

Spurious Oil Paintings Reproduced by Photography.

Under certain circumstances photography may with advantage be employed as an auxiliary of the fine arts; but there are others where all true artists would resent its intervention as an intrusion. Among the latter must be classed some pictures that have recently been produced by painting in oil on the back of photographs rendered transparent by means of Canada balsam, or some such method; these photographs are then passed through the press, and are thus made to resemble oil-paintings. Some speculators are busy exhibiting these pictures in Paris in the hopes of getting up a company for their manufacture and sale on a large scale.

Pictures thus reproduced by photography are to be palmed off especially for the decoration of churches, and thus a mechanical imitation of Rubens or Van Dyck, Titian, or Raphael, will take its place as an ecclesiastical altar piece. Good-by, then, to all the tradition of art, to all enthusiasm for the old masters, to all encouragement of living artists, if such forgeries as these are to prevail. Photography would be degraded in such a service, and deserve nothing but condemnation. In reproducing what it beholds, or as the handmaiden of art, photography can render great services; but if it be employed in supporting mechanical frauds, in imposing upon ignorance, or in promoting bad taste, it will be scouted by all who possess a love for the beautiful.—*Photographic News.*

RECENT INVENTIONS.

A novel arrangement of fireplaces, flues, and chimneys in kilns for burning bricks, tiles, or other earthenware, has been patented by Mr. Nicholas Lodge of Naapirville, of Aurora, Ill. The construction of the kiln is such as to secure an even "burn."

An improvement in road planers, patented by Mr. Joseph P. Lafetra, of Shrewsbury, N. J., consists of a blade suspended diagonally from the under side of a frame supporter by wheels, and provided with an elevating and depressing screw, by which the blade is thrown into position for use, or raised so that it may be moved about.

Mr. William L. Allen, of Belle Plaine, Kan., has patented an improved baker's cabinet, which is provided with flour chests placed so as to deliver flour to sieves placed over the mixing bowls; it is also provided with compartments and drawers for containing spices, lard, etc.

An improvement in stringing beads, invented by Messrs. S. M. & J. C. Lewes, of Providence, R. I., consists in making the end bead with a cavity to receive the knot on the end of the string, and with a screw plug for confining the knot.

NEW LOADING APPARATUS FOR ORDNANCE.

The accompanying engraving represents a novel gun-loading attachment recently patented by Lieutenant D. D. Johnson, of the Fifth U. S. Artillery. The aim of the inventor in planning the apparatus has been to produce a loading device which may be applied without altering the present style of gun carriages, and which may be operated from a position considerably below the muzzle of the gun.

A staff carriage, A, is supported by rods, D, which may be raised or lowered by the racks, E, and their pinions. The staff carriage, A, carries a short shaft, upon which there is a pinion for driving the sponge staff or rammer staff, also two drums for receiving the rope by which it is rotated.

The first operation in cleaning the gun is to raise the staff carriage, A; the sponge staff is then run through the carriage as far as convenient; the free end of the staff is then raised by means of a rod fitted with a fork for the purpose. As soon as the teeth of a rack with which the sponge staff is provided, engage the teeth of the pinion in the carriage, the pinion is turned by means of the ropes, forcing the sponge into the bore of the gun. The sponge staff carries a drum by means of which it may be revolved when the sponge reaches the end of the bore. The sponge staff is withdrawn by reversing the motion of the pinion in the carriage. The cartridge rest, C, receives the cartridge, shell, or shot, and carries it to the muzzle of the gun. The rammer staff is then inserted and operated in much the same manner as the sponge staff. After loading, the staff carriage and the cartridge rest are lowered out of the way to permit of the ready adjustment of the gun.

Gases of the Stomach.

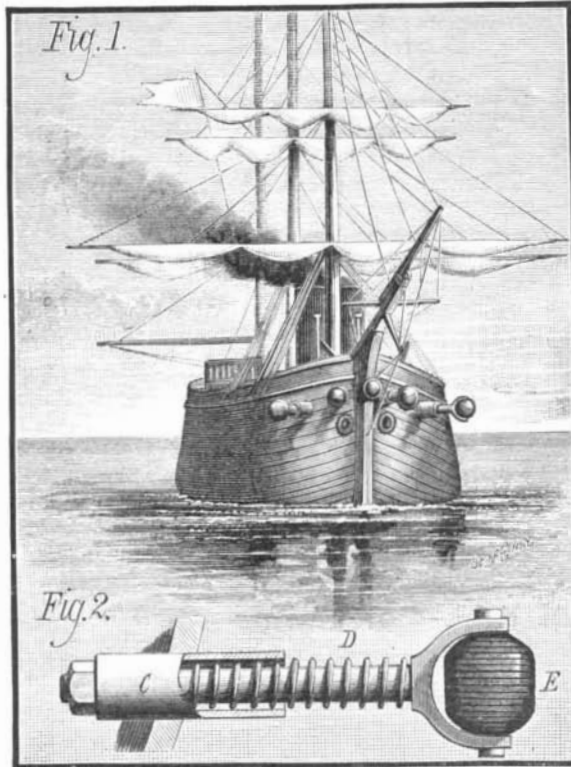
In a paper recently read before the Paris Academy of Medicine, the author expressed the opinion that food does not produce gas, and that the gases which are found in the diges-

tive tubes proceed from the external air, the blood and fecal matter; these gases are continually put in motion by the pathological contractions of the muscular fibers of the intestines; expelled by the mouth, they are constantly renewed, and their production may be as incessant in a starving man as in one who is well fed. This symptom of production of gas, therefore, signifies an irritation of the stomach, which is always consecutive to a long-standing gastric dyspepsia. No therapeutic agent need be sought to combat these gases.

A NEW FENDER FOR VESSELS.

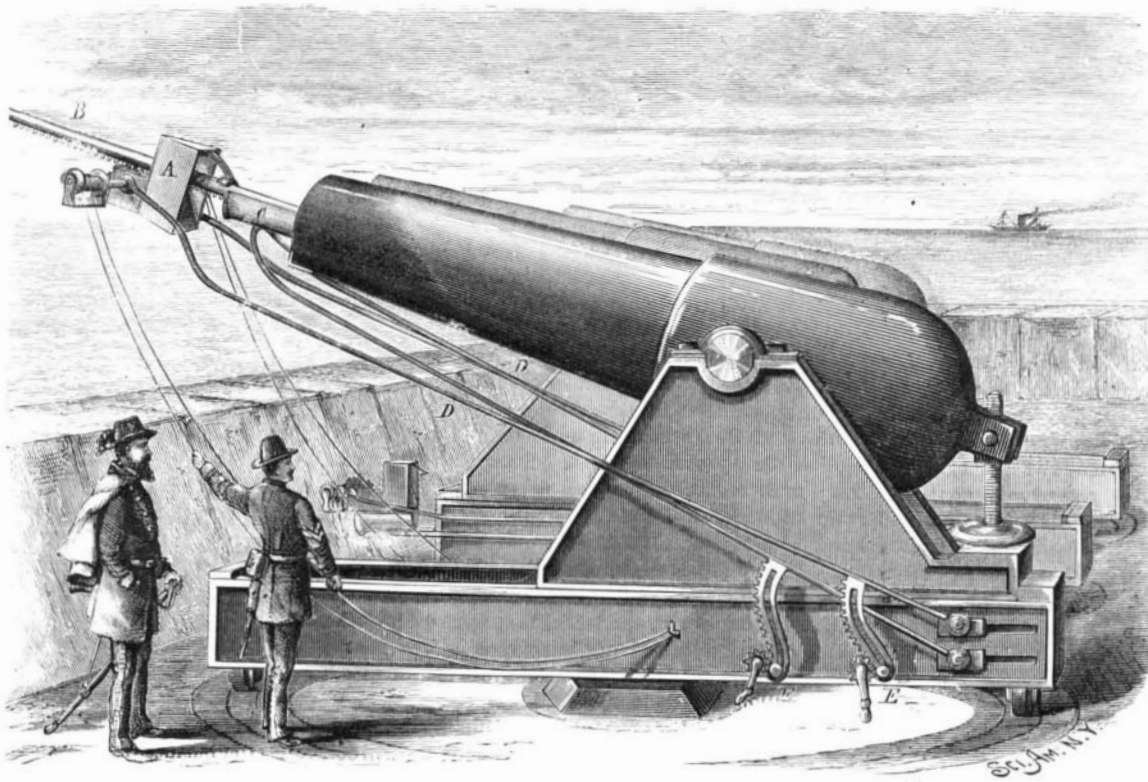
The accompanying engraving represents a novel spring guard or fender for vessels, recently patented by Mr. Carl Hülster, of 181 Orchard street, New York.

The object of this invention is to furnish a device for at-

**HULSTER'S FENDER FOR VESSELS.**

tachment to vessels for deadening the shock or concussion in case of a collision, and thus preventing the damage which generally results from such accidents. The invention consists in several spring supported bars, D, projecting from the bow of the vessel, and carrying rollers, E, which are covered with tarred rope to give them a yielding surface. The bars, D, pass through strong iron sockets, C, secured to the timbers of the vessel. The inventor in the present case shows spiral springs around the bars, D, but rubber or other springs may be used, and they may be placed inside instead of outside of the vessel.

In the event of the collision of two vessels the shock will

**JOHNSON'S LOADING ATTACHMENT FOR ORDNANCE.**

be absorbed by the springs, so that neither of the vessels will be likely to sustain injury.

The Oldest and Coldest Town in the World.

According to Humboldt the oldest town in the world is Jakutsk, 5,000 inhabitants, in Eastern Siberia. It is not only the oldest but probably, also, the coldest. The ground remains always frozen to the depth of 300 feet, except in midsummer, when it thaws three feet at the surface. The mean tempera-

ture for the year is 13.7° F. For ten days in August the thermometer goes as high as 85°. From November to February the temperature remains between 42° and 68° below zero. The river Lena remains frozen for nine months of the year.

Anointing in Infantile Disorders.—Scarlet Fever.

More than twenty years ago a correspondent communicated to the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN the following simple treatment for scarlet fever:

When the first symptoms of the disease appear anoint the flesh of the victim from head to foot with the inside of the rind or fatty portion of a smoked ham, and renew the application as often as the flesh becomes dry. The writer had saved his own children, and after our publication we received a number of letters from persons who had tried the simple remedy in their own families with satisfactory success.

We are reminded of the above by reading in a recent number of the *Lancet* the following testimony of H. Guard Knaggs, M.D., F.L.S., on the value of anointing in infantile disorders of various kinds, reporting a number of remarkable cases in support of his theory:

"During the past eleven months I have been testing, with uniformly successful results, the value of a very simple method of treating such infantile complaints as atrophy, bronchitis, convulsions, diarrhea, febrile disturbances generally, and indeed all disorders of childhood which are accompanied by an unnatural state of the skin.

"The treatment simply consists in smearing with salad oil the whole surface of the body, from the crown of the head to the tips of the fingers and toes, the process being repeated every twelve, six, or even four hours, according to the urgency of the case. Of course, the use of a long flannel gown or small blanket is obvious, and the fluid should be slightly warmed.

"The application of oil possesses the following immense advantages over the ordinary warm bath:

"1. Skin-action is more completely and permanently restored.

"2. The danger of reaction is avoided, for there is no sudden change of temperature; and, moreover, the sheet of oil protects the surface from atmospheric influences.

"3. It acts as a fuel-food, not only preventing waste of tissue, but actually increasing the bulk of the little patient.

"4. It does not depress, but, on the contrary, appears to exhilarate.

"It will scarcely be credited by many that the formidable affections above mentioned will frequently yield to this treatment, or, at any rate, show signs of abatement in from twenty minutes to four and twenty hours; but such is the case, though sometimes forty-eight or even seventy-two hours will elapse before any decided signs of improvement occur."

Useful Bacteria.

Hitherto much evil, and no perceptible good, has been attributed to the minute forms of vegetable life known as bacteria. It has been left for a Russian botanist, Cienkowski, to discover an instance of their usefulness, namely, in the manufacture of beet sugar. One of the necessary stages of the process is that in which the beet juice assumes a gelatinous consistency, when it is compared to frog spawn. The cause of this condition has had many explanations. Some have thought it due to the escaped viscid protoplasmic contents of the cells, others a result of a fermentation process, causing the sugar in the juice to become converted into a "spawny" cellulose and into glucose. Jubert and Mendes, however, suggested that it was owing to the presence of peculiar organized bodies, and this suggestion Cienkowski has now confirmed, showing by his researches carried on in a sugar factory that the "frog spawn" is, by its development and growth, closely related to a bacterian form described by Cohn as *Ascoascus Billrothii*, which he calls provisionally *A. mesenteroides*, and that to it the beet root sugar manufacturer is indebted for the formation of his glucose. This bacterian can be easily cultivated by keeping a slice of cooked beet root, a little moistened with water, in free contact with the air.

Cienkowski's monograph was published by the Imperial Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg, last year.

Photography by Electric Light.

It has become quite the fashion in Paris for parties of ladies and gentlemen after dinner, or on their way to the opera, to step into a studio and have their photographs taken by the electric light. It is, moreover, said that the Americans are the best patrons of these night studios.