

(7) M. E.—Ordinary hemlock tanned sole leather may be said to be hardened without any material alteration of its nature by the following treatment. Prepare a bath as follows:

- Slaked lime... 1/2 pound.
Sal soda... 2 "
Water... 1/2 gallon.
Boil together, cool, and add:
Slaked lime... 1/2 pound.
Water... 1/2 gallon.
Put the leather into this for three days, then remove and put it into a bath of:
Slaked lime... 3 pounds.
Water... 1 1/2 gallons.

and let it soak in this for from two days in summer to three days—or even four days—in winter. When taken out of this, pass through water heated to about 180° Fah., and then pass between heavily weighted rolls, or, if a denser material is demanded, press in a hydraulic press. When subjected to the latter, a product nearly as hard as vulcanite is obtained, but one still possessing the appearance and nature of leather quite distinctly.

(8) G. C. W. asks how to make a cheap white metal that will beat tin, same as gold leaf is beat. It is to be used for gilding on plaster of Paris. A. The common white gilding leaf is composed of tin and lead—2 parts tin, 1 part lead make a very white tough leaf. Equal parts of each is a little darker; 1 part tin to 2 parts lead is about as low as you can go with this compound and have it keep bright. There is a plastic metallic alloy described in the Journal of the Franklin Institute, vol. xxxix., page 55, which might be of use to you.

(9) C. C. C.—To soften sheet brass for stamping, heat to low red and quench in water. Some kinds of brass need be only heated to what is called the black heat. As the composition of yellow brass varies very much, you would do well to order your sheets annealed and of the kind used for stamping.

(10) G. E. Z. asks: How can I cut out round glasses that will not crack easily? I now heat the glasses almost to a melting point and press them out to the size required, three-fourths and one-half inch diameter, but find that heating the glass makes it very brittle. I cannot use a diamond, as they must be exactly alike, and the glass will not always break where cut, without the edge chipping. The glasses are used between two lead washers held by a nut against a boss, and are tested to 150 pounds pressure to the square inch. A. The process of stamping or pressing glass makes it brittle because of uneven cooling. The pieces can be made as tough as the nature of glass will allow by thoroughly annealing in the same manner as is done in the glass houses. You can construct a small oven, somewhat after the style of a baker's oven, or get what is called a muffle and set it in small furnace if your work is small in quantity.

(11) D. P. K.—Back draught or explosions in fire chamber are generally due to imperfect combustion at the commencement of firing, caused by accumulation of carbonic oxide above the fire, when upon opening the door it takes fire by the contact of air. At other times, when the ash pit door, and fire door are entirely closed to prevent steam making, the fire chamber will fill with carbonic oxide and will take fire upon opening the door. It is well to allow a little air through the fire door at all times. For "sun dial" see Notes and Queries, No. 3, September 30, 1882, which is correct for New York.

(12) J. O. B.—The enameling of cast iron is done by brushing upon the surface for the first coat, the following composition, of the consistency of paint: 66 parts powdered calcined flint, 34 parts borax; mix, melt, and pulverize, then add 12 parts potter's clay. Grind together in water enough to spread with a brush. Paint the work and put in a warm place to dry. For the second or glaze coat take 15 parts borax, 73 parts of powdered glass that has no lead in it, 12 parts caustic soda; thoroughly pulverize and mix with enough water to make it flow under a brush. Lightly and quickly brush a thin coat of the last mixture over the dry coat of the first mixture, and dry. Then fuse the enamel in an oven at low red heat. To tin cast iron is difficult and unsatisfactory. You can galvanize cast iron with zinc and then redip in tin, if necessary to have a tin surface. See SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT, No. 176, for galvanizing process, also SUPPLEMENT, 161, for zinc bath for galvanizing.

(13) E. K. asks: 1. How is resin oil made? A. Crude resin oil is obtained by heating the lower grades of resin in an iron still up to 150° to 160° C. First water, pyroligneous acid, and naphtha pass over. Then the temperature is raised to near the red heat of iron, when the resin boils, and crude resin oil distills over. 2. What percentage will it give? A. 20 to 25 per cent. 3. Is it necessary to have a copper condenser, or would an iron one do? A. Iron will answer. 4. A receipt to make yellow axle grease. Also receipt to make black axle grease. A. The following is a receipt for a thick oil grease:

- 1. For use in winter:
Tallow... 35 parts.
Oil of resin... 10 "
Olive or rape oil... 65 "
2. For use in summer:
Tallow... 60 parts.
Oil of resin... 8 "
Olive or rape oil... 40 "

The blue color is due to the dark violet tint of the oil referred to, while the yellow tint is produced by the addition of a solution of turmeric root in caustic soda.

(14) W. H. F. asks how powder is made. What is mealed powder? How is it made? A. The composition of powder varies according to the use for which it is intended; thus sporting and rifle powder has a composition equal to:

- Salt peter... 74.84 per cent.
Sulphur... 11.84 "
Charcoal... 13.32 "

The pulverized ingredients, thoroughly mixed, with the addition of water, form "meal" powder.

(15) H. R. E. writes: In your last issue, on

page 298, A. G. G. asks, What are the ingredients of Spencer's acid? I have used the following for the past nine years, with very satisfactory results, on steel and copper plates. (a) Dissolve 1 ounce granulated silver in 5 ounces of pure nitric acid and 5 ounces water. (b) Dissolve 3 ounces mercury in 5 ounces nitric acid and 5 ounces water. For strong Spencer acid take 2 ounces of (a), 2 ounces of (b), 1 ounce nitric acid, and 24 ounces soft water. Mix and keep in a dark bottle. It may be interesting to state that the above acid does not take effect on steel unless started off by touching the steel under the acid with a piece of clean zinc, when instant and rapid action takes place. It might remain on the steel plate forever without biting if the zinc is not applied.

(16) G. T. R. writes: In your issue of April 28, you gave an account of a meeting of the "Elmira Farmers' Club" to inquire into the best method of preserving fruit trees after being girdled by mice or rabbits. A very simple treatment by my father a number of years ago, in the State of Missouri, was wholly successful in preventing the girdling. About a year after he had planted a large orchard, the rabbits commenced "barking" his trees so rapidly that, unless a stop was immediately put to it, he would soon have only dead trunks. He accordingly went to work and wrapped old newspapers around those yet unbarked, commencing at the ground, and wrapping for a distance of, say, two feet up, tying the paper with an ordinary cotton string. These trees were never afterward touched by the rabbits.

(17) G. B. asks for the mode of making "neatsfoot oil." A. The ox feet—the feet and hocks of neat cattle cut off about 18 inches above the hoof—are denuded of skin and slit up longitudinally. Near the hoof is a small mass of soft fat, which is scooped out with the knife, and set aside for the preparation of the best quality of oil. The hoofs are washed in cold water, and then boiled in open pans set in brickwork, and heated by a fire beneath. A certain quantity of oil is thus boiled out of them, and when skimmed off, forms an inferior grade of neatsfoot oil. After about three hours' boiling, the tissues between the horny hoof and the last digit bone are sufficiently softened to allow of the latter being easily scooped out of the hoof with a knife. These "cores" consist of bone, gelatinous matter, and fat, and, together with small pieces of fat previously alluded to as being removed by the knife before boiling, are put into a separate pan of fresh water and all boiled together for the extraction of the oil. This forms the best kind of neatsfoot oil.

(18) M. C. B. writes: Can you tell me how to make the copper paint? A. Precipitate metallic copper out of any solution of a copper salt by introducing scrap iron into the liquid. Then mix the precipitated copper with linseed oil or varnish.

(19) H. B. writes: Having seen an article from the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN relating to the green caterpillar, or worm which destroys so many cabbage heads, I will send you my sure cure. I put a quantity of green tansy into a barrel and add cold water, let it stand a day or two, then sprinkle the cabbage heads (using a fine sprinkler) with the liquid about twice a week. I have never found a worm on them after the third sprinkle. Continue to sprinkle, or they will come.

(20) W. asks: What is "salt of gold"? I am advised to try "an ammoniacal solution of an oxide or salt of gold," and ask your suggestions as to how I am to proceed. What is "salt of steel"? A. The chloride of gold, which is the usual commercial salt, can be used for the purpose. Salt of steel is probably a solution of steel in some acid, and may, we think, be replaced by using the iron chloride.

(21) J. V. S. writes: I find that a very reliable rubber cement which I am using evaporates so rapidly that in a short time it becomes too thick to use. I have tried thinning it with benzine; but when I put on a patch with the cement diluted with benzine, the rubber peels off the patch, leaving only the cloth sticking to the patched surface. 1. Can you inform me through your Notes and Queries how I can thin the cement without impairing its value? A. Most all rubber cements consist of rubber dissolved in either carbon disulphide, chloroform, or benzine, and you must add some one of these. 2. What is the best India rubber solvent? A. A mixture of methylated ether and petroleum spirit.

(22) J. C. McR. asks (1) for a mortar for adhering tiles to the walls of a Turkish and Russian bath, which would resist the action of heated air and steam. A. Use a mixture of commercial glycerine and finely powdered litharge. This compound will resist a temperature of 225°. 2. Also a kalsomine or paint for the walls of baths, which would resist the action of heat and steam. A. Use zinc white in dammar varnish; let it dry very thoroughly.

(23) M. Bros. write: We are trying to find a white enamel paint that will resist the action of water. We use it on the inside of a pine pal for dairy purposes. Have tried dammar varnish mixed with linseed oil, and put on four to five coats; and although it makes a nice enamel it does resist the action of water for any length of time. A. Use zinc white in dammar varnish and let dry very thoroughly before putting the liquid into it.

(24) W. A. I. asks for the best method of polishing brass work, and the best way of retaining a polish for a length of time. I am assistant engineer of one of our fire companies, and find it very difficult to obtain a good polish. I have been looking over back numbers, but cannot find desired information. A. For keeping up the polish upon your brasswork, do not scour with coarse powders. Get "electro silicon," or rotten stone; even whitening does well when the others are not at hand. Use a little kerosene oil in rubbing off the work; it does not oxidize or become acid like vegetable or animal oils. After you get the article well cleaned up, you need use only whitening for rubbing off the every day stains, and wipe off with the oily cloth. It prevents the action of moisture and air, and reduces the labor.

INDEX OF INVENTIONS
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[See note at end of list about copies of these patents.]

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