

## Miscellaneous.

Correspondence of the Scientific American.

WASHINGTON CITY, April 23, 1850.

The fate of the Patent Office Appropriation still remains undecided, but it will in all probability be settled during the present week.—The history of the matter does not at all justify the present narrow policy. It was in 1836 that Congress authorized the erection of the building, leaving it to the President to carry out; a plan was drawn by Mr. Elliot, for which he was paid \$300. This was the only authorized plan, although there have been numerous projects by various Commissioners. The Secretary of the Interior, under the act of Congress, was directed to continue the structure, \$150,000 being appropriated for that purpose. He, of course, notwithstanding the insufficiency of the sum, saw no alternative but to proceed with the original plan. To complete the original and only authorized plan will cost \$600,000. Though Congress in the first place appropriated \$108,000 for a Patent Office and furniture. Gen. Jackson, who had an eye to the future, adopted a plan, which to complete will cost over a million, including the sums already expended. Congress sanctioned the President's act by making a second appropriation, eight months afterwards, and finally increased the sum to nearly half a million, and Mr. Ewing has contented himself with carrying out Gen. Jackson's original design, authorized and repeatedly sanctioned by Congress. The project of Washington & Co. to establish depots for the sale of patent rights referred to in your last number, is highly approved. It is thought, however, that a plan of this kind ought to be adopted by the Government itself, inasmuch as in a pecuniary point of view—to which standard every thing appears to be now reduced,—a small fee from every depositor of a model would amply repay the expenditure. It is suggested that a portion of every Custom House in all the large cities could be easily devoted to that purpose.

Since the deposit of the remains of Mr. Calhoun in one of Fisk's patent metallic coffins, I perceive in several newspapers enquiries as to their construction. The following, in the absence of a drawing, will give some idea of the Burial Case. It is similar in its outlines to the human body when placed in a horizontal position. It consists of an upper and lower metallic shell, which are joined together in a horizontal line in the centre, each part being of about equal depth. These shells are more or less curvilinear, and form each a narrow flange, which, when placed together, are bound by screws inserted through the flanges, and connected at the point of juncture with a substance which soon becomes as hard as the metal itself. The upper shell is raised work, and ornamented in the casting with the appearance of rich folding drapery thrown over the body. It has a heavy oval glass plate over the face, on which is screwed a polished metallic cover; on the breast of the upper shell is a smooth surface for an inscription. The cases are painted on bronzed to suit the taste of purchasers.

The body of the late Mrs. Madison is deposited in the first ever sold.

Mr. H. J. Rogers, of Bain's Telegraph Co., has completed an invention by which the transmission of news will be greatly facilitated. It will go into operation in a day or two, when a description will be furnished.

The article in your last number relative to the percussion cap machine now exhibiting at the Capitol, will give rise to an investigation in which it is to be hoped justice will be done. The soldier claims the invention as entirely his own, and says he can prove it. His machine, worked by power, cuts from the sheet of copper the star, forms, finishes and charges the cap without handling, at the rate of 5,000 per hour. In France the copper is cut in strips by machine shears, and each strip is rolled and cleaned in acid and water, and three different machines, worked and fed by hand, are used to form each cap. They also roll the caps in sawdust before charging. In England the copper

is cut into double breadths by machine shears and then rolled by the strip. Two machines, worked by power but fed by hand, are used to form each cap. After rolling in sawdust, charging and varnishing, each cap is again placed by hand in a lathe to be again cleaned. \*

## Another Franklin.

Mr. Nye, of New Bedford, Mass., presented this petition to the house last week:—"To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives—Sirs: I wish to have my name changed to that of Franklin Macy, instead of Stephen Macy, being a relative of the illustrious Dr. Franklin, and having a mind like his. Which your petitioner will ever pray.

STEPHEN MACY.

[The above will be hailed with satisfaction by all true lovers of science, it having been supposed by many that Dr. Franklin's distinguishing characteristics would fail to descend upon any of his relatives, but this supposition is groundless as will be perceived from this petition. We propose that Mr. Macy be invited by the corporate authorities of this city to take possession of the cupule of the Post Office—the position once occupied by his "relative" when conducting important electrical experiments. Who second's the motion?

## Portrait of Columbus at Albany.

The portrait of the Discoverer of America, hanging in the N. Y. Senate Chamber at Albany, has at least an interesting history, if it be not, as it is said to be, an authentic original painting. It appears by the Journals of the Senate for 1784 that it was presented in that year by Mrs. Maria Farmer, in whose family it had been for some 150 years—purporting to have been taken in 1542. When the Capitol was removed from the City of New York to Albany in 1797, the portrait was left in the garret of the old City Hall, where it remained until 1827, when by order of the Senate it was reclaimed, restored and reframed, and is now one of the principal ornaments of its Chamber.

## Havana Cigars.

The official estimate of the manufacture of these articles is thus stated by a Havana correspondent of the Picayune: The report states that each cigar maker will roll daily 300 cigars, at an average of 50 cents a hundred. Supposing them to work twenty in each month, this will give 72,000 cigars annually per hand.—The consumption in the island they estimate at 440 millions, and supposing the exports to be 160 millions, this will give 600 millions as the annual cigar manufacture, giving employment in its various branches to fully 10,000 people, the value of whose labor is not less than \$4,000,000. The consumption of cigars here seems disproportionate, but when we take into consideration that from childhood almost every one smokes, we do not doubt it is underestimated.

## A New Mouth for the Mississippi.

The people of Louisiana are thinking seriously of opening a mouth for the Mississippi into Lake Pontchartrain, back of New Orleans. It is believed that it would relieve the river and its floods, and prevent any such terrible overflows as that of last year. In a commercial point of view the project is also commended. It would open a direct communication with the Gulf and Atlantic States, and render the troublesome, tedious and expensive navigation of the Mississippi useless.

## The National Washington Monument.

The Council of the Chickasaw tribe of Indians have appropriated two hundred dollars towards the erection of the National Washington Monument. During the discussion of the subject, the declaration was made that the people had never spilt the blood of white men in war; and that they entertained the same veneration for Washington as their white brethren.

## The Michigan Block for the Washington Monument.

The Legislature of Michigan has made an appropriation for a block of native copper from the Lake Superior mines, 3 feet long by 1½ feet wide and 2 feet deep, polished and bearing this inscription: from Michigan, "an emblem of her trust in the Union."

## Foreign Miscellany.

The number of Building Societies in Great Britain in 1849 exceeded 2000, and the funds raised by them was about \$10,000,000. These are the savings of the lower and middle classes.

An English Court has decided against the legality of Odd Fellows Societies. This point has been a disputed one for a number of years.

Dreadful storms had visited various parts of the British Coast. The New York Packet-ship J. R. Skiddy had been lost on the Irish coast and a number of the crew lost. The Dublin steamer Adelaide, to London, was lost at the mouth of the Thames and all on board lost, 150 persons.

Immense quantities of sand eels were found on the morning of the 8th of April, on the Ard-bane Mountain, Ireland, about a mile from the Atlantic.

A Jewish Merchant named Judah Sebag, has suffered martyrdom at Alig, in Morocco.—He was envied by some Mahomedan Merchants, who accused him of blasphemy against Mahomet. The alternative was, to renounce his religion or be burned. He indignantly refused to deny his religion, and nobly chose death. He was put into a large fire, and devoured.

## A Rich Present.

A magnificent gold snuff-box, richly studded with diamonds, has been presented by the Sultan Abdul Medjid, of Turkey, to Samuel Colt, Esq., of New York, in evidence of his high appreciation of the latter's Patent Repeating Fire Arm. It is beautifully wrought, and is valued at \$2,500.

## Taxed Heavily for Foreign Compliments.

Mr. Morse was taxed \$90 at the N. Y. Custom House, for the splendid order, set in precious stones, for the wonderful application of magnetism to telegraphs, received from the Porte of Turkey, and recently Mr. Colt, the inventor of the six-barrelled revolver, had a magnificently gold and enamelled snuff box, with the lid inlaid with brilliants, sent to him as the Turkish Sultan's appreciation of his famous pistols. Colt paid \$500 to our Custom House for the cost of importing this present. [The government should remit this tax.

## A Drink of Beer Forever.

Mr. Emerson, in one of his lectures, tells a story to exemplify the stability of things in England. He says that William of Wyckham, about the year 1150, endowed a house in the neighborhood of Winchester to provide a measure of beer and a sufficiency of bread to every one who asked it forever; and when Emerson was in England he was curious to test this good man's credit, and he knocked at the door, preferred his request, and received his measure of beer and his quantum of bread, though its donor had been dead seven hundred years.

## An Operatives' Rolling Mill.

A site has been selected at Steubenville, Ohio, for the erection of a rolling mill. Some twenty of the puddlers and boilers who recently made an unsuccessful strike at Pittsburg, proffer \$15,000 toward the erection of the works, on condition that the citizens of Steubenville will contribute \$20,000 additional.—The mill, if put in operation, will employ over 100 laborers.

## Hailstones in India.

In a paper lately read before a Scientific Society of Bombay, it is stated that hailstones in India are generally from five to ten or twenty times the size of those at home, from six ounces to a pound being nothing unusual.—Hail in England rarely exceed the size of oranges or pumpkins, and hardly ever less than walnuts.

Lieut. Col. John McClellan, of the Topographical Corps of Engineers, has received orders to take charge of the expedition for running the Mexican boundary line. The party will consist of 40 civilians, with two mounted companies of soldiers. The will leave on the 15th of May next for El Paso, where the survey commences.

## American Invention in London.

The Baby-Jumper is an American invention that is having a great sale in England. The inventor has a shop in the Strand, and in his window are specimens of the jumping machine, and also a very beautiful wax model of a child, which is suspended in the "Baby-Jumper," and by the action of a spiral spring, the model baby jumps from morn till eve, to the infinite amusement of parents, young and old, and blushing misses and their sweethearts, as they join the crowd in front of the window.

The American clock trade was formerly carried on to a great extent in London, but latterly the sales of Yankee time-pieces have been quite limited. Saunder's Razor Strop is another American article that has recently been offered for sale in the English market. But as it is not advertised, few persons are aware that it can be obtained in London. The grand secret of the success of any article, is a liberal system of advertising in the daily papers.

## Great Steam Hammer.

Messrs. Nasmyth & Gaskell, the celebrated machinists of Manchester, are manufacturing a gigantic steam hammer for an establishment in America. It weighs six tons, and will be shipped in a few days from Liverpool to its destination. It is the largest hammer that has ever been made in England. The machinery by which it will be worked, is brought to such perfection that a thick bar of iron can be sundered by one blow of the hammer, or any egg placed in a wine glass can be chipped at the top, without breaking the glass.

## A Tall Chimney.

The New England Glass Company have commenced laying the foundation for a tall chimney, which they are about to build for their glass works in Cambridge. It is to be about 30 feet square at the base, and carried up to the height of 240 feet, 20 feet higher than the Bunker Hill Monument! Flues under ground are to connect their various furnaces with this chimney, thus making it do all the smoking (?) for their immense establishment.

## Catching Pigeons in the West.

They take a wild pigeon, tie a string to his leg, sew up its eyes, and let it go; the bird flies into the air, and mingles with the first flock that passes, the sportsman then pulls his decoy bird to the place in which his net is concealed, the whole flock following and are led into the snare, when they are secured.

## Profits of Southern Manufacturing.

The Augusta Manufacturing Company has declared a dividend of three per cent. out of the profits of the past three months. This is equal to 12 per cent. per annum, and is more, the Mobile Advertiser says, than can be made on the best managed cotton plantation in the South.

## A Mine of Coin.

Some workmen on the bed of the canal near Albany last week struck upon a pile of sovereigns, and a regular grab game ensued. The first finder secured \$600, and the others \$150 a piece—in all about \$1200. It is thought to have been accidentally dropped into the canal by some emigrant.

## New Trees.

Yew trees are the longest lived of any other in Europe. There is one at Braborne in the County of Kent, England, which is allowed to be 3000 years old. The old English yeomen made their bows of the yew tree.

## Great Speed of a Screw Vessel.

The Screw Steamer, Erin's Queen, made a passage from Belfast to London a short time ago, in 85 hours. The distance was 700 miles.

## New Form of Letter Writing.

They are beginning to correspond in lithographic letters in France.

The cost of maintaining the United States squadron on the coast of Africa for the suppression of the slave trade, is \$284,000 per annum, with little or no good results.

The British papers are publishing for gospel, the *hoax* story of the *Herald*, about the discovery of ancient ruins in California.

We are under renewed obligations to Senator Seward for Congressional documents.