

Scientific Warfare.

We should like to see a soldier rigged out in the numerous devices which have appeared since the commencement of the war, in our excellent contemporary, the *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*. We should like, also, to know what he would weigh in full working order; i.e., able to do such small repairs as his arms might need, to make gun-powder, to cut off a leg or perform other surgical operations, to distill foul water, to purify beef, to cook such food as soldiers use, to patch shoes and breeches, and having withal wherewith to make a bed, a table and a few chairs. It has always puzzled us to know how the man of war would transport all of these useful appliances; but the difficulty is now removed. The last number of the *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN* contains the "Portable Breastwork," which is, in brief, a wheelbarrow with a piece of boiler plate about as big as a barn door, so fixed as to be adjusted at any angle, thus affording a complete protection to the infantry man in the field. We see no objection to the use of this apparatus, provided the ground is in all cases smooth and hard, with no dead bodies in the way, and no high winds. The many advantages attending the use of the "Patent Life-preserving Wheelbarrow" can hardly be enumerated. With this, the soldier could easily transport a small stove, writing desk, library, hammock, tent, a barrel of apples, a bushel of doughnuts, reports of investigating committees, hospital stores, &c. The order of battle need not even be disturbed at night; since each soldier could camp where he stood. In event of defeat, a rout would be utterly impossible; for no cavalry nor foot troops could ever make their way over such *chevaux de frise* as would be presented by the debris of half a dozen regiments of wheelbarrows. The only danger would be that the unscientific enemy might some night, when each man was sound asleep in his wheelbarrow, take it upon them to wheel off our troops; but doubtless the inventor of the machine could arrange a patent brake for the wheels.—*Railway Times*.

All that the facetious editor says is true. Look also at what our inventors are doing among the appliances and utensils of the laundry and kitchen. We have lately been impressed with the idea that "Biddy" has rather a good thing of it in the kitchen, and our suspicions are now resolved into certainty; she has only to turn a crank and the garments issue from the squeezing machine much "drier," as she phrases it, than even her brawny arms could twist them; she need not henceforth crack and strain her mighty thews in vain. So also with the hand-irons. The "exile from Erin" is no longer in danger of overheating the delicate cuticle with which Nature has covered her fingers and arms; the heat-intercepting envelope (illustrated in this number) shields her from injury, and protects her from the too fervent heat of the iron. The portable clothes-dryers come to the aid of "Biddy," and enable her to hang out her garments from the windows, so that her fragile limbs are not endangered by descending the stairs with heavy burdens; and the washing, churning, and we don't know how many other contrivances of the kind, secure to the modern housemaid an immunity from over-exertion that must be highly delightful. Even milking is now done mechanically, and we saw an individual, only the other day, vending a whistling machine (think of that, ye puckerers!), and it made a melodious echo unapproachable by any human sibilation. Where the inventors will cease in their efforts to utilize muscle is, after this latest achievement, quite inscrutable.

We thought we had rather exhausted the catalogue of invention when we chronicled the performance of the whistling machine; since the above was in type we have received a suggestion from a correspondent that some public-spirited person should invent "a pair of tongs for handling chicken and spare-rib bones," as it is very disagreeable to have the fingers greased at the table. We call the attention of inventors to this latest requirement of domestic economy, adding only that if they will also make a machine to masticate tough beef, it will not be unprofitable in boarding-houses and hotels. How is it, Messrs. Inventors, shall we have the tongs for table use?

A COMPLIMENT WELL EARNED.—Mr. William Gorman, the Chief Engineer of the steamship *Roanoke*, has been presented with a splendid gold watch by the agents of that ship, Messrs. Ludlam & Heineken, for services rendered during a severe gale, in which the vessel was caught. We know Mr. Gorman very well and think that the compliment was one well earned and deserved by him; he is a hard-working indefatigable officer in whom our steamship owners can place confidence.

LARGE sums of money are expended annually in obtaining the fertilizing material, guano, from distant islands, in the sea; while in our cities vast quantities of materials embracing the same properties are allowed to pollute the sewers and flow unclaimed into the sea.

MISCELLANEOUS SUMMARY.

CALIFORNIA WOOL.—In 1855 there were only 360,000 pounds of wool raised in California; in 1863, there were 64,000,000 pounds raised. The *California Wine and Wool Register* says respecting wool:—"The past three years have been marked by a steady improvement in the quality of our wool, and in a less degree by a more careful attention to putting sheep in a marketable condition by the farmers. Our farmers have expended more money upon fine woolled breeding sheep within three years than any other State in the Union has done in ten years; but they will lose much of the benefit of these investments, unless they give to the shearing, tying and packing of their wool much more attention than they have yet done."

THE EXACTIONS OF JOURNALISM.—Every editor knows and has felt the truth of the following assertions, which we copy from an exchange:—"It is one of the hardships of the profession that its working wheels—brains and hearts—are not allowed to lag for sickness or stop for calamity or sorrow. The judge may adjourn his court; the school and the workshop may close shutters; the mourner may veil features, and turn friend and stranger from the door, but the journalist must forget before the *to-morrow* of today, must write gaily and freshly as a news-monger on the trifle of the hour, whatever burden has been laid on that same hour by Providence."

THE "WHAT IS IT" A FAILURE.—The famous submarine battery, which was intended to remove rebel obstructions in the James river, Va., has turned out a complete failure. She cost the Government some fifteen thousand dollars, exclusive of armament. Upon her recent trip she sank at once to the bottom (instead of floating just beneath the surface), and it has since been found impossible to raise her. The frame is fast breaking up by the action of the breakers. She is near Coney Island, and there will soon be nothing left except her iron-work and guns, which may possibly be recovered.

MATERIAL FOR SHIPS OF WAR.—It is proposed to supersede the use of armor plates for ships by willow-wood of the thickness of a foot, having a steel rolled plate of one inch and a half inserted in the middle of the wood. This wood has the property of resisting compression to a great degree, and possesses the same cohesive and repulsive properties as steel. Whalebone, from its cohesion and tenacity, has likewise been proposed as an extra backing for the iron plates, placing the same between the iron and the teak or willow. Horn has its advocates as an additional backing.

TAX ON PATENTED ARTICLES.—Commissioner Boutwell has made the following decisions under the Internal Revenue law in regard to the manufacture of patented articles. Whenever a person is the owner of a patent or of the right to manufacture a patented article, and employs other persons to make such patented article, the patentee or owner of the patent right will be regarded as the manufacturer, and the tax will be assessed upon the sales as made by him or his agents.

An ice mirage was lately witnessed in Buctouche, Kent county, N. S., by which a portion of Prince Edward's Island, fourteen miles distant, seemed to be suspended in the air and very near, so that the clearing and buildings could be distinctly seen; and with a moderately powerful spy-glass, cattle and vehicles could be distinguished moving about.

THE Bedouins, says Ritson, are a most alert and military race, and yet it is an undoubted fact that the quantity of food usually consumed by the greater part of them, does not exceed six ounces a day. Six or seven dates soaked in melted butter, serve a man a whole day, and he esteems himself happy when he can add a small quantity of coarse flour or a little ball of rice.

A Mr. Stokes of Trenton, lately sued Judge Narr of the *True American*, for damages, for having put his marriage among the deaths. Although the editor offered to make it all right by putting Stokes' death among the marriages, the indignant Benedict would not accept the *amende honorable*. Damages six cents.

THE Canadian journals continue to complain of a "plethora of silver."

THE NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.—The annual meeting of the New York State Agricultural Society was held at Albany on the 11th inst. The report of the Treasurer shows that the receipts for the year were \$17,169 02; expenditures, \$13,354 96, including \$4,486 77 paid on premiums of the last State Fair; cash on hand, \$3,814 06, including the State appropriation of \$2,000 for flax machinery premiums. Edward G. Faile, of Westchester, was elected as president, and B. P. Johnson as corresponding secretary. The next State Fair will be held at Utica.

A SHOCKING RECORD.—The suicides in France now average ten a day; the number for the present century, thus far, is over three hundred thousand. Not a day passes in which a suicide may not be directly traced to want of success in life; to the false moralities inculcated by wicked or ignorant writers; to the failure of parents in obtaining a proper influence over their children; to unrestrained appetites and passions; and to the inability of multitudes "to get along in the world" prosperously, for want of thoroughness of preparation for their calling or station in life.—*Hall's Journal of Health*.

THE AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.—The Committee on Agriculture in the House of Representatives has prepared a bill defining the duties and providing for the officers in the Agricultural Bureau. It authorizes the employment of a chief clerk, a botanist, chemist and entomologist, at a salary of \$2,000 each per annum; also a disbursing clerk and a chief of statistics at \$1,800 each; a translator and draughtsman at \$1,400 each, and six clerks at \$1,200 each. Here will be a nice opening, we fear, for a new batch of enterprising politicians. They will have a finger in the pie, somehow.

"HEAVY DAYS" IN THE NEW YORK POST-OFFICE.—We find the following in the last *United States Mail*:—"Some idea will be given of the immense labor in the New York Post-office, when the fact is mentioned that, on one day lately, in addition to the usual work, there were received by steamer from Newbern, N. C., 66,000 letters; Port Royal, 16,000; and three mails from New Orleans by different steamers, bringing about 15,000—making, in all, nearly 100,000 extra letters in one day. On the following morning, by the arrival of the *Saxonia* with the European mails, over 30,000 letters were received."

THE skate factory of Messrs. Williams, Morse & Co., in Skowhegan, Maine, has manufactured over 30,000 pairs the present season, all of which were sold to a single firm in Boston. They make nineteen different varieties of skates, and nearly every process in the manufacture is performed by machinery.

It is stated that, with 125 presses, the Treasury Department is just able to print enough green-backs in two-thirds of a day to pay the expenses of the Government for one day.

WITHIN one month past about 14,000 bales of cotton have reached Cairo, Ill., on their way to a northern market.

NEW LONDON, Conn., is the choice of a majority of the committee on the location of naval depots for a new navy yard.

C. H. ADAMS, of Cohoes, N. Y., has a contract to furnish the army with 36,000 knitted shirts.

PAPER collars have advanced from 25 cents to 40 cents per dozen.

Starvation Prices.

Let those who are fond of grumbling at high prices peruse the following extract relating to the cost of provisions during the siege of Gibraltar by the French and Spanish in 1777:—

"During the siege the most common necessaries of life were exorbitantly dear. Bad ship-biscuit, full of worms, was sold at one shilling a pound; flour, in not much better condition, at the same price; old dried peas at one shilling and fourpence; salt, half dirt—the sweeping of ships' bottoms and storehouses—at eightpence; old salt butter at two shillings and sixpence; and English farthing candles at sixpence apiece. Fresh provisions commanded much higher prices. Turkeys sold at three pounds twelve shillings; sucking pigs at two pounds two shillings; and one pound one shilling was refused for a calf's pluck."