

Scientific American

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The New York Times and the Patent Laws.

In the New York Daily Times of the 26th ult. there is a long article on the Patent Laws, there is also one as long in the Times of the 29th ult., in answer to a correspondent. The Times asserts that patents have been and are an evil, and that it would be better to abolish the present system of Patent Laws. It does not propose the abolition of the present Patent Laws, however, without offering a substitute, like all great statesmen; and, alas, such a substitute! But we almost forgot, it offers two substitutes; let us consider them apart. Here is the first one:—

"If we are not prepared to abolish the patent system at once, there would be a slight, nay, more than a slight advantage in confining the business of the office to the granting of caveats. Let the inventor have no other bonus than what he may make in retaining his secret, and getting it fairly and fully in the market, a year before his competitors. If his improvement be valuable, and meet a mechanical want, the profit he may thus secure will, we fancy, equal the largest desert. And then, at least, the enormous taxation now levied upon the public will suffer a very considerable reduction. The working poor man will the sooner enter upon equal terms of competition with the speculating rich one. And there will be quite little, perhaps no litigation."

This extract, which we quote from the Times of the 26th, is one of the most sublimely ridiculous emanations that we ever saw in print. Until now, we could not have believed that there was a single American man, woman, or child, that could read, so profoundly ignorant of what a caveat is, and of our Patent Laws. But we live in strange times, Benthamite-doctrine times.

A caveat is simply the description of an invention not yet completed, which the inventor sends to the Patent Office with a fee of \$20, requesting it to be filed in the confidential archives of the Patent Office, and it contains this statement, "prior to making application for a patent for the same."

If another person makes application for a patent for a like invention during the term of one year from the filing of the caveat, the Patent Office, before acting on the said application, sends word to the person who files the caveat, to prepare his model and specifications, and make his application for a patent within three months. This is the *Caveo—beware—* of the Patent Office; it is no protection whatever, and there is no such a thing as a writ of *Caveat* granted; it is no bonus, and never can be. Perhaps the Times means a new kind of *Caveat*; if so, we would like to know what kind of bonus he could make out of it. What in the name of common sense is evolved by the expression, "let the inventor have no other bonus than what he may make in retaining his secret, and getting it fairly and fully in the market a year before his competitors,—the profit he may thus secure will, we fancy, equal the largest desert."

There can be no doubt but there is a great quantity of *fancy* here. The Times surely means to have a new law enacted, by which an inventor will be compelled, whenever he makes an improvement, to describe the same to the Patent Office, which will grant a *Caveat* for one year—a beware to the public,—after which the Patent Office will reveal the same for the benefit of the public. This is the plain inference to be drawn from the language of the Times,—or it is nonsense. It is nonsense, for no law can be made that will compel an inventor to reveal his secret in one year; and no inventor would then be so contemptibly foolish as to reveal his secret at all in one year, or twenty years, while he can keep it to himself. The *caveat-bonus* of the Times, is therefore one of the modern Benthamite wonders of literature. The expression about the capitalist and working-man and enormous taxation, are quite unintelligible to us; we do not know what the Times means. But this is not the only remedy for the present patent system proposed by the Times;

here is another, and it is a perfection one:—

"These half-way measures, however, are seldom satisfactory. All the evils were better reached and cut away at once; and to effect this, nothing will answer but the abrogation of the entire code. As a substitute for it, we know of nothing better than a system of bounties. Replace the present troop of officers and examiners, with a commission composed of a due number of practical mechanics, and mechanical philosophers, before whom the inventor may lay his claims. Let them be prepared with an accurate knowledge of what has already been achieved, and with what improvements are required in mechanics, science, or art; and in passing upon the invention, let them determine not merely, as now, its title to originality, but to real and universal utility. If it be of intrinsic value, let them recommend its purchase by Government for the people; and let the Treasury pay for it. If it be of secondary importance, or of no importance whatever, let them so decide it, and leave it to make what way it can among purchasers without the official sanction."

The cloven foot peeps out here, whether intentionally or not. Yes, here it is. The present patent system does not allow political Galpinizing and Gardenerizing; it allows no spoils to the party victors: they do not get their hands into the Treasury to rob the people, in giving Uncle Sam's money out to favorite miserable inventors. The "practical mechanics and philosophers" of the Commission would be men as ignorant of their business as the Times is of a *Caveat*. This system of government rewards would answer well for political leaders, but the people of these United States are too enlightened to adopt such views. Patents do not tax anybody; but those who, like the Times, are ignorant of our Patent Laws, and who allow themselves to be cheated when they could easily prevent it by making themselves acquainted with the said laws. Here is another extract:—

"The inventor of real merit will invent, just as the author of real genius will write, even though there be positive laws against them. There is a necessity in these things. Accident is the parent of a vast number of discoveries; deliberate invention of the few; and no pecuniary reward will stimulate the latter into activity. The necessities of mankind, not the laws, prompt the loftiest reaches of inventive talents. And to the true man, who evolves a discovery calculated to benefit his race, the sense of such a benefit conferred, and the gratitude of his fellows, are amply sufficient compensation."

There is very little truth in the whole of this extract. The inventor will not invent, nor will the literary genius write with positive laws against them; it were just as true to say "the prisoner will exercise his natural instincts of liberty even if his limbs were manacled to the stone floor of a dungeon." Some discoveries have been made by accident, but all our great and useful mechanical inventions have been the result of much study, toil, expense, and research. Necessity is not at all times "the mother of invention." What use had Whitney for a Cotton Gin for himself, Watt for a Steam Engine, or the painter Fulton for a Steamboat? Rewards excite—not the necessities of mankind—inventive genius. It is related, in the life of Watt, that whenever he took up any invention, after he saw it would not pay, he threw it aside at once,—and wise and right was he. The Times speaks of inventors as if they were a lot of knaves and fools. But look at the compensation which the Times asserts is sufficient for a true inventor, "the sense of a benefit conferred, and the gratitude of his fellows are amply sufficient compensation," for his discovery. How would the Editor of the Times like to be remunerated by this kind of *sufficient* compensation, for the ideas he evolves. The mouse would often stagger from his flour barrel, with the tear in its eye, we guess, if he, the Editor, depended on the *gratitude* of his fellows for sufficient compensation.

As a matter of justice and right, we hold to the doctrine that inventors should be paid for their inventions by the community. Inventions do not tax, but relieve, the people. If a person does not wish to pay for a patented improvement, why, he need not use it: the pa-

tee cannot compel any one to use his invention; and those who use it and pay for it, do so because they consider the improvement relieves them of a tax,—it gives a good new improvement for a clumsy, inefficient machine. We have now cheap newspapers by inventions for making type, paper, and printing machines, while no improvement in composing has been made in two hundred years. Would those improvements have been made, and would we now have such cheap newspapers, if the improvers had depended for *compensation* on the gratitude of their fellows? We throw not. It may do very well to raise up an ideal *true man*, but human nature will be human nature, and the man who speaks of such compensation for useful discoveries, surely did not see the conclusion any person would draw from such a sentiment—"thou hast no gratitude."

Manilla Rope.

A correspondent inquires of us if we know of any compound or solution "that would prevent manilla rope becoming tender and weak by exposure to heat and smoke, especially to those engaged in the foundry business," and adds, "iron chain cannot be depended on." We are confident that good iron chain can be trusted. We have never tried any personal experiments with the ropes; it is our opinion, however, that if rope were steeped in alum, (say about 1 lb. of alum to 20 lbs. of rope), dissolved in as much water as would cover the rope, in a tub, and let it lie there a few hours, then take it out, wash it in cold water, and then dry it, that it would stand the heat and smoke a great deal better. The rope would have to be thus treated before it was put up on the crane. The alum is a good substance for imparting a partially tanned and non-combustible character to vegetable substances, such as rope. This mode of treating the rope may not be convenient, in that case weak alum water might be applied to the rope with a brush, and then let it dry on the crane. We know of no plaster composition (like tar) that would answer. But it must not be forgotten, that all rope will wear out by continual usage, hence a sharp eye must always be kept upon it—as sharp as that upon the *flattow* of a coal pit, where life is in continual danger.

The Streets of New York.

We have been in many cities at home, and in the Old World, but no one can at all come up to our great empire city for dirt and dust, it is the *Magnus Apollo* of all others. The great benefactor of our citizens is a heavy shower of rain; it appears to be the only generous and efficient scavenger we have got. In wet weather, our most noted street—Broadway, is generally six inches deep with mud, and when this dries up, and a good breeze comes sweeping along, it is quite as great a feat to travel up our grand promenading street as to journey across the Great Desert. American travellers are exceedingly foolish to journey to Egypt for a sight of the sandy plains. Only for the intervals of mud, the camel might be a more useful animal among us than the horse. We have repeatedly called attention to our dirty streets, but we suppose it will be all in vain to expect a reform, and yet the remedy could soon be applied. Whose fault is it? Not the city government's altogether. Let the merchants in Broadway do their duty; let them unite together and get rid of the evil in their street, which they can easily do, and this will do much for the credit of our city. It is our opinion they would save the amount in the better sale of their goods, if they themselves should pay to keep the street clean.

Russia Sheet-Iron.

MESSRS. EDITORS—From your remarks on "Russia Iron and Patents," in the Scientific American of the 24th April, I infer you have no knowledge of the manufacture of "Imitation Russia" sheet-iron in this country, I therefore take the liberty of informing you that I have (with my brothers) been supplying that great desideratum since 1842, in which year we obtained United States Letters Patent for the successful discovery of a process of giving to sheet-iron (in its manufacture) that beautiful finish and durable gloss and lustre, heretofore only known in Russia; last

year we obtained another patent, from the U. S., for an improvement made in our *modus operandi*—and we now have in successful operation the "Delaware Iron Works," in Delaware; "Constitution Iron Works," near this city, and the "McKeesport Iron Works," near Pittsburg, Pa.—making an article equal to the Russian, of which we sold in New York alone, last year, 200 tons or more. Whether we have hit upon the secret mode of Russia or not, we do not pretend to know—nor do we believe that it is yet known out of Russia; there have been so many different candidates claiming that honor, with as many different modes that nothing less than the most substantial and conclusive proof of the discovery of the secret, should satisfy any one. And we not think Congress should pass a law granting the exclusive right to any one to manufacture, this article by the Russian process, without such proof being furnished, and not then if such law should conflict with patents already granted. ALAN WOOD.

No. 3 North Fifth street, Phila.

[Mr. Wood is greatly mistaken if he supposes we ever discuss any question without being well acquainted with it. If he had been a careful reader of the Scientific American, he would have noticed that our subjects are carefully considered, and all our remarks well digested.

We perfectly agree with him, about Congress not granting the exclusive right to any one to make Russia Iron, without the requisite proof spoken of, and there is no fear that Congress will do so. We also assure him that the requisite proof has already been furnished. Before we penned the article referred to, we examined specimens of the iron made by the said process, also specimens of Wood's sheet-iron.

We also assure Mr. Wood that we know the whole process by which it is made, and if it be not better than that of Wood & Bros., then he need not be afraid of his craft, for assuredly it will do him more good than harm; the process must stand or fall upon its own merits. Is Mr. Wood afraid of it?

If Congress should grant a patent to-morrow which would conflict with any one in existence, then the one granted by the special act would be an infringement of the other, and the users of it liable for damages. The specimens of the sheet-iron referred to, which we saw, were very excellent, and stood burning in the fire better than a specimen from McKeesport Works; Wood's sheet-iron is a beautiful article, and does credit to the gentlemen who discovered the improvements.

Another Explosion.

On the 25th ult., as the Prairie State was passing out from Pekin, on the Illinois River, the flues of her larboard boiler collapsed, and sad to relate, some twenty persons were killed and wounded. The ends of the boiler flew out, and but for a quantity of hay stored in the boat, the loss would have been much greater.

A bill is now before the United States Senate, (which we hope will pass), for the prevention of accidents by explosions. We have received a copy of this bill, and will have more to say about it next week. We have also received the pamphlet of A. Guthrie, engineer of the Chicago Water Works, on the causes of explosions on the Mississippi, their prevention, &c. We will present the substance matter of this able pamphlet to our readers at an early date.

Sad Death of a Good Mechanic and Inventor.

Junius S. Alcott, of Oriskany Falls, who has left behind him a name on his lathe, during a fit of temporary insanity, committed suicide on the 26th ult., by throwing himself between the water-wheel and pinion of the woolen factory in that place. He was killed instantly. His loss will be much felt. We knew him well, and deeply regret his sudden and unhappy departure from among us. His partner, Mr. Couch, was in this city when the unfortunate event occurred.

We have received the thirty-first Annual Report of the Mercantile Association and supplement to the catalogue. This institution is one of the best in our city, and we are happy to know that it is in a highly prosperous condition; it numbers about 4,000 members, and has a library of over 30,000 volumes.



Reported Officially for the Scientific American

### LIST OF PATENT CLAIMS

Issued from the United States Patent Office

FOR THE WEEK ENDING APRIL 27, 1852

**VALVES FOR STEAM ENGINES.**—By M. W. Baldwin, of Philadelphia, Pa.: I claim the arrangement in the valve chest of a steam engine, of a duplex valve, one part of which is actuated in the usual manner by valve gear, to admit steam from the boiler, to act directly on the other part and force it to open and close the steam or exhaust passages, substantially as described.

**FILE CUTTING MACHINERY.**—By John C. Blair, of Pittsburgh, Pa.: I do not claim a pattern for regulating the depth of the cut of the chisels; but I claim the combination of the pattern located between the cam and the chisel carriage, in the manner described, with said cam and carriage and the file carriage by which the pattern is moved, the whole arranged and operating substantially as set forth.

**SHUTTLES FOR WEAVING HAIR CLOTH, etc.**—By D. L. Dewey, of Hartford, Ct.: I claim the combination of the sliding bar with the springs when used in connection with stops attached to the shuttle boxes, or other convenient fixtures, so that the motion of the shuttle will slide the bar in such a manner that when one of the springs drops one piece of the wool or filling, the other spring will receive and confine another at the other end, so that the pieces may be carried through alternately from each side, and released or dropped in the right position to be beat up, when the whole is constructed and arranged as described.

**HOLD-BACKS FOR SLEDS.**—By Perry Dickson, of Blooming Valley, Pa.: I do not claim connecting the dogs with, and operating them by the backward pressure of the tongue; but I claim attaching the dogs to the roller rigidly, instead of to the runners, as is usual, and connecting the tongue to the said roller by hinges, or analogous joints, in such a manner that the backward motion of the tongue, in relation to the body of the sled, turns the roller on its axis and forces the points of the dogs so attached to it, into the snow or ice of the road, for the purpose set forth.

**SMUT MACHINES.**—By John M. Earls, of Troy, N. Y.: I do not claim a perforated case, the same having been heretofore in use; neither do I claim a spike rubber; nor a ventilator with spiral arms; nor scourers made of sheet or other metal. Nor do I claim the oil box at the top of the machine; nor the oil pipe for the lower bearing of the shaft; but I claim, first, the projecting screen chambers, in combination with the arrangements for separating the rubbing chamber from the fan chamber, whereby the grain is prevented from being affected by the blast from the fan chamber, while it is passing through the rubbing chamber, and is only brought in contact with the current of air where it ascends to take away the chaff and other impurities, substantially as set forth. Second, I also claim, in combination with the scouring surfaces, the beating forks, for the purpose of beating the grain and breaking the hulls, while falling from the rubber to the scourers, whereby the berries are more effectually cleaned from adhering impurities, as set forth.

**STEERING APPARATUS.**—By N. T. Edson, of New Orleans, La.: I do not claim any particular part of the apparatus as new; but I claim the combination of the forked and unforked pawls, with the ratchet, and with rubbers placed face to face and on the same side of the wheel.

Second, I claim the combination of the spring, the arms, and the cap piece with the relieving springs, whereby the pawls are supported with sufficient firmness, but at the same time permitted to have sufficient play to admit of the action of the said relieving springs, all as substantially set forth.

**RAILROAD SWITCHES.**—By J. F. Klein, of Trenton, N. J.: I claim the bars or shifters, constructed, arranged, and connected to the switches of a railroad, in the manner and for the purpose as described, so that if the train run in either direction, and the rudder be placed in either position, as described, and if the switch or switches are not in a proper position, the rudder will act upon the shifters and move them gradually, as the train approaches, so as to move and place the switches in such a position that the train may pass on unimpeded without the risk of running off the track.

**GINNERS FOR LONG STAPLES OF COTTON.**—By Calvin Willey, Jr., of Chicago, Ill. (assignor to himself and Uriah Walker, of Babcock's Grove, Ill.): I claim regulating the feed of a cotton gin for ginning sea island cotton, by means of an endless apron, which may be set to or from the feed rollers, to suit the quality of the staple and the quantity to be fed in to be cleaned, and still be driven by the same mechanical movement, as described.

I also claim, in combination with the covered feed rollers which receive the material from the apron, and carries it into the machine, the series of alternate brushes and elastic beaters on the same shaft, for combing out the fibre and knocking off the seed, whilst it is still held by said rollers, as set forth.

I also claim, in combination with the inclined chamber, through which the material is driven by the blast from the wings of the beaters, the inclined chamber having a cross blast through it, from the fan blower, to complete the entire separation of the fibre and the seed, both chambers being provided with screens, for the purpose set forth.

**WARM AIR FURNACES.**—By Alex. Kelsey, of Rochester, N. Y. (assignor to James Cowles): I claim the use of an equalizing flange, with the tubes attached, by which the air on each side of the radiating cylinder is warmed to about the same temperature, before entering the warm air-condensing flues.

**MACHINES FOR PRESSING TOBACCO.**—By Ephraim Parker, of Rock Island, Ill. (assignor to Alfred A. Parker, of St. Louis, Mo.): I claim the use of the revolving mould disc, combined with its revolving bed plate, with the scraper and roller, or their equivalents, for keeping the moulds free from the liquorice or juice of the tobacco, as described.

I also claim the use of revolving sinkers, constructed substantially as described, combined with the pan and cushion, or their equivalents, for keeping the same clean, and the combination therewith of mechanism for moving the sinkers a quarter of a revolution at every eight (more or less) number of pressings, as described.

I also claim the conductor, formed of endless aprons or belts, or their equivalents, for conveying and retaining the plugs and pressure, until they are thoroughly consolidated, in the manner and for the purpose set forth.

**STUD BRACE FOR BOILER FLUES.**—By Andrew Lamb & Wm. A. Summers, of Hants Co., England; patented in England, Dec. 9, 1848: we claim the stud brace for bracing the flat surfaces of steam boilers, as described.

**BRUSHES.**—By Freeman Murrow, of Williamsburgh, N. Y.: I claim the double adjustability of the brush by means of the combination of the ball and socket joint and the sliding joint, or their equivalents, as set forth.

**FLOAT GAUGES FOR STEAM BOILERS, etc.**—By T. J. Sloan, of New York City: I am aware that a float placed within a boiler, or within a vessel communicating with a boiler, has been employed to regulate the position of ratchet hands, operated by an independent mechanism, to open and close a valve cock, or regulate the motion of a pump, the said float being employed, simply to engage or disengage the said ratchet hands; but when so employed, the said float has been so arranged as to act on the said mechanism outside the boiler, etc., and hence subjected to the difficulties above pointed out.

I do not, therefore claim the employment of a float to regulate the action of an independent mechanism as a means of indicating the height of water, and regulating the supply thereof, when such float acts upon such mechanism outside of the boiler; but what I claim is the employment, substantially as described, of an independent float, within a steam or other boiler, or other vessel, which, as its position is varied by the change of level of the water, shall act as a check or stop to the motion of a mechanism combined therewith, and operated by an independent motive force, outside of and passing through to the inside of the boiler, substantially as described, to determine the supply of water to be given, or to give the required indication or alarm, as specified.

I also claim the method described of preventing the action of the mechanism outside, which is actuated by an independent force, from re-acting on and changing the position of the float, that it, the float, may be free to follow the varying level of the water, as specified.

**SELF-LOADING AND DUMPING CARTS.**—By B. T. Stowell, of Wadman's Grove, Ill.: I claim the manner of opening and closing the slatted bottom of the cart body by means of a bar which is jointed to the rear edge of the foremost slat, and which, when its rear end is unfastened, descends vertically and allows the whole series of slats to be operated simultaneously by the action of the weight within the cart body pressing upon the same; and when the rear end of the said bar is drawn rearwards and upwards simultaneously actuates the whole series of slats, and thereby closes the bottom of the cart body.

**STEERING APPARATUS.**—By A. Swingle & N. Hunt, of Boston, Mass.: We are aware that the steering gear and rudder head have been connected together and the tiller made to rise and fall with them, and therefore do not claim such an arrangement. But we claim the construction and arrangement of the tiller and rudder head, as described, in combination with steering gear entirely separate from the rudder head, the tiller being connected with the latter and attached to the former, in such manner that when the rudder is unshipped or raised unusually high by striking the bottom, the tiller will be disconnected therefrom, without danger of breaking either the steering gear or the rudder head, or being itself broken.

**BOXES FOR JOURNALS.**—By Henry Turner, of Charlestown, N. H.: I claim making the cap box in the manner described, that is to say, of alternate pieces of hard and soft metal, arranged in a helical position, by which, together with the circular end pieces, the soft metal is kept in place, and friction and injury to the axle prevented, substantially as described.

**CULTIVATORS.**—By T. J. Ball & J. Post, of Pittsfield, Mich.: We claim the construction of the long metallic inclined blades, on the after part of the machine for cutting the sods and lumps, and pulverizing the ground, as set forth.

**DESIGNS.**  
**COOKING STOVES.**—By S. H. Sailor (assignor to North, Harrison & Chase), of Philadelphia.

**PORTABLE FURNACE.**—By James G. Abbott & A. Lawrence, of Philadelphia, Pa.

#### Patent Law Reform.

**MESSRS. EDITORS.**—The remarks in your paper of the 17th inst., referring to the 8th and 12th sections of the proposed Bill for the amendment of the Patent Laws, direct attention to matter of considerable importance. Extending, or varying the subject of reform, as regards these laws, I would intrude upon your valuable space by offering a few observations on the present rules and provisions relating to the filing, &c., of Caveats. What a chapter of disappointments could the confidential archives of the Patent Office disclose, were the veil of secrecy withdrawn and all the embryo bantlings of inventive genius made bare! How many a novel but impracticable idea should we find! And yet, new or old, practicable or impossible, the requirements of the law are the same. An inventor has conceived, in general outline, what he believes to be a new and useful mechanical device; he obtains the protection of the law afforded him by caveat; proceeds, free from the dread of piracy, to experiment, and finds—alas, poor Yorick!—that practice fails to establish what theory had promised. This caveat, he has been told, was gratuitous protection. (What a utopian fallacy is law "for nothing.") The twenty dollars paid were simply two-thirds the application fee in advance; but the bubble having burst—the imaginary invention having proved itself a "gay deceiver," two courses of procedure alone are left, which are, either to sacrifice the twenty dollars paid; or, for the recovery of that, become cent-wise and

dollar-foolish, by submitting to furnish the office with a model of a device that won't act and a specification of a "new and useful (?) " improvement descriptive of the same. Ten more dollars having been paid, a withdrawal of the twenty may then be made, and the scientific or mechanical idiot made a sentinel in the "tombs," to scate away more successful applicants or weaken the claims of perfected discoveries.

Messrs. Editors, I would respectfully inquire from you, is there no room for reform in the law relating to Caveats? G.

Washington, D. C., April 24.

[The reform for a Caveat, is to require good drawings for the invention, so far as it is completed, with a particular description and claims. The caveat, then, would be like a patent specification in contested cases—is all we can suggest at present—Ed.]

#### The Lakes and Salmon.

**MESSRS. EDITORS.**—I am somewhat surprised to see in your paper of the 24th inst., the article headed "Mystery of the American Lakes," from the "Welland (C. W.) Advocate;" you so seldom err on subjects of philosophy, that we might indulge an occasional hoax, if we could feel sure you did not believe in it yourselves; but to tell about a "subterranean passage between the upper lakes and the ocean," through which salmon and herring can pass, is starting a fish story that the famous captain of a whale ship, who held the sea serpent at the bottom of the ocean fifteen hours, would hardly endorse. Having spent forty years of my life along the shores of those upper lakes, and having never found a man old enough, or cunning enough to have caught a salmon (of the lower lake species) in any of the upper lakes, before the opening of the Welland Canal, I am willing to believe that through this canal their first entrance was effected,—but had they been plenty as cat-fish and sheep's heads, I should have been satisfied to consider their existence in those waters, as dating back to the time when the ridge that forms the Falls of Niagara was ocean's shore; or, that an Indian or a fish-hawk had accidentally deposited, above the Falls, booty from the lakes below, rather than suppose an under-ground tunnel some two or three hundred miles long, and sufficiently large to admit the passage of the unaccounted flow of water which the writer seems to think is not evaporated and "does not pass through Detroit river." As Lake Huron is at least 380 feet above Lake Ontario, no large body of water could pass from one to the other without occasioning a vast whirlpool at one end of the passage, and an immense boiling jet at the other; and any periodical passage of herring and salmon would be less likely to account for the flux and reflux of the lakes, than the increased amount of snows and rain that fall some years contrasted with others. Had the writer contrasted the steady and uninterrupted flow of the Detroit river, with the gushing and diminished flow of the fitful streams which feed the lakes, and then deducted for evaporation on the liberal scale of Nature's works, he would probably have found the under-ground passage between Lakes Huron and Ontario too small for an old salmon to swim up.

J. E. HOLMES.

Holyoke, Mass., 1852.  
[To friend Holmes, we must say, this is not a question of philosophy, but one of fact, like the statement of a witness. We made no remarks upon the probability or improbability of a subterranean communication between the lakes, apart from the statement "are herring and salmon found in lakes and rivers above the Falls?" We are now informed that salmon pass up through the Welland Canal, and the herring must also pass through the same source if found above the Falls. Subterranean rivers are not wonders; but if salmon were found in the upper lakes, and they having no communication with the ocean, this would be a wonder—such an one as our faith would be too weak to embrace, for the salmon only comes to fresh water to spawn.]

#### Editors.

The life of an editor is comparatively short. He wears out before his time. The exacting toil he pursues, which is rarely, or never broken by a solitary day of relaxation, shatters his nerves, exhausts his vital energies, and

makes him gray-haired almost in middle age. To him the course of nature is reversed, and night is turned into day. He labors when other men sleep. Nothing tells sooner on the constitution than this. The close room in which he usually sits, the stifling odors of damp newspapers from the mail, and the blinding glare of the gas-lights increase the wear and tear upon his system, so that he is a fortunate member of his profession if he does not give out entirely before he is fifty years old. Nothing but distinguished success and the consequent ability to lighten his toil by employing substitutes, can save him from this irresistible doom.

[The above, taken from the Boston Museum, is a true picture of an editors life. Who coveys it?]

#### Remington's Bridge.

Some few years ago the Remington Bridge was spoken of all over the country as a mechanical wonder, and the model excited much attention in London. One was built at Montgomery, Alabama, of which the State Register gives the following account:—

"Remington's Bridge, after standing for months in a very tottering condition, has now broken in two about the middle, and fallen into the ravine. Soon after its completion it was tilted to one side by the wind and its own weight, and never righted—the slope being too great to allow the passage of vehicles. It stood unused, a monument of humbuggery, for more than a year; and we presume that its destruction will convince even the most decided believers in Remington's theory, that his plan will not answer for long and heavy structures, which, as in the case of the bridge here, will break with their own weight, after losing their original balance, by the action of the weather. The bridge, we believe, was never accepted by the Council, and the city, therefore, loses nothing by its unfitness and demolition. It was built under the supervision of Remington himself, and must have been a costly work."

#### Iron Flags.

There is no end to the new purposes for which iron is beginning to be used. At Cincinnati, they are taking up the broad flag stones, which are laid down for foot passengers at the crossings of the streets and substituting iron plates. The Cincinnati Commercial says:—

"The broad iron plates, which are laid from the sidewalk over the intersections of many of our streets, is one of the best investments the city ever made. If physicians and others, who have much driving to do about town, do not appreciate the comfort of these plates, the springs of their wagons and carriages do.

[If these plates are not very rough on the surface, they will soon wear slippery; in that case, pedestrians must look well to their feet in wet and sloppy weather, or down they will go. Foot passengers wear out cast-iron plates faster than carriages and horses.]

#### A New Clock for the City Hall.

We notice, by the late proceedings of the Common Council that arrangements have been made with Messrs. Sherry & Byram, of Sag Harbor, L. I., to place one of their highest grade clocks in the cupola of the City Hall. Our city has always needed a general "Regulator," and from the high reputation of those gentlemen, our citizens may soon expect to possess the great desideratum—a universal standard of time, as a guide for one railroads, steamboats, &c., as well as for all branches of business is what we all devoutly wish for.

By private letters from Nineveh, we learn that Colonel Rawlinson, who is now conducting the excavations abandoned by Mr. Layard, "has opened out the entire place of sculpture of the Kings and Queens of Assyria." "There they lie," we are told, "in huge stone sarcophagi, with ponderous lids, just as they were deposited more than 3,000 years ago."

A physician of Prague has just died a real "martyr of science." He had been in the habit of taking strong doses of poison, after swallowing an antidote, in order to note the effects. On the 23d ult., he took so large a quantity of morphine that all the efforts of some medical friends present at the exhibition could not save him.