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Contents.

(Illustrated articles are marked with an asterisk.)

Air and spirits (51)..... 299
American Science Association (7) 298
Ammonia, to make (47)..... 299
Answers to correspondents..... 298
Aphelion, the earth's (9)..... 298
Arctic explorations, recent..... 295
Astronomical notes..... 286
Baldness, premature (46)..... 299
Batteries, construction of (16)... 298
Battery, efflorescence of (18)..... 298
Bells, repairing (45)..... 299
Bird pepper (77)..... 300
Boats, paddle wheels for (2)..... 298
Brakemen, a lesson for..... 295
Business and personal..... 298
Calculation, instinctive..... 288
Camphene (70)..... 300
Cellars, watertight (12)..... 298
Cementing iron to wood..... 287
Cementing leather (67)..... 300
Chimneys, bad draft in (25)..... 299
Cockatoos, black*..... 295
Copper and ammonia (72)..... 300
Cork-leather, a new fabric..... 296
Crane, a powerful*..... 287
Deodorizer, new..... 287
Diving bell and grapnel*... 291
Drying yeast (61)..... 299
Earth pits*..... 296
Electrical condensers (16)..... 298
Electric annunciators (17)..... 298
Electric force and magnetism*... 292
Electro-magnets, charging (15).. 298
Electro-magnets, slow (76)..... 300
Electro-plating (34)..... 299
Engineer's profession (73)..... 300
Engine for sawing (21)..... 299
Explosive compound (69)..... 300
Evolution, the goal of..... 288
Fibers, pineapple and banana.... 288
Fire pots, whitening (37)..... 299
Fireproof rug, a (13)..... 298
Fireproof safes, filling for (59)... 299
Fish plates, railway, securing*... 294
Flowerpots*..... 296
Flux for alloys (1)..... 298
Food to work, the relation of..... 293
Frozen soil, deep..... 287
Fruit preserver, a (32)..... 299
Gage pipes, water (20)..... 299
Garters, electric (42)..... 299
Gases, absorbent powers of (48).. 299
Glue, hardening (58)..... 299
Gold, coloring (64)..... 299
Hair, removing (78)..... 300
Harness blacking (62)..... 299
Heater for dwellings, steam*..... 294
Horse power, nominal (5)..... 298
Houses, new, occupation of..... 296
Iguana family, the*..... 295
Induction coil (30)..... 299
Inventions patented in England.. 296
Iron, writing on (50)..... 299
Joints, universal (25)..... 299
Lathe power connections (28)..... 299
Lathe, power for (39)..... 299
Life-saving device..... 293
Locomotive engineers, etc. (33)... 299
Locomotive engineers, the..... 296
Locomotive, the Weston..... 289
Magnetic files, etc. (75)..... 300
Magnetization of ilmenite..... 293
Magneto-electric machine (19).... 299
Mattress, life-preserving 295
Mechanical engineers' education. 293
Metal for planer boxes (35)..... 299
Metal tube for heating (53)..... 299
Microscope objectives, etc. (14).. 298
Milk, solidified..... 299
Molasses manure..... 287
Mortising and boring machine*... 291
Mountains, the origin of..... 289
Opacity and color (8)..... 298
Paint and water glass (56)..... 299
Paper boats, etc. (41)..... 299
Patent decisions, recent..... 296
Patents, American and foreign.... 297
Patents, list of Canadian..... 301
Patents, official list of..... 300
Patents, ribbons on (44)..... 299
Perfume, new..... 289
Phosphorus lamp, the (65)..... 299
Phrenology a science (40)..... 299
Pigeon post, a transatlantic..... 295
Poppy red dye..... 289
Psycho mystery, the*..... 291
Railway, new elevated..... 294
Refrigerating machine, Tellier's. 294
Rope, strength of..... 294
Rope, weight of (24)..... 299
Saw teeth, trimming..... 295
Sewer gasdangers..... 287
Smoke condenser, new..... 294
Smoke stack, proportions of (36). 299
Soap, soda (52)..... 299
Speculum metal (11)..... 298
Steel ingots, casting large*..... 290
Steel manufacture, the Sheffield*. 291
Steel process, the Bessemer*..... 290
Stone arrow heads (74)..... 300
Stone, natural grooves in (71)..... 300
Stove brick (66)..... 299
Teeth, killing nerves of (57)..... 298
Telegraphy in India, quadruplex.. 289
Telescope lenses (6, 9, 10, 11)..... 298
Thermometer difficulty, a (63)..... 299
Too much of a good thing..... 295
Transferring pictures (68)..... 300
Varnish for paper (55)..... 299
Varnish, paraffin (49)..... 299
Walls, thief-proof (12)..... 298
Water motor, noise (26)..... 298
Water power for sawing (27)..... 298
Waterproof cloth (54)..... 299
Water supply (31)..... 299
Water wheel power (40)..... 299
Wheatstone, Sir Charles..... 289
Wire gages (16)..... 298
Writing on gold (60)..... 299

THE GOAL OF EVOLUTION.

"Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,
And then she made the lassies, O!"

So the gallant Burns sang of mother Nature, intending to compliment the lasses. Had he lived till this more scientific age, he might have stayed his hand, or else have had the lasses fashioned first. The handiwork of Nature seems to have lost care or cunning toward the last.

In the details of the skeletons of the other animals, says Professor Cleland (in his address as Vice-President of the Department of Anatomy and Physiology at the late meeting of the British Science Association), one sees the greatest precision of form; but there are various exceptions to this neatness of finish in the skeleton of man. Witness the variations of the breast bone, which, especially in its lower portion, is never shapely, as it is in the lower animals; witness the coccygeal vertebra, which are the most irregular structures imaginable; even in the sacrum and the rest of the vertebral column, the amount of variation finds no parallel in other animals. In the skull, except in some of the lower forms of humanity, the *dorsum sellæ* is a ragged, warty, deformed, and irregular structure, never exhibiting the elegance and finish seen in our poorer relations. The curvature of the skull and the shortening of its base, which have gradually increased in the ascending series of forms, have reached a degree which cannot be exceeded; and the nasal cavity "is so elongated vertically that, in the higher races, Nature seems scarcely able to bridge the gap from the cribriform plate to the palate, and produces such a set of unsymmetrical and rugged performances as is quite peculiar to man." Other examples of similar conditions, he tells us, will occur to every student of human anatomy.

Thus it would appear that man, the highest product of evolution, is physically the least perfectly finished. His bony framework is more open to variation than that of the lower types of the animal world. This fact would seem to indicate a certain newness of character, as though Nature had not yet had time to settle down to stereotyped forms of human detail. To some it might also hint of possibilities of further development, perhaps of the evolution of human or superhuman, yet animal, types which may surpass the present human as that does the antecedent brute. Professor Cleland, on the contrary, sees in them curious indications rather of the "formative force nearing the end of its journey." Animal life, he thinks, has reached its preordained climax in humanity, and that the future progress of evolution is to be traced from man, not to other animal forms yet to appear, but through his physical (*qy.* psychical?) nature into the land of the unseen.

The reasons for this sudden spring into ether do not clearly appear, the only hint of a physical basis for it lying in the observation that the variations of structure which have been noted are principally to be found in the head, the part of the body most closely connected with the development and expression of the mental character.

Just here we may note a singular circumstance in connection with the present stage of discussion in regard to the possibilities of human progress, individually and collectively considered. Last year, from the standpoint of matter, Professor Tyndall traced the line of individual evolution into the infinite azure, where personal identity is lost; and half mankind were set by the ears in consequence. This year, before a section of the same society, Professor Cleland, from the standpoint of the speculations of the authors of the "Unseen Universe," argues from physical data the continued evolution of humanity in "the land of the unseen," wherein personal identity is said to be eternally preserved: and not a word is said of his transcending the strict domain of scientific inference!

INSTINCTIVE CALCULATION.

A writer in the *Cornhill Magazine*, who claims to be something of a natural calculator himself, attempts the rather difficult task of advancing a satisfactory explanation of the peculiar arithmetical feats performed by the well known engineer Zerah Colburn, during his early youth. Mr. Colburn was an American and the founder of the English journal, *Engineering*. In a biography of him which we published at the time of his death, five or six years ago, we mentioned his remarkable mental precocity, some phenomena of which may be recalled in the present connection. When eight years of age, it is said that Colburn instantly answered such questions as: Find the cube root of 268,335,125, how many seconds are there in 48 years, raise 8 to the sixteenth power, and others of similar difficulty, which even the most expert of mathematicians would have been unable to solve by any mere mental process. In looking for parallel cases of children with like abilities, we find three others, something regarding each of which it is well to note before passing to the consideration of the possibility of an explanation.

In 1839, Vito Mangiamele, a Sicilian boy eleven years of age, was examined by Arago and several other eminent members of the French Academy of Sciences. To him, questions equally knotty with the above were given, and these together with such posers as: "What number complies with the following propositions: that if its cube be added to five times its square, and then forty-two times the number and the number forty be subtracted from the result, the number is equal to zero." To this the boy gave the correct answer, (five) just as the questioner had repeated the sentence for the second time. An earlier case is that of Jedediah Buxton, a child almost totally uneducated. Of him it is related that if he heard a sermon or other speech he instinctively counted the words; if a period of time were mentioned in his hearing, he computed the seconds; or if he walked over a piece of ground his mind was busily employed in calculating the number of inches. He solved mentally such a problem as: How many cubical eighths of an inch are there in a quadrangular mass which measures 231,145,789 yards long, 5,642,732 yards wide, and 54,965 yards thick? And besides, he possessed the curious faculty of being able to suspend his calculations at any point, turn to other subjects for any length of time, and yet resume his mental work at the proper place. Like Mangiamele, he could give no account of how he accomplished his task.

The last instance is that of George Parker Bidder, who subsequently became a noted English civil engineer. His gift lay more in a natural taste for figures than through the instinctive calculating power which Colburn, Mangiamele, and Buxton possessed. He accustomed himself to count up to 1,000,000, and thus became familiar with large numbers. He besides was an inventor, and devised new arithmetical processes. From all accounts it would seem that, his was an acquired power, aided of course by natural genius, and this view finds further corroboration from the fact that in after life, Bidder retained his abilities, while the other three individuals lost theirs. In 1856 he gave an account of how his operations were worked, which goes still further to show them to be the results of acquired skill, more especially as neither Colburn, Buxton, or Mangiamele were ever able to give any explanation whatever of their mental processes Bidder, therefore, is hardly to be considered in conjunction with them.

To return now to the *Cornhill Magazine* writer and his theory, the latter is essentially that the calculator does not regard the numbers set before him as abstractions, but rather as definite groups of concrete objects, as, for example, dots. The mental process required then to multiply 24 by 3 is to picture 24 as two columns of dots of ten each, and one column of four. To multiply by three, the imperfect columns are imagined as brought together, making one column of ten, and two over. The one is added to six columns pictured at the same time, making seven columns of ten, and one of two, that is, 72. We need not explain the supposed method of division, as it is essentially similar; for we believe the objection will at once occur to the reader that this plan cannot answer for dealing with great numbers, as it can in no wise be conceived that any mind can form a perfect picture of millions multiplied or divided by millions. It is very possible for the mind to be trained so as to conceive detail to an astonishing degree; and imagination, in conjunction with memory, in some people will reproduce scenes with every feature intact, of which only the most salient characteristics would remain fixed in the average mind. Robert Houdin, the French conjurer, could walk quickly past a shop window once, and then name every article in it, and the size, color, and position of each. This was purely acquired, though Houdin had the ability to make the acquirement in the beginning. Every artist who produces a design draws upon the same faculties; so do skilled chess players, who are able to play a dozen or more games at once; so do musicians, who can hear a harmony or melody by looking at the printed score. All of these instances we should class with Bidder, but not with Colburn or the other two mentioned.

What Turner was in color and Mozart in music, we believe Colburn and his peers to have been as regards numbers. Turner's perception of gradation of color—not mere light and shade, but color—was instinctive, purely inborn. He felt color, not outlines or form; and no one, before or since, in that respect has ever approached him. Mozart felt music; at the age of six he could compose difficult harmonies; he could distinguish accurately and instantly announce variations in sound equal to one sixty-fourth of a tone. Now no one pretends to explain Turner's coloring or Mozart's music from a mental standpoint, for the simple reason that there is no explanation. Both artists were born with wonderful gifts, gifts as inexplicable to their possessors as they are to the average man; and there the matter rests. Colburn, Buxton, and the Sicilian boy had a like sensation of the relations of numbers. They went through a kind of calculating process, probably as instinctively as Turner handled a brush to place his colors, or Mozart moved his fingers to grasp the chords of the harpsichord or organ. This mental operation, we believe, however, was unconscious cerebration; and the same genius or instinct, or whatever term by which we may agree to designate the faculty, which rendered it unnatural for Turner to make inharmonious contrasts, or Mozart to strike discords, prevented Colburn and the others from false calculation, and caused them to feel, as it were, the relations of numbers.

PINEAPPLE AND BANANA FIBERS.

It is from the fiber of the pineapple that the natives of the Philippines weave the celebrated web *nipis de piña*, considered by experts the finest in the world.

In his travels in that promising but badly managed Spanish colony—all Spanish colonies are badly managed, for that matter—the German traveller Jagor had the good fortune to witness the process by which the fiber is prepared.

When plants are intended for the growth of fiber, the fruit is not allowed to ripen, the leaves thereby taking on a larger development. The fiber is separated by hand. A leaf is placed on a board on the ground, with hollow side upwards. Sitting at one end of the board, a woman holds the leaf firmly with her toes and scrapes its outer surface with a potsherd, using the rounded edge of the rim.

The scraping reduces the leaf to rags, disclosing a layer of coarse fiber running lengthwise of the leaf. This is dextrously lifted up and drawn away in a compact strip: after which the operator scrapes again until a second fine layer is laid bare. Then turning the leaf round, she scrapes its back down to the layer of fine fiber, which she quickly draws to its full length away from the back of the leaf. The fiber is then washed, dried in the sun, combed, and sorted. It is from material thus crudely prepared that the *nipis de piña* is woven, of such exquisite fineness that robes of it are valued as high as $1,500, at Manilla.

The pineapple fiber is also exceedingly strong: a cable 2½ inches in circumference has been known to endure a test strain of over 6,000 pounds.

Another noted fiber, Manilla hemp, takes its name from the chief city of the Philippines. It is not hemp, however, but the fiber of a species of banana, which does not differ greatly from the edible banana, and is probably a variety of the same species. Thus far, according to Jagor, the serviceable fiber has been exclusively obtained from the southern portion of the Philippines, all attempts to make its culvation profitable in the western and northern provinces having failed. A species of banana grows in great luxuriance in Western Java, but it has not been utilized as a fiber plant to any great extent. Great efforts have been made in the Celebes to cultivate this fiber, but Bickmore repeats that it has been abandoned in favor of coffee, which is found to be far more profitable. For domestic purposes, the banana fiber—known to commerce also as *abacá*—is made use of in many tropical countries, and in time will doubtless be largely supplied; but for the present the supply comes, as already stated from the Philippines.

The plant thrives best on the shaded forest-covered slopes of volcanic mountains, such as abound in Albay and Camarines: on level ground not so well, and on marshy land not at all. The plant requires, on an average, three years to produce its fiber in a proper condition. For the first crop only one stalk is cut from each bunch: later on, the new branches grow so quickly that they can be cut every two months. In full growth the yield is 30 cwt. to the acre, whereas from an acre of flax not more than 4 cwt. is obtained. After the plantation is once established, the plants flourish without any care or attention, the only trouble being to collect the fiber. One plant may yield as much

as two pounds of fiber, but the average is not more than a pound: on indifferent soil much less.

Several grades of fiber are derived from different parts of the leaf stalk,the edges yielding the finest. The fiber,which lies next the surface, is stripped off by hand in broad bands, and then softened by being drawn backwards and forwards between a broad bladed knife and a block of wood. One worker cuts up the stalks, strips off the leaves, and attends to the supply: the second, frequently a boy, spreads out the strips of fiber; the third draws them under the knife. The coarse fiber is called *bandala*; the finer, *lupis*. The former is chiefly used for ships' rigging; the latter is employed in weaving. The three finer grades of lupis are further softened before weaving by being pounded in a rice mortar. Generally the first or finest sort is worked as woof with the second as warp, and the third as warp with the second as woof. The fabrics so woven are nearly as fine as the *nipis de piña*. For purity, flexibility, and color, the finest of these banana stuffs are said to compare with cambric as cardboard does to tissue paper. According to Jagor the finest stuffs require so great an amount of dexterity, patience, and time in their preparation, and are consequently so expensive, that they cannot compete with the cheap machine-made goods of Europe. Their fine warm yellowish color also is objected to by European women accustomed to linen and muslin strongly blued in the washing. By the rich half castes,however, who understand the real goodness of their qualities, they are highly appreciated. In the regions where abacá is cultivated, the entire dress of both sexes is made of coarse banana cloth called guinára. For foreign markets,still coarser and stronger fabrics are prepared, such as crinoline and stiff muslin, used by dress makers

It is as an article for exportation, however,that the fiber is of the most importance commercially. In 1871 over 600,000 cwt. were exported, nearly three fourths coming to this country. It is very largely used in the manufacture of paper.

THE ORIGIN OF MOUNTAINS.

Mountains have been explained by two widely different suppositions. One is that they are due to sediments deposited under water from the erosion of a wasting continent, which by upheaval have become mountains. The other is that they are due to uplifts, as the result of lateral pressure caused by shrinkage of the earth's interior. For the last fifteen years or more, these conflicting views have each been held by geologists of undisputed authority; and "when doctors disagree, who shall decide?" is the old question which remains still unanswered. This uncertainty in all moral reasoning, when we have to balance probabilities, is a great source of discomfort to the youthful student; and in perhaps no department of human inquiry is this more true than in the field of Science, for what is highly probable today may be shown in the light of advancing Science to be highly improbable tomorrow. And in reply to the oft-repeated question of the young student: "What is the use of learning as truth today what may be rejected as error tomorrow?" it may be said that all the successive theories of advancing Science are stepping stones which may eventually lead to the undoubted truth. We see use in taking the first faltering and ill-advised steps in any avocation, though we soon reject these for others more conducive to the end desired.

Without attempting a decision, we propose in this article only to state some of the main points in the arguments *pro* and *con*, and leave all to decide for themselves as to which is the more reasonable.

We would naturally conclude that, if mountains are due to lateral pressure, they would be formed by the uplifts or elevations of the earth's crust. But this is seldom the fact, for several reasons. According to Professor Dana, many if not all mountains have their origin in the bending down of the crust. As the crust subsided, the trough was kept full of water, which continually deposited sediment. This deposition about kept pace with the rate of subsidence. In this manner, many of our mountain ranges were, in the earlier ages, taking the initiatory steps in the process of mountain making. As the crust subsided and was covered to a great depth with an accumulation of eroded material, it would be weakened by the earth's internal heat. An addition of several thousand feet of sediment to the surface would bring a given degree of heat so many thousand feet nearer the surface. This would often be sufficient to soften or melt the sustaining crust, which would then yield before the lateral and vertical pressure combined, and cause the crusts on the sides of the trough to fold over and approach each other above it, thus crushing the sedimentary beds into a narrower space, with the necessary result of elevating the crushed and folded strata in the middle.

The Appalachian chain illustrates the fact that one mountain system may be formed by several successive depressions, accompanied with the deposition of eroded material. Professor Hall attributes the cause of mountain making to sedimentary accumulations, which, by their weight, are sufficient to cause a depression in the crust. Thus, by the addition of 40,000 feet of sediment, the crust would sink the same number of feet. Then, by a subsequent elevation of the crust, the accumulated strata would be raised into a mountain, independent of lateral pressnre. He just reverses the idea of Dana, by making the subsidence a consequence of sedimentary accumulations, instead of the accumulations a consequence of subsidence. To this Dana objects, because "the earth's crust would have to yield like a film of rubber to have sunk a foot for every added foot of accumulation over its surface, and mountains would have had no standing place."

Another reason why the elevations due to lateral pressure do not produce the high mountains appears in the fact that, when a series of strata is sharply bent upwards—forming an anticlinal—the outer strata are fractured and strained apart, while the strata which are bent downwards—forming a synclinal—present to the surface a firm and compact mass. This can be clearly shown by making a sudden bend in a walking stick. The fibers of the outer curve will be torn asunder, leaving a splintered and ragged surface, while on the inner curve they will become unusually dense and firm. The fractured edges of the anticlinal curve are in a favorable condition to be worn away by water, while the compact surface of the synclinals, though forming the valleys, where the greatest amount of running water would act upon it, suffers but little erosion. The consequence is that the elevated strata are worn away even below the level of the original valleys, and the latter become the elevations. This can be proved by noticing that the strata visible on the sides of most valleys and hills are not parallel to the sides, but are nearly at right angles to them.

The mountains formed by depressions of the crust were far more common in the early history of sedimentary deposit, for the crust was then comparatively thin, and hence more yielding to lateral pressure. But after the crust became thickened beneath by the cooling of the earth, and more rigid by the accumulation of strata above and by previous plication and solidification, the mountains formed were largely due to uplifts of very wide extent carrying the stratified deposits with them. Our Rocky Mountain system was formed by these uplifts in the tertiary age, and it is probable that coral island subsidences in the Pacific Ocean accompanied the continental elevations.

The adherents to the accumulation theory—among whom are Hall and Hunt on this continent, and Scrope and Lyell in Europe—have noticed that, in mountainous districts, the elevations are less than the aggregate thickness of the strata, while in non-mountainous sections the hights correspond to the thickness of the strata. If the latter were equally true in mountainous districts, the Appalachian Mountains would attain a hight of forty thousand feet. Mr. Hall holds that these barriers are due to original deposition of materials, and not to any subsequent forces breaking up or disturbing the strata of which it is composed; and that upheavals and contortions of strata are only accidental and local. In this view he is sustained by Montlosier and Jukes. He also claims that the direction of mountain elevations is determined by accumulations along the sides of oceanic currents or shore lines. Dana, on the other hand, considers the northeast and northwest trends of most of the mountain and shore lines on the globe to be the result of cleavage in the earth's crust, and to indicate lines of weakest cohesion, like cleavage planes in crystals.

The accumulation theory supposes that, after a vast amount of material has been deposited in successive strata under water, a great continental upheaval brings the whole mass high and dry above the water line; and the present mountains are the stratified deposits which have escaped denudation by the action of frosts and floods. We have good illustrations of this process of erosion in the Missouri River valley, where the elevated land is being constantly washed away, forming deep ravines and abrupt ridges, and is carried into the muddy Missouri, and deposited in the deltas at the mouth of the Mississippi, thus adding constantly to the territory of Louisiana. As Egypt is said to be a gift of the Nile, so Louisiana is a gift of the Missouri. The effects of erosion, on a small scale, can be seen on the sides of deep railroad cuts, where miniature mountains and valleys are formed by the washing of water as it runs down their slopes.

Professor Le Conte opines that these opposing theories result from the loose use of the word mountain. He treats the whole subject under the two heads of mountain formation and mountain sculpture, and claims that the true mountain chain, or the convex plateau which constitutes it, is due only to foldings of the crust, and that those elevations which are left by the erosive action of water are not mountains, but simply sculptured continental elevations.

The effect of shrinkage and of erosion can be fairly seen on a small scale by the following artificial contrivance: Take a well filled bladder or toy rubber balloon, and cover it completely with several successive coatings of tallow, glue, plaster of Paris, or other substances that will harden after they have been put on in a plastic state. These will represent the stratified crust. Then by withdrawing some of the air from the bladder, which will answer to contraction of the nucleus, the crust will become rigid, furrowed, and fractured by lateral pressure, like the crust of the earth. Now by allowing a well regulated stream of water to flow over the surface of this, we can see many of the phenomena of erosion, like those apparent on the earth's surface.

Sir Charles Wheatstone.

This distinguished inventor died in Paris, France, on the 20th of October last. He was born at Gloucester, England, in 1802, and in early youth was engaged in the manufacture of musical instruments. With the object of improving upon these, he was led to study the laws of sound; and thus imbibing a strong taste for physical science, he proceeded to the investigation of the phenomena of optics and subsequently of electricity, on the velocity of which he published papers in 1834, detailing many very striking and new experiments. In the same year he was appointed Professor of Experimental Philosophy at King's College, London.

Previous to this time William Fothergill Cooke, in Heidelberg, Germany, had completed his first telegraphic invention, based on the electrometer form, had followed it with two mechanical telegraphs, and soon after came to England to introduce the telegraph system on railroads. His efforts at first pointing towards success were, however, nullified by a pneumatic signal apparatus, to which the railway people gave preference; but instead of being disheartened by his failure, the inventor began new experiments, regarding which he sought the advice of Faraday. The latter referred him to Wheatstone, and then, in 1837, began that partnership which has sent the names of the two inventors to posterity, indissolubly linked. It was Wheatstone's great learning, combined with Cooke's inventive genius, that evolved the succeeding discoveries in the telegraph. "Mr. Cooke," says Brunel, "is entitled to stand alone, as the gentleman to whom this country is indebted for having practically introduced and carried out the electric telegraph as a useful undertaking, promising to be a work of national importance; and Professor Wheatstone is acknowledged as the scientific man, whose profound and successful researches have already prepared the public to receive it as a project capable of practical application."

Invention now rapidly followed invention: the first was a discharger and secondary circuit to be applied to Cooke's original alarm; then combinations of all the various improvements; then a new mechanical telegraph, Wheatstone's work; then another telegraph, having a revolving index hand on a fixed dial, a new device of Cooke's; besides others, all devices of remarkable ingenuity, and the subjects of several patents in England. On the 12th of June, 1837, the inventors received their first English patents, and on the same date obtained an American patent on the electro-magnetic telegraph. This, however, was of no benefit to them, as the apparatus was never practically employed in this country, Professor Morse's instrument, as is well known, being the chief one in use from 1844 to 1846.

Wheatstone was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and twice received the medal of that association for his discoveries. Both himself and his co-laborer Cooke received the honor of knighthood in recognition of their public services.

SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION.

POPPY RED FOR ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS.

Thin cotton tissues are brushed over with a mixture of corallin lake ground up with water and thickened with gum, 75 grains of calcined magnesia per quart being added before use.

NEW PERFUME.

The local committee in Tahiti have sent to Paris the odoriferous bark of a yet undetermined plant, known over the Society and Pamotons islands by the name of *marie*. It can be advantageously employed in the preparation of the perfume known as new-mown hay.

SOLIDIFIED MILK.

A sample of condensed milk, weighing about 1 cwt., has been exhibited at the rooms of the Society of Arts, London, and an interesting experiment made thereon. This mammoth piece of solidified fluid was prepared by Hooker's process. It had been exposed to the action of the air for four years and three months, yet its quality was still so excellent that in a few minutes it was resolved, by churning, into good fresh butter. The trial was only one of a series made at the International Exhibition, South Kensington, and elsewhere. In each case the same satisfactory results were obtained.

QUADRUPLEX TELEGRAPHY IN INDIA.

It will interest our readers, says the *Indian Daily News*, to learn that quadruplex telegraphy—that is, the art of sending four messages, two in each direction, simultaneously, by means of one wire—has this week been accomplished on the Madras Railway Telegraph. The system which Mr. Winter, the telegraph engineer, invented in March last, proved perfectly successful on eighty miles of line, and its extension to lines of greater length is simply a question of additional condensers and battery power. The principle of sending two messages simultaneously in the same direction, on which this quadruple system depends, was successfully worked between Salem and Madras on April 16, but unfortunately other duties prevented Mr. Winter's carrying out the duplexing of this principle until the last few days.

THE WESTON LOCOMOTIVE.

A new engine, built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia, has been put on the Boston and Albany Railroad for trial. A saving of fuel of generally over 30 per cent is claimed. This is effected by means of a peculiar firebox. In most locomotives, the long flues or pipes connecting the furnace with the smoke stack are directly opposite the door, and much of the fine coal is caught by the draft as soon as thrown into the furnace, and comes out of the smoke stack in the form of dust and sparks. With this boiler, however, the invention of a man named Weston, a firebrick arch over most of the furnace keeps down much of the fine stuff, and what does escape has to pursue a zigzag course through a consuming box—where the particles are stopped, and even the smoke is consumed—in front of which are the flues, only six feet long instead of a dozen, as in an ordinary engine. This much for economy of fuel; and to provide still more for comfort, the smoke stack contains an arrangement by which what few sparks do get that far are carried off to the ground by pipes running beneath the engine. The locomotive is higher than most, and is extremely well proportioned. This is rather a small one, having a cylinder 16 inches in diameter, with a stroke of 22 inches, and driving wheels five feet in diameter. H. B. Klinger, who has it in charge, has been running it on the western end of the road, and comparing its work with that of the company's engines, with an average saving of 46 per cent in fuel.