

National Convention of Inventors.—Patent Property.

A Convention of Inventors is called to assemble at Baltimore on the 21st of this month. This meeting is called by a resolution passed at the Convention held in the same city in the month of last March. It will really be refreshing to the hearts of inventors, if the Convention, does *wisely, honestly* and well, something for their benefit. The first thing it should do, to ensure confidence in its purpose, is to guard against that kind of action which characterized the March Convention. There were some good men in it—men with the heart honest purpose of doing the inventor some service; but there were sharpers there also—men with a keen eye to number one, speculators in patents, and legal gentlemen who like Job's warhorse, "scented the battle afar off." It was a convention, that left a doubtful impression on the minds of many inventors, who knew the materials of which it was composed, respecting its *real objects*. Three lawyers were appointed to draft a code of New Patent Laws. They are men well qualified to construct technically a code of laws, but it is very doubtful, if they understand what inventors want. They will likely report at the coming Convention.

A short time ago, the N. Y. Tribune, alluding to this convention, made use of the following language:—"One proposition that will or should be discussed at this Convention contemplates the protection of the property of Inventors from the deprivations to which it is now exposed by the caprices of Jury Trial.—The ablest and most adroit lawyer is quite as essential in a patent-suit as the best case; and some verdicts have been given in glaring defiance alike of Law and Justice. The Inventors should endeavour to devise a remedy for this."

The above is a very unjust attack upon the intelligence and honesty of American Juries. Some wrong verdicts, no doubt, have been given by *Juries*, but more wrong decisions have been made by Judges. If a law was passed to-morrow, that would hedge around patent property, for fear of the results, from a fair investigation and Jury trial, as to inherent right in the property, we could, without assuming the air of a prophet, predict the abrogation of the whole patent system, in a few years. No unlawful monopoly must be tolerated in the Republic, and a Jury trial in a patent case, is merely "to decide whether the patentee is the real inventor, or not, or whether the defendant infringes the plaintiff's patent, or not, and according to circumstances, award damages. An intelligent Jury can decide best upon these things. Our inventors (patentees) want a law passed, that will save them from the expenses of *Law*. According to the present law, patent property is no less safe than other property, but the great evil lies in the expense of protecting it, from those who are dishonest enough to appropriate it to their own use. For example, the right of a patentee, according to the Law of 1836, can be contested in any District Court in the United States, as to priority of invention; and year after year, from Court to Court, he may have to defend his rights. In that case he would need to have a purse as deep and well filled as the Pacific Ocean. Now there should be some remedy for this. What shall it be? The law we think should be altered to allow one trial of Jury for priority, before a Circuit Court—then allow an appeal to the Supreme Court, to establish, or nullify the patent, and after this, allow no trial in any Court to contest priority. In cases, however, where the person complained of, as infringing on the *patent*, if there is not exact identity in the machines, and identity denied, we see no remedy but a fair Jury trial. This is no more than just. Every man must be protected in his rights.

There is a wrong opinion abroad respecting patent property. It is imagined by some that a man with a patent carries a crow on his back for every one to take a free shot at; or that it is a key to the District Court, plunging the poor patentee into a whirlpool of litigation from which like Nicholas the swimmer after the golden cup, in another element, he sinks to rise no more. Our Judges, *generally*, are willing to put the most favorable construction

on a Patentee's Specification. It is true that there has been a great deal of patent litigation, and there will be. This is not to be wondered at, when we take into consideration, the great number of patents that are always in existence, but we venture to say, that there is less law suits respecting patent property, than any other kind. There are but few men so bold, as to defend in Court a brazen-faced piracy, or insidious infringement. There are some no doubt, who have done it, and there are others who will do it again, but their numbers are small.

New England Amusements.

"When I asked how it happened that in so populous and rich a city as Boston there was at present (October, 1845,) no regular theatre, I was told, among other reasons, that if I went into the houses of persons of the middle and even the humblest class, I should often find the father of a family, instead of seeking excitement in a shilling gallery, reading to his wife and four or five children, one of the best modern novels, which he has purchased for twenty-five cents; whereas, if they could all have left home, he could not for many times that sum have taken them to the play. They often buy, in two or more successive numbers of a penny newspaper, entire reprints of the tales of Dickens, Bulwer, or other popular writers.

"Dana, now a lawyer in Boston, and whose acquaintance I had the pleasure of making there, has, in his singularly interesting and original work, entitled "Two years before the Mast," not only disclosed to us a lively picture of life in the fore-castle, but has shown incidentally how much a crew, composed of the most unpromising materials, rough and illiterate and recruited at random from the merchant service of different nations, could be improved by associating with a single well educated messmate. He was able, on one of the few holidays which were granted to them in California by the most tyrannical of captains, to keep them from going ashore, where they would have indulged in dissipation, by reading to them for hours Scott's historical tale of "Woodstock." We ought scarcely, then, to wonder, after what I have said of the common schools of this city, that crowded audiences should be drawn night after night, through the whole winter, in spite of frost and snow, from the class of laborers and mechanics, mingled with those of higher station, to listen with deep, intense interest to lectures on natural theology, zoology, geology, the writings of Shakespeare, the beauties of "Paradise Lost," the peculiar excellencies of "Comus," and "Lycidas," treated in an elevated style by men who would be heard with pleasure by the most refined audiences in London.

[The above is from Lyell's recent work on the United States, and it presents a striking contrast, between the tastes, habits, and feelings of Americans, and those of other nations especially those who have been soddened with despotism for ages.

The Desert of Sahara.

North of the mountains of the Moon in Abyssinia lies the great Desert of Sahara stretching 800 miles in width from its southern margin, and 1000 in length between the Atlantic and the Red Sea. It is a hideous, barren waste, prolonged eastward into the Atlantic for miles, in the form of sand-banks, and interrupted to the west only by a few oases and the valley of the Nile.

This desert, is alternately scorched by heat and pinched by cold. The wind blows from the east nine months in the year, and at the equinoxes it rushes in a hurricane, driving the sand in clouds before it, producing the darkness of night at midday, and overwhelming caravans of men and animals in common destruction. Then the sand is heaped up in waves ever varying with the blast; even the atmosphere is of sand. The desolation of this dreary waste, boundless to the eye as the ocean, is terrific and sublime—the dry heated air is like a red vapor, the setting sun seems to be a volcanic fire, and at times the burning wind of the desert is the blast of death. There are many salt lakes to the north, and even the springs are of brine; thick incrustations of dazzling salt cover the ground, and the particles carried aloft by whirlwinds, flash in the

sun like diamonds. Sand is not the only character of the desert, tracks of gravel and low bare rocks occur at times not less barren and dreary. On these interminable sands and rocks no animal, no insect, breaks the dread silence, not a tree nor a shrub is to be seen in this land without a shadow. In the glare of noon the air quivers with the heat reflected from the red sand, and in the night it is chilled in a clear sky sparkling under a host of stars.—Strangely but beautifully contrasted with these scorched solitudes is the narrow valley of the Nile, threading the desert for 1000 miles in emerald green, with its blue waters foaming in rapids among wild rocks, or quietly spreading in a calm stream amidst fields of corn and the august monuments of past ages.

Temperature of Water in High Pressure Steam Boilers.

The following table shows the heat of the water in high pressure boilers, when worked at from one to fifty atmospheres.

Pressure in Atmospheres.	Temperature in deg. of Fah.
1	212°
1½	233.96
2	250.52
2½	263.84
3	275.18
3½	285.08
4	293.72
4½	300.28
5	307.50
5½	314.24
6	320.36
6½	326.26
7	331.70
7½	336.86
8	341.78
9	350.78
10	358.88
11	366.85
12	374.00
13	380.66
14	386.94
15	392.86
16	398.48
17	403.82
18	408.92
19	413.78
20	418.46
21	422.96
22	427.28
23	431.42
24	435.56
25	439.34
30	457.16
35	472.73
40	486.59
46	491.14
50	510.60

If we are enabled to ascertain the heat of the water in the boiler, we have, by the above table, a ready means of ascertaining the pressure of the steam within the boiler. Let us suppose that the heat of the water is found to be 486½. On looking over the table we find opposite to this, the pressure equal to 40 atmospheres; this number multiplied by fifteen (the weight in pounds of the atmosphere, on a square inch of surface) will give the pressure against every square inch of the internal surface of the boiler thus—at 486½ the pressure in pounds on the square inch is 40x15 = 600 pounds.

Boiling Springs of Iceland.

The Boiling Springs or aqueous eruption of Iceland, called Geysers, are among the most interesting phenomena in physical geography, and have been ranked even among "the greatest wonders of the world."

These volcanic fountains are situated about 16 miles north of Skalholt, to the east of a small ridge, separated by a swamp from a group of high mountains. The principal fountains are the Great and Little Geysers and the Tunguhver. The Great Geyser rises from a cylindrical pipe or pit, 8 or 10 feet in diameter, and 75 feet in perpendicular depth, opening in the centre of a basin from 46 to 56 feet in diameter, and four feet deep. Hot water, having silicx in solution, rises gradually through the pit till it runs over, depositing silicious matter at the bottom and round the cavity. When the basin is full, subterranean explosions, like the firing of distant cannon, are heard at intervals of some hours, accompanied with a tremulous motion of the ground.

The water then rushes, up from the pit, and sinking again, agitates the water in the basin and causes it to overflow. A stronger rush of water now takes place, clouds of vapor follow, and loud explosions are heard. Steam escapes in large quantities, and the water is thrown up to the height of 100 to 150 feet.—The cold air condenses the steam into vapor, which is tossed about in dense clouds, tumbling one over another with singular rapidity, and forming a sight of great interest and magnificence. When the basin, and its pipe are are thus emptied the explosions cease and are renewed after they have been again filled from below. Mr Henderson found the temperature of the water in the basin 203° before an explosion, and 183° after it. The New Geyser, or Strocker, 140 yards from the Geyser, is an irregularly shaped pit, nine feet in diameter and 44 deep. The water is seen in a state of great agitation about 20 feet below the orifice. At variable intervals a prodigious rush of steam issues with roaring noise; and so great is the force of propulsion, that the mass of vapor rises perpendicularly to the height of 100 and sometimes 200 feet, even when there is a good deal of wind. When large stones are thrown into the pit, they are shivered to pieces, and thrown upwards to a height often greatly exceeding that of the columns of vapor of water. In the valley of Reikholt is situated, among a great number of boiling springs the celebrated spring of Tunguhver; it consists of two cavities, distant only three feet, from which the water is ejected in alternate jets. While the water is thrown up from the cavity, in a narrow jet, 10 feet high, the water in the other cavity is in a state of violent ebullition. The narrow jet, after playing for about four minutes subsides, and the water in the other cavity instantly rises in a great column, to the height of three or four feet. After playing three minutes this greater jet subsides, and the other rises to repeat its singular alternations.

The general phenomena of the Geysers are obviously caused by the generation of steam in cavities containing water and of such a strength that when the steam occupies a certain space it overcomes the pressure of the water which is thrown out and followed by the steam. It is not easy however and has not been satisfactorily done, to explain the irregular alternations of the Tunguhver springs. Although the principal Geysers have been playing for 600 years, yet they are subjected to great changes arising from changes in the internal fires by which they are produced.—One of the springs which George Mackenzie mentions as very active when he visited the island in 1809, was found by Mr. Barrow to be extinct in 1834, and the surface of the neighborhood so changed, that the appearances described by the older travellers could not be recognized. In the same valley there is a small rock, from the top of which hot springs issue; and at Reikholt, the celebrated hot bath, excavated 600 years ago, Snorro Sturleson, is still to be seen. It is fourteen feet in diameter, and six feet deep, and is supplied with hot water from a spring 100 yards distant, by means of a covered channel, which has been injured by an earthquake, and by cold water from another neighboring fountain.

Ship and Whale Collision.

The packet ship *Hibernia* on her late voyage from this port to Liverpool while going through at a furious rate, struck full in the head an immense sperm whale, which flinging himself half out of the sea before he sought his depth, struck his assailant with his enormous flukes.

The whale was supposed to be instantly killed for the water around the ship's stern was completely discoloured with blood and oil.—No hurt was done to the ship.

It is supposed the whale she struck was either ill or sleeping on the surface. The oldest seaman in the *Hibernia* had never witnessed nor heard of a similar occurrence. For hours after this accident a solitary whale was seen roving around our vessel, and spouting, doubtless in search of his murdered mate.

Many of the Virginia ladies have gone into mourning on account of the death of Mrs. Madison.