

MISCELLANEOUS SUMMARY.

SHIPPING OF NEW YORK.—From the records of the Custom House it is ascertained that 5,406 vessels arrived at New York from foreign ports in 1862, the total tonnage of which was 2,552,481 tons. Of this number 2,692 were American vessels, representing a tonnage of 1,472,989 tons. This is a total increase of 429 vessels and 68,797 tons over 1861. The total number that cleared last year was 5,016, the tonnage of which was 2,487,852 tons.

THE LONDON UNDERGROUND RAILWAY.—This railway, which has been already described in our columns, was opened to the public on the 13th of January. The trains run every ten minutes. On the first day 38,000 passengers were carried on it, and the average every day since has been 26,500.

AMERICAN SILVER IN CANADA.—The *Toronto Globe* gives the following explanation of the cause of so much American silver being in Canada:—"In Canada we had been accustomed to take United States silver at par. Availing themselves of this condition of things, brokers from the other side, having first bought up all the silver they could lay their hands on, brought it over here, exchanged it for gold, which they took back home with them and re-exchanged for silver at a relative discount, repeating the process again and again with very large profits. The result was inevitable. Silver took the place of notes in the hands of the public, thereby decreasing the circulation of the banks, which refused to receive it on deposit. For a time, in fact, our merchants and traders had to be their own bankers. This state of things, of course, could not last; there was more silver in the banks than was needed, and like everything else whereof the supply exceeds the demand, it went down in price. The discount now generally charged upon it is four per cent. American silver, in consequence of a greater relative amount of alloy, could not, like gold, be exported to foreign countries, where it would be rated at its intrinsic worth, and consequently it did not rise to so high a premium."

AMERICAN PETROLEUM AS FUEL IN PARIS.—A French paper says:—"An American gentleman (Mr. J. L. Linton) has lately visited Paris for the purpose of submitting to the French Government his new method of generating steam. Instead of the ordinary fuel, he uses petroleum oil. The points which his patent particularly dwells on are these:—From water of equal temperature the time required for generating steam to 20 lbs. pressure above the atmosphere was found by actual experiments to be in favor of the oil—17 minutes to 31 minutes. The cost of coal oil, extracted from one tun of cannel coal, delivered in any port in France, would be less than the coal, in consequence of the cost of carriage for the latter; and the use of oil thus extracted would generate infinitely more steam than the coal itself. The saving in bulk over coal is 250 per cent., and in weight 500 lbs. of oil are equivalent to 2,000 lbs. of coal. Ten men, with the use of oil, in the fire-room department of a ship, are equal to fifty with coal. The largest steamers now running between New York and Liverpool require 1,200 tons space for coal, whereas, with the use of oil as fuel, 450 tons would be sufficient. It can be applied with great advantages for locomotives on railways, and stationary engines, as well as for ordinary heating purposes. The plan has been examined by a Government committee in Paris."

HOW COAL WAS SENT TO THE "QUEEN OF THE WEST."—The running of the Vicksburgh blockade by a coal barge has already been noticed by telegraph. The manner in which the feat was accomplished was as follows:—

It was at first suggested to send a barge-load of coal to her in tow of an iron-clad; but then the iron-clad would have had to run the blockade twice. Finally, Admiral Porter determined to trust the barge to the mercy of the current at midnight of the 17th, and his plan was successful. "Broad Horn" drifted past the batteries, and was met at a safe point by three men from the ram, in a small boat, who steered her safely to her destination. The rebels may have seen her lazily making her way south, but concluded she was not worth the trouble of picking up, and let her go by unmolested. By this manoeuvre the ram was saved the risk of having to run the blockade twice, and perhaps from being destroyed.

It is reported that this gallant ram has been since captured by the enemy, through the treachery of the pilot.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.—The contract just awarded here, includes 535,000 pounds India rice at 8c. per pound; 1,500 barrels New Orleans sugar at 13c. per pound; 2,000 barrels ditto at \$12 95 per 100 pounds; 416,000 pounds very choice Rio coffee, roasted and ground, at \$42 88 per 100 pounds; 31,407 pounds ditto green, at 35c. per pound; 1,462 barrels extra mess beef at \$14 25 a \$14 95 per barrel; 22,500 pounds smoked sugar cured hams at \$9 74 per 100 pounds; 50 barrels beef tongues at \$16 50; 2,000 bushels choice white beans at \$3 12 per bushel; 3,000 bushels ditto at \$2 92; 9,000 gallons superior Bourbon whiskey at \$2 per gallon, and 170,000 gallons good common ditto at 90c.

The Gunboats "Ossipee" and "Juniata."

The Secretary of the Navy officially declares to the Senate that the disabling of the *Ossipee* resulted from the cutting of the cylinder slide valves, caused by the softness of the iron.

Four bulls of vessels have been fitted with engines built on this plan. Ten have similar machinery, of which eight have been tried, two only giving way. The trouble with the *Ossipee* and *Juniata* arose from the fact that their builders were inexperienced, and had neither proper shops, tools, mechanics nor engineers.

With regard to the failure of the *Pensacola*, Chief Engineer Isherwood reports that she was built at Pensacola, and the machinery at Washington, from designs by E. N. Dickerson and Fred. E. Sickles, under a contract with Secretary Toucey, in 1858. One of these persons was the patentee of an alleged improvement in engines; and the other a lawyer, with intimate relations with Messrs. Mallory and Yulee, of the Senate Naval Committee, and the plan was tried, in opposition to the opinions of the Engineers of the Navy. Owing to numerous blunders, the machinery was two years and nine months in preparation. Its cost was \$328,460. She was with difficulty got to New Orleans, and was there reported to be useless until her machinery was replaced.

We understand, also, that the committee appointed to examine Mr. Isherwood's plans for steam naval machinery have reported against them. What is the matter with the engineering talent in the United States? Have we no engineers who understand their business well enough to design steam-machinery that will be serviceable? We imagine the trouble lies in the fact that simplicity of arrangement is not sought for—through the conceit of those who prefer to conjure up new notions out of their own stupid noddles—rather than rely upon the well-settled principles that rule in our best engineering establishments.

The Accident to the "Great Eastern."

The directors of the *Great Eastern*, on the return of that vessel from New York, deemed it their duty to hold an investigation into the circumstances under which she met the accident off Montauk, in the latter part of August last. The result has been the entire acquittal of Captain Paton from all blame; we append a copy of the letter addressed to him by the company, and we echo the wish that he may have a long and prosperous career in the command of the noble ship:—

GREAT SHIP COMPANY, Liverpool, Jan. 26, 1863.

DEAR SIR:—The directors, as you are aware, having considered it their duty to investigate the circumstances attending the accident to the *Great Eastern* off Montauk Point, on the morning of the 27th of August last, met on board the ship on the 23d inst., for the purpose of holding the inquiry, and in which they were kindly assisted by Mr. H. C. Chapman, Lloyd's agent at this port. Having fully investigated all the circumstances attending this untoward event, the directors have arrived at the conclusion that no blame whatever attaches either to you or to any of your officers; but that the accident is solely attributable to the ship striking on a sunken rock (in the fairway channel), which is not laid down in the charts. The directors have great pleasure in instructing me to communicate to you this decision; and trusting you will have a long and prosperous career in the command of the *Great Eastern*, I am, dear sir, yours very truly,

J. N. YATES, Secretary.

The manner in which the damage to the *Great Eastern* was repaired, and the fact that the inner skin of the vessel was not in the least injured, have contributed greatly to restore the original confidence in, and high estimation of, the vessel.—*Mitchell's Steam Shipping Journal*.

APPLICATIONS FOR THE EXTENSION OF PATENTS.

The following persons have applied to the Commissioner of Patents for the extension of their patents for a term of seven years:—

Packing for Rotary Pumps.—Caroline Cary, administratrix of Albigeance W. Cary, deceased, of Brockport, N. Y., has applied for the extension of a patent granted to said A. W. Cary, for an improvement in packing for rotary pumps, on May 15, 1849. The testimony will close on April 13th, and the petition will be heard at the Patent Office on the 27th of that month.

Bending Wood.—Thomas Blanchard, of Boston, Mass., has applied for the extension of a patent granted to him, for an improvement in bending wood, on Dec. 18, 1849, subsequently surrendered, and re-issued on Nov. 15, 1869. The testimony will close on May 11th, and the petition will be heard on the Patent Office on the 25th of that month.

Persons who wish to oppose the extension of these patents should do so without delay. Copies of the claims in each case will be promptly forwarded from the Scientific American Patent Agency upon the receipt of \$1.

A New Plan for Carrying Petroleum to Market.

A correspondent having seen an article in a recent number of the *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN* entitled "A Pond Freshet," suggests, in view of the disasters arising from that method of getting the oil to market, that a train of pipe be laid along the river or in any other direct line most desirable, into the upper end of which the oil men could pour their oil, taking a receipt for the number of gallons and withdrawing the same quantity from the common reservoir into which all the oil found its way at the terminus of the conduit. This seems to be a sensible suggestion; there may be some local objections to it, but none occur to us, and it appears quite feasible. A company could be formed for the purpose of carrying the oil in this way, and it would doubtless be a source of profit to all concerned.

LOOKING OUT FOR SLIGHTS.—There are some people always looking out for slights. They cannot pay a visit, they cannot receive a friend, they cannot carry on the daily intercourse of the family, without suspecting some offense is designed. They are as touchy as hair-triggers. If they meet an acquaintance in the street who happens to be pre-occupied with business, they attribute his abstraction to some motive personal to themselves, and take umbrage accordingly. They lay on others the fault of their own irritability. A fit of indigestion makes them see impertinence in everybody they come into contact with. Innocent persons, who never dreamed of giving offense, are astonished to find some unfortunate word or some momentary taciturnity mistaken for an insult.

CRIPPLES ON GARRISON DUTY.—Twenty-four soldiers, crippled in the defense of their country, offer (through the columns of the *Washington Star*) to garrison forts, so that men more fitted for active service may be enabled to leave for the field. This offer has been made with the belief that there are many soldiers throughout the country in similar disabled condition who will gladly volunteer for this purpose. This is a spirit worthy of the days of the Revolution. Had this same spirit animated the hearts and purposes of the entire North, the Government would not, as now, be leaning upon a slender thread.

"AS CLEAR AS MUD."—The attorney of the Internal Revenue Bureau receives many curious letters, and is asked all sorts of queer questions concerning the national stamp license-tax. One of them runs thus:—"My two boys sell essences; are they drugs? And if so must I put stamps on them?" Another letter inquires: "Are newsboys who sell papers peddlers? Must we get a license before we can sell them?" Another wants to know: "If my wife hires a doctor who hasn't any license, have I got to pay him for it?"

An English paper recently stated that Great Britain shipped about 13,000,000 pounds (65-pound bundles) of gunpowder, directly or indirectly, to the South in the first three months of 1863.