Scientific American.

THE ADVOCATE OF INDUSTRY, AND JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC, MECHANICAL AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS.

VOLUME IX.] NEW-YORK NOVEMBER 26, 1853. [NUMBER 11.

THE
SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN,
PUBLISHED WEEKLY,
At 128 Fulton street, N. Y. (Sun Buildings.)
BY MUNN & CO.

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A Wonder of the Desert.

One of the most interesting events which have recently transpired in California, is the discovery in the southern part of the State, in the neighborhood of the Colorado, of an immense pyramid of hewn stone. It has a level top of more than fifty feet square, though it is evident that it was once completed, but that some great convulsion of nature has displaced its entire top, as it evidently now lies a huge and broken mass upon one of its sides, though nearly covered by the sands. This pyramid differs, in some respects, from the Egyptian pyramids. It is, or was, more slender or pointed, and while those of Egypt are composed of steps or layers, receding as they rise, the American pyramid was, undoubtedly, a more finished structure; the outer surface of the blocks were evidently cut to an angle that gave the structure, when new and complete, a smooth or regular surface from top to bottom. From the present level of the sands that surround it, there are fifty two distinct layers of stone, that will average two feet each; this gives its present height one hundred and four feet, so that before the top was displaced, it must have been, judging from an angle of its sides, at least twenty feet higher than at present. How far it extends beneath the surface of the sands, it is impossible to determine without great labor.—such is the age of this immense structure, that the perpendicular joints between the blocks are worn away to the width of from five to ten in. at the bottom of each joint, and the entire surface of the pyramid so much worn by the storms, the vicissitudes and the corrodings of centuries, as to make it easy of ascent, particularly upon its sides. A singular fact connected with this remarkable structure is that it inclines nearly ten degrees to one side of the vertical or perpendicular.

What Sensible People Think of the Scientific American.

MESSRS EDITORS—Your paper grows better and better every week, and I cannot very well get along without it. I find it difficult to get a class of people whose business it is to till the soil, to subscribe for a scientific journal; they think they can dig rocks, plant corn, cut grain, or dress flax, without studying science, but if they would study their own interests, they would not be without the American, which would keep them thoroughly posted up on all the improved machines for doing the very same work that they now have to do by hand at five times the expense of *machine* labor, besides, the many valuable receipts which it contains more than pays for each volume; in short, it is the best and cheapest scientific paper in the world, if my judgment serves me.

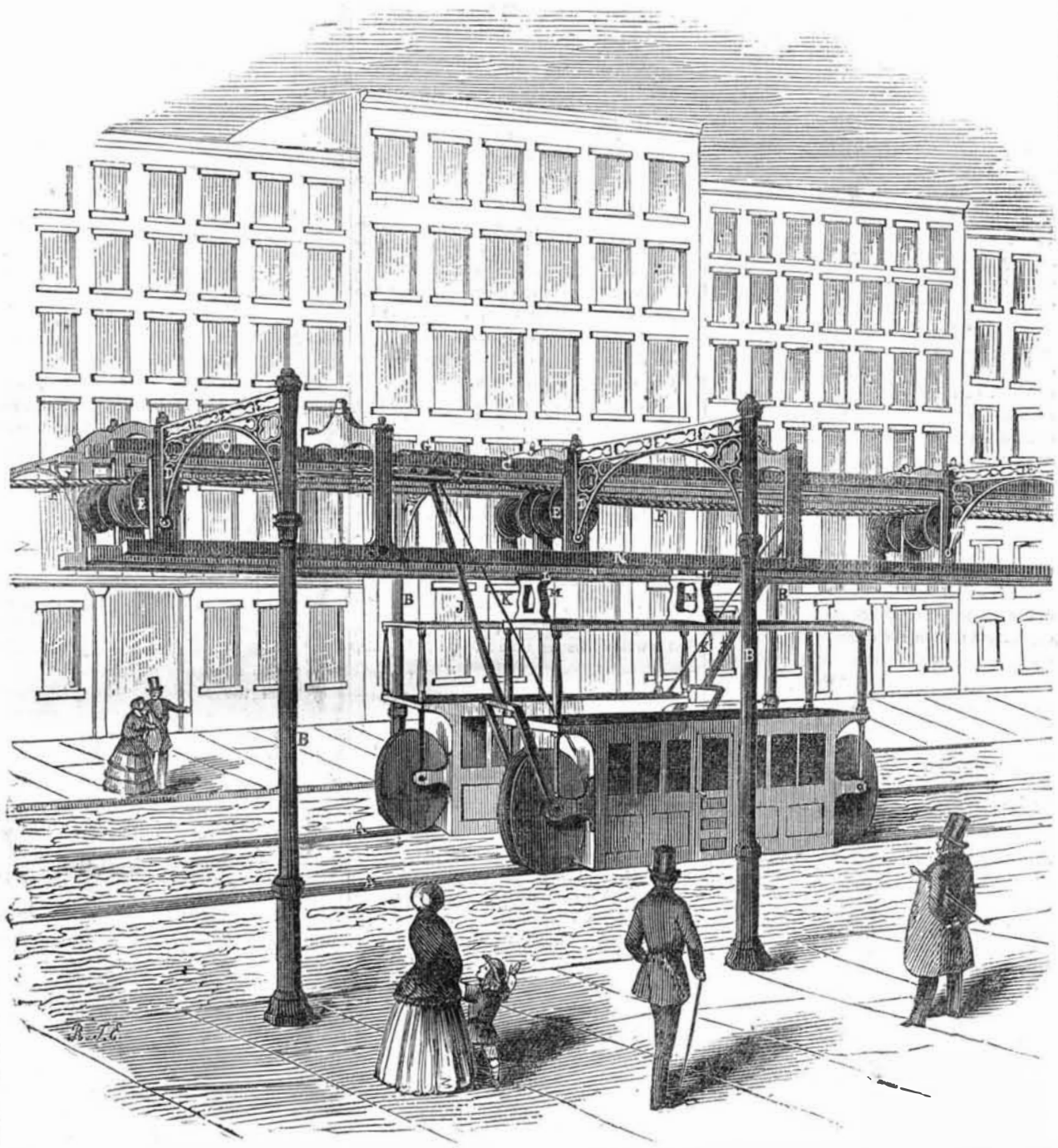
L. M. PARKER.

Shrewsbury, Mass.

The Sugar Crop.

The sugar crops of the Louisiana plantations are remarkably good this season. One-third of the planters have already commenced rolling, and a hogshead and a half of sugar is made from an acre of cane.

NEW RAILWAY FOR BROADWAY.



The annexed engraving is a perspective view of a new railroad for Broadway, by William Deitz, of the city of Albany, N. Y.

In the center of the street, say within six feet of each other, are two iron tracks laid down in the usual manner, upon which it is intended to run two lines of cars, each, say four feet wide, and of any convenient length, one line up on one rail, the other line down on the other rail. The wheels of the cars are placed under the center lines of these frames, ranging with each other. The balance of the cars is preserved by another set of wheels placed in line above the first set, and which run under or between elevated rails placed fifteen to twenty feet above the ground rails. These elevated rails are supported upon cross bearings and framing, which connect a double row of pillars about forty feet apart, or rather from curb to curb, leaving fourteen feet when the cars are side by side, that is, each side of Broadway, and in the absence of the cars leaves 34 feet The cars are to be propelled by an endless rope extending from Union Square to the Bowling Green, and running over the upper set of wheels. One of the most ingenious arrangements of this plan is that by which the rope is supported overhead, and connected or disconnected with the cars at will. The rope is supported at intervals by pairs of sheaves or pulleys, placed exactly opposite to each other, in prolongation of their axes, and about an inch apart, each of the sheaves in form that of the one-half of a grooved pulley, the pulley being cut asunder through the middle of its groove; these pulleys run each on its own axle, which is secured to a standard rising from the frame that supports the upper rails. From the car there rises an upright post, which carries on its upper end a thin stem, J, capable of passing between the pulleys and supporting a grip brake of peculiar construction, which, by a rod and spring, can be made to grip the moving rope or let it go instantly, so as to permit the car to stop and take in or leave passengers.

A A are the two single rail tracks; B B are the supporting posts, and D D are two of the support arms thrown across the street for supporting the frame with its driving pulleys. This frame is double, one side for cars going down, and the others for the cars going up. C N represent an upper and lower longitudinal bearer—two of these on each side, and a pair in the middle, with their vertical and the cross braces, form the pulley frame. E is one of the coned sheaves for driving the endless band or rope, F. G is the *grip*, or device for connecting the car with the endless rope, which it encircles, and for arresting the car. It is attached to the car by a blade, J, in front; it is hollow, formed in two sections, the upper one being hinged at one side to the lower one. The upper half has a spring on it, which tends to throw it open. K is the brake rod attached to the upper half. The conductor, when he wishes to set the car in motion, pulls down on the rod, K, and attaches it to a hook on the car; this clamps the grip to the running endless rope, F, and this runs the car forward. By disengaging the rod, the upper half of the clamp or grip, G, opens and the driving rope runs freely through the clamp. There are small grooved pulleys on the sides of the clamp, and I are their guide rails. M represents a cuneform block on each car, and L are anti-friction steadying rollers to guide the car; they run against the inside of the lower bearers, N. The pulleys are driven by station ary steam engines—one or more, as may be necessary. This is certainly a good plan for a ground railway, to economise the space in the street, and to obviate the use of horses and yet employ steam power.

It is some time since we first saw Mr. Deitz's model, and since that time our attention has been directed to a plan by Patrick O'Neil, of Brooklyn, which embraces the above method of propelling the cars; but Mr. O'Neil's plan is for an elevated continuous railroad, embracing an arcade, covered with glass, and is really a magnificent project.