

## SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

ESTABLISHED 1845

MUNN &amp; CO. Editors and Proprietors

Published Weekly at  
No. 361 Broadway, New YorkCHARLES ALLEN MUNN, President  
361 Broadway, New York.FREDERICK CONVERSE BEACH, Sec'y and Treas.  
361 Broadway, New York.

## TERMS TO SUBSCRIBERS.

One copy, one year, for the United States or Mexico ..... \$3.00  
 One copy, one year, for Canada ..... 3.75  
 One copy, one year, to any foreign country, postage prepaid, 18s. 6d. 4.50

## THE SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN PUBLICATIONS.

Scientific American (established 1845) ..... \$3.00 a year  
 Scientific American Supplement (established 1876) ..... 5.00 "  
 American Homes and Gardens ..... 3.00 "  
 Scientific American Export Edition (established 1878) ..... 3.00 "  
 The combined subscription rates and rates to foreign countries, including Canada, will be furnished upon application.  
 Remit by postal or express money order, or by bank draft or check.  
 MUNN & CO., 361 Broadway, New York.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY APRIL 24th, 1909.

The Editor is always glad to receive for examination illustrated articles on subjects of timely interest. If the photographs are sharp, the articles short, and the facts authentic, the contributions will receive special attention. Accepted articles will be paid for at regular space rates.

## THE "DREADNOUGHT" COMPETITION.

The game of war begins to assume Brobdingnagian proportions when it is played with battleships costing \$10,000,000 apiece for counters. England and Germany appear to be playing such a game just now; and this in spite of the fact that the latest official pronouncements of the two governments would lead us to suppose that the dove of peace hovers undisturbed above the international checkerboard. The present feverish excitement over the progress of Germany in the construction of battleships, is due to the sudden realization by the people of Great Britain that the excellent German system of building according to a definite programme, extending over a period of years, gives an assurance of a definite future strength and standing, which is wanting under the British system of leaving each year's addition to the navy to be decided by the caprice of the particular political party, which happens for the time being to hold the reins of office. Furthermore, by a dexterous manipulation of statistics, the party in Great Britain which is desirous of building the biggest possible navy that the liberality of Parliament will allow, has endeavored to impress the public with the belief that within two or three years' time Germany will be in possession of a greater number of "Dreadnoughts" than Great Britain itself. The note of alarm has served its purpose so well (or so ill, according as we look at it) that the Parliament has passed a bill authorizing the construction of eight of these huge and costly vessels, the appropriations for which alone will reach the huge sum of not less than \$80,000,000. That the alarm over conditions, fictitious though we believe them to be, has spread throughout the whole of the British empire, is shown by the offer of three of the leading colonies to contribute, should the mother country desire it, six additional "Dreadnoughts," or their equivalent in naval construction. This, expressed in terms of dollars and cents, would mean an additional \$60,000,000; which brings the total sum that the British empire stands prepared to invest in new battleships alone up to a round sum of about \$140,000,000.

But although we regard the immediate cause of this excitement as fictitious—the progress of German shipbuilding for the past year having been neither faster nor slower than its predetermined and publicly-announced plan called for—the spirit which has been revealed during the discussion shows how deeply is engrafted in the national consciousness of the British people the conviction that the security of the island itself, the integrity of the empire, and the preservation of its commercial supremacy, depend upon the maintenance of an overwhelming preponderance of sea power. This is a principle which has become practically the first article of faith in the catechism of British international politics. Its soundness, at least as affecting British interests, has never been called in question by the other leading powers of the world.

## ECONOMIC LOSS THROUGH THE MOSQUITO.

It is well understood that the mosquito, as a vehicle for the spread of disease, is responsible for an untold amount of sickness and general inconvenience. Not all of us, however, appreciate the heavy incidental losses due to the depreciation in the value of mosquito-infected districts, the impairment of the vitality, and, therefore, of the earning capacity, of malarial patients, and the large total resulting losses as expressed in dollars and cents. A valuable study of this subject has been made by Dr. L. O. Howard, Chief of the Bureau of Entomology of the Department of Agriculture, and presented in a recently-issued Bulletin upon the subject of the economic loss to the people of the United States through insects that carry disease. The subject is dealt with mainly under the three heads

of Malaria, Yellow Fever, and the Typhoid Fly. In the present notice we confine ourselves to the mosquito as a vehicle for the spread of malaria.

It is contended that malaria has retarded in a marked degree the advance of civilization over the North American continent. Particularly was this seen in the march of the pioneers through the middle West and the Gulf States west of the Mississippi. In attempting to estimate the economic loss from the prevalence of malaria, reference is made to the method of Prof. Fisher, given before the recent International Tuberculosis Congress, by which he arrived at an estimate of over a billion dollars annually as representing the cost of tuberculosis to the people of the United States. In this estimate Prof. Fisher considered the death rate for consumption, the loss of the earning capacity of the patients, the period of invalidism, and the amount of money expended in the care of the sick. No such definite basis is available for estimating the effects of malaria; but Dr. Howard, by using the statistics of deaths due to malaria in sixteen of the northern States during the period from 1900 to 1907, arrives at an approximate death rate for the whole of the United States of 12,000 per year. In the case of malaria, however, the death rate is a less sure indication of the real economic loss than in the case of any other disease; for a man may suffer from malaria for the greater part of his life, with a reduction of his productive capacity of from fifty to seventy-five per cent, and yet ultimately die from some entirely different immediate cause. Sir Patrick Manson, writing of tropical countries, declares that malaria causes more deaths, and more predisposition to death, than all the other parasitically-induced diseases affecting mankind, together. Celli states that, owing to malaria, about five million acres of land in Italy remain very imperfectly cultivated. Creighton says that this disease has been estimated to produce one-half of the entire mortality of the human race; and, inasmuch as it is the most frequent cause of sickness and death in those parts of the globe that are most densely populated, he considers that the estimate may be taken as at least rhetorically correct.

Now, although there is no perfectly sound basis for a close estimate, at least in this country, between the number of cases of malaria and the number of deaths resulting therefrom, an estimate based by analogy upon Celli's investigation of malarial mortality in Italy leads Dr. Howard to the conclusion that the approximate number of cases of malaria in the United States must be about 3,000,000. We quite agree with the doctor that it is no exaggeration to estimate that one-fourth of the productive capacity of an individual suffering with an average case of malaria is lost. With this as a basis, and including the loss through death, the cost of medicine, the losses in malarious regions through the difficulty of obtaining competent labor, it is estimated that the loss to the United States, from malarial diseases, under present conditions, is not less than \$100,000,000 every year.

## THE HUDSON-FULTON CELEBRATION.

The celebration of two such epoch-making events as the discovery of the Hudson River and the inauguration of steam navigation upon its waters is an undertaking, whose execution upon a scale commensurate with the importance of the occasion, calls for no small expenditure of thought, labor, and money. We have before us a brief statement of the object and plan of the Hudson-Fulton celebration, which shows that, as far as a well-thought-out plan can assure success, the committee has done its work thoroughly. An ambitious affair of this kind, however, must not be carried through with an over-careful consideration of the cost. If it is to be consummated with the *éclat* which its importance demands, there must be none of that lack of funds which may so easily transform an ambitious pageant, or series of pageants, of this kind into a pitiful farce. The State is committed to the enterprise; it has received world-wide advertisement, and it is for the Legislature, the various State societies, and the individual citizens of the State to join hands in rendering the forthcoming celebration worthy of the great events that it will commemorate.

It is the boast of New York State that it contains in New York harbor the principal gate of entrance, and in the Hudson River the geographical key, to the United States and the vast regions lying to the west of the Allegheny Mountains. This noble river and the magnificent harbor into which it discharges have exerted an influence in the development of the latest and greatest of the important republics of the world, which it would be hard to overestimate. When Henry Hudson sailed his little craft nearly 150 miles through navigable water into the very heart of the country, he doubtless understood, navigator and trader that he was, how valuable a route was here for the seaborne traffic of the future; but he little realized that the river formed merely part of what, in the days of the Indian occupation, was already a

great highway of travel by river, portage, and vast inland lakes, to the remote regions of western America. Still less did he understand that from the farthest point to which he had penetrated would be built in later days a great artificial waterway, through which vessels, many times larger than the "Half Moon," would be able to navigate uninterruptedly from the river's mouth to a system of vast inland seas, from whose shores they would gather and bring down to the seaboard the products of a country rivaling in area and resources that continent from which he had set sail on his adventurous quest.

We can do no more just here than give a brief summary of the elaborate plans of the celebration.

The services will begin on Monday, September 27th, 1909, with a rendezvous of American and foreign naval vessels at New York, when a *facsimile* of Hudson's "Half Moon," now being built in the Netherlands from the original plans, will enter the river and take her place in line. A *facsimile* of Fulton's "Claremont," propelled by its own engines, will start from the original site, and will also take position in line. On the same day will be opened an exhibition of paintings, books, relics, etc., at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Museum of Natural History, and all the various historical societies. On Tuesday there will be a procession of historical floats, and possibly on this day will take place the competition of mechanically-propelled airships for a prize of \$10,000 offered for the winner of a race from New York to Albany. General Commemoration Day is set for Wednesday, September 29th, when there will be a dedication of memorials erected in the Hudson River valley. The number and location of some of these are unsettled, but the commission is satisfied that monuments to William the Silent and Henry Hudson, a tablet to the Founders and Patriots of New York, and a tablet on Fort Tryon, will be ready for dedication. Statues of Robert Fulton at Peekskill, Governor Clinton at Kingston, Peter Schuyler at Albany, and Van Rensselaer at Troy have been suggested. The present is an excellent opportunity for the citizens of those towns and the counties in which these towns are located to erect appropriate and too-long-delayed tributes to these distinguished men. On the same day there will be exercises at the universities and colleges throughout the State. Thursday will be devoted to military displays by the army, navy, and national guard. On Friday there will be a naval parade to Newburg, in which the "Half Moon" and the "Claremont" will be the center of attraction. After the parade has reached Newburg, a memorial arch, erected by the Daughters of the Revolution, will be dedicated.

The first week of festivities will close on Saturday, October 2nd, which is designed for a general carnival day in New York city. It will be marked by the return of the New York division of the naval parade to its starting point; and it will terminate in the evening with a grand carnival parade, the chief feature of which will be movable allegorical tableaux to be participated in by all nationalities represented in New York city. There will be a general illumination of the city, a special feature of which will be the display of fireworks from the great bridges of the East River. At 9 P. M. a chain of signal fires upon the mountain tops and other points of vantage along the whole Hudson River will be lighted simultaneously.

What will be known as Upper Hudson Week will begin on Sunday, October 3rd, when the "Half Moon" and "Claremont" will continue their journey up the river, escorted by a fleet of vessels. The center of interest on Monday will be found at Poughkeepsie, which will witness a naval parade and the erection of a statue of Robert Fulton. On Tuesday the parade will proceed to Kingston, where it is proposed to erect a permanent memorial in the form of a statue of Governor Clinton. Wednesday will find the parade at Catskill. Thursday it will reach Hudson, where a statue of the great explorer is proposed. Friday the flotilla will reach the capital of the Commonwealth, where it is hoped a statue of Peter Schuyler, the first Mayor of Albany, will be ready for dedication. Saturday, the close of the fortnight of festivities, will be marked by the arrival of the naval parade at Troy, where it is proposed to erect a statue of Van Rensselaer, who obtained the first land grant in that section of the country.

## WILBUR WRIGHT'S FLIGHTS IN ITALY.

Last week Wilbur Wright made his first aeroplane flights in the vicinity of Rome. The flights were made above the plain of Centocelle, and were witnessed by a great and enthusiastic crowd. The champion aviator took up several army and navy officers. On April 16th he made three flights of 6, 10, and 5 minutes' duration. On the longest of these he flew very close to a villa, and afterward rose to a height of 150 feet. The onlookers were astonished at his performance, and at the perfect control he had over his machine. King Humbert expects to witness some of the flights.