

Miscellaneous.

Correspondence of the Scientific American.

WASHINGTON CITY, April 10, 1850.

Mr. Ewbank is still receiving a brisk "fire in the rear" from masked batteries, but he is still in the land of the living. A man without enemies cannot possess much force of character. His nomination will not be acted upon by the Senate for some time, as everything seems destined to "go by the board" until after the adjustment of the slavery question.

Elihu Burritt, the learned blacksmith, is here lecturing on the wonderful effects the magnetic telegraph and steam will have in consolidating all the families of the earth into one universal brotherhood.

The California fever is here as well as elsewhere: a party which includes several members of our Common Council will leave in a few weeks. An engineer named Nourse is going out for the Aspinwalls with a newly invented machine for breaking the quartz rocks, in which the gold is principally found.

The patent metallic bronzed coffin, in which the remains of Mr. Calhoun are deposited, is so much admired that Fisk & Raymond, the patentees, have appointed an agent in this city. It will be recollected that Mrs. Madison was enclosed in one of them.

Mr. Porter has been busily engaged during the past week in endeavoring to get the stock taken up for his California spindle-shaped balloon, but the people seem rather shy of making such an investment. The idea of rushing through the air with the speed of a thunderbolt, is rather startling to many of them. He is about to lecture on the subject with a view of removing such scruples. In the proposed aerial steamer there is to be a saloon 150 feet long and 10 feet wide, made of painted cloth, with a floor of thin boards. About 80 feet of the central part of the saloon is to be furnished with delicate seats for passengers, and to have windows in the sides. In the centre of the saloon is to be the engine room, furnished with two light made steam engines of 10 horse power each. The saloon is to be suspended about 50 feet below the float, being connected thereto by 200 steel rods, of the best material, flattened to prevent resistance, and capable of sustaining 1000 pounds each. Between the float and saloon are mounted two propelling wheels, 40 feet in diameter, and made of light materials. The form of these propellers is to be that of an eight-armed windmill wheel; the sails or fans, when in motion, acting obliquely on the air, which, by re-action, exert a propulsive force on the wheels, thus propelling the whole machine, are to be operated by the steam engines by means of belts or endless chains. To the rear of the float is to be connected a rudder 16 feet long, having four leaves four feet wide, two to be vertical and two horizontal. One edge of each leaf is to be connected with a central stem, so that the direction of the float may be governed both vertically and horizontally. The weight of the saloon, rudder, wheels and supporting rods, is estimated at 3000 lbs., and that of the engines 4000 lbs., thus leaving a balance of buoyancy of 38,414 lbs.—sufficient to carry 200 passengers with their baggage. All this seems very wonderful, but Porter says "strike, but hear."

Members of Congress are anxiously awaiting the arrival of Collin's mammoth steamer, which the proprietor has promised to send round to our port for their gratification. Many of the Western Members have no idea of what an ocean steamer is.

You will perceive that Bulkeley has asked Congress to appoint some naval officer to test his invention for extinguishing fires in vessels.

Mr. W. A. Kentish, of your city, the inventor of the Double Safety Anchor, has sent models of it to the Navy Department, hoping that Government will purchase the right to use it.

Singular Phenomenon—A Shower of Sulphur.

The passengers and officers on the Peytona, from New Orleans for Louisville, observed a

very singular phenomenon as the boat was passing Napoleon, Ark., on Sunday morning the 17th ult. during a shower of rain. The atmosphere was of a muddy yellow color, and the rain had the appearance of liquid sulphur.—The rain as it fell on the deck of the boat left a thick scum like sulphur floating on its surface, a large portion of which was gathered by the passengers for the purpose of having it analysed. The train was accompanied with much lightning, and at one time the entire horizon was filled with vivid flashes of electricity darting in all directions. In less than fifteen minutes the rain ceased and the skies became bright and unobscured.—[N. O. Picayune.]

[The above must have only had the appearance of sulphur. It was probably the yellow dust of some vegetable flower carried up by the whirling wind that generally precedes a thunder storm.]

News from California.

The Cherokee arrived at this port on last Friday, the 4th inst., with \$1,658,818 in gold dust, and 81 passengers. The City of Sacramento was relieved from the floods, which at the last accounts had overflowed nearly the whole of it. Three steamers were regularly running on the Sacramento, and new towns were springing up rapidly along its banks. The weather was delightful and the gold hunters were exploring the country in all directions. The "Alta Californian" states that each individual at the mines, during winter, has netted per diem from three ounces to five hundred dollars. They are about to build a railroad from Sacramento City to Coloma.

The floods from the mountains have brought down a great deal of gold to the old placers. The Mormon Territory of Deseret wishes to become part of the State of California. San Francisco is rapidly increasing both in wealth and inhabitants. A piece of lump gold weighing 28 pounds was found at the mines at Stockton. There are now 120,000 inhabitants in California, and the prospect is that there will be as many more by this time next year.

Calico Soirees.

Holden's Magazine gives an account of this interesting fashion, which we commend to the attention of all our people. A model movement in society has been made in the manufacturing town of Fall River, Massachusetts. Some of the wealthy employers and factory owners hold weekly soirees in the town hall, for the benefit of the working classes. These meetings are called calico soirees, because some of the ladies appeared in dresses of that cheap cloth. All classes attended; the rich mill owner, and his poor operatives; the ship-owner and his sailors; the mistress and her servants; the shop-keeper and his clerks; the creditor and debtor; the lawyer and client, the preacher and his congregation, the teacher and his scholars. A friend of ours who was present at one, described the scene as very cheering and pleasant, and the effect on all who attended was alike profitable. It took some of the pride out of the upish, and raised the ambition and self-respect of the lowly. He said that the coachman who drove them to the hall, after he had taken care of his horses changed his dress, and came in and mingled with the company without any appearance of restraint or awkwardness. They had music, conversation, and cheap refreshments, and after a lively evening they all retired to resume their accustomed duties and stations the next day.

Paying the British National Debt.

Fourrier was of the opinion, says the Independent, that on the adoption of the Socialist system, the national debt of Great Britain would be easily paid off, merely by the eggs that would be furnished from the phalansteries. The people were to be arranged in 600,000 phalansteries, and each phalanstery could easily keep 10,000 hens, which would yearly lay 200 eggs a-piece, making 2,000,000 at each station. Multiplying this by 600,000, and calling the eggs worth half a franc per dozen, he found that less than six months would entirely pay off the debt. The only material point omitted was the inquiry where you would find a market for the eggs—ten thousand million dozens!

LIST OF PATENTS

[Continued from page 233.]

I also claim, the wires fastened at one end to the bars or rods, and having the other end bent at such an angle as to enter a slot in or upon the breast beam, when the same is used in connection with the temple, as herein described.

To A. Fersen, of Boston, Mass., for improved pocket filtering and drinking tube.

I claim the fitting a filter to a tube of greater or less length, substantially in the manner herein before set forth, so that water may be strained by the very act of drinking.

To L. W. Gosnell, of Baltimore, Md., for improvement in Parlor air-heating Stoves.

I claim the combination of the cold air chamber, and valve, with the hot air annular chamber, and the reservoir or chamber, below the horizontal plate, in the chimney flue and behind the recessed fire board, as described, said chamber being provided with an opening, to let the cold air into the annular hot air chamber, and small openings, to let a portion of the cold air into the reservoir, and the valve.

I likewise claim the combination of the hinged water holders, with the recessed fire board, said holders serving the double purpose of evaporator, stands and valves, as described for moistening the air and admitting warm air from the reservoir or space, behind the fire-board or directly into the parlor.

I also claim the arrangement of the valves, in the segmental top of the fire-board, as described, for letting the warm air from the recess of the fire-board into the reservoir, to be conveyed thence wherever described.

[It will be very difficult to understand this claim. We have left out 180 words not claimed, but paid for.—Ed.]

To G. H. Gray, Sen., of Clinton, Miss., for improved Sash Stopper.

I claim the arrangement substantially as herein described and represented, in one compact and connected mechanism of a pair of oppositely acting eccentric tumblers held in contact with the jamb, by a single spring or its equivalent; and both operated by the same key or other usual substitute, and so disposed and constructed as to oppose any attempt (except by one who has control of the catch) to either raise or lower the sash from the position in which it may be placed.

To L. Haverstick, of Manortop, Pa., for construction of Drill Teeth in Seed Planters.

I claim the spring coupling constructed and arranged substantially as set forth.

To D. Hicks, of Duncausville, Pa., for improved attachment of the forge-hammer to its helve.

I claim limiting the depth of that portion of the hole in the helve which receives the shank of the hammer and at the same time making the crown solid, excepting a hole of sufficient size through the same to admit of a punch, substantially in the manner and for the purposes herein described.

To J. W. Hoffman, of Philadelphia, Pa., for improved oscillating self-adjusting railroad frog.

I do not claim the application of my frog to any part or place on railroads except simply where the rails cross each other as is always the case at a turnout, neither do I claim as my invention the action of the car wheel on the arms of my frog.

What I claim is a railroad frog constructed applied and operating essentially in the manner and only for the purpose herein set forth.

To L. Jennings, of New York, N. Y., for improved revolving plates and tumbler lock.

I claim the arrangement of a series of permutation plates in a line and on the same axis of motion, each having a central hole for the reception of the entire key and a projecting tongue for the key to act upon, and a recess or recesses on the periphery for the reception of the tumbler, but this, I only claim in combination with a tumbler attached to and rotating with the cylinder, substantially as herein described.

I also claim making the recesses of the key plates (or the equivalent thereof) of different length but all starting from the same line, substantially as herein described, to facilitate the insertion and removal of the key as described.

I also claim the cylinder which contains the

permutation plates and which carries the tumbler as above described, in combination with the permanent flanch enclosing the same and having a recess to receive and hold the tumbler when thrown out, substantially as described.

And finally I claim, the attachment of the eccentric for throwing the bolt with the rotating cylinder carrying the tumbler and containing the permutation plates as described.

Works on Science and Art. Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

This is a volume of considerable size, containing the transactions of the second meeting of the above Association, held in Cambridge last August, as reported for the Boston Evening Traveller. It is refreshing to take up a work of a scientific nature, which is original in itself, such as this volume. We cannot say this much for the majority of the scientific works published in our country; they are mostly compilations, many of which have brought fame to their authors with very little cost of talent, except a huge development of the bump of acquisitiveness. This volume contains the papers read upon the various subjects presented to the Association, many of which interested us deeply when first published in the Traveller, and it gave us unbounded pleasure when we heard of their publication in a neat volume—a volume which we recommend to the attention of every man who has the least taste for the solid and true, and who would desire to peruse the emanations of the greatest minds in our country. It is published at Boston and Cambridge, by Jas. Munroe & Co., and is for sale by S. Putnam, No. 155 Broadway, New York.

MARINE AND NAVAL ARCHITECTURE. By John W. Griffiths.—Number 3 of this splendid work, embracing the Theory and Practice blended in Shipbuilding, by Mr. Griffiths, Marine and Naval Architect, is just issued. It contains a number of excellent plates, and is fully equal to any of the preceding numbers.—This will be a great book when it is completed.

DICTIONARY OF MECHANICS, ENGINE WORK AND ENGINEERING.—Part 7 of this work, published by Messrs. Appleton & Co., edited by Oliver Byrne, contains good engravings of Coining machinery, Dodge's Cop Spinner, Corn Mills; Whitman & Wise's Corn Sheller, and Nevin's Cracker and Biscuit Machine, both published in the Sci. Am., and a number of other machines. This is a very good number.

SYLLABUS OF A COMPLETE COURSE OF LECTURES ON CHEMISTRY: By Prof. Solly.—We are indebted to Mr. John Taylor, No. 123 Nassau street, N. Y., for this most useful volume on Chemistry, being a sketch of the science and its application to the Arts of Mining and Agriculture. It is a text book embracing a classified view of the whole science, and is compendious and minutely accurate. No teacher nor pupil of chemistry should be without it.

Congress.

Our Congress has made slow work of it this Session. Not a Bill has yet been passed.—There is a miserable management somewhere. It is to be hoped that something will soon be done, both for the sake of decency and the benefit of Uncle Sam's children in general.

Remember, in thy feasts, that thou art entertaining two guests, the body and the soul. Know, further, that thou squanderest at the moment what thou bestowest on the body, but retainest forever what thou givest to the soul.

The Governor of South Carolina has appointed a committee of twenty five gentlemen to go to Washington, and bring home the remains of Mr. Calhoun.

Astronomers are in a considerable state of excitement at present, in the expectation of the comet of 1556.

The Homestead Exemption Bill has passed the New York House of Assembly. In all likelihood it will also pass the Senate. The amount exempted is \$1000.

What has become of the "Rochester Knockings," lately.