

Miscellaneous.

The Human Ear.

The story which I will relate, is not long, but it may not be devoid of interest to others, although it only concerns myself. When I was eight years old and at school, a larger boy than myself, made me believe that if I put the pit of a small thorn apple (fruit of the hawthorn) into each ear, and one in each nostril, pushing them well home, and then, sneezing well, they would all come tumbling out of my mouth. Being fond of such legerdemain tricks, as all boys are, I tried the trick, and found that sneezing was good for the nose, but the pits abode in my ears, and for two years I was somewhat troubled with them, although no doctor was consulted, for the reason, that I was afraid to tell my parents what I had done, for fear I would get my ears pulled for being so foolish. When I grew up to be somewhat larger, I remember well having paid with interest the grudge I owed the larger boy who played me such a malicious trick. The pit of one of the thorn apples remained in my right ear for six years, and it came out after being loosened by a tremendous pulling at that appendage by one of my parents, for some mischief I had committed. I was not sure till then, but the pits had fallen out or come out some way, for they were pushed very far into my ears, but now I suspected that the other one was still in my left ear, and sometimes I thought I felt it with the head of a pin, but it never hurt me, did not injure my hearing in the least, and I often thought I would consult an ear doctor, (for fear if it was in I might yet suffer from it), but I was afraid; for more than once I made an effort with a blunt instrument to remove what I thought was the pit, when, from the acuteness of the pain I suffered, I desisted, thinking I might be mistaken in my surmise, and was injuring a part of my ear. But on Thursday, last week, all my surmises were confirmed by the removal of the pit from my ear with the point of a blunt pen knife. It came out easily and unexpectedly whilst trying to remove what I thought was some hard wax. I had put a lotion in my ears about a week before to soften the wax, as I had become a little deaf. My left ear feels quite light and clear. This thorn apple pit has been in my ear for 28 years. It measures 3-16 of an inch in its greatest diameter and is 1/4 of an inch in length. Where it has rested in my ear, it has left an indentation, owing to the growth of the ear since I was eight years of age. The pit is very hard, and is quite sound, but is of a dark color like the wax in the ear. I am happy in being now relieved from all fears of a thorn hedge developing itself in my upper regions.

R.

New York, 26th Jan., 1851.

Reform of the Patent Laws—Washington Republic.

"So to our mind nothing is clearer than that no patent should be re-issued, added to, or extended, without notice to the public. An extension, additions or reissue, is distinctly equivalent to a new patent; and no man ought to have his property taken from him by virtue of any such instrument without due advertisement and notice. It is a very serious matter to take his earnings from the industrious mechanic, on the ground that he has innocently manufactured articles the subject of an exclusive privilege, of which he had no notice, and no means of notice. And yet such things may be, and actually are, under the existing laws."

[The above is an extract from a leader in the Washington Republic of the 26th. The article shows a decidedly hostile spirit to inventors and their interests. It mentions a great number of evils in advocacy of a writ of *scire facias*, (a writ we advocate, but not as embraced in the Bill now before the Senate), but none of which such a writ can remedy that we can see. The extract quoted above shows a decidedly unfair and incorrect view of the matter. Can a patent be extended without advertising? No; Sec. 18 of the law of 1836 requires this, and it is done, and the

Republic advertises applications for extension to allow all who object to show cause why the patent should not be extended. Now is it not wrong to try and make the public believe, as the above extract does, that all extensions are granted *under the rose*? The whole argument of the Republic goes to show, that before a patent, even, is granted, the petitioner should advertise about the same and explain his invention. This would be a fine way to invite to patent piracy. We are sorry to observe how unfairly the Republic puts the question.

Patent Cases.

U. S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana.—Elisha Bloomer vs. Curtis and Rinney; in equity. Before Judges M'Kinley and M'Caleb.—The complainant, who is the assignee of the right to use Woodworth's planing, tonguing, and grooving machine, within the State of Louisiana, for the extension of the term of patent, commencing on the 27th day of December, 1849, and ending on the 27th day of December 1856, filed a bill of complainant to restrain the defendants from the illegal use of one of the machines within the State of Louisiana.

The defendants opposed the application upon the ground that having purchased of the assignee of the administrator of the patentee, the right to use the machine in question under the first extension of the patent, to wit: from the 27th day of December, 1842, until the 27th day of December, 1849, that they had authority to use the machine under the special Act of Congress, approved of the 26th day of February, 1845, and which extended the patent for seven years, from and after the 27th day of December, 1845.

The Court after a full hearing of the case, decided, that unless the defendants could show a clause in the Act of Congress, reserving to assignees a right to use machines previously in use, that an injunction must issue.

The injunction was accordingly granted restraining the defendants from the further use of the machine.

WOODWORTH'S PLANING MACHINE: DECISION.—Circuit Court of the United States, for the Northern District of New York. John Gibson vs. Ballard and Brennan, December 19, 1850. A motion was made in this cause before his Honor Alfred Conkling, at the Chambers in the city of Auburn, for a preliminary injunction to restrain the defendants from the unauthorized use of the Woodworth's Planing Machine in the village of Watertown.

The motion was argued by R. L. Joice, for the plaintiff, and G. A. Underwood, for defendants, and an injunction granted, according to the prayer of the bill.

In the case of John Gibson vs. D. Haskins, his Honor Judge Conkling, at the same time, granted a similar injunction restraining defendant, Haskins, from the farther use of the Woodworth Planing Machine at Jamestown, Chautauque Co., N. Y.

The World's Fair.

Great preparations are now making for sending American machines and articles to London, to be exhibited at the World's Fair. As no article can be received in London without a certificate of an American Central Board, appointed by the Federal Executive, it gives us pleasure to know that an agent, Mr. C. F. Stansbury, is now in this city to grant certificates and pass all the articles intended for the World's Fair: he will be found at the Navy Yard every day from 10 A. M. till 2 P. M., and from 4 till 7 P. M. The Revenue Cutter Forward has been despatched to Philadelphia and Boston, to bring articles from those cities to the Frigate St. Lawrence, which will sail from this port to Southampton, England, in the early part of next month. There is no time now to be lost in preparing for the grand Exhibition. The articles from the United States now amount to nearly 400, and many of them will do credit to the mechanical genius of our country. The natural productions will not be surpassed, if equalled, by any others exhibited there. By late foreign exchanges, we perceive that nearly 9000 British exhibitors will be there; Germany and France will send forth some things which cannot be rivalled by those of any another nation.

The expense to American exhibitors will be greater than to those from the Continent of Europe, but no greater than to the Canadians, many of whom will compete for the prizes.

We hope to see a World's Industrial Fair in our own beloved land at no distant day; we trust that this object will not be lost sight of; we want every stimulant for improvement, and such exhibitions, when well conducted, do most certainly stimulate genius and encourage industry.

Verdict of the Coroner's Jury about the Fallen Buildings.

The following is the verdict of the Coroner's Jury, in relation to the case mentioned by us last week. We shall see what it will amount to:—

"We, the undersigned Jurors, sworn by the Coroner to investigate the cause of the falling of the six houses on the southern side of 21st street, between the Fifth and Sixth avenues, on the afternoon of the 15th of January, 1851, by which William Higgins and others were killed, do find that their deaths were caused by the culpable negligence of William Thomas, George Spencer, and Edward Fleming, in erecting and superintending said buildings.

ROBERT SMITH, THOS. J. WOODRUFF,
JOHN DELAMETER, JAMES H. CHAPMAN,
PETER J. BOGART, EZRA SMITH,
JOHN S. ALLEN, SYLVANUS GEDNEY,
JAMES WEBB, G. W. GEER,
JAMES STYLES, JOHN N. M. BERRY,
CHARLES SMITHSON, WM. TUCKER,
WM. F. HAVEMEYER."

The Coroner's Jury, (in addition to their verdict), do most earnestly recommend that the city, or other authorities, pass such laws or ordinances, regulating the erection, altering or taking down of buildings in this county, as may secure the lives and limbs of persons employed, and that we feel it our duty, and earnestly recommend to capitalists and others, about to erect buildings, to refrain from entering into arrangements with either incompetent or inefficient architects or builders, as it is evident the spirit of speculation too frequently prevails in our community.

Look out for Impostors.

A gentleman writing to us from Brookfield, Vt., says that an individual has been collecting subscriptions in that place and vicinity, for the "Scientific American," agreeing to furnish the paper at one dollar per annum. The rascal, in order to gain the confidence of those of whom he solicited subscriptions, informed them that the publishers had recently adopted the plan of furnishing the paper at \$1 per annum in order to increase their subscription list largely, and that if one dollar were paid to him, he would guarantee the paper to be forthcoming in one week after the money was handed in.

To what extent the rascal referred to has duped the public in the Green Mountain State, we are not informed, but we wish it distinctly understood that the individual alluded to is a scoundrel, impostor, and rascal, and the publishers have not established any rates for subscriptions different from those advertised each week in the prospectus of the paper, and that travelling agents are not employed to canvass for the paper at all.

When will people learn wisdom, and instead of paying money to strangers pass the funds over to their Postmaster requesting them to forward for such papers as they may wish.

Publishers and Editors.

Any paper which has not already published the prospectus of the "Scientific American," for Volume 6, will be entitled to a copy of the paper, for one year, without an exchange, by inserting the prospectus, which may be found on the last page of each number. The 20 back numbers already issued will be immediately sent on receipt of a copy of the paper containing the advertisement. Publishers will please to mark the advertisement when sent, that it may not be overlooked, and if an omission, or any irregularity occurs, they will oblige by early informing us.

California Agency.

Messrs. Cooke & Le Count are sole agents for the Scientific American, in California, and

will attend promptly to all orders. Their News Office is located in Wells & Co.'s building, San Francisco. Through the energetic management of the above firm, the Scientific American has acquired a very large circulation in the new State.

Expose of Paine's Light

On last Monday evening, Mr. Joseph Dixon, of Jersey City, famous for his crucibles, manufacture of American steel, and practical chemical knowledge, delivered a lecture on light, and demonstrated how easily wise people might be deceived with perpetual motions, and new gas lights. He stated that if Mr. Paine's discovery were true, we had to unlearn all we had learned, and that instead of advancing, chemical science had been retrograding. He believed that all Mr. Paine had said about resolving water entirely into hydrogen, was sheer nonsense. He had an apparatus there, exactly like the one seen in the Boston Commonwealth, and paraded in so many papers. It did wonders to convince the audience "how easy 'tis to gull the pedants, to gull the would be wise" He asserted, and his demonstration went to prove, that Mr. Paine's Electrodes in his decomposing jar were a voltaic battery, and his helices might be of wood as well as of iron. The hydrogen jar was connected by a tube with a camphene vessel, and a small tube on the top of the hydrogen jar, exhibited hydrogen undergoing combustion with a pale light, while a beautiful light was shown by a tube coming out of the camphene. We did not examine this vessel, but we must say, that we could not see how the hydrogen could pass through the camphene into the tube, for the exit tube dipped down into the fluid, and no hydrogen from the decomposing jar could get into it. This part of the experiment was neither satisfactory nor demonstrative of what has been alleged by more than one disinterested person who has tried Mr. Paine's experiment in catalyzing the hydrogen. It was not in our power to wait, after the lecture, to ask for a farther explanation about this part of the experiment. Mr. Dixon has bet \$5,000 that Mr. Paine cannot resolve water entirely into hydrogen, nor decompose it with only one pole of a magnetic connection. He holds the same opinion as we have set forth from time to time, about this discovery. He is safe in his \$5,000.

It has been stated by Dr. Nichols, that the decomposing water in Mr. Paine's jar, was acidulated. This is an evidence that his electrode is a battery, and that zinc is used. After the audience were perfectly satisfied that Mr. Dixon had decomposed the water by his revolving helices, (for when they were in motion, the water bubbled, when stopped, the bubbles stopped), he stepped out on the floor and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, the helices are made of wood." The effect was electrical, humorsome, and laughable,—it extinguished the Electric Light.

Taciturnity of Genius.

In conversation Dante was taciturn or satirical; Butler was silent or caustic; Gray and Alfieri seldom talked or smiled. Descartes, whose avocations formed him for meditation and solitude, was silent; Rousseau was remarkably trite in conversation—not a word of fancy or eloquence warmed him. Milton was unsocial, and even irritable, when much pressed by the talk of others. Addison and Moliere were only observers in society: and Dryden has very honestly told us, "conversation is dull and slow, humor saturnine and reserved; in short, I am not one of those who endeavor to break jests in company, or make repartees.

The Arctic arrived in this city at 8 P. M., last Monday, she put into Halifax for coal, and was 16 days 8 hours, from dock to dock. There is bad management somewhere. Why don't the engineers see that plenty of coal is stowed away in the bunkers.

The entire subscription required to establish the steam line between Philadelphia and Liverpool, says the North American, has been obtained. The line will consist of four steamers, which, when completed, will constitute a semi-monthly communication between the two cities.