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Decimal Weights and Measures.

If our Congress, at its approaching session, can find time to do anything for the people, we would invite their attention to a reform in the present system of weights and measures. Our currency is celebrated throughout the civilized world for its simplicity, and a system of decimal weights and measures, would, when once introduced, prove equally beneficial. Our present system is not only objectionable from its compound ratios, but it is otherwise needlessly complex. What, for instance, is gained by using one kind of weight for grocers, another for jewellers, and a third for apothecaries? The French have partially introduced a reform of this kind, and we hope that before long we may be enabled to use a complete decimal system of currency, weights, measures and, indeed, everything used in computations. If any of our Congressmen will take this measure in hand, and get it placed upon our Statute Book, we will set him down as a public benefactor, and send him a copy of the "Scientific American" for one year, gratis.

Cure for Deafness.

A new discovery has been made to relieve deaf persons. Two aurists in London have invented an instrument which is placed within the ears, without projecting, and being of the same color of the skin, is not perceptible. It enables deaf persons to enjoy the general conversation, to hear distinctly at church, and at public assemblies; the unpleasant sensation of singing noises in the ears is entirely removed, and it affords all the assistance that possibly could be desired.—[Ex.]

[We want some more light on this subject of hearing.

Great Feats in Diving.

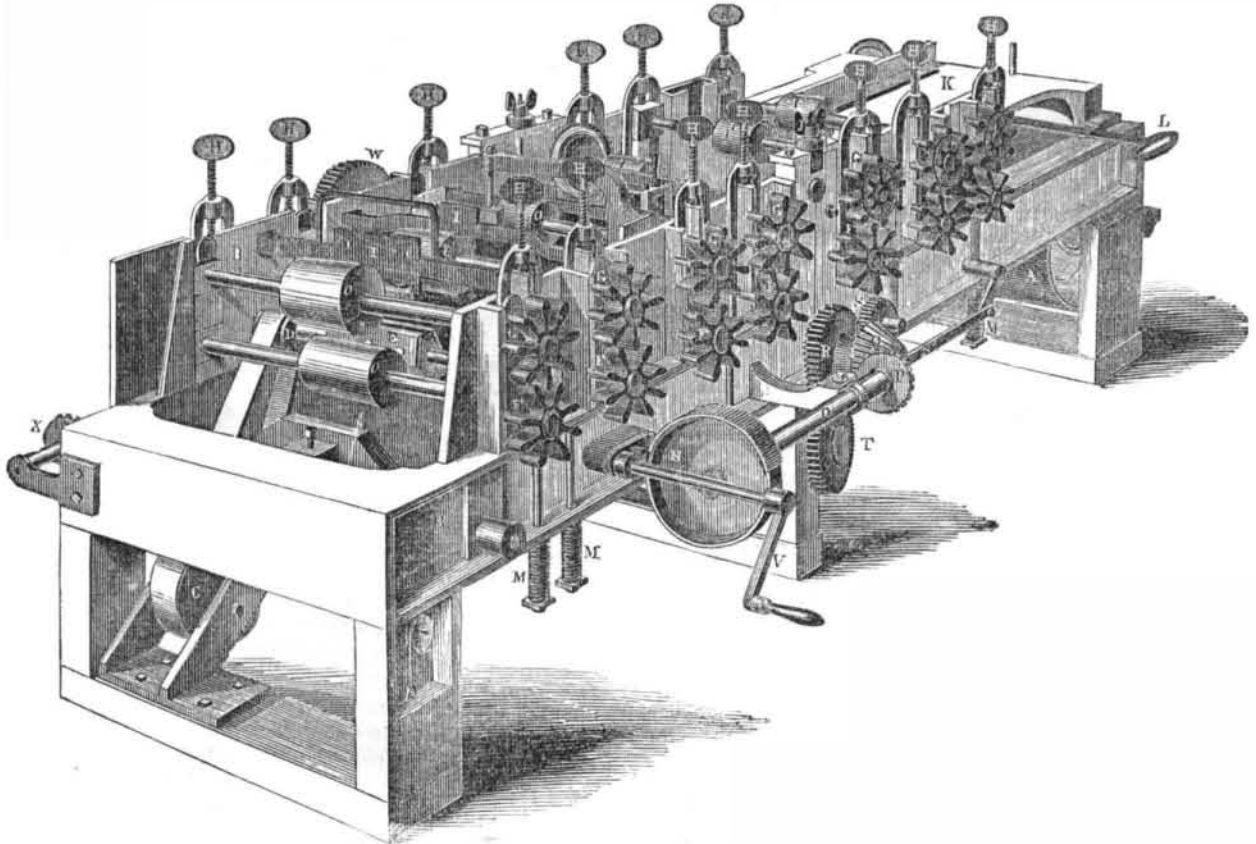
Among the remarkable feats of diving lately performed in Bath, England, it is mentioned that a seaman dove down with a pair of laced boots on his feet and a pair of Wellingtons in his hand, but returned to the surface wearing the Wellingtons and carrying the laced boots. He afterwards dove with a jacket and a pair of trowsers in his hand, dressed himself while under water, and on returning to the surface took a pipe filled with tobacco from his pocket, struck a light and smoked while floating on his back.

Furs of Monkeys.

The importation of monkey skins is an important business in Salem. The "Gazette" says: "Monkeys skins have formed an article of commerce for several years, and we dare say that many a fair lady has strutted her brief hour in all the glory of a monkey skin muff and rat skin gloves, without suspecting the quality of her finery.

A correspondent of the Builder urges the use of Indian ink for State papers, as carbon is its base, which is indestructible when preserved from damp and other equally injurious influences. The writing in Doomsday Book, after the lapse of eight centuries, is in better preservation than the state papers of the last two Kings of England.

HAWKINS' STAVE DRESSING MACHINE.—Fig. 1.



We present our readers this week with engravings of Wm. Hawkin's Stave Dressing Machine, patented July 22, 1851, and now on exhibition at the Crystal Palace.

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the machine, showing its principal parts and their mode of arrangement.

A is a driver, to which motion is communicated from the prime mover by a belt passing over a pulley on the same shaft, not shown in the engraving. There is upon this shaft, at the same end, a small pulley, over which a band passes, giving motion to a larger pulley upon a

shaft, on which are placed the feeding rollers. B is the frame, made of cast-iron; C is a friction pulley, changing the direction of the belt which passes over D, giving motion to the cutters, E. F F F and G G G are the star gears connecting the upper and lower series of rollers; H H are thumb-screws for elevating the upper series of rollers to accommodate varying thicknesses of staves. I I are cross bars holding brushes for clearing the staves of chips. J J are thumb screws for elevating the top cutter for cutting different thicknesses; K is a table on which the staves are placed as they are fed in; L is a

are the knives, I; these bearings work in slides. H is a pulley rotating the knives.

Figure 3 is an end view of the same arrangement, the letters on which refer to the same parts as on fig. 2. This machine is at work at

Fig. 3.

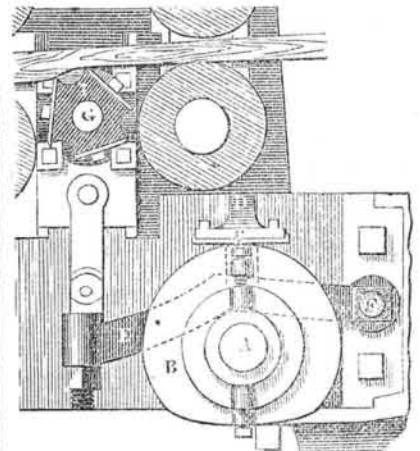
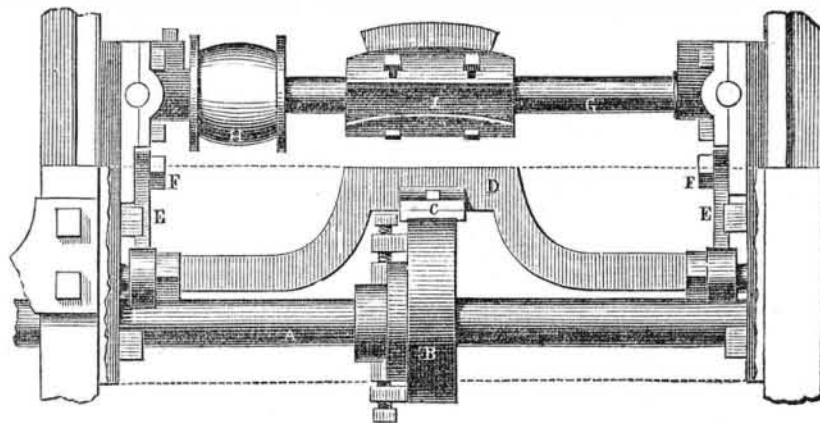


Figure 2.



handle for shifting the belt from the loose to the fast pulley, giving motion to the feed rollers; M M are spiral springs holding the upper feed rollers firmly against the stave; N is an elliptic cam, giving the requisite reciprocating motion to the cutters working the bilge upon the stave. Q is the shaft of this eccentric, on which is a mitre wheel, P, receiving its motion from Q, which is connected with a pinion upon the third feed roller (omitted in the engraving by mistake) and gearing with S. R is a spur wheel gearing with T, upon which is a pin actuating the lever, N', communicating reciprocal motion to a crank, U, upon a shaft, at the opposite extremity of which is another lever, giving motion to the sliding rod seen in the center of the right-hand

side of the engraving, which, by pressing against the end of the stave, first passes it between the feed rollers. V is a handle for shifting the cutters to a different width of stave. W is a large spur wheel communicating motion to the feed rollers. X is a mitre wheel giving motion to a cam which elevates and depresses the cutters, for the purpose of making the stave thinnest in the middle.

Figure 2 is a view of the cutters and the arrangement by which they are varied to cut the stave thinnest in the middle. A is a shaft upon which is the eccentric cam, B, which, by its friction against the yoke, D, elevates and consequently gives motion to E, which is connected at F with the bearings of the shaft, G, on which

the Crystal Palace, and performs well. We bespeak for it the attention of all those interested in this class of machinery.

More information may be obtained by letter addressed to the proprietors, Wells & Hill, at Milwaukee, Wis., or Buffalo, N. Y.

Sweet Potato Vines.

A correspondent of the "Georgia Telegraph," states that the vines of the sweet potato may be saved during the winter and used in the spring for propagating a new crop. In the Fall, any time before frost takes place, the vines may be cut in any convenient length, and placed, in layers, on the surface of the earth, to the depth of twelve or eighteen inches, cover the vines, whilst damp, with partially rotten straw, (either pine or wheat will answer) to the depth of six inches, and cover the whole with a light soil about four inches deep. In this way the vines will keep during the winter, and in the spring they will put out sprouts as abundantly as the potato itself when bedded. The draws or sprouts can be planted first, and the vine itself can be subsequently cut and used as we generally plant slips.