

Miscellaneous.

Correspondence of the Scientific American.

WASHINGTON CITY, April 30, 1850.

The Patent Committee of the Senate have made a report adverse to the petition of Tatham & Brothers, for an extension of a patent right, which they purchased for the manufacture of lead pipe. It appears that Tatham, when in England, became acquainted with the invention, and purchased from the inventor all his interest therein. On his return, he obtained a patent here, bearing date 29th March 1841, but granted for the term of 14 years from the 31st of August, 1837, that being the date of the foreign patent, in accordance with the statutory provisions in such cases; thus leaving the invention to be used by any one in the United States, for a period of nearly four years, free of cost, before the issuing of the patent. The Committee say, that in no instance has Congress extended a patent at the request and for the exclusive benefit of an assignee alone. That, they contend, would be impolitic and unjust in the extreme, inasmuch as an assignee is a mere trader and speculator upon the labor and inventions of others, and has therefore no more merit or claim on the government for its aid than a speculator in any thing else would have. The policy of the patent laws is to give protection to the meritorious inventor, and this being accomplished, the intention of the law is fulfilled. The Committee say that the petitioners have not thought proper to inform them what they paid for the invention, nor of the profits they have made out of it. These facts, for reasons best known to themselves, they have kept secret, but from facts which have come from other sources, there is no doubt but that an immense sum has been realized. In addition to this the patent has not yet expired, nor have they given any reason why their application was made to Congress instead of to the Patent Office.

The South is at last waking up to its true interest; a few days ago nearly the whole amount of the capital stock for a steam cotton factory at Sparta, Ga., amounting to \$80,000, was taken up the same day. This spirit of enterprise is now rapidly spreading through Alabama and Tennessee.

Brown's patent water gas, which has been for some weeks used at the National Hotel in this city, has recently been discontinued, and the gas of the Washington Company again introduced, for the reason, I believe, that it is to be furnished gratuitously.

The Secretary of the Treasury has received a letter from Mr. Appleton, from which it appears that the annual product of all the cotton mills in the U. S. is 25,000,000 of yards.

The nomination of Mr. Ewbank has not yet been taken up, nor does there now appear any probability of action upon it until the Compromise Committee shall have made their report.

You will perceive that the Judiciary Committee of the House have at last reported their bill for the protection of the rights of patents, but owing to the retarded state of the whole of the public business, there is but little chance of definitive action upon it at the present Session. Five months have expired, and yet none of the appropriation bills are touched.

A writer in one of our city papers thinks the proposition of certain persons in the British Parliament to tax the articles sent to the World's Industrial Convention, an indication that from fear of foreign competition the whole affair will be quashed. This is a mistake, for however much they may fear Yankee ingenuity, the projectors have gone too far to recede.

Henderson's telegraphic machine for taking the Yeas and Nays is an admirable contrivance, and would answer very well provided members were not in the habit of changing their votes after they have been given. At the recent election of Clerk, two-thirds of the members of the House changed their votes three times before the announcement of the

result, and in which case none but the present plan would have served to prevent confusion.

For the information of visitors desirous of seeing the large copper rock which was brought from Lake Superior at such great expense during the Administration of President Tyler, I would state that it lies in the square of the War Department buildings, where it appears to have been long forgotten.

Mr. Roebling's publication on the practicability of an Atlantic Magnetic Telegraph has been read with a good deal of attention, and the Senate Committee, to whom a memorial on the subject has been referred, will avail themselves of the suggestions made. There have been so many wonderful things accomplished in our day that it is scarcely safe to laugh at any thing.

There is a good deal of talk in relation to Tippet's Cold Water Safety Engine. He has produced a one-horse power model, the working of which he says exceeds his most sanguine hopes. Boilers are entirely dispensed with. The steam is raised by means of a small jet of cold water injected upon a large plug of iron fixed in the furnace, and of sufficient bulk to retain the heat that might be dissipated. By a simple contrivance, this steam enters the cylinders and moves the piston in a manner similar to a common engine. The amount of power is limited only by the strength of the materials. He claims that it is utterly impossible for any explosion of any extent to occur, for the simple reason that there is nothing in it larger than a cylinder to explode. He is about to construct a boat fitted up with one of these engines, as an experiment. *

Medical Discovery.

It has been ascertained that the true source of scorbutic disease, as it shows itself in our ships and prisons, is the want of potash in the blood; that salted meat contains little more than half the potash in fresh meats; and that, while an ounce of rice contains only five grains of potash, an ounce of potato contains 1,875 grains, which accounts for the great increase of the disease since the scarcity of the potato. In patients under this disease, the blood is found to be deficient in potash; and it has been ascertained by repeated experiments, that whatever be the diet, such patients speedily recover if a few grains (from twelve to twenty) of some salt of potash be given daily.—Lime juice is regularly ordered in the navy, as a specific for the disease, and the reason of its efficacy is not the acid, but the amount of potash being 846 grains in an ounce. On these facts, it seems possible to found a slight, but very salutary improvement in the navy. Let a portion of tartrate of potash be ordered regularly to be mixed with the lime-juice that is given out for use; and let arrangements be adopted for boiling the salt meat in steam. A large portion of salt will thus be eliminated, and the food made more wholesome. A similar course might be adopted in work-houses and prisons. If so simple a remedy is in our hands, it is criminal to neglect it.

[If the above is true, all that is required to prevent scurvy, is simply to use a little of the carbonate of potash in food, (with salt meat.) There is no use of lime juice, that would be a useless expense. We apprehend, however, that the scurvy is produced not for the want of potash, but the presence of too much of the chlorate of soda (salt) in the food.

Mineral Cave in Wisconsin.

The Madison, (Wis.) Argus publishes a statement showing that there is in that vicinity, a huge cave containing immense deposits of lead and copper. The quantity of mineral lead seen in a distance of three miles only, (cave distance—perhaps three hundred yards,) was computed at about 200,000 tons. The discovery created great excitement at Fox-town, near the cave, and preparations for the erection of smelting furnaces were immediately made.

[The above is something like a hoax. Since the discovery of gold in California, wonderful discoveries of the same metal have been made in Australia, and gold mines have been found in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Indiana, and almost every State in the Union. Some people would like to speculate in mineral lands, but the charms of California have no rival.

Interior of East Florida.

Alachua was the first county, says the Ancient City, which was laid off in the interior after the cession, and previous to its American occupation had never been settled, the Spanish and English settlements in Florida being principally confined to the coast. It has, however, from the time of De Soto's expedition to the present day, been covered with a large population, and was the favorite country of the Indian tribes. In 1812 it was the seat of the Seminole power, and occupied by their head chiefs, and continued so until they were driven out by the whites. In 1814 an attempt was made by a party from Georgia, under General Harris, to form a settlement in this section.—A government was actually organized, but in consequence of the continued hostility of the Indians and bad management, the settlement was broken up. Many tracts of land were surveyed at that time, the plots of which afterwards fell into the hands of the Spaniards, and probably served as the basis of nearly all the Spanish grants in the country. Alachua has always been a favorite agricultural county, and is said to boast of an unusual uniformity of seasons and general good crops. Its lands are well calculated for nearly every species of product—sugar, cotton, corn, and tobacco, thrive well. It is also healthy and pleasant.—Its numerous ponds and prairies diversify the landscape, and its great natural curiosity, the Alachua prairie, is well worthy of a visit. It was called by the Indians the Jug, from its peculiar formation. The Natural bridge of the Santa Fe, under which a large river runs for a mile in length, is a singular freak of nature, and the numerous sink-holes, caverns, and natural wells and springs make it a very peculiarly formed country. As a grazing and agricultural country it is well worthy of attention, and has already within its borders a numerous and enterprising body of inhabitants.

Patent Information—Important to Persons Using Patented Machines.

We learn by the Washington Union, that the Supreme Court of the United States, sitting at Washington, on Friday last, in the case of Wilson, assignee of Woodworth, vs. Forsyth & Simpson, decided that a person in the lawful possession and use of a patented machine, when a patent is renewed or extended, is not merely entitled to the continued use of the thing patented, according to his interest therein, by virtue of the 18th section of the act of July, 1836, as decided by Wilson vs. Rousseau, and this case when formerly before the court, in 1846, but has also the right to keep the machine in perfect repair, not, however, to the extent of destroying its identity, and that supplying new cutters and knives to Woodworth's planing machine, when the old ones become worn out, are lawful repairs, which may be made without infringing the patentee's extended right. The court also decided that the allegation of fraud against Uri Emmons, in obtaining an interest in the Woodworth patent in 1829, (F. & S. claiming in part under Emmons) was not maintained in this case.—The court affirmed the decree of the Circuit Court of the United States for Louisiana, dismissing complainant's (Wilson) bill—Judge Wayne delivering the opinion. The case was argued by M. Webster and Governor Seward for complainant, and Mr. H. D. Gilpin and J. D. Westcott for defendants.

Life of a Locomotive.

It is estimated in England that the life of a Locomotive is one hundred and fifty thousand miles.

If the value of an engine is \$6,000, it costs four cents for every mile run. The usual railroad fare for passengers is about four cents a mile, so that a passenger at this rate would pay no more for his passage than the actual cost of the wear of the engine, if no other passengers were carried except himself, and no freight taken.

The Railway tolls on Coal in England may be judged from a notice in the London Mining Journal: The Clay Cross Company have contracted to deliver 45,000 tons of coal in London; and have agreed with the Midland, and London and North-western Railways for the carriage of them, at $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per ton per mile.

Works on Science and Art.

DICTIONARY OF MECHANICS, ENGINE WORK AND ENGINEERING.—Part 8 of this work, published by Messrs. Appleton & Co., contains Machinery for Sawing, Derricks for Hoisting, Docks for ships, Dredging Machines and Dressing Machines.

THE JOURNAL OF THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE.—Number 4, Vol. 49, of this Journal is an excellent one. It contains a good article on American Engineering.

If we are correct in our data, No. 6 of Arnot's Gothic Architecture was issued in Oct. last, and we have now to announce, after a long, (and to each subscriber, perplexing) period, Nos. 7 and 8 combined. Publishers so responsible as Messrs. Appleton & Co., are justly subject to censure for such manifest indifference to the interests of those who look for the numbers with some reasonable regularity, and we feel bound to express it, in behalf of all who have subscribed for the work through this office. The publication is a good one, and is got up in a highly creditable manner. Four numbers more makes it complete.

Write Plain.

It makes no matter how coarse and clumsy the penmanship may be, if it is only plain and easily decyphered. No person should direct a letter whose hand-writing is not legible. Many sad mistakes have been made in directing letters to puzzle postmasters. There are no less than eleven thousand pounds is put into the British Dead Letter Office annually, because the backings of the letters cannot be decyphered. All that is required, is a little attention and a little care. Editors do not like to read the correspondence of a careless writer, and printers have two kinds of devils—the attendant, known as the "printer's" imp, and manuscript that would be disowned as the production of Beelzebub.

Georgia Turpentine.

The Savannah Republican, in an article upon the Turpentine business in Georgia, states that there are some fifteen or sixteen persons now engaged in its manufacture, whose united product will amount to not less than twenty thousand and eight hundred barrels during the present season. There are some eight or ten others who have recently embarked in the business whose labors will add very considerably to this amount. The distillation of crude turpentine is also rapidly increasing in that State; and the time is thought not to be very distant, when Georgia will be able to vie with North Carolina in the production of this article.

Salt at Syracuse.

About 2,000,000 gals. of salt brine are pumped up every day at Syracuse, and the wonder is how the water is impregnated and it is said to improve every year. Hundreds of acres of land are covered by evaporating vats, and constantly spreading over more. These are replenished with brine daily, and the salt gathered twice in a season. The boiling process is more laborious, though producing a finer grained and a less valuable quality of salt. Each furnace is set with from 20 to 30 large cauldron kettles, which are kept full and boiling night and day, and vary in the amount of a day's product from two to ten bushels of salt each.

"Spiritual Knockings."

These strange phenomena, at Rochester, Auburn and the late break out at Stratford, Conn., continue to command a large share of public attention, and although vouched for in the most positive terms by those who are known to us as men of the highest respectability, still thousands in the language of Shakespeare, "might not believe this without the sensible and true avouch of their own eyes." This is our case exactly.

A most terrific tornado has taken place in the Island of New Providence, W. I. It was the most destructive experienced for thirty years. The loss of life and property was fearful.

The steamboat "Belle of the West," was burned one mile below Warsaw, Ky., on the morning of the 23rd ult. About one hundred passengers lost their lives. What a heart-rending event.