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WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR INVENTORS—ADVICE GRATIS AND ADVICE FOR PAY.

For the information of our new subscribers, we would state that it is the custom, at the office of this paper, to examine models or drawings and descriptions of alleged new inventions, and to give written or verbal advice as to their patentability, without charge. Persons having made what they consider improvements in any branch of machinery, and contemplating securing the same by Letters Patent, are advised to send a sketch or model of it to this office. An examination will be made and an answer returned by early mail. Through our Branch Office, located directly opposite the Patent Office in Washington, we are enabled to make special examinations into the novelty and patentability of inventions. By having the records of the Patent Office to search, and the models and drawings deposited therein to examine, we are enabled to give an inventor most reliable advice as to the probabilities of his obtaining a patent, and also as to the extent of the claim that it is expedient to set up when the papers for an application are prepared. For this special examination at the Patent Office we make a charge of Five Dollars. It is necessary that a model or drawing and a description of the invention should accompany the remittance.

The publishers of this paper have been engaged in procuring patents for the past SEVENTEEN years, during which time they have acted as Attorneys for more than TWENTY THOUSAND patentees. Nearly all the patents taken by American citizens in FOREIGN countries are procured through the agency of this office.

Pamphlets of instructions as to the best mode of obtaining patents in this and all foreign countries are procured through the agency of this office. We also publish a larger pamphlet containing the PATENT LAWS of the United States with a digest of facts relative to the rights of inventors and assignees. This pamphlet is important to every person who owns a patent or is about to apply for one. Sent by mail on receipt of six cents.

For further particulars as to what can be done for inventors at this office, see advertisement on another page, or address

MUNN & Co.,
No. 37 Park Row, New York.

STRIKES.

Strikes are constantly occurring among our workmen, with what real benefit to them we know not. We hope, however, that they may succeed in getting through these troublous times unincumbered by debt or severe hardship. Upon none do the trials incident upon a disturbed political condition fall with

more severity than upon the laboring classes, and it is a very empty sort of consolation to tell them that their sufferings can all be traced to the working of natural laws; that because there is little or no demand for labor their wages will be small, or that the reverse is true, when business becomes brisk again. They should have the sympathies of the community, and those who are concerned in the distribution of public or private charities should see to it, that none of their charges are overlooked. The price of all kinds of food and the necessaries of life are raising rapidly, and those whose incomes are restricted must feel the additional tax very keenly. We hope that the strikers will come to some amicable arrangement with their employers, whereby their troubles may be satisfactorily settled. The laborer is certainly worthy of his hire.

DRILL YOUR CENTERS.

If machinists, and others in the habit of using engine lathes, only knew how much time and trouble are saved by the simple practice of drilling a center, they would never omit it when about to turn a shaft. In the first place, to make a center with a center punch is to be guilty of a very unmechanical proceeding; the center in work to be turned should be round and true; it ought also to conform to the shape of the dead or live center of the tool, which it is to be turned in. This feature cannot be obtained with a center punch. The latter are always ground up to a sharp point on a stone, and are more apt to be triangular, than cylindrical in shape. Notwithstanding all these bad features, the punch is employed with the utmost confidence by a great many mechanics—by far too many—as a substitute for the drill. "It takes too long to drill the center," says Shiftless, and then whack goes the hammer, and a three-sided conical kind of a cavity is indented into the shaft, and the clumsy workman proceeds to turn it down. In all probability he does not get two inches in length on it, before the work comes leaping out of the lathe and lies in the bed a faithful witness of his want of skill and forethought; the result is that the center has to be renewed and the shaft runs out of truth. Now how much better it would have been to have drilled the shaft at once, and so made a perfect job—one that would last. Very often work goes out of the machine-shop and comes back again to be done over, because the person for whom it was made did not know what he wanted; or for other reasons, then the utility of a drilled center is fully apparent, as the shaft may be put in the lathe and it will run true, whereas in a center made with a punch there is no reliance of any kind to be placed. Again we say, then drill your centers!

IRON FERRY-HOUSES.

All the ferry-houses and other buildings on the wharves of New York are constructed of frail and perishable wooden materials. Several years ago we recommended the erection of fire-proof iron store-houses on our wharves, and also urged the substitution of stone piers for the timber structures provided for our shipping. A sensible reform has been commenced by the Union Ferry Company in the erection of a handsome and spacious iron building in place of the old wooden ferry-house at the Fulton Ferry. This new iron building was commenced in the month of August last and is not yet completed, but it is in a very advanced state. It is comparatively lofty, being 60 feet in height to the peak. The sides and roof are formed of corrugated iron plates supported on iron columns sustained and braced with suitable tension rods. The roadway from the street to the boats will be covered the whole length, and passengers will pass from the ferry-house to the boats without exposure during storms. A dome is to be erected in which a large clock will be placed fronting Fulton street. It will have a glass front and be illuminated at night so that the hours may be seen, (like those on the City Hall clock) by night as well as day. The general arrangement is nearly similar in character to the present ferry-houses. That is there is a main central building where the foot passengers enter and where the ferry fees are taken; behind which are the usual rooms for ladies and gentlemen. At the extreme sides are also entrances for foot passengers and between these and the central main building are the covered suspension carriage-

ways to the bridges. As soon as this structure is completed the Union Ferry Company will proceed to erect similar fire-proof structures at the South and the Hamilton avenue ferries on the New York side. This example deserves to be copied by all the other ferry companies, and we trust it will also be extended to the objects we recommended long ago, namely, fire-proof wharf-stores for the protection of merchandise in the course of discharge from vessels and for shipment.

HOE'S NEW PRINTING PRESS.

Newspapers are, most essentially, an American "institution," and it is only through the extraordinary facilities afforded by the press-maker for their rapid production, that they can be printed so cheaply that nearly every family in the land is enabled to peruse them. In the country, especially, publishers require a printing machine that is simple in its mechanical parts, and which can be readily adapted to the various calls made upon them for job work, when the regular weekly issue has been run off. To do job work, however, it has been necessary heretofore to have separate presses for special purposes, and it has long been an object with inventors to produce a press which should combine, as far as possible, a number of peculiarities which would render it capable of being used for many different kinds of printing. This desideratum has been attained, and we think from what we have seen of the performances of the press illustrated on another page, that it will prove a promising candidate for popularity. It is designed expressly for country newspaper publishers, who cannot, as they well know, confine their business to one class of work. The press runs remarkably easy; we took hold of the fly wheel and readily drove the apparatus with one arm. This is an extremely important feature where steam power is not convenient. Those interested in this matter will thank us for calling their attention to it.

POISONOUS COFFEE.

In consequence of the great advance in the price of coffee—amounting to some two hundred per cent over former rates—many cheap substitutes for it have been recently manufactured and offered in the market. Rye coffee, consisting of roasted rye, sometimes mixed with a little genuine coffee and chicory, has been the principal substitute and is extensively sold. A case of poisoning has recently occurred in a German family in South Brooklyn, which is said to have resulted from the use of rye coffee. It has been investigated by Dr. Baur, the health officer of that district, who has made a report on the subject. He states that Dr. M. Palmedo informed him of the case, and he visited the family and found Mr. George C. Croft, his wife, two of his daughters and one son under the influence of what he supposed was a poison. Other members of the family had been affected, but had become convalescent. One of the young ladies was very ill, her face was bloated, she appeared as if affected with dropsy, and was at times delirious and feverish. Dr. Baur, with Dr. Palmedo, instituted a search for the cause, and his suspicions rested upon some rye coffee which the family had been using. Chemical analysis and microscopical examinations being impracticable, he tested its effects upon a dog. The animal to which the dose was administered exhibited symptoms similar to those of the persons in Mr. Croft's family, and upon this evidence, together with the flavor of the coffee, Dr. Baur has concluded that the rye coffee contained a poisonous ingredient, and he intimated, although he does not assert positively, that there was ergot in it. He found out the store where it had been sold, and condemned the whole stock on the grocer's premises. Dr. Baur cautions the public against the use of rye coffee. He states that this grain when pure makes a harmless substitute for coffee, but ergot and other poisonous seeds grow up with it, and unless these are separated the coffee made from it is dangerously poisonous. It appears to us that Dr. Baur has left this question in an unsatisfactory condition, according to his published report, for he has not positively asserted that he found any specific poison in the rye coffee which he examined, and his conclusions are just as legitimate against the use of rye for bread as they are against its use for coffee.