





**Improved Skate.**

The peculiarities and advantages of this skate will be readily perceived from the illustration. Dispensing with the objectionable and troublesome use of screws and straps in adjusting the skate, the fastening combines ease and comfort with strength and simplicity.

Fig. 1 is a view of the skate fastened upon the foot, Fig. 2 of the skate alone, and Fig. 3 of the bottom of the boot as prepared to receive the skate. Two plates are secured to the sole of the boot, one upon the ball and another on the heel. The plate, *a*, upon the ball has two slots formed in it of a pear shape, as shown, the slots being broadest toward the toe. Screw heads, projecting from the upper surface of the plate, *b*, Fig. 2, of the skate, enter these slots at their broad forward ends, but cannot pass through the narrower portions in the rear. To the bottom of the heel of the boot is secured a narrow plate, *c*, Fig. 3, which is bent at right angles and extends up as high as the heel. This plate is perforated to receive the spike, *d*, which projects upward from the heel plate of the skate, the heel also being bored for this purpose. Rising upward from the back edge of the heel plate of the skate is a spring catch, *e*, fitted with a bevel projection which catches into a slot cut in the heel plate of the boot to receive it.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 1.

Fig. 3.



**DE BRAME'S PATENT SKATE.**

The skate is fastened to the boot by passing the screw heads through the broad forward part of the slots in the sole plate, and then drawing the skate back to bring the screws to the narrow part of the slots, which effectually secures the forward part of the skate to the boot. The heel is then pressed up, introducing the spike, *d*, into the hole in the heel of the boot, and as the catch, *e*, enters its slot it secures the heel. The skate is taken off by pressing the catch, *e*, from its hold, dropping the heel so as to withdraw the spike, *d*, and slipping the skate a little forward to allow the screw heads to fall from out the slots. A round plate, *f*, upon the toe piece of the skate supports the toe of the boot, forming one of the most novel features of this invention.

It will be seen that this skate may be either put on or taken off in an instant. Its skeleton form gives it a highly elegant appearance when on the foot, and its lightness is, for ladies especially, an important recommendation. As the screw heads do not enter deeply into the sole, this skate may be worn with the thinnest soled boots.

The patent for this invention was granted through the Scientific American Patent Agency, April 9, 1861, and further information in relation to it may be obtained by addressing the patentees, J. A. de Brame and B. Gurney, at 707 Broadway, New York.

**ELECTRO-MAGNETIC MACHINE ON A LARGE SCALE.**—In our next number we shall publish a beautiful engraving, explanatory of Beardsley's electro-magnetic machine, which is now in extensive use at College Point, Long Island, for electro-plating on an extensive scale, by means of steam power instead of by the galvanic battery. It is also used at College Point for making the magnetic tack hammers which we recently noticed, which pick up tacks as well as hammer them down. It will be accompanied with an interesting article, clearly explaining the principles of magneto-electricity.

**THE WAY BANK NOTE PLATES ARE HARDENED.**—To harden an engraved steel plate, and to prevent it from warping or in the process a peculiar method must be adopted. The mode practiced by our bank note companies is to bury the plates in animal charcoal in a clay crucible and expose them to red heat for about two and a half hours, and then cool them by pressing them into cold lead. By this process all of the most delicate lines of the engraving are preserved in the most perfect manner, without the slightest distortion or damage.

**The New Blue from Cotton Seed Oil.**

On page 298 of the current volume we published an extract from the *Photographic News*, giving an account of a new blue dye obtained in France from cotton seed oil. The writer expressed the opinion that indigo and prussian blue had found a formidable rival in this new blue.

We find in *L'Invention* an article by M. Kuhlmann, giving a report of an elaborate series of investigations on the new substance, the result of which is very discouraging to the prospect of its industrial application. M. Kuhlmann says:—"The matter being soluble in alcohol, this solution served me as a bath for the dyeing. Several immersions in a warm alcoholic solution, allowing the stuffs to dry between each immersion, communicated an intense blue color, which soon, however, became green, and then changed to a yellowish brown. This result is evidently due to an oxydation in contact with the air, the oxydation be-

ing facilitated by light, especially by direct rays of the sun. The colors proved much more permanent in the dark, and more still in an atmosphere of carbonic acid. As the new substance plays the part of an acid rather than of an alkali, I sought to fix it on stuffs in a state of combination with various oxides. Some cotton, woolen and silk stuffs, prepared with a mordant of alumina, were dyed in the warm alcoholic solution, but the color preserved its great alterability. The application of alum, after the direct coloring of the stuffs, or mordant of the sesquioxide of iron, gave the same results. No better success attended the use of stannate of soda, followed by a bath of dilute sulphuric acid; nor a bath of perchloride of tin, followed by a dilute solution of hypochlorite of lime. The oxides of lead and of mercury gave no more permanent color."

We give these facts as a guide to our chemists who choose to experiment in the inviting field of making this cheap substitute for indigo practically useful, by fixing the color. The mode of preparing the blue is described on page 298.

**Sulphur in California.**

The refining of sulphur has been commenced as a business in Santa Barbara county, Cal. Twenty miles south-eastward of the town of Santa Barbara, and seven miles back from the Mission of San Buenaventura, which is upon the sea shore, is a great bed of native sulphur, deposited in remote ages by the vapors and waters of sulphur springs. The country in the vicinity bears strong marks of volcanic action. The sulphur deposits back of San Buenaventura have long been known, but only lately has it been rendered valuable. Messrs. Davidson, Spence & Co. commenced about the first of this year, to open the mine.

The *Daily Alta*, says that there were then some half dozen men at work in the mine, and this sulphur is so abundant and accessible, that the time is perhaps not far distant when it will be shipped to Europe. The crude deposit is stated to comprise 80 per cent of sulphur.

Two or three instances of the perforation of lead by insects have recently been brought under the notice of French naturalists. In one case which happened in the Crimea during the Russian war, the balls in several pockets of cartridges had been rendered entirely useless.

**Comparative Extent of United States Canals.**  
The following table shows the comparative extent of the canals and locks of the United States:—

Canals	Canals		Locks	
	Width.	Depth.	Length.	Width.
	Feet.	Feet.	Feet.	Feet.
Erie Canal.....	70	7	80	15
Pennsylvania.....	40	4	80	15
Delaware & Hudson.....	44	6	100	15
Schoharie.....	36	3	80	17
Lehigh.....	60	5	100	20
Morris.....	32	4	—	—
Chesapeake & Delaware.....	66	10	100	22
Chesapeake & Ohio.....	40	4	80	15
James River & Kanawha.....	50	4	100	15
Wabash & Erie.....	60	4	—	—
Illinois & Michigan.....	60	6	—	—
Delaware & Raritan.....	80	8	210	24

The Delaware and Raritan canal has been navigated by steamboats since 1844. The steamers which run on this and the Chesapeake and Delaware canal are propellers ranging from two to three hundred tons burden, and they are from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet in length.

\*Width at surface.



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