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Hecker's Self-Raising Flour.

In some of our recent issues we have called attention to this article, the subject being important in itself, but more especially as the Self-Raising Flour manufactured by Hecker & Brother, at their Croton Mills, seems likely to become of very general use. In our paper of the 22nd May last, we threw out some suggestions touching the existence of a patent, and the ingredients which might or might not be safely used for the purpose of lightening bread. Under what patent the Heckers manufactured this flour, and what those ingredients were, we had not then been advised. Hence our desire to furnish the public with such explanations as we could obtain or give on the subject.

It will be remembered that we had not then examined or used this flour, and were not, therefore, prepared either by experience or experiment, to express any opinion as to its merits.

But our purpose was to obtain information as well for our own satisfaction as for the protection of the public.

The recent use of this "Self-Raising Flour" in our family, and a deliberate examination of the subject, have satisfied us, beyond all question, that it is a most desirable article, not merely for the convenience of the thing—an important consideration certainly—but especially because the best bread, biscuit, &c., it has been our good fortune to meet with, are thus produced. Indeed, it seems to us that no good housekeeper, after having used this flour, would willingly fall back upon the old and less perfect method of fermentation in the preparation of bread.

While we are thus enabled to assert our decided preference for the patented flour, above the common flour, and for this improved mode of lightening bread over the old methods, we deem it to be our duty to caution the public against spurious imitations of it, which we perceive that eminent Professor of Analytical Chemistry, at Rutgers College, N. J., Dr. L. C. Beck, whose letter is before us, suggests the probability, for, like all articles of superior utility and value, this will doubtless have its counterfeits. The slightest care will suffice to detect the spurious article, without even an examination of its quality, for the "Self-Raising Flour" has the brand "Patent" as well as the address of Hecker & Bro., upon the barrel, bag, or package, which, we presume, no one will be daring enough to forge.

We were much struck with the small quantity of raising ingredients used in the manufacture of the patent flour, and with their result in the bread. This we find to arise from their minute and thorough incorporation with the flour, which must result from the use of very improved, perfect, and powerful machinery; and such evidently is the machinery used by the Heckers in this process. Hence the same quantity of ingredients unskillfully used, as in the case of families attempting their mixture with flour, would be wholly ineffective, besides the chances that the ingredients would be inferior or adulterated, and the proportions inaccurate, and, consequently, failing in the important point of neutralizing each other.

We have already sufficiently disavowed the statements contained in the communication of H. A. Smith, which, owing to inattention, found its way into our paper of the fifth of June last. If that correspondent referred to the "Self-Raising Flour" manufactured by the Heckers, he was laboring under an entire mistake, or must have been actuated by improper motives. But we must add that the apprehension that we might have done Hecker & Brother injustice, in being the means of bringing that letter before the public, led us to give so much attention to this subject, and that, finally, we felt it to be our duty to call upon Mr. Smith for an explanation. In that interview he agreed to sign a paper to be prepared by us, retracting what he had said prejudicial to this flour. Such a retraction we had hoped, ere this, to have obtained and published.

We may, however, advert to this subject

again, hereafter. The Messrs. Hecker & Bro. have prosecuted improvements in their departments of business with such devotion and ability, that nothing could be more foreign to our wishes than to throw any impediment in their way. Being themselves men of science, and thus and otherwise possessing peculiar advantages, they have made great progress in the improved manufacture of flour, farina, &c. Hence it was, that at the World's Fair, where the genius, skill, and industry of all lands met in fierce competition, and where our productions, at first, were deemed inferior, it was found that Hecker & Brother had produced, from their Croton Mills in this city, the best Genesee Flour in the world. It would gratify our national pride less if we could have competed with the Englishman in the fine polish of cutlery—with the Frenchman in work of exquisite taste and beauty—with the dusky weavers of the East in the creation of their finest tissues; or if we could have exhibited the greatest diamond extant, than to have thus triumphed in respect to this great staple—the staff of life. We owe a debt of respect and gratitude to men who have thus, in high places, against strong prejudices, and after unprecedented criticism, vindicated the American name. If it could be once asked, "Who has read an American book?" no one can hereafter affect to question our success in this branch of our manufactures.

Steamboat Racing.

The steamboat "Henry Clay" took fire on Thursday, last week, about 12 miles from this city, while coming from Albany, and, sad to relate, [no less than seventy persons lost their lives. The way in which the accident happened was this: the Henry Clay and the Armenia, opposition boats, left Albany together, and raced nearly the whole way; the Henry Clay passed the Armenia, and was ahead of her, about two and a half miles below Yonkers, when she was discovered to be on fire in the boiler room; the pilot immediately turned her head towards the shore, and ran her full force against the bank, with her bow foremost and stern in deep water. The passengers who lost their lives were on the after part of the vessel, and all communication with the bow was cut off by the fire. She was in full flames in three minutes, and the lost were drowned by throwing themselves into the water. It was a terrific scene, and the calamity has created a greater sensation among our citizens than any event which has occurred here in six years. If the pilot had laid her alongside the shore, probably all on board would have been saved, but the stern being left in deep water, and the majority being women and children, they crowded upon one another, and being helpless to save themselves, found a watery grave.

The direct cause of the accident was the criminal recklessness of the officers in racing—there can be no doubt of this. The fire originated in the boiler room, where the heat was so intense, during the race, that persons could scarcely approach it. Meetings have been held in this city to pursue those who have been the direct cause of this accident but nothing—no, nothing, will be done to them, we believe, by way of punishment. The lips of justice appear to be sealed with the blood of our fellow citizens; no respectable person is punished in our country for criminal recklessness in sending fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, and children into eternity, by burnings, explosions, nor anything else. It is high time that something were done, and done promptly and effectually to wipe out the foul blot of steamboat and railroad murders from the escutcheon of our country.

Potts' Process for Forming Piers and Embankments.

Two weeks ago, on page 355, we made a few remarks about Dr. Potts' process for sinking hollow iron piles. Since then Mr. Pontez, the owner of the American patent has called upon us; he had just arrived from Charleston, S. C. He has been sinking piles for a railroad bridge over the Pee Dee river, and the foundations for a lighthouse in Baltimore are being perfected upon the same principle. In the course of a few weeks we will have something more to say upon this new

system of engineering, and will perhaps be able to illustrate some very important improvements made by Mr. Pontez, in the application of the building of docks, something much wanted in the city of New York.

Science—Its Truths and Falsehoods.

It is no doubt true, that certain theories have been looked upon as science in one age, which have been set aside, and have given place to other opinions in another age; there is a philosophy "falsely so called," but truth never changes—it is immutable, and knowledge is but truth, therefore scientific knowledge must be true, unalterable, and unchangeable. New discoveries cannot alter old truths—they are eternal. The grand object of reason—that for which it was given to man, is truth, to search after it—"to prove all things and hold fast that which is good." The danger of science, is the acceptance and maintaining of views which are not the truths, but the falsehoods of science—the wolves in sheep's clothing. This was the case with the old philosophers, who opposed Galileo, because they believed, without sufficient proofs, in the theory of Ptolemy. It is not right, however, to embrace every new alleged discovery, merely because it is new, if opposed to some old one, because some old theories have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Facts themselves never grow old, and they never can be supplanted; thus there has been a continual round of night and day ever since our planet commenced its flight in space, but the causes whereby night and day are produced have not always been understood. Whenever a cause, however, is discovered, we apprehend that our knowledge can go no further—it is then fast as the everlasting hills. The difference between the scientific and the non-scientific man consists in this, the former has embraced and is acquainted with the facts relating to science; the other is perfectly ignorant of those facts, or has embraced falsehoods instead of facts, just like a man who has accepted the perversions instead of the facts of history.

It is a dangerous thing for the community when ignorant, egotistical men can and do flame their falsehoods of science abroad, perverting and deceiving the silly-minded with their very audaciousness. There have been blind leaders of the blind, in all ages, and there are plenty of such characters in our own day and country, but if ever there was a period in the history of this world when ignorance was inexcusable, it is the present, and yet it is truly surprising to see what a number of profoundly ignorant men there are in the world, usurping conspicuous positions, and boldly confronting truth with falsehood.—There are plenty of men whose babblings and daddlings of science—whose loud voices and small brains—whose vague and sounding nonsense, appear to be the very qualifications which some people suppose should belong to philosophers. They have the faculty of saying things which they neither understand themselves, nor any body else, and this, by some, is held to be science—philosophy and profundity of thought. If undefined cogitations, and unrefined disquisitions, as portentous of results as the idiot's dream, be philosophy, then they are philosophers.

In a number of cases we have exposed the cant and rant of such fellows—such pretenders to scientific knowledge, and we shall have to do so frequently. We perceive that the centrifugal force question is being discussed again by some of our cotemporaries; another California balloon is soon to leave Washington for the land of gold; another electric light may soon start up in the East, West, North, or South, and then for another furious excitement about wonderful discoveries, and so on. On page 380 Vol. 6, Scientific American, we stated that, in twelve months from that date, the public would thank us for the exposure we made of the Centrifugal Force humbug. The twelvemonth has now elapsed, and we ask our friends, if all that we said respecting that machine has not come to pass? The whole affair is now exhibited to be putrid with imposition. It is to the disgrace of our city and country that there are men who sit in high places, pretenders to scientific lore, who could not tell whether the centrifugal theory were right or not.

When we exposed the rottenness of the cen-

trifugal force theory, we were abused through the columns of the New York Tribune, and a number of trashy papers in this city, but the truths of science are eternal, and we trusted to time to nail the centrifugal falsehoods of science, as was Sisera, to the ground. It has been done; not a solitary machine to bring centrifugal force out of nothing—costing nothing—has yet been constructed and never will be; the miserable imposition, and the more miserable and audacious promoters of it have sunk into their proper places. True science has triumphed; some high pretenders to knowledge and science were tried by that touchstone of mechanical philosophy, and their small amount of true learning is now appreciated,—they, too, will yet sink into their proper places.

The Universe and Man.

This earth might have been made a wild dreary waste, without beauty or grandeur to cheer the heart of man; but the evidences on every hand prove conclusively that the universe and man, as man is constituted, have been formed by the same Almighty Creator, with all their laws in harmony, to promote the happiness of intelligent creatures. The stars, when they come out at night in the blue heavens, with their millions of flaming torches, to light up the mighty dome above, impress the heart of man with feelings of wonder and admiration. The sublime mountain, the roaring cataract, the rustling breeze, the forest with its singing leaves, the songs of warblers in the groves, the purling rills, the grassy meadows, the flower's perfume, yea, the black thunder cloud, as well as the calm sunshine, were all made for man, for his pleasure, his happiness, his immortal glory. The very cold of the arctic and antarctic regions—those vast solitudes of ice and snow—were made for the benefit of man; the sun looks down upon the oceans of the tropics, the clouds and vapors rise, the cold currents from the North and South—"the wind, in its circuits," as Lieut. Maury says, "rush in to fill up the vacuum below, while the hot winds fly away to the North, and fall down in gentle showers, refreshing the thirsty ground." The winds thus formed, and the vapors thus carried, bring health to the cheek, and abundance to the fields. The mountains are also nature's reservoirs; they husband up the snows and rains, to pour them down again in silver streams and rolling rivers, to irrigate the soil, or transport the inland commerce of a continent to the broad ocean; and the oceans themselves, their wide expanse of waters—their ever-restless beatings on wild shores—were all made for the benefit of man. Without such an expanse of ocean covering two-thirds of the surface of our globe, lands now blooming with verdure and beauty, would be nothing but dreary sandy wastes. The winds carry our ships from shore to shore—they keep the deep from stagnant putridity, and their very voices have a charm, when deep calleth to deep; "there is beauty on ocean's vast verdureless plains, when lashed into fury, or lulled into calm."

The summer clouds, as they stand and move, red and grand against the setting sun, when they rise like Alp upon Alp, or castle upon castle, with flaunting banners and gleaming lightning behind them, like the far flashing of artillery, impress every heart with feelings which tell us that these things were made for the delight, the admiration, and benefit of intelligent beings. The very curves of mountain ranges, hills, and winding rivers—those bounding lines of beauty, were made for some important purpose,—they harmonize with those laws or endowments—call them what we will—which are enstamped upon the heart of man; in the language of John C. Price, "there is beauty and music o'er all this delectable world,"—and so there is, but man often tramples those beauties and delights beneath his feet, in the same way that the profligate treads recklessly upon virtue. He who would enjoy the beauties of nature, must, like the Patriarch Isaac of old, often go out to muse at the evening hour, and "look from nature up to nature's God."

Dr. Hubbil, in the Eclectic Journal of Medicine, states that a decoction of cleavers (galium aparine), if applied to the face, and intensions of it drank, removes freckles from the skin.