

(26) C. L. V. writes: I have been gathering carnelians and agates for quite a while. Having a nice collection now, I should like to polish them. Will you please tell me if there is any other way or method of polishing them besides cutting them? If so what is the method? A. You may shape your carnelians with a corundum wheel such as is commonly used by dentists, and they may be tolerably well polished on a fine Arkansas oilstone fitted to the lathe.

(27) J. P. J. writes: I wish to build a scow about 60 feet long, and 18 or 20 feet beam, and 4 feet hold, decked over forward and not to draw over 3 feet of water when loaded. 1. Could I put on a stern wheel and successfully propel it by steam, at the rate of 3 or 4 miles per hour? A. Yes. 2. If so, about what horse power engine would it require, or would I have to use two smaller engines? A. One engine, 9 inch cylinder by 2½ feet stroke, or two equal to this in power. 3. Would an upright boiler answer, and what size? A. Yes; consult a good engineer as to size and proportions. 4. What size should the wheel be? A. 9 to 10 feet diameter. 5. And about how many paddles? A. Ten. 6. Would it be better to have it longer and less beam? Will a square bow answer? A. Longer and less beam would be better; a square bow will answer for a light draught.

(28) A. H. asks: 1. Is crude petroleum superior to coal for smelting iron? A. If it could be practically and economically applied, yes. 2. If so, is it used for that purpose to any extent? A. No. 3. Is iron ore with 60 per cent of iron and 5 per cent of sulphur a good ore for smelting, say with petroleum? A. No. 4. What back numbers of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN contain information about petroleum; iron smelting with petroleum, and is there any book published about iron smelting with petroleum? A. See pp. 352, 69, 90, 368, and 85, vol. 39, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN. We know of no such book.

(29) W. J. H. asks for a compound used to harden iron. A. Heat the iron to a cherry red, dust on powdered yellow prussiate of potash, and plunge in cold water.

(30) "Subscriber" asks if a pipe 12 feet high, 6 inches diameter, be filled with water, the pipe to be made of material just strong enough to hold the water, would a pipe of same height, capable of holding three times the amount of water, have to be of stronger material? A. If of same height, yes.

(31) W. K. H. writes: Let us suppose a 10x12 engine, running at 200 revolutions, 400 feet piston speed, with a 5 foot driving wheel. Then a 10x24 engine, 100 revolutions, same piston speed as above. Now, to communicate the same speed to the driven machinery we must have a 10 foot driver, which exactly balances the leverage gained by the stroke. Am I right? A. Yes.

(32) J. S. S. writes: In "Notes and Queries," April 19 (11), you say: "J. W. W. asks: 1. What degree of centigrade is water at its greatest density? A. 4°, equal 39.2° Fah." In "The Depths of the Sea," by Prof. C. Wyville Thomson, Macmillan & Co., London, 1874, the author says, on page 306, that on the cruise of the Lightning, August, 1868, he found the temperature at the bottom of the sea -1.2° centigrade; and on the cruise of the Porcupine, August, 1869, page 309, he found -1.3° centigrade, more than 5° centigrade lower than the answer to J. W. W. A. The fact that the temperature is below 4° cent. at the bottom of the sea does not prove that the density of the water is greatest there. Water is practically incompressible, and expands both above and below 4° cent.

(33) A. K. writes: I want to make an induction coil like the one described in SUPPLEMENT NO. 160. I have made the tube out of maple wood, ½ of an inch internal diameter and fifteen sixteenths of an inch external diameter. 1. Will this do? A. Yes. 2. Should it be varnished? A. Yes. 3. Must the hammer be soft iron? A. Yes. 4. How many thicknesses of thin writing paper should I put around each coil or layer of the secondary coil? A. Four. 5. Should it be varnished? A. Not necessarily. 6. What battery is the best as regards strength, durability, and cost? A. Probably the Grentz will answer your purpose best. 7. How many will I need for the coil to get the best results? A. Three, of good size.

(34) A. M. S. writes: Suppose a wood planer to have a cylinder 5 inches in diameter, with 3 knives set at an angle of 45° with the radius, and making 4,000 revolutions per minute. Will such planer cut any smoother or better with the edge of knives projecting only ¼ of an inch over chip break, than it would with the knives projecting five sixteenths or three eighths of an inch? A. Yes.

(35) S. E. M. writes: I wish to make an ink that will copy several days after writing with it. A. Use a strong aqueous solution of soluble nigrosin (a variety of aniline black soluble in water), containing a few drops of clove oil to prevent moulding.

(36) J. W. P. asks what the Italian statuary or image-makers put in their plaster of Paris so as to make it resemble marble. Some of their wares are very finely cast with a fine outside polish. A. Saturate the dry cast with melted (pure) stearine or stearic acid.

(37) B. A. M. asks: 1. Is not aniline red a poison? A. Pure fuchsin or magenta is hurtful, if not poisonous, when taken into the system in any considerable quantity. The commercial aniline red often contains traces of arsenic, owing to the employment of arsenic acid in its production. 2. Are there no means of neutralizing it without spoiling the wine which contains it? A. No. 3. How can it be detected in wine? A. See p. 344, vol. 39, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, and pp. 862, No. 54, 593, No. 38, and 637, No. 40, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT.

MINERALS, ETC.—Specimens have been received from the following correspondents, and examined, with the results stated:

E. D. B.—It is difficult to determine a plant from such material alone, but we are very positive that it is one of the milkweeds, probably the very widely distributed *Asclepias cornuta*. If so, we may state that numerous partially successful attempts have

hitherto been made to obtain from the tough stems of the plant a textile fiber and a paper stock. The plant, although common, is not found in sufficient abundance in a wild state to afford any very great supply. We are not aware of any experiments that have been made to ascertain whether its cultivation would prove profitable; if you have facilities it would be an interesting matter to devote a little land and time to its cultivation to find out this.—D. B. B.—No. 1. The rock is a serpentine. The crystals appear to be aluminite and prehnite—quantity too small for proper classification. No. 2. Graphic granite, Nos. 3 and 4. Hornblende and feldspar. In No. 3 the red crystals are garnets. No. 5. A ferruginous clay containing carbonaceous matters.—No. 6. Dolomitic rock. No. 7. Chiefly calcite containing marcasite. No. 8. Coal shale.—L. W.—It is an impure clay—aluminum silicate—containing much lime carbonate, iron oxide, magnesia, and traces of alkaline chlorides. If properly washed it might be serviceable in the manufacture of bricks, tiles, drain pipes, cheap pottery, etc. It cannot be used for soap making, as the per cent of alkalis is very small.—J. A. S.—It is an impure alum—of some value if found in any considerable quantity. An analysis would be requisite to determine its actual value.—C. F.—No. 1. A schistose conglomerate. No. 2. Ferruginous sandstone. Ground, washed, and calcined, this may produce a cheap bright red pigment.

#### COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

On Motion of Perimetral Points in a Rotating Shifting Wheel. By J. P. B.  
On Squaring the Circle. By G. M. A.  
On the Polar Sea. By F. G. N.  
On Canals. By J. S. B.  
On the Hop Plant. By H. W.  
On Oilers. By A. B.  
On Forgery and Science. By J. E. E.  
Wagon Wheel Question. By S. N. M.  
On Mosquitoes. By E. P.  
On Cipher Writing. By J. W. W.  
On Rose Hips. By C. F. E.  
On Lunar Calendar. By J. D. S.  
On Life Saving Apparatus. By Nauticus.  
Machine for Covering Wire. By J. B.  
On Telephones and Sounders. By H. H. E.

#### [OFFICIAL.]

INDEX OF INVENTIONS  
FOR WHICH  
Letters Patent of the United States were  
Granted in the Week Ending  
April 8, 1879,  
AND EACH BEARING THAT DATE.  
[Those marked (r) are reissued patents.]

A complete copy of any patent in the annexed list, including both the specifications and drawings, will be furnished from this office for one dollar. In ordering, please state the number and date of the patent desired and remit to Munn & Co., 37 Park Row, New York city.

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