purpose. When will men learn the full meaning of that divine expression, "Peace on earth, good will to men."

The cases of Cholera that have already occurred in this great city, have been of a kind not calculated to excite any general apprehension. New York is more healthy according to her resident population than any City in the World. When a pestilence of this nature visits a city, it should be met at once, by the healthy bracing themselves up to fulfil the offices of good Samaritans to their more unfortunate neighbors. During the great plague in London, it is recorded of a gentleman that he was the means of saving a great number of lives, by his attentions, and he was prevented from running away to the country when his carriage was at the door, by hearing his negro servant ask "if his massa's God lived in the country." Various remedies have been proposed and who can tell which is the best. It has been found that chloroform rubbed on the body relieves the cramp. We believe that the following is a good solution to be taken and people would not be the worse of having it in their houses. Gum camphor one drachm; gum Arabic and white sugar, each two drachms; water, from five to six ounces; spirits of lavender compound, half an ounce; laudanum, sixty drops. Of this, take a table spoonful occasionally.

No sooner was the Cholera announced to have broken out in our city, than the streets were deluged with flaming handbills of quack preventatives, but it was pleasing to know that but few were frightened. With our plentiful supply of water, our city will exhibit as clean a bill of health this year as it did the last. This we are glad to know is the prevailing opinion among our citizens.

Supplying Albany with Water.

It is well known to many that Albany, the capital of this State, is miserably supplied with water. The more elevated parts of the city have to depend on rain water for domestic use, and frequently in droughts, this supply fails. When this is the case, there is great suffering. A number of projects have been brought before the city for a better supply of water, and this question formed a leading motive of action between opposing parties at the late municipal election. One party was for bringing in the Mohawk River by tunnel from above the Cohoes Falls, and the other party was opposed to this measure, only on the ground of too great expense. The latter party was victorious, and no doubt, right in their success. Owing to the great fire in Albany last year and the great amount of taxes arising from that and other causes, the inhabitants can now but ill afford to enter into new and expensive, although it may be beneficial enterprises.

We see that the City Surveyor, George W. Carpenter, Esq. has lately presented a Report of a mode of supplying the city with water from the Hudson, by steam power, and estimates the total cost for reservoirs, engines, &c. at \$324,000. One reservoir is to contain 4,000,000 million gallons and the other 6,000,000 gallons, sufficient to supply 80,000 people with 25 gallons per day for nearly a week.—

This plan of supplying Albany with water was communicated to us last year by Mr. S. McElroy, of Albany, assistant surveyor, and a young and rising man. His estimate was something less than the above, but his views were sound and exhibited an acquaintance with the subject. Were the inhabitants of Albany capable of entering upon the enterprise of bringing in the Mohawk by gravitation at present, we would be glad, but as they are not, the plan of supplying it with water by steam power, is the next best, and no doubt a good one. Many cities have been thus supplied exclusively with water, and some of them largely engaged in manufacturing. The city of Glasgow, in Scotland, the greatest manufacturing city in the world, with the exception of Manchester England, has been supplied for thirty years with water forced a distance of 5 miles by five huge steam engines. These engines supply 300,000 inhabitants with filtered water, and also supply bleach works, dye works, foundries and factories innumerable besides. The water is carried to the tops of the highest houses, and families are supplied with ten times more water than the inhabitants of Albany are at present, and for one-sixth the price. Let the Albanians put up a good, powerful low pressure engine and they need not calculate, we think, the annual expense of two engineers as embraced in Mr. Carpenter's Report.

Dyeing Straw.

The French pursue a method of dyeing straw for hats, to open it up when in a damp state and roll it out between a pair of cylinders. For light, delicate colors, this process is always pursued in new straw. To dye blue, common chemic (sulphate of indigo) to which has been added a little potash, is employed.—It will do very well, however, without the potash. This composition is used for various shades. A copper vessel is brought to boil and such a quantity of chemic added to the water, as will dye the shade desired; the fire is then removed and the straw put in and kept immersed until it is deep enough in shade. It is then taken out, washed in cold water and dried. This plan will dye the lightest and darkest shades of blue according to the quantity of the sulphate of indigo used. Yellow color can be dyed on straw by boiling it in a weak solution of yellow oak bark and alum, but the muriate of tin is better than the alum. Green can be dyed on straw by employing a bath of turmeric and sulphate of indigo, but it is best to dye the straw yellow first with oak bark and then give it the sulphate of indigo, which should be neutralized of its acid by the sugar of lead. This makes a *very fast green*. Lilac may be dyed on straw, by first dyeing it a light blue and then a pink color on the top.

Pink is dyed by steeping the straw in a weak hot solution of cochineal and sulphuric acid, or instead of sulphuric, use the muriate

of tin and some cream of tartar. This makes a very beautiful color.

Red colors may be dyed on straw by using a very strong solution of the cochineal and muriatic—no sulphuric acid. Every shade of drab on straws may be done in this way by using a greater or less depth of blue or pink on the straw, but it is best to dye the pink shade first and then dye the light blue on the top.

Fine reddish browns on straw are dyed with catechu, the sulphate of iron and the chromate of potash. The straw must be immersed in three separate vessels containing these three stuffs, commencing with the catechu. Wash the straw well when dyed before it is dried. Black is dyed on straw by a strong solution of hot logwood, into which the straw is steeped for about 10 hours. After this it is immersed in a weak solution of the sulphate of iron and *sumac*, and then washed and dried.

The above modes of dyeing straw will be found useful to many; and from the hints given, any person may branch out freely into all the shades, from gray to violet and deep brown.

Fire Brick.

Mr. T. S. Mackay, one of our valued subscribers in Pennsylvania furnishes the following account of Fire Brick: "I have been thinking of sending you a few fine brick, as samples manufactured at Queen's Rua in Clinton Co. Pa., on the west Branch Canal of the Susquehanna. As samples of these bricks have lately been examined by the most competent judges, and pronounced in every respect equal, if not superior to the best English brick. They have been used for several years in some of the largest furnaces in this State, and are considered the very best. The Queens Rua Company I understand have orders for upwards of 250,000 for this season; they are also engaged in mining and shipping some of the finest and purest bituminous coal to be found in this State, a sample of which I also send you. I am in no way interested in this business, only as a Pennsylvanian, and an American, and should rejoice to see every article we can produce supply the place of foreign especially when of an equal or superior quality."

Very Important Patent Cases.

On Friday the 1st inst. in the United States Circuit Court, Philadelphia in Equity, before Judges Grier and Kane, the important patent case of Woodworth's and Barnum's Planing Machines, Wilson vs. Barnum, was decided, and the opinion of the Court given by Judge Kane, and an interlocutory injunction granted, according to the prayer of the bill until hearing by a further order of the Court.

We make no comments on the above, only we should like to have heard the curious opinion of the Court. An engraving and description of Barnum's machine will be found in No. 18, this vol. Scientific American. It may explain something about this decision when we say the able Hon. W. H. Seward was Mr. Wilson's counsel in the case.

BLANCHARD'S PATENT.

On the same day on which the above decision was made the case of Blanchard's Gun Stock Turning Patent vs. Joseph Brown, was decided on the motion for a new trial. The opinion was delivered by Judge Grier, and the motion refused, and single damages allowed in each case, in accordance with the verdict of the jury.

Charcoal for Wounds or to prevent Contagion in Hospitals.

Charcoal acts upon gases by condensing them in itself, often in proportion of more than thirty times its volume. Charcoal saturated with any kind of gas cannot condense another without giving up part of that with which it is saturated. Charcoal purifies putrid water by condensing the gases generated by the decomposition or putridity of matter in the water. The charcoal employed for this purpose absorbs the putrid gas by the atmospheric air quitting the charcoal with which it has been saturated. Charcoal absorbs the effluvia arising from wounds and also destroys the pestilential effects of such effluvia—let it arise from disease and decomposition in any shape. As it is a good absorbant, it must be a good preservative against contagion. The

charcoal of hardwood has the faculty of absorbing a greater quantity of gas than the kind made from light soft wood. It is best to use the charcoal for such purposes in a fine powdered state.

Death of an Ingenious Mechanic.

Mr. Frederick Frølich, an ingenious Swiss mechanic, employed at the Navy Yard, near Washington, was found drowned last week. It subsequently appeared that he had been shamefully beaten by some persons at the house where he boarded. It is supposed that he was laboring under the effect of an aberration of mind from the injuries he had received, at the time he wandered off and drowned himself. Some persons in the house where he boarded have been arrested. Mr. Frølich was the author of some very ingenious inventions, and had taken out some patents while residing in France before he came to the United States. One of his inventions was a new mode of ventilating steamships in combination with a new condensing apparatus. Another was a new cut-off, called the *Maltese cross cut-off for valves*.

American Hand Cut Files.

Mr. John B. Cochran has lately engaged in the manufacture of all kinds of Files, at his shop on the corner of Raymond and Willoughby streets, Brooklyn, N. Y. We have examined the files made at Mr. Cochran's establishment and consider them unsurpassed—they are all warranted equal to the very best imported English files, and superior indeed to any that can be made by convict labor. He has got some of the very best file makers in his employ and takes great care to produce none but articles of a superior quality. We like this. Our mechanics are taking great pains now to have good tools—this is as it should be.

Quackery.

Dr. Skinner of Vermont, proposes as a remedy for the enormous evil of quack medicines, to supply the public with medicines in a popular form. Well, we don't like to see medicines prescribed in a popular form. If quack medicine does so much evil in a popular form, what will become of the public when a trade is made by the profession in the popularity of their medicines.

The only way to put down quackery in medicines, is the way we do with erroneous receipts, expose the nature of them and give correct ones in their place.

Remington's Bridge.

A correspondent enquires of us where the assignees of James R. Remington reside, and what are the conditions of the sale of rights for his improvement in Bridge Building, secured by patent about six years ago. Can any one give us the information?

Snakes in New Orleans.

The overflow has brought large numbers of snakes and other reptiles from the swamp up into the streets. Conger Snakes, the most venomous known in this country, had been seen in the water in several places and a little girl, while wading in the water in faubourg Tremé, was bitten by something which she did not see, and died in a few hours afterward.

There are now in the course of construction in Newark N. J. two Magnetic Machines for separating iron ore from earthy mixtures. One was finished last autumn and taken to the iron mines in the western part of the State where it performed admirable.

The Egyptian Government has closed its paper mill in the citadel of Cairo, and has intimated to the managers of its other manufactories that it intends to discontinue those establishments.

Our London Patrons.

We are happy in being able to inform our English patrons that such arrangements have been completed with the London Patent Office that the Scientific American may hereafter be found there. Messrs. Barlow & Payne are agents at 89 Chancery Lane, and will receive remittances on account of the Scientific American from those who may desire to subscribe.

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