MISCELLANEOUS.

Arkansas.

From a recent travel in Arkansas, I am convinced that she possesses within her bosom the elements of a great empire. History presents no parallel to the advantages she now holds out to emigrants, in the way of getting rich lands, &c. Much the largest portion of the State is unsurpassed in the fertility of its soil and the extent of its agricultural resources; and the southern and eastern portions are now held to be the finest cotton lands on the globe. As a field for science, an opening for speculation, and capital, her claims are transcendant. Here, from her silver-crested hills and azure-robed mountains, science may pluck the gems. Here the hand of capital may be stretched forth to embrace rich and exhaustless mines of iron, coal, lead, marble, and other useful stones. To reap rich rewards, bring to light her vast wealth, develope her great resources, and make them available, her people hitherto apathetic, have now resolved to build a grand trunk railroad through the heart of the State, connecting the capital —Little Rock—with the Mississippi River, at Memphis, from which point railroads and rivers radiate in all directions. The country through which this road will pass is exceedingly fertile, and presents great facilities for cheap construction, requiring comparatively no cutting, being rich plains, prairies, and alluvial bottoms, crossing two or three beautiful and navigable, though small, streams, which can be easily bridged.

In crossing an extensive bottom, requiring an embankment, if alternate sections were made of wood—such as one hundred yards of a strong timber frame, and then fifty yards of earth,—a great improvement in railroad construction would be effected; this system would prevent vibration, and would also effect a great saving.

In a few years Arkansas will attain to be a State, great in her products, powerful in her influence, and confident in her powers.

Memphis, Tenn. R.

Railroad Accidents.

We cannot indulge in vituperous language towards conductors and engineers as some papers do, every time an accident takes place on a railroad. If we are to believe one paper all the accidents are caused by ignorant conductors—men below mediocrity in talent and education. Another paper strains to make the public believe that the majority of accidents are occasioned by intemperate engineers or inferior ones; the employees, at any rate, get all the blame for the accidents, the companies only get blame for not paying high enough wages so as to secure able men for conductors and engineers. We know that such conclusions and opinions are incorrect, and those who entertain them are ignorant of what they are talking about. We know that there are conductors and engineers employed on our railroads who are perfectly competent to fulfill all their duties; men who are highly educated and endowed with qualities of mind of the highest order. We do not wish to mention names, but we could easily do so.

It is a great wonder to us that there are not more railroad accidents, for when we consider how our tracks are all open, so many of them single, so many poor bridges, and beside all this, many of our railroads were built with curves and laid with rail for engines one-half lighter than those now used, and to run at one-half the present general speed, we say the conductors and engineers (taking the mass), deserve great credit for their vigilance and ability. Our railroad system is bad, and neither the conductors nor engineers should be blamed for this. When an accident occurs we want a strict investigation of it, and a prompt punishment for the guilty; but no man nor body of men should be condemned unheard.

Steamboat Explosions.

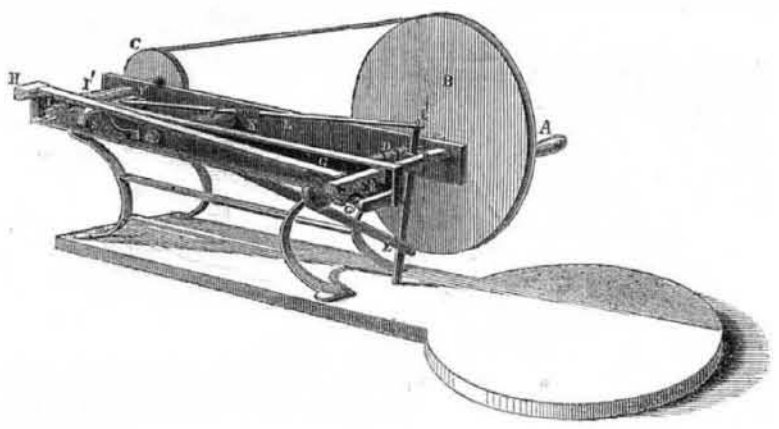
The steamer Glencoe exploded her boilers at St. Louis on the 3rd inst. She had 150 passengers; a great number were killed. She had just arrived from New Orleans.

The steamer Redstone exploded all her boilers on the same day as the Glencoe, while backing out of Scott's Landing near Madison Ohio. A great number were killed; 15 dead bodies have been recovered. When will our country be aroused to the iniquity of such catastrophies? See on another column.

American Cotton.

N. S. Dodge, Secretary of the U. S. Commission at the World's Fair, has published an article in the Washington Intelligencer about the Cottons that were exhibited in the Crystal Palace. There were samples from Asia, Africa, and the United States. Among the specimens of the East India Co., there were some very excellent kinds, of a mixed quality, but all exhibited carelessness in preparation, gathering, &c. There was a good sample from Peru, and some good qualities from Barbadoes and Jamaica. The African cottons were good, but not well prepared. For many purposes, he believes, it will meet with ready sale, as the quality is very good, and it is totally different from the cotton raised in our country. The soil, he thinks, is the cause of the difference in the quality of the cotton, and no soil in any cotton growing country is equal to that of the South, for raising fine long silky cotton.

CARTER'S APPLE PARER.



The accompanying engraving is a perspective view of the Apple Paring Machine of Charles P. Carter—formerly of Ware, Mass., but now of No. 18 Maiden Lane, this city N. Y., for which a patent was granted in October 1849. The machinery is placed on a bottom board or plate. A is a crank handle; B is a pulley driven by the handle; C is a smaller pulley driven by a band from B; I' is a spindle, on the end, I, of which are the prongs to hold the apple; H is the knife on the end of an arm, G. This arm is attached to a shoulder which has a segmental rack, G', on it, and this shoulder is fixed on a pin which turns in bearings; R is a small rack on a square sliding bolt. This rack is moved sideways, and by meshing into the segment, G', it turns the knife arm, G, giving it a half revolution, to make the knife act on the apple as it revolves on the fork, I. The knife is also guided according to the round shape of the apple by a rest, S. The bolt of the rack is moved by a screw, D, on the spindle of pulley B; E is an oscilating bar with a stub pin on its inside face, which fits into the groove of the screw, D, therefore, as the bar, E, is inserted between two cheeks of the bolt, R, the stub pin is guided by the screw to push the bolt to the left side, thus turning the rack, G', and operating the knife, H. When the knife has gone over the apple, the screw throws out the pin and the rack bolt R, springs back at once to commence a new operation. To bring back the rack bolt, it is attached to a flat arm, L, on the top, which has a spiral spring, K, on it, and another flat steel spring, E', below. These springs and guide bar give the knife arm steadiness, and bring it back suddenly to its position after every operation on an apple. J' is a clearer; it is a sliding head operated by the spring arm, L, which acts on a spring plate on the face of the said clearer, pushes it out when the apple is pared, throwing it off the prongs of the fork. This is a very simple and good apple parer. More information may be obtained by letter addressed to Mr. Carter, or applying at the place mentioned above.

Recent Foreign Inventions.

Improvement in Tanning.—George Laycock, late of Albany, N. Y., dyer, now of Doncaster, Eng., tanner, has taken out an English patent for the following improvements in treating hides and skins:—

Unhairing Skins or Hides.—The skins are first soaked in water and unfleshed, and broken up in the ordinary manner. The patentee then takes 7 lbs. of soda ash, pearlash potash, or any other strong alkali, and 6 lbs. of unslacked lime, and boils them in six gallons of water. He then adds to this mixture sufficient water to reduce the strength of the solution to 14° Twaddle's Alkali Hydrometer, and immerses the skins, handling them well at first, so as to expose to the solution every part of their surface. The skins are allowed to remain in the mixture until the hair starts at every part, when it is removed with knives, and the skins are then worked out in clear water, as is ordinarily practiced by tanners.

Sheep Skins.—To remove the wool from sheep skins, the patentee applies, with a white washing brush to the flesh-side, some of the above solution. In about two hours the solution will have caused the wool to start, when it is removed with knives, and the skins are then well worked out, as customary. This process effects a considerable saving of time over the system of limes at present adopted in the trade.

The Bait.—Instead of using hens and pigeons' dung, the patentee makes the bait by mixing with water a sufficient quantity of sulphuric acid to give it a perceptibly acid taste. The skins are immersed in this liquor, and will generally run down in an hour or two, but if they should not run down fast enough, more acid must be added, and the skins are then to be well worked out in clean water The acid is subsequently neutralized with stale urine, and the skins are again well washed.

Tanning the Skins.—For this purpose the patentee takes, for 100 calf skins, 100 lbs. sumac, 50 lbs. terra japonica, 12½ lbs. sulphate of potash, and 12½ lbs. alum, which he boils for half an hour in sufficient water to cover the skins. He then macerates in cold water 40 lbs. oak bark, which he adds to the above mixture, and immerses the skins therein, handling them well at first, and continuing to do so until the skins are found to be tanned, which will generally be in about six or eight days. The quantity of liquor above mentioned is sufficient for twenty cows, oxen or horses' hides, and for a hundred sheep, calf, or other skins.

The Grain.—The grain must be laid with weak liquor of the kind last described.—[London Mechanics' Magazine.

Another Terrible Steamboat.

The Cincinnati Gazette of the 5th inst. gives the account of one of the most terriffic steamboat explosions which has ever taken place. The steamboat Redstone lately commenced running between Cincinnati and Madison, and on Saturday at 12 M. left the latter place for Cincinnati on a trial of speed with about twenty cabin passengers. The number on deck is not known. The officers and crew numbered about twenty persons. She landed at Carrolton and took on a number of passengers, and then pushed out and started on. Upon arriving at Scott's Landing, four miles above Carrolton, at the foot of Craig's Bar, she was called in for a passenger, the Rev. Perry A. Scott, a Baptist minister, formerly stationed in Covington, and recently in Warsaw, Ky. Mr. Scott had been on a visit to his parents, and was returning to his charge. His parents and three sisters accompanied him to the landing to witness the departure, as the sequel proved, into the presence of his God. The Redstone shoved out and backed down from the landing about one hundred yards. A strong wind was blowing in shore, and it was with difficulty that she could back her way out. At the second revolution she made to start forward, her three boilers exploded at the same time, with a tremendous noise, shattering and tearing the boat literally to atoms. She sunk in less than three minutes, in twenty feet water. The ladies' cabin and aft part of the boat, from the main-deck up, in its shattered condition, took fire and burned down to the water's edge. In the explosion her chimneys were blown nearly across the river.

The awful force of the explosion can be conceived from the fact that a large piece of one of the boilers was blown half a mile, lacking five or six yards, from the wreck. Eleven bodies were blown into a cornfield at some distance from the water. Among them, those of the first and third engineers.

The people of Carrolton and the vicinity hurried to the scene; and twenty-five dead and wounded bodies were immediately borne to a small farm-house on top of the hill which rises back of the river, and which was converted into a hospital. The inmates of this house gave up their rooms, bedding, and every thing in their possession to the suffering. The scene here beggars all description. The mangled and ghastly corpses by the side of the wounded and dying, with inadequate medical aid and means for the care of the latter, the floor of the rooms covered deep with blood; this, and the view of the scattered wreck and the awe-stricken multitude on the shore below, made up a scene of horror before which the intensest paintings of Sue and Dickens pale and grow dim.

The river for some distance below Carrolton was strewn with the fragments of the boat, machinery, furniture, and clothing.—Small pieces of bedding and clothing were found at the distance of very nearly half a mile back from the river, while the trees along the shore were littered with the fragments of the same and of the wreck.

The cause of this explosion is very evident; it was recklessnes, that culpable public, and, let us say, legalized murderer. Almost every week we have to record some such calamity. Within three weeks, no less than 100 persons have lost their lives by steamboat explosions on the river between Cincinnati and New Orleans. All the laws which have been enacted, and all the safety-valves which have been invented have failed to reduce the number of explosions—there are just as many now as ever. We speak of these explosions frequently, our readers will see that we do it from principle, or we would not take up so much room in our columns with such a subject, but while our people are sent in scores into eternity every week by explosions, because they trust their lives to engineers and steamboat captains, we cannot hold our tongue —and will not. Our government in their zeal for the lives of some American sailors, cruelly treated in Japan, are said to be fitting out an expedition to punish those Asiatics; this shows a zeal for something more than a humane principle, or why is our citizens at home allowed to be killed so recklessly by such terrible explosions as that of the Redstone.

Indian Hemp.

An experiment was made in New Orleans a few days since by a druggist, with one of the narcotics so much used in the East—viz: Indian Hemp, or canabris indica, in order to test its application to medicinal purposes. He took six grains, (a very large dose) which produced great weight about the head, followed by irresistable bursts of laughter, during which, however, he was perfectly conscious of all that he was doing, or felt or thought.

Error.

The residence of George O.Donnell was given in our list of claims for March 2nd at New London, N. Y. It should have been New Lebanon, N. Y.

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