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## Rail-Road News.

### Locomotion the Test of Civilization.

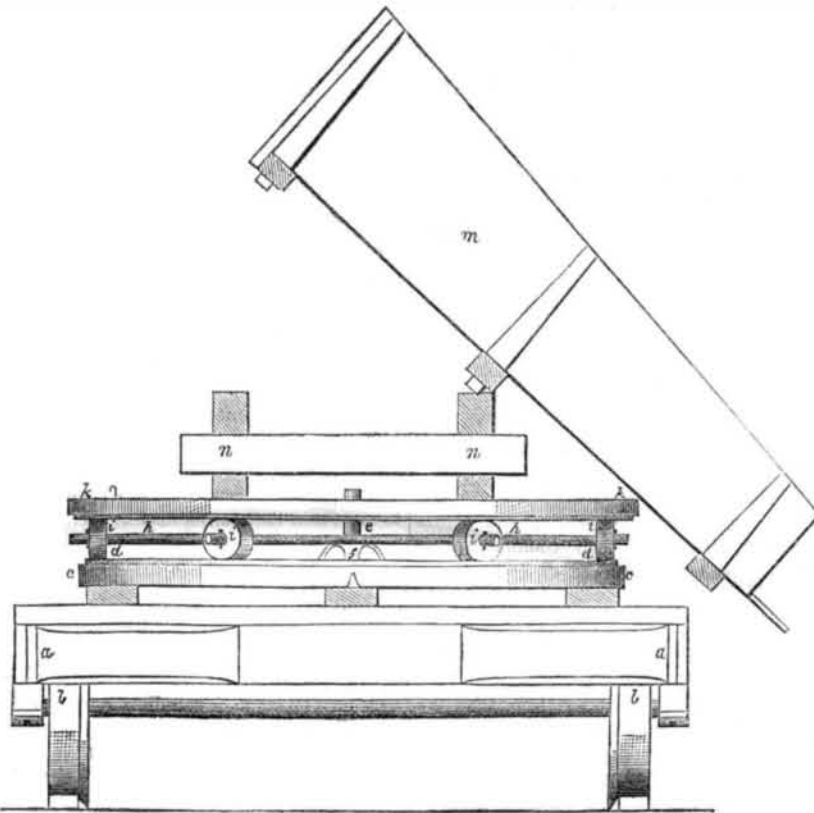
Our good friends and allies, the French, are admitted to be more philosophical than practical, in their views of society, and in the course of the animated discussions which are constantly occurring among their journals, upon theoretical questions, curious reflections and ideas are frequently elicited. The *Courrier du Havre*, in a recent article upon the reduction of railroad fares, throws out the idea that the condition of locomotion in any country is a simple and infallible means by which to judge of its advancement in civilization and in doing so, makes some candid admissions, which would scarcely have been expected from a Gallic source. "He is the most useful citizen," says, "who gives the greatest impulse to the production of wealth, and multiplies exchanges with the greatest zeal. The lowest round of the social ladder is occupied by the negro and Indian; living on little or nothing, producing little, reposing listlessly at the foot of the palm or cocoa tree which waved over them at birth; while, at the summit of that ladder, appear the opulent Englishman, the indefatigable American, great consumers, great producers, and expenders; always in motion, always on the road, never arriving but to start, never buying but to sell, never gaining money but to invest it again. Between these two extremities, but more closely approaching the latter, are the nations of Latin origin, the Italians, the Spanish, the French, nations laborious but economical, contemplative and sedentary by taste, travelers by occasion or by necessity, considering labor merely as a means of arriving at repose, aspiring to become independent rather than millionaires."

### Pacific Railroad.

It is well known that Mr. Whitney, of New York, who projected what is known by the name of Whitney's Railroad—a railroad to the Pacific—after having met with much opposition in the Senate, at Washington, went to London the last spring, and brought the subject before the English public. He proposed the erection of his railroad through the British possessions of North America to the Pacific. His plan has met with the strongest objections on account of its impracticable nature and the absence of any benefit it might confer on the capitalists of that country. The plan has found no favor with the engineers there.

The New Bedford Mercury publishes a letter telling how a lady of that place, by drawing a rocking chair along the carpet, received a tremendous electric shock, and at the same time her husband saw a blue ball of electricity float through the room. Wonderful, truly.

PALMER'S PATENT DUMPING CAR.—Fig. 1.

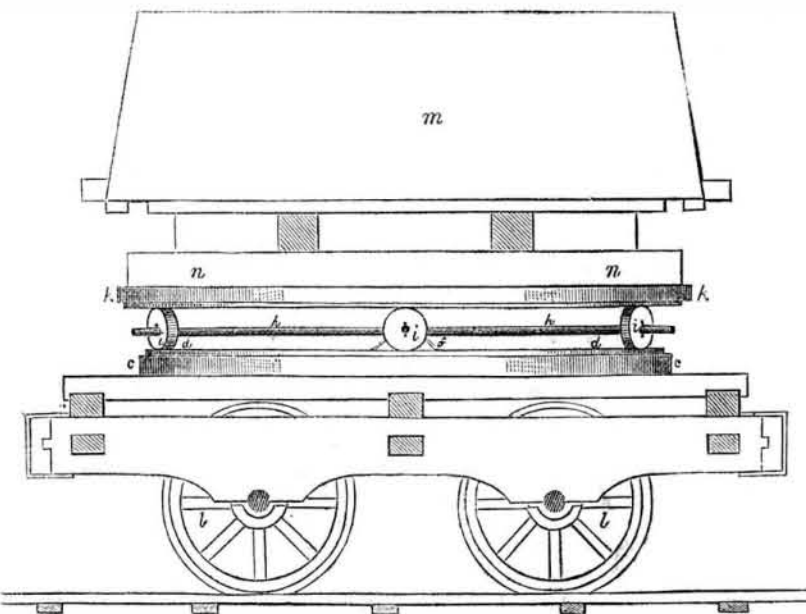


The accompanying engravings represent improvements in Dumping Cars for railroads, invented and patented by Mr. Granville Palmer, of Greenbush, N. Y., but who has assigned all his right, title, and interest to Mr. R. E. Finch, of Peekskill, N. Y.

Figure 1 is a side elevation, and figure 2 is an end elevation. The same letters refer to like parts. The improvement consists in applying between the box or receptacle for the earth, &c., of the car, and the body or carriage frame of the same, a turning table or apparatus to permit the free turning of the box in any direction, so that the earth, gravel, &c., may be deposited on any desired part of the road.

*a a a a* is the body or carriage frame of the car, constructed in the usual manner, and having wheels, *b b b b*, connected to it in the ordinary way. *c c* is a circular railway arranged on the top of the body, and having an iron rail, *d d*, secured on its upper face by screws, nails, or otherwise; *e* is a vertical or upright metallic shaft, firmly attached at its lower end to the body of the car, said shaft being held firm, or sustained in its position, by the metallic bracing shoulder, *f*, figure 2, which is likewise secured to the body of the car. The shaft, *e*, passes through a suitable lever in the centre of the spider or axle tree frame, *g*, (so that said spider or frame may turn freely on said shaft), the arms, *h h h h*, of

Figure 2.



which, at their ends, serve as axletrees for the friction wheels or rollers, *i i i i*, which rest and move on the rail, *d d*. A circular plate, *k k*, somewhat larger in diameter than the railway, *c c*, is arranged above the spider or frame, *g*, so as to turn easily on the shaft, which passes through a suitable hole in the centre of said plate. A circular metallic rail

or bar is attached to the under-side of this plate, *k k*, so as to rest upon the rollers, and on the top of said plate the usual frame-work, *m m*, for elevating the box, *n*, of the car, is firmly attached, said car box being hung on the same in the usual manner.

It will readily be perceived that, by the above specified arrangement of machinery, the

car box may be turned to any desired position on the body or carriage frame, and the contents be deposited at any part or point of the road.

The following is the claim of the patent:—  
"I claim arranging a turning apparatus between the body or carriage frame of a railroad dirt car and the box of the same, substantially as above set forth, so that said box (or mouth of the same), may be turned to any particular part of the road, and the contents deposited thereon."

Mr. Finch offers to sell rights of States, &c., and more information can be obtained about the same by letter.

### Diving for Shells.

The following extract from "Roivings in the Pacific, a new work, relates the manner of diving for shells at the "Bow Island," so named by Cook:

"On arriving at the reef or knoll, the boat was secured by its painter to a projecting branch: and the divers proceeded to dive from it in all directions and, as they brought up the shells, so they threw them into the shallow water on the knoll until the shells became scarce; or they became tired and wanted to pull into another station. Shell-fish of various descriptions are attached to and wedged in the coral branches, apparently having grown with their growth. On a still calm day you may see to the bottom at ten or twelve fathoms, and the shell-fish when feeding reflects tints of the most brilliant and beautiful hue; and fish of every conceivable form and color may be seen sporting in the interstices of the coral branches.

It is a curious sight to watch the divers; with scarcely a movement they will dart to the bottom like an arrow, examine beneath every protruding rock, and on continuing their investigations, by a simple movement of the arm will propel themselves horizontally through the water, and this at the depth of seven or eight fathoms. I timed several by the watch; and the longest period I knew any of them to keep beneath the water was a minute and a quarter, and there were only two who accomplished this feat. One of them from his great skill, was nick-named by his companions the "Ofat," (stone.) Rather less than a minute was the usual duration. In fine weather they can see the shells, when, if the water is deep, they dive at an angle for them; and as the shells adhere firmly to the coral by strong beards, it requires no little force to detach them. I was astonished on one occasion at witnessing a diver, after one or two ineffectual attempts to tear away a large oyster, sink his legs beneath him, and getting a purchase with his feet against the coral, use both his hands and fairly drag it off. When they dive in very deep water, they complain of pains in the ears, and they sometimes come up with their noses bleeding; but it is rarely that you can get them to attempt such diving, let the shells be ever so abundant, they will come up and swear there are none; the exertion, from the great pressure, is too painfully distressing. It has frequently happened, after a set of worn-out divers have sworn that no more shells could be obtained, that a fresh set has come and procured from fifty to sixty tons, without difficulty."

### Chloroform a Propelling Power.

Experiments with chloroform as a propelling power, in the place of steam, are now making in the port of L'Orient, and there is reason to hope, from the success which has already attended them, that they will result in causing a considerable saving to be effected in cost and in space.—[Galignani.

[Mr. Galignani, chloroform is 300 sleepy a gas to compare with steam.