

Scientific American.

NEW YORK, APRIL 1, 1854.

The Crystal Palace Mismanagement.

When at the close of the the London exhibition, it was first proposed to erect a Crystal Palace in New York, and that it was all to be a private speculation, we denounced the whole project, as being anti-national, imprudent, and disgraceful. We asserted that it was foolish to commence a great exhibition so soon after that of the one in London, and that it was arrogant for any company of speculators to stand up as the representatives of our country, magnifying their own private project in the eyes of the whole world as being that of the nation. We had hoped that in the course of five, eight, or ten years after the World's Fair, our country would have an exhibition broad and national in its scope and management, which would be an honor to our Republic and do our countrymen justice in every department of the Industrial Arts. This was our great reason for opposing the New York Crystal Palace, because it we conceived, would rob us of a future creditable National Exhibition. In referring to this project on page 172, Vol. 7, two years ago, we said, "it will be a failure; there can be no doubt about that." And a failure it certainly has been, so far as its managers have managed to swallow up the stock, and recklessly involve the Association in debt. In one thing we have been disappointed, namely, in the want of straightforward financiering by its Directors. Who would have thought, when such men as Theodore Sedgwick, William Whetten, Mortimer Livingston, Alfred Pell, August Belmont, Watts Sherman, E. J. Anderson, &c, were at the head of it, that its affairs would have been so badly conducted. The stockholders were greatly deceived by the representations of the managers, for in June 1852 they published a card stating that the whole expenses would only be \$300,000, while the income would be \$729,000, leaving \$429,000 as profits. Instead of this being so, the Investigating Committee, appointed by the New Board of Directors, have found that the old Directors have sunk no less than \$1,039,000—all the capital of the Association, all the receipts, and left a debt of \$178,000 still owing. Miserable managers, they have not left a rag of credit for themselves or their country in conducting the enterprise.

All this has been attributed to the Crystal Palace not being open in season, and the British Commissioners, Lord Ellesmere, Sir Charles Lyell, &c., who came over here to witness its inauguration, make very handsome apologies in their recent report, but it is all sheer nonsense to say that this was the cause of such a waste of money. One of our daily papers, with its usual amount of blundering, in commenting on the affair, asserts that the cause of failure was owing to the pomp and extravagance displayed at the inauguration, and that the managers erred in pursuing a foreign model, beyond the plan of the building itself. Now all this is just the very reverse of what should be said, and springs from a superficial study of the subject. Such ignorance as was displayed in reference to the cost and the labor required to erect the building surpassed all sensible comprehension.

We have ever recommended and still recommend all persons who are able, to visit the Crystal Palace while it remains open, because it is really worth more to any person than the price charged; indeed, it has done vast good, we believe, to the public, although it has entailed heavy losses upon its stockholders. And such an exhibition of the Industrial Arts, if well managed, would, we think, pay well, if kept continually open in this city. If an exhibition six times its size can be made to pay at Sydenham, near London, why cannot such an exhibition be managed both for the benefit of the public and the stockholders in this city.

An injunction was issued last week to restrain the new Directors from paying out of the Treasury any money to those who had loaned to the old Directors, in violation of their charter, which specifies that the capital stock, together with the debts of the Association shall

not exceed \$500,000, which statute, it is alleged by the complainant, has been transcended. The affairs of the Crystal Palace might be resuscitated under proper management, but whether they will be so or not we cannot tell. We have been led to make these comments from reading the recent report of the British Commissioners, in order to explain away the general idea which has gone abroad, that the New York Crystal Palace was a national affair.

Report on the Machinery in the Crystal Palace.

We have now before us a copy of the Report of the Jury on the Machinery and Engineering contrivances that have been exhibited at the Crystal Palace, and we do not remember to have been so much disappointed with any document ever before presented to us. From the reputation of the men composing the Jury, we certainly expected an able and instructive Report.

Its introduction is a shallow attempt at something grand about the progress of the human race, and not even a respectable account is given of the nature, construction, and operation of a single machine on exhibition.

It is so barren, so incongruous, so one-sided, so dull, so doubtful, so short, and so shallow, that we at one time thought of treating it with silent contempt; and were it not to protest against it in the name of the exhibitors of machinery in the Crystal Palace, we really would only say—as its author will yet say—"oh no, we never mention it, its name is never heard." Out of a list of four hundred and thirty-eight machines exhibited, only thirty are named, and the residences of the owners are left for conjecture. There were three splendid large steam engines on exhibition, and yet only one is named; there were two new and ingenious gingham power looms, and some excellent plain ones on exhibition, and yet these are all passed over without a single word said about them, while a paragraph is devoted to a hand loom. Not a single word is said about the excellent and beautiful English cotton machinery, or the superb tools of Joseph Whitworth—one of the foreign Commissioners. We protest in the name of all generous Americans against this omission; our countrymen like fair play for friend and foe.

We also had an understanding that none of the Jury were to be interested persons; yet here we find that one of them was awarded a silver medal for a machine. The concluding paragraph of the report is one of the greatest jumbles of sense and nonsense we have ever read. It mixes up weights and measures, patent laws, and machinery, into a dish of the most indigestible hotch potch. The following is a sample of one of its sentences:—"Having to examine more than four hundred machines, for the most part either patented or to be patented, the Jurors have had more opportunities than are afforded in ordinary business of seeing what a number of evils could be suppressed by the enactment of a good Patent Law, and by the adoption of a rational system of weights and measures." Now we must confess that although we have had no small amount of experience in looking through literary millstones, that this sentence puzzles us exceedingly. Perhaps it means that the best way to judge the merits of machines would be either by weighing or measuring them. If such views guided the Jury in examining the machines on exhibition, it may help to account somewhat for this singular report. We feel, however, a kind of choking sensation while we think of it, and we are positive that there is not a member of that Jury who, if he sits down and carefully reads it, but will feel as much ashamed of it as we do. We cannot conceive—we say this at least of some of them—why they allowed such a miserable document to go before the public.—There is something about it which—owing to the reputation of those composing the Jury—demands explanation. Out of respect for the feelings of the friends of the Jurors, we omit the publication of their names in this connection.

To fill out this column we would state that we paid into the United States Treasury in this city, over 1,400 dollars for Government fees on applications for patents filed within ten days.

A Great Railroad—New York and Erie.

We have received from the Chief Engineer, W. J. McAlpine, a copy of the second edition of the Report of the Directors of the New York and Erie Railroad. It is full of instruction to every man who takes an interest in railroads, or who wishes to be well informed of the progress of our country in railroad enterprise. In 1832 the first application was made for a charter, but it was not until 1851 that it was finished. Its whole history as presented in this Report, exhibits a succession of struggles of the most trying nature, against great difficulties, and at last a complete triumph over them all. It is the greatest private enterprise on our continent; its whole length is 495 miles, including the New Jersey branches, on which the cars now run from Jersey City, to Dunkirk N. Y., without changing, but the Road has to pay the abominable Jersey tribute, which is a disgrace to that State. A second track will soon be in operation from New York to Corning, 291 miles. The quantity of iron rails laid in the tracks is nearly 70,000 tons, and 4 tons of spikes are used to the mile. There are 25,000 lineal feet of bridging built. There are three large machine shops fitted up with complete sets of tools for repairing and fitting locomotives, and five smaller machine shops. The company has 130 locomotives in use, and contracts have been made for 60 new ones, which are to be delivered in the course of a few months. The total cost of the Road up to the last November was \$31,222,824, but there is a great amount of property owned to balance this expenditure. There is one excellent feature in connection with this road, and one which should belong to every other railroad in our country, we allude to a telegraph for especial use. The Report reports that the company have in operation 497 miles of telegraph, 52 offices, and 65 operators, exclusively employed for its own business. "No expenditure," it says, "made on this work has proved more profitable. It has added to the safety of passengers, and has given a feeling of security to the managers and operatives of the road against a large class of accidents, to which, without it, they are peculiarly exposed. When accidents do occur, information is communicated immediately from the nearest station, and assisting engines, cars, and men are dispatched with the greatest promptness, thus saving in every instance a considerable loss of time and expense, besides the advantage of communicating the intelligence to all approaching trains, and avoiding the further damage which has proved so disastrous to some other roads." It gives us pleasure to record the fact of this railroad using a telegraph for its own business. Eight years ago we directed attention to the importance of such an agent to all railroads. They will all come to use it yet. Under the management of such gifted and able officers as this railroad now has, it will, we have no doubt, soon be in a very flourishing condition.

City Dust—Merchants Growing Wise.

Celebrated as our merchants are for shrewdness in business and restlessness of enterprise, yet in many things they have exhibited a great amount of stupidity, in fact, they have acted as if they had no self-consciousness of the possession of eyes, until they were half filled up with such a dust as to threaten blindness. Five years ago we directed their attention to the necessity of having Broadway swept every night, or at least before persons began to traverse the streets in the morning, and it was only on the evening of the 16th inst., that they took active measures to carry out such a reform. A meeting of the Broadway merchants was held that evening in the Astor House, and speeches were made, setting forth the heavy damage sustained to their goods by clouds of dust, carried by high winds through the streets, and which is so fine that it enters every store, and settles down on the finest velvets and silks, as if they were only vulgar calicos.

The meeting passed a resolution expressing their opinion that they had no hope nor confidence in the public authorities ever abating the nuisance; they therefore authorized J. N. Genin to collect subscriptions, to have Broadway swept once every 24 hours, in the

morning, before 7 A. M. We hope that the merchants in other streets will follow the example. They will also yet come to adopt the plan we recommended years ago, namely, to have all street repairs, such as paving done during the hours of night, so as to have no such obstructions to business and passage during the day.

The American Lock not Picked.

MESSRS. EDITORS.—We notice in your paper of this date an article headed, "Hobbs' Lock Picked," in which our names are made the subject of the article in question. You state that "there can be no doubt of the fact that the American Lock of Day & Newell, under the care of Mr. Hobbs, now in London, has been successfully picked."

Allow us to disabuse your mind of this conviction by a statement of facts as they actually exist. It is well known that Mr. Hobbs went out to England in 1851, as our agent to represent our lock at the Great Exhibition of all Nations; the world knows the result of his mission. He picked the Chubb & Bramah Locks with comparative facility, and received the 200 guineas which was offered as a reward for the performance. We then, in order to give England and the rest of the world an opportunity to exercise their skill on the American Lock, at once placed it before the public and offered a reward of \$1,000 to have it picked. This challenge was accepted, and after a trial of 130 consecutive days by England's most scientific mechanics, the task was abandoned as fruitless, and the lock returned to Mr. Hobbs unpicked and uninjured, thus establishing the title for the Newell Lock which it enjoys, viz., the "Champion Lock of the World." Mr. Hobbs having by these circumstances obtained a high reputation as a Lock Picker, became identified with our Lock, hence it is called by many in this country the Hobbs "Lock." This, however, is not the case, as the following facts will show:

Mr. Hobbs and other parties are now engaged in the manufacture of cheap locks for ordinary purposes made after various American patterns, which they denominate American Locks. One of this class Mr. H. calls the Protector Lock, designed for desks and tills, which he sells at prices from 5 to 10 shillings each, one of which is said to have been picked by Mr. Goater, foreman of Messrs. Chubbs. Now as we have no connection in the manufacture of these Locks, and as they bear no affinity to ours, we trust you will make the amend honorable by placing the matter before the public in its proper light.

DAY & NEWELL.

New York, March 24, 1854.

The American Lock of Day & Newell, then, has not been picked yet. Our cotemporary, the "London Mechanics' Magazine" should not have made such an ado about the picking of the cheap lock of Mr. Hobbs, as it leads the public to believe that it was the bank lock that received the medal and encomiums of the Commissioners at the World's Fair, which had been picked. The lock of Messrs. Day & Newell still remains proof against the skill of the most celebrated English locksmiths.

The Inventor of the Electro-Magnetic Telegraph.

On another page will be found the advertisement of the gifted inventor of the Electro-Magnetic Telegraph—His invention has conferred incalculable benefits upon his fellow men,—he is an honor to his country, and an object of pride to his countrymen. His telegraph is the most simple in use, and standing upon its real merits and just claims it has nothing to fear. Some of his friends, however, without any necessity for any such indulgence, have been as wild and extravagant in their claims, as some of his opposers have been bitter and denunciatory in their antagonism. No one can deny that our country is indebted to Prof. Morse—as being the first inventor—for its splendid and extended system of telegraphs, by which millions are saved to our merchants and newspapers every year, and by which so much pleasure and happiness are derived by friend holding converse with friend at great distances apart. Such a benefactor deserves to be highly rewarded, and we have no doubt but he will meet it.