

and nitrogen in steel. It is entirely theoretical, and does not exist in a free state. Ammonium cyanide is a crystalline salt, and can be obtained of any druggist. It may be that you have confounded the latter with your cyanogen of ammonia.

(31) C. G. asks how to make new whisky barrels look old? A. By washing the barrels with a solution of iron sulphate (green copperas), the wood will become darker.

(32) J. M. K. asks: How the oiling process on black walnut furniture is done? A. For fine oil coat on black walnut, first make what the varnishers call a filler, of whiting and burnt umber in proportion to make the color correspond with the color of the wood. Rub these up with boiled linseed oil and with it about one-tenth the quantity of whiting and umber, of litharge as a drier. Make mass of consistence of paint. Rub this into the surface of the wall—not with a rag—and allow it to dry. One coat will probably be enough. Then rub the surface with boiled oil. After this is dry, if a higher finish is required a French polish rub will answer most wants.

(33) J. L. asks: How to make a paste to stick pasteboard together that will not be affected by dampness, and at the same time be pliable, so it will not break when the board is bent? A. Use the following: gum shellac 3 parts, caoutchouc (India rubber) 1 part, by weight. Dissolve the rubber and shellac in separate vessels in ether free from alcohol, applying a gentle heat. When thoroughly dissolved, mix the two solutions, and keep in a bottle tightly stoppered.

(34) G. and V. L. ask: What is the present value of bar aluminum? Is there much demand for it? Where is the principal market to dispose of it? A. Bar and sheet aluminum is now on sale in New York at \$1.50 per ounce. The price in Paris and London is from 75 cents to \$1.00 per ounce. There is very little used except for experimental purposes. Jewelry, mathematical and optical instruments are made of it and its alloys, as aluminum bronze. There would be a large demand if it could be made cheaper.

(35) H. H. requests: Let me know how to soften an oilstone, and what oil is best to use on it. And are the tops and bottoms of violins curved by pressing, or are they gouged out? A. Oilstones cannot be softened; there are different grades of oilstones hard and soft. The best oil to use on an oilstone is kerosene; water is better on a hard stone. The best violins have their tops and bottoms cut out to swell, by hand, from boards from five-eighths of an inch thick to three-quarters of an inch thick. Cheap violin tops and bottoms are pressed from thin wood.

(36) C. M. writes: 1. Do you know of any place where files are made by the "sand blast" process? A. No. Files are generally cut, tooth by tooth, by means of hammer and cold chisel. Files are cleaned and sharpened by means of the sand blast. See SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, March 3, 1883, "Reshaping Files." 2. Also do you know of any concern that cleans stove castings by same process? A. No. Cleaning stove castings by the sand blast would be an expensive process compared with the present means of the pickle tub and wire brush.

(37) H. W. S. asks: Which are the best, machine or hand riveted boilers? A. Hand riveted boilers.

(38) J. H. writes: Please inform me what kind of solder is used for soldering band saws. I have tried it with tinsmith's soft solder, but it seems it is too hard; as soon as I bend the saw, the weld separates, otherwise the weld is better than the usual way with silver. A. The usual solder is spelter, but good tinman's solder is effective—composition, two of lead and one of tin by weight. But the metals should be pure. The saw should be cleaned with the file and washed with the usual saturated solution of zinc and muriatic acid. Then apply the solder, and grasp the joint with a hot tongs to keep the solder fused until the saw is heated.

(39) J. K. says: You will please give me a receipt for making a mixture of acids, to make bright again tarnished brass and copper. I have seen it used by men who wished to make bright the small brass bells, such as are used on masquerade suits. I wish to use it for the same purpose. The bells were first dipped into the acid, then into clear water, and then put into fine sawdust to dry; when taken out, they had a bright shine. A. Clean the brass by warming it and dipping in water charged with washing soda, then into clear water to remove the grease. Then dip in a bath of one part by measure of sulphuric acid, one part sal ammoniac, two parts nitric acid, and four parts water. Dip for a moment, then dip in clear water, and dry in hot sawdust.

(40) A. S. P. asks how the name, etc., is stamped on books in gold? A. Gilding on book covers is done by means of engraved brass or electrotyped patterns, heated and pressed on the substance over the gold leaf, which is fixed by an albuminous size—white of eggs. 2. How lead pencils are stamped in gold? A. The gilding on lead pencil wood is done in a similar manner by a stamp. In both cases white of eggs for size, gold leaf for material, heat and pressure for means are used.

(41) L. D. writes: Having tried several methods, but without success, of removing a letter in stipple, printed with aniline blue mixed with what is known as Boston drier upon a costly piece of muslin, I would be pleased to be informed by you what could be used to remove the same without injury to the fabric. A. Hydrogen peroxide is probably as good a reagent as you can use for this purpose. See description of its properties in SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT 339.

(42) J. M. D. writes: Please inform me how to make solder that will stand from 800° to 1,000° F. without fusing? A. Silver solder will stand more than 1,000° F. Or a solder of silver 2 oz., antimony 1 oz., will stand more than 800° F.

(43) C. B. W. writes: There are two boilers in every respect identically the same, excepting crown sheets, one being circular, the other flat. I think that the former (crowned) boiler generates more rapidly than the other. If right or wrong, please give reasons? A. We think the difference will be scarcely appreciable, as

there will be more heating surface exposed with the flat crown, but the circular crown is stronger and gives better circulation.

(44) S. H. asks: 1. Is there any particular proportion between the amount of rags and sulphuric acid used in making glucose, and what is it? A. First extract the starch from the rags, and boil the solution containing the same down to a density of 5° to 10° Baume, then use the acid in the proportion of 5 lb. to 100 gal. solution. 2. What is the best thing to use to neutralize effectually muriatic acid, so that the neutral compound shall be insoluble in water? Chalk does not seem to kill the acid completely, as soda carbonate still produces effervescence no matter how much chalk is added. A. Try silver oxide; silver chloride is the only insoluble chloride in water. 3. How does nature supply the constant drain on her store of oxygen? Is it being steadily reduced, so that it is only a question of time when the air we breathe will no longer support life? A. The supply of oxygen is obtained from plants, which exhale oxygen. The composition of the air is practically constant, and any diminution of oxygen is not appreciable. 4. Does a bullet partake of the motion of the rifle if discharged as the hunter is following the game with his gun, when the animal crosses his line of sight at a right angle? A. The bullet will have the motion of the rifle added to its own movement.

(45) C. B. H. asks: What number of cubic feet of compressed air under a pressure of from 80 to 100 pounds per square inch will be required to drive a 10 horse power engine 10 hours? A. At 100 pounds pressure it will require 200 cubic feet per hour for 10 horse power. This will require 2,400 feet of air to be compressed to 200 cubic feet of about 8 volumes into 1, each hour.

(46) A. P. asks in regard to drying wood with superheated steam. Can it be successfully done? Would it be as likely to check as when dried with hot air? What is the better plan of superheating steam? A. Superheated steam may enable you to make a hotter drying room. We do not know that it has many advantages and is liable to cause trouble. Eighty pounds boiler pressure with sufficient pipe will enable you to boil the sap out of the wood. The best way to prevent checking is to heat the wood in steam for a short time or until the wood gets thoroughly heated through, and then ventilate slowly, keeping up the heat in the dry room.

(47) J. R. M.—The following is a description of the apparatus and process of manufacturing birch oil: "The apparatus consists of a furnace, a boiler, a tin pipe, a trough into which water is continuously brought from a mountain brook, a barrel, and a glass jar. The furnace is made of loose stones, so arranged that the fuel is put in at one end and the smoke goes out at the other, through an old piece of stove pipe. Over the furnace is the boiler, which is merely a wooden box, about three feet wide, four long, and three deep, with the bottom covered with sheet iron to prevent burning. The boiler has a wooden lid, so that it can be tightly closed, and from the top leads the tin pipe. This pipe runs into the water trough and through it, so that the water always surrounds and cools it. The end of the pipe, after coming out of the trough, opens over a barrel, and in this barrel, exactly under the end of the pipe, is placed the glass jar. This constitutes all the plant." The boiler is filled about a third deep with water; the birch bark and twigs are shoveled in until it is full; the lid is placed, and the fire started in the furnace. For hours the fire must be carefully watched, and fresh fuel continually furnished. The material in the boiler becomes heated, the oil in the twigs extracted and mixed with the water. At boiling heat, the steam arising from the water and oil passes through the tin pipe and becomes chilled by the water in the trough; a condensed liquid is the result; and this mixture of oil and water escapes from the pipe, when it naturally separates. It drips into a glass jar placed over a barrel; the heavy oil sinks to the bottom of the jar, while the water flows over and is saved in the barrel to be again reboiled the next day. The oily substance saved in the jar is the oil "pure and undenied."

(48) E. H. asks how to color finished wrought iron articles without heating them, so as to make the articles have a blue black color? A. Finished wrought iron cannot be colored blue black without heating. It may be varnished or painted. It may be oxidized by acids to retain a brown, but a permanent blue black must be induced by oxidation by heat.

(49) C. M. H. & Co., ask: 1. Is there any advantage in distance between the point of application of the power and any resistance that it is proposed to overcome, provided that the medium through which the power is transmitted be devoid of elasticity and exactly parallel to the direction of motion, the power acting in the same line? A. None whatever. 2. Does this or does it not apply to a case where a horse is hitched to a vehicle, the trace being fastened to the hame at exactly the same level as it is attached to the vehicle, the road being always perfectly level? A. We think the draught is easier under the conditions named. We do not see the parallel between the two questions, however.

(50) E. B. K. asks: From which will I get the best results—a 7 in. silvered glass reflector, or a 3 in. achromatic objective? Wishing to construct a telescope with the 3 in. objective, using two lenses, eye and field, what focal distance should they have, and what power would such a telescope have? A. The 7 in. silvered glass reflector will give the best results and the most light, always provided that both are of equal class in the perfection of finish and definition. The 7 in. reflector should be 7 ft. focus with a small plane reflector for the Newtonian form, which gives the best results as to image, but sacrifices a part of the light; such a telescope, if first class, should bear a power of 300. The 3 in. refractor should be from 40 in. to 45 in. focus, and if first class should bear a power of 250.

(51) K. B. asks: 1. Can tar bone be rendered fluid merely by action of steam or heat? A. By boiling in water—and the effect of steam is similar—bone is converted into gelatine and dissolves, forming a solution clouded by suspended fat and vascular tissue, and solidifying in a jelly on cooling. 2. Bone,

being an organic matter, ought to be soluble like hair, hide, or wood fiber. Do you know of any process or chemicals effecting it? A. The bone cartilage is likewise soluble in hydrochloric acid. 3. Of what is celluloid composed? A. For description of celluloid see page 3617 of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT, No. 227.

(52) P. A. S. asks for a receipt for making the percussion powder for metallic cartridges? A. The priming used in percussion caps is made by triturating 100 grains fulminating mercury with a wooden muller on marble with 30 grains water and 60 grains gunpowder. A solution of gum mastic in turpentine is used as a medium for attaching the fulminate to the cap.

(53) C. S. B. and F. H. T.—For cleaning buckskin you might try the following: Make a solution of weak soda and warm water, rub plenty of soft soap into the leather, and let it remain in soak for two hours, then rub well until quite clean. Rinse thoroughly in a weak solution of soda and yellow soap in warm water, but not in water only, else it dries hard. After rinsing, wring it well in a rough towel and dry quickly, then pull it about and crush it well until soft. Your best plan, however, is to have them cleaned at a professional dyer's.

(54) N. E. L. asks the proper size of the ports of a cylinder 3 x 5 in., speed 200 revolutions per minute? A. Steam opening, $\frac{1}{8}$ x $\frac{3}{4}$ in.; exhaust, $\frac{3}{16}$ in. x $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

(55) T. N. H. asks how to apply French polish to inlaid woodwork? A. Lay on a coat of fine shellac varnish. When dry rub it down with fine emery paper and lay on another coat. Repeat until you have a fine, smooth surface, then with a flat camel's hairbrush lay on a final coat of fine furniture varnish. The following gives good results: Take of rather thick shellac varnish and boiled linseed oil equal parts. Shake it thoroughly whenever used. Apply sparingly with a cloth and rub briskly until the desired polish is secured.

(56) J. T. T. says: In making a one-sixteenth in. cut lengthwise through a seamless brass tube $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. diameter by 12 in. long, it springs open about three-sixteenths in. Can you tell me how to prevent it? If tube was cast brass, would it spring as much when cut open? A. Before splitting the tube anneal it by heating red hot and slowly cooling. Drawn brass tubes are hard. Cast brass tube will not spring open.

(57) G. S. asks: 1. Do you think a good, strong gask would be strong enough to generate steam for an engine $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. bore, 3 in. stroke, if connected with a coil of pipe placed in a stove near by the gask, having double heads and braced? A. No; do not risk it. 2. I saw something about using mercury flasks for boilers for small engines (as above); is it possible to use them as such? A. Yes. You will find in the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT for June 28, 1879, a cut of a boiler so made. 3. How are Pharaoh's serpent eggs made? A. See SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, vol. xlv., No. 4, and vol. xlviii., No. 6.

(58) J. P. P. asks concerning Connellsville coke—how made, from what, etc.? A. The Connellsville coke derives its value from a very rich seam of bituminous coal in Western Pennsylvania, said to be the purest vein of bituminous coal in the United States, and very similar in quality to the Durham vein in England, which is also famous for its coke producing qualities. The coking is done by burning off the volatile matter or hydrocarbon gas in large ovens.

(59) J. F.—Wheel No. 2 will give from 10 to 15 per cent the most power, and is an improvement over No. 1. Both plans are old. You will get better results from No. 1 by reducing the number of chutes.

(60) S. N. G. writes: Say two rubber bags, sixty gallons capacity, as used for oxyhydrogen light, be placed one on top of the other under 250 pounds pressure, will the gases be forced from each tube with same power as if the bags were separate under same pressure? A. The pressure would be same in both cases. The plan you suggest is in common use, and is preferred on account of the facility with which both gases can be put under exactly the same pressure. Of course there will be the difference of the weight of the upper bag, but this is so slight as to be of no account.

(61) R. W. G. asks: 1. Could a steel sphere or spheroid be permanently magnetized? A. Yes, but if perfectly symmetrical and homogeneous it would not exhibit polarity until fractured. 2. If so, what would determine the position of the magnetic axis? A. It would not be determined so long as the sphere remained perfect. 3. Do the variations of the needle in an electric storm indicate an increase or a decrease in the earth's magnetism? A. Probably neither. The needle is affected by electric currents. 4. Does the number of sun spots sensibly diminish its heating power on the earth? A. It is generally believed to make no material difference. 5. What kind of an eye piece would be best, and of how high a power, for a telescope having a meniscus lens of about 36 in. focus, with a diameter of $2\frac{1}{2}$ in., as an object glass? A. Low power. 6. Would it be best to use this with full aperture, or to diaphragm it down with diaphragms in the tube or over the glass? A. Full aperture on nebulae and faint objects. Use a diaphragm outside of the objective for the planets and a very small aperture for the sun.

(62) F. B. J. says: I have a brick house with stone foundation for cellar; the stone portions constantly damp; and in time of great thaws from snow and ice, as also from rains, a portion of the north side leaks or oozes water under the foundation into the floor. How can I prevent it? The cellar is otherwise dry, except at this place; $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet of walls are under ground. A. Where water comes under walls five feet below the surface, it will be difficult to keep a cellar dry. In some wet locations in New York city, cellars are made with bottoms somewhat on the flat-boat bottom shape, and heavily cemented on the under side, and with a drain for carrying off the water.

(63) H. L. asks: 1. For a solution for making the yellow oiled clothing that teamsters wear instead of rubber coats and pants? A. Dissolve 1 oz. of beeswax in 1 pint of the best boiled linseed oil over a gentle fire, applying when cold with a piece of rag, rubbing it well in, and afterward hanging up to dry,

which will take about 4 days. 2. Also a solution for making aprons that are used in slaughter houses; they are soft and pliable, black on one side, and show the canvas color on other side, but will not let water soak through. By giving me above information through your paper you will greatly oblige a reader. A. Let 4 oz. of India rubber in small pieces be softened in 8 oz. of oil of turpentine, then add 2 lb. of boiled oil, and boil for two hours over a slow fire. When dissolved add 6 lb. boiled linseed oil and 1 lb. of litharge, and boil until an even liquid is obtained. Apply warm.

(64) G. S. S. writes: We build our row boats by commencing at the keel with strips one-half by seven-eighths inch in size, nailing one to another until we reach the top. What is the best material to put in the joints as we build? A. Cotton cloth saturated with thick white lead paint.

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

R. McW.—The mineral is pyrite (iron sulphide), and may carry gold. An assay will be necessary to determine its value, the expense of which will be \$5.00.

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AND EACH BEARING THAT DATE.

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