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Contents.

(Illustrated articles are marked with an asterisk.)

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THE SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT

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Table listing contents of the supplement including CHEMISTRY, ENGINEERING AND MECHANICS, TECHNOLOGY, ART, ARCHITECTURE, ELECTRICITY, LIGHT, HEAT, ETC., NATURAL HISTORY, HORTICULTURE, MEDICINE, HYGIENE, ETC., MISCELLANEOUS, and BIOGRAPHY.

THE POSITION OF INVENTORS.

An accurate conception of the meaning of a patent and of the true status of an inventor is far from common. The fact that inventors are the possessors of a limited monopoly, that is frequently of great value, weighs against them in the estimation of the less enlightened class.

Of the older judges none attained higher reputation than Judge Story. It is he who gave to Patent Law its famous appellation, "the Metaphysics of the Law." His opinion of the dignity of inventors and the value of their services to the country at large is worthy of record.

Judge Story declares the protection of patents to be a matter of public policy. How impolitic, then, does the recent action of the House of Representatives appear. But he is not alone in his ideas of the rights of inventors.

If patent lawyers be consulted, they will be found generally of the opinion that a patent is a contract between the inventor and the Government.

But there is another point of view that may be found indicated in the judicial opinions we have cited. The real policy of the Patent Law is a selfish one on the part of the Government.

Every American prides himself on his country's progress in this path. With the abrogation of the patent laws invention would cease almost entirely, and we should have to look to other countries for new devices in machinery and processes.

It will be noticed that the views given on the position of inventors favor them and their rights. They are given by eminent judges, who were especially dispassionate and impartial in the decisions cited.

were any needed. But the statute now in force is the fruit of many additions and amendments. It has done well in the past, and is good for some time to come, as it seems reasonably near the goal of adaptability and efficiency.

THE PONS-BROOKS COMET.

We have received a communication from Adamsville, Michigan, in which the writer asks for information concerning a comet he first discovered about the 18th of January in the southwest, about the same distance from Venus as Venus is from the sun, and a little south, with a tail extending east.

The comet seen by our correspondent in the southwest is the same comet that was, as we stated, seen in the northwest when first visible to the naked eye. It was faintly perceptible on the 27th of November, and looked like a small nebulous star.

The reason the comet could not be found in the northwest was because it was then a faint object almost impossible to pick up unless one knew just where to look for it.

This comet, known as the Pons-Brooks comet, was discovered in 1812 by M. Pons. It was predicted that it moved in an ellipse with a period of 71 years.

Our correspondent desires information in regard to the best book that will "educate him in the revolution of our planet, also others as far as possible."

PECULIAR WOOD WORKING.

The auger is intended primarily for making holes in wood, yet the only cutting or boring portion is the chisel lip on its lower end; and if the implement could be kept at its work and guided in its course, the gimlet screw at its point and the spiral above its cutting portion might be dispensed with.

An adaptation of the circular saw is more peculiar than this. It is the cutting of a wide kerf with a thin saw; thus a saw of one-fourth of an inch thickness, or "set," cuts a score, or slot, of three-quarters of an inch or more.

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