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THE BELGIAN SYSTEM OF CANAL TOWING.

There are now navigating the canals of this State over five thousand boats, which are kept in motion by either steam or animal power; by far the greater proportion are propelled by animals. Whether the power is economically applied or not is a matter of great importance, as the quantity of freight that is moved on these artificial waters is immense.

The reward offered by the State in 1871, for an economical system of canal propulsion, has been the means of directing the attention of inventors to this subject, and improvements of more or less merit have been developed; but the hoped-for new system, if we may judge from the continued employment of animals, has not been adopted if it really exists.

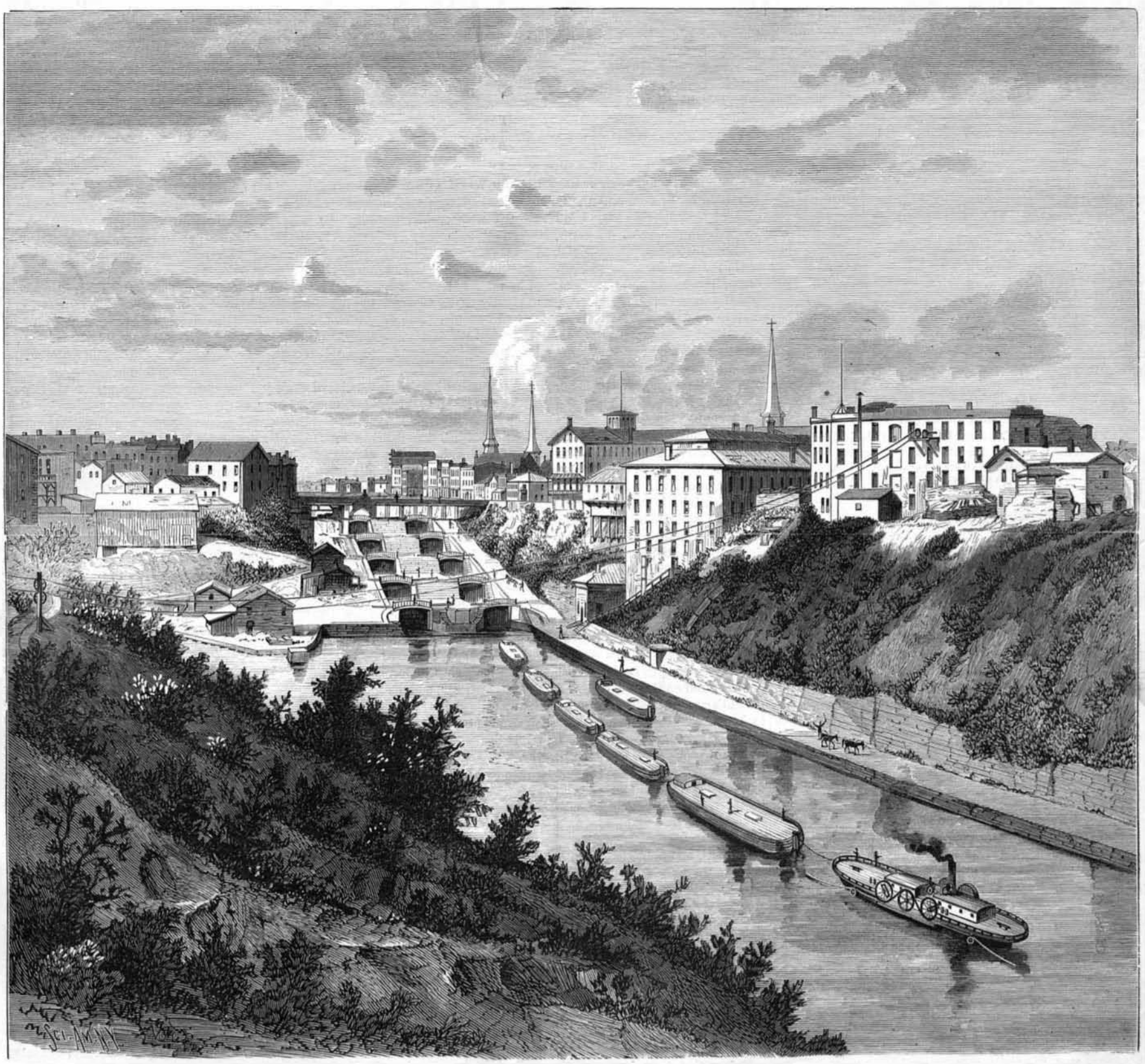
The Belgian system itself is not new, it having been employed in Europe for more than 18 years, and long before that, boats were hauled by means of submerged chains. The modern improvements, which render the system and machinery complete, consist in the substitution of wire rope for the ponderous and more expensive chain, and a clip drum or driving wheel for the ordinary indented windlass. This system has been adopted by the New York Steam Cable Towing Company, who have for several years towed boats on this plan from Buffalo, N. Y , to Lockport, proving not only the economy of the system, but its perfect adaptability to canals, and especially to the Erie Canal. Meantime they have perfected the mechanism of their boats. The State has granted to them 50 years' exclusive privilege of laying cables in the Erie Canal between Buffalo and Albany for this purpose, and the cables will be laid as far as Rochester this season.

Two cables will be laid, one for the up boats and the other for the down. The cables, which are one inch in diameter, are made of steel wire, and have a hemp core. They weigh 4 tons to the mile, and have no slack.

The tow boat, which is shown in Fig. 2, is 78 feet 6 inches long, 16 feet broad, and draws, when loaded with coal, 5 feet of water. It has a rudder at each end, the one at the bow being always locked, as in the case of our New York ferry boats. The boat carries a screw at one end, 4 feet in diameter and 7 feet pitch, which is used merely to propel the boat through the locks. Upon one side of the boat are three wheels, each 6 feet in diameter, the center one, as shown in Fig. 3, carrying around its periphery clips, which grasp the cable tightly as it passes over the top of the wheel. This wheel is secured to a 6 inch shaft, which is about on a level with the deck; the shaft receives its power from the engine shaft through a train of gearing which causes it to make about one revolution to eight of the engine. The wheels at the sides of the clip wheel are simply tighteners, to hold the cable down to the clip wheel. They are supported on studs projecting from blocks which slide in the inclined ways, and are moved by screws passing through the blocks. The cable is taken up by two sheaves, like that shown in Fig. 4, placed one near each end, as shown in Fig. 2.

The engine is an inverted vertical of the plain, substantial style usually built at the Pound Mfg. Co.'s Works in Lock-

[*Continued on page* 146.]



THE BELGIAN SYSTEM OF CABLE TOWING.—THE LOCKS AT LOCKPORT, N. Y.

THE BELGIAN SYSTEM OF CANAL TOWING.

[*Continued from first page.*]

port. It is 14 inch bore and 16 inch stroke. The boiler—of the locomotive style—has a 5 foot shell, and is 14 feet long.

The screw receives its motion through clutch gearing, shown in Fig. 5. The miter wheels on the engine shaft are loose. The clutch slides on a feather, so that when it is brought into engagement with either wheel it will carry it, and consequently drive the wheel on the screw shaft. This mode of gearing is found to answer the purpose as the screw is seldom used.

The boats are calculated for towing from four to five canal boats at a speed of three miles per hour. The method of making up and towing a train of boats is shown in the front page engraving. The machinery for these boats is built by the Pound Manufacturing Co., of Lockport, N. Y. The boats are built by H. Benedict & Co., of Lockport. Ten of these boats have already been built; fifteen more are to be completed next winter The company intend to build eighty in all.

Our large engraving not only gives an excellent ideaof the Belgian system of towing, but it also shows the locks of Lockport, where the boats are raised and lowered 60 feet The difference in the two water levels affords the city of Lockport one of the finest water privileges in the world. Clustered around the locks and along the course of a race on the left bank are factories which are driven by water from the upper canal level. Beyond the bank on the left and in the hollow just out of sight in our view are the Pound Works. The large buildings on the left of the locks are the Holly Works, of which we have several times made mention. At the foot of the locks is a small building containing the pumps that supply Lockport with water for extinguishing fires and all other purposes, except cooking and drinking.

There is another matter of engineering interest connected with the spot shown in the engraving, namely, the transmission of power by means of wire cables. There is probably not another place in the country where this method of transmitting power is employed to such an extent as within the area covered by our engraving. A 30 inch turbine at the Pound Works distributes power through five cables to manufacturers of various kinds upon and beyond the embankment. The Richmond Works, on the extreme right of the engraving, supply power through two cables that run across the gully, one being 2,100 feet long, the other 1,600 feet; also through other cables to five other establishments upon and beyond the right bank. A 40 inch turbine under a 65 foot head supplies the power. One of these cables, 1,100 feet long, runs around corners and is supported upon poles. About 20,000 feet of cable are kept in motion by these two turbines.

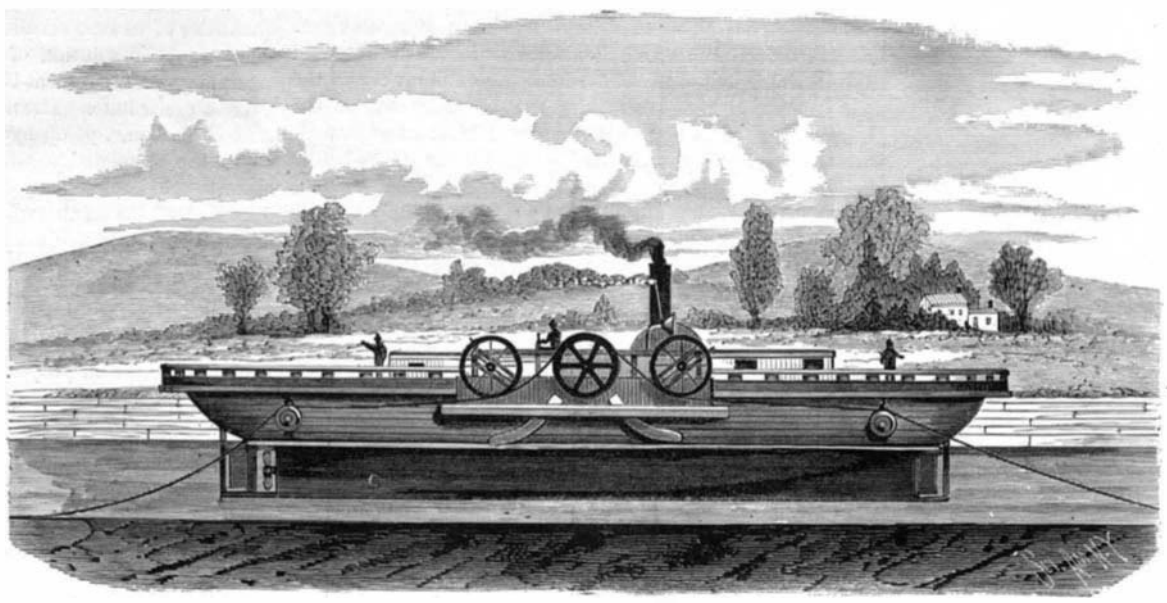
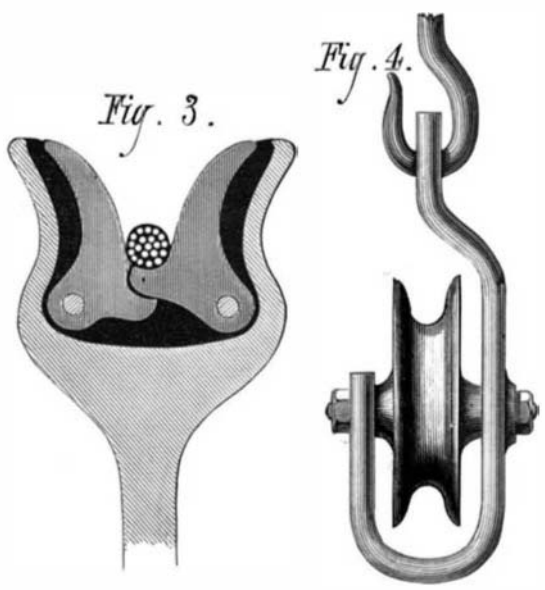


Fig. 2.—SIDE ELEVATION OF CABLE TOW BOAT.



CLIP IN DRIVE WHEEL. TAKE-UP SHEAVE.

MISCELLANEOUS INVENTIONS.

Mr. George H. Hutton, of Boonsborough, Md., has patented an improvement in jump-seats for vehicles, which consists of a stop or locking device for supporting the pivoted or shifting seats of vehicles and holding them firmly when elevated, so that they will have no swaying or lateral movement.

A seal and a lock for doors of freight cars, and also stationary structures, have been patented by Mr. John T. Kilham, of Harper's Ferry, W. Va. It is so constructed that when the seal or plate containing the seal proper is duly attached it prevents the lock bolt which secures the hasp from being withdrawn, and hence the door cannot be opened. When the seal plate is broken the lock bolt is released, and by proper manipulation can be withdrawn from the lock, thus in turn releasing the hasp and allowing the door to be opened.

An improved fire extinguishing attachment for buildings, which is so constructed that water may be thrown over all parts of the buildings, inside and outside, to prevent them from taking fire from a contiguous burning building, and to extinguish the fire if it has already started, has been patented by Mr. Edward M. Whyler, of Hays City, Kan.

An improvement in gates, patented by Mr. Moses Derby, of Pepin, Wis., consists in certain novel features of construction, whereby the gate is adapted for swinging in either direction, and may be raised to clear obstructions.

Mr. Marshall McDonald, of Lexington, Va., has patented an improved fishway, in which is utilized the velocity or pressure of the head of water at the dam by directing the head of water through a series of openings on an incline, the openings being arranged to discharge upwardly, so that an initial upward current on the incline is produced, which enables the fish to ascend the incline.

A lamp top or burner, having a socket in its upper portion and a detachable mouthpiece or tip provided with a tenon or reduced portion which fits therein, has been patented by Mr. William C. McCormack, of Stanford, Ky.

An improved check for oil wells has been patented by Mr. Jasper Neath, of Shamburg, Pa. It consists in an external packing device applied in connection with the usual packing devices, or at one of the lower joints in the tubing, to prevent any flow of oil through the tubing, so that when sufficient pressure has accumulated to cause a flow the oil will pass outside the tubing by the casing to the tanks.

Mr. Griffith B. Thomas, of Point Pleasant, West Va., has invented an improvement in iron roofing, which consists in forming the joints between the sheets by crimping the edge of one over the turned up edge of the adjoining sheet the whole length, and then fastening them by clips of tin.

Mr. Benjamin F. Wood, of New Haven, Conn., has invented an improved frame for drying lace curtains under tension. It is simple in construction, and will hold the curtains under a uniform tension while drying. When not required for use it can be folded into compact form for storage or transportation.

Mr. Paul H. Seager, of Manteno, Ill., has patented an improvement in stovepipes, which consists of a section of pipe unriveted at the lower end so that its diameter at this end can be increased and diminished at pleasure by means of a lever pivoted to the pipe on one side and connected by a strap with the other side. By moving the lever back and forth the pipe is contracted and expanded, and secured in any desired position by a pawl engaging a ratchet guard over the lever.

An improvement in flour bolts has been patented by Mr. Josiah J. Zinn, of Union City, Pa. The object of this invention is to construct the reels so that a smoother surface will be given to the bolting cloth, for the purpose of permitting a sliding motion of the meal when it is in operation, and thus enable the flour to be bolted more evenly and cleanly than is now done.

Mr. Rienza A. Goldsmith, of Washingtonville, N. Y., has invented an improvement in thill couplings, which consists in forming upon the head of a coupling bolt a plate with a hole through which the cam bolt passes, so that the coupling bolt may be secured by the nut that holds the cam bolt.

A composition for water filters, formed of clay, sand, wood sawdust, pulverized pumice stone, and English calcimine, mixed together in about equal quantities, with sufficient water to reduce the mixture to a plastic state, has been patented by Mr. Jean B. Ader, Aîné, of New Orleans, La.

An improved flood gate, which is so constructed as to swing open as the water rises and swing shut as the water falls, which will prevent trash from lodging about its hinges, and may be readily adjusted to the height of the water at different seasons of the year, has been patented by Mr. William B. Akers, of Little River, Va.

Mr. John Ames, Jr., of New York city, has patented an improvement in making brushes. The invention consists in a knot formed by dipping the loose butts of the bristles into melted pitch, glue, or cement, and inserting them in a form, where they are allowed to cool or harden.

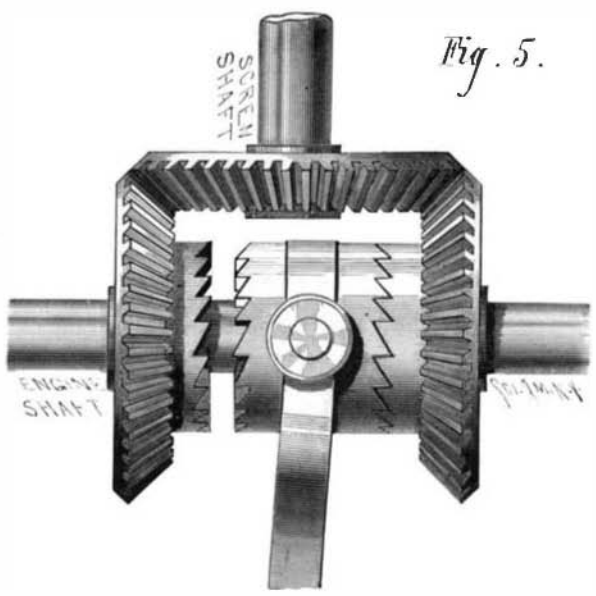
Mr. Louis A. Bringier, of Ascension Parish, La., has patented an improvement in back-bands for plow harnesses. It consists in a connecting device of peculiar form for holding the traces and preventing their detachment.

An improvement in the class of foot-rests which are composed of two plates or thin boards hinged together, so that when the device is in use one of the plates will be at right angles to the other, but when not in use one plate may be folded flat upon the other, is the invention of Mr. Henry Jungmann, of Madison, Wis.

Mr. Maximilian C. F. Nitze, of Dresden, Saxony, has patented an improvement in application of electric light to a speculum. The object of the invention is to provide a means for direct illumination and examination of internal parts or cavities of the body, as the urethra, the bladder, the larynx, the esophagus, the stomach, the uterus, the outer auditory passage. This method, and the instruments constructed according to this method, afford the possibility of introducing the source of light into the internal parts or cavities themselves for examining the part directly, or its reflected image. Lenses or lens systems for enlarging the field of view may be employed in combination with his instruments. The source of light employed in these instruments consists in a platinum wire made incandescent by an electric current. The white heat of this wire is taken up and made harmless by means of a cold water current flowing along the circuit wire.

An improved machine for perforating papers, so that letters, numbers, or other characters may be represented thereon by a series of perforations, has been patented by M. Henri L. Poirier, of Paris, France. The punch holder is so constructed that the punches may be readily replaced when they are worn, and they may be grouped in the prisms so as to change the characters to be reproduced in perforations.

Mr. Albion B. Parkman, of St. Albans, Me., has invented an improved hame fastener, which consists of the hollow shank or body containing snap hooks, the shank of one of which has sharp teeth on its upper face, while the shank of the other is provided with square teeth on its upper face, which are held in the shank by the dogs that are pivoted within the body of the fastener, and made to engage with the teeth of the snap hooks by a curved spring.



SCREW DRIVING GEAR.

An improved washing machine has been patented by Mr. Zohar Doyle, of Ogden, Ill. It consists of two semi conical pressers, with air tubes to prevent suction, mounted in a head held upon a frame operated by a lever and springs, and adapted to be shifted about, so as to be directed upon the surface of all the clothing.

Mr. Emery M. Pike, of McDonough, N. Y., has patented improvements on the butter worker for which letters patent No. 179,053 were granted to him June 20, 1876. In that apparatus a frame, provided with a trough or gutter, supported a reciprocating tank provided with an eduction pipe. The present invention consists in details of construction and arrangement of various parts of the apparatus, whereby provision is made for lessening the friction, for disposing of the brine, and for insuring the proper operation of the apparatus