

## ENGINEERING INVENTIONS.

A low water alarm and indicator for boilers has been patented by Mr. Charles Hults, of Torch Lake, Mich. In connection with a jointed frame and pivoted toggle levers is a properly connected float, so arranged that when the water in the boiler has fallen below a prescribed line, the fact will be made known by an indicator upon the boiler, together with an alarm from the whistle.

A car coupling has been patented by Mr. Vladimir S. Bekofsky, of New York City. It has a hooked drawhead held loosely in a hollow drawbar, a sliding plate with cam slot acting on the hooked drawhead, with other novel features, the design being such as to allow the cars to play in vertical and in horizontal planes without fear of casual uncoupling.

A car coupling forms the subject of a patent issued to Messrs. Henry Lehr and Charles Verch, of Albany, N. Y. Combined with a hook pivoted to the drawhead, and adapted to engage a stud of an opposing drawhead, is a rod with an arm adapted for movement in front of the hook to hold it raised, the coupling being intended to couple automatically, to be readily uncoupled, and to be adjusted at will to prevent coupling, without requiring train men to go between the cars.

## MISCELLANEOUS INVENTIONS.

Beveled glass forms the subject of a patent issued to Mr. Charles P. Oudin, of New York City. This invention consists in making the plate with an offset between the bevel and the face of the glass, whereby the face of the glass is made to stand out from the bevel in clearly defined lines.

A safety pocket has been patented by Mr. Eli Strouse, of Baltimore, Md. It is formed in the back of the vest, and located in the lower right or left corner, concealed and securely closed by the buckle or backstrap of the vest, which extends across the mouth of the pocket and forms the front side of the mouth.

A combined sewing machine cover and stool has been patented by Mr. Gaul O. Brager, of Osage, Iowa. The cover is adapted to inclose the head of a machine, and has a leg frame fitted within it, which lies within the cover when the latter is adjusted to the machine, and are adapted to support the cover as a stool when so desired.

An automatic elevator gate has been patented by Mr. George T. Fallis, of St. Joseph, Mo. It is a sliding gate hung on ropes having weights, with a device for locking the gate in an open or a closed position, controlled by the movement of the elevator carriage, together with a novel construction for securing the gate in the guides.

A spool holder has been patented by Mr. Canova T. Cagle, of Beersheba Springs, Tenn. It consists of a light base plate, easily held by its retaining pin to the front of a lady's dress, and carrying an arm and stud on which spools of thread of different size may be readily adjusted, the device also carrying a miniature pincushion and thimble clamp.

A wheel hub has been patented by Mr. Andrew J. Morrison, of Houghton, N. Y. This invention relates to the construction of the spoke tenons, the hub proper having improved spoke sockets, and an oil box and sand box, the combined hub and boxes, except the spoke ring, to be made of iron, steel, or brass, and the spoke ring to be made of wood or compressed paper.

A churn dasher has been patented by Mr. John L. Maxwell, of Bentonville, Ark. It is formed of a series of beveled rings, having between them openings which converge toward the top, making a form of dasher which can be readily forced through the cream and is very efficient in separating the butter, the invention being an improvement on a former patented invention of the same inventor.

A key operating device has been patented by Mr. David A. Childs, of Columbia, S. C. It is a split pulley adapted to be clamped upon the shank of a door key, and grooved in its periphery to receive a cord extending over one or more pulleys to a distant point, so that when the cord is pulled, it will turn the key to lock or unlock the door, according as the cord is wound.

A gas and air compressor and dry vacuum pump has been patented by Mr. August Osenbrück, of Hemelingen, Prussia, Germany. An ordinary slide valve gear is employed, with secondary cut off valve, and the cylinder has pressure relieving valves, so that, the secondary cut off being permanently adjusted for a certain difference between the exhaust and compression pressure, variations will be provided for by the relieving valves.

A mosquito canopy has been patented by Mr. William W. Barnum, of Indianapolis, Ind. It consists of an adjustable slatted rectangular frame, with pins and slotted standards adapted to receive them, pivoted supporting bars and other novel features, intended to make a cheap and efficient frame for supporting the ordinary fabric netting, and one that can be attached to any ordinary construction of bedstead without marring it.

A furnace for hothouses has been patented by Mr. William A. White, of Staatsburg, N. Y. Against two or more sides of a many sided shell or body are arranged independent coils of return or serpentine construction, to heat water, and thus transmit the heat, the coils being subject to separate control, and so arranged that the flow of hot water may be conveniently turned on or off from any part of the structure, and the supply in different directions readily regulated.

A hot water pipe arrangement for heating purposes forms the subject of another patent issued to the same inventor. The invention, while applicable to various heating purposes, is more especially designed for heating hothouses and similar structures, and provides separate hot water circulating coils above the heating coils, so connected that a rising circulation is obtained.

## NEW BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS.

ONE THOUSAND AND ONE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS IN UNITED STATES HISTORY. By B. A. Hathaway. Lebanon, O.: A. H. Hathaway. 1887. Pp. 99.

This is a convenient little manual, whose scope is sufficiently indicated by its title. It is dedicated especially to teachers, but one use for it would seem to be in the preparation for civil service examination. It is neatly printed, and is a good companion piece for other question and answer books by the same author.

STEAM BOILER EXPLOSIONS WHICH OCCURRED IN VICTORIA BETWEEN APRIL, 1884, AND MARCH, 1885. By A. C. Wannan. Melbourne: Edward J. Stephens. 1886. Pp. 30.

This is a reprint of a paper read before the Victorian Engineers' Association; with it is reprinted the report of the discussion that followed its reading. It contains one illustrative plate. The paper, it is stated, was inspired by the extraordinary number of explosions that occurred in the period designated in the colony. It is a useful contribution to the literature of boiler explosions, and the author shows much common sense in his treatment of the subject and remedies suggested.

\* \* Any of the above books may be purchased through this office. Address Munn & Co., 361 Broadway, New York.

## Business and Personal.

The charge for insertion under this head is One Dollar a line for each insertion; about eight words to a line. Advertisements must be received at publication office as early as Thursday morning to appear in next issue.

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The Knowles Steam Pump Works, 44 Washington St., Boston, and 93 Liberty St., New York, have just issued a new catalogue, in which are many new and improved forms of Pumping Machinery of the single and duplex, steam and power type. This catalogue will be mailed free of charge on application.

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## Notes &amp; Queries

## HINTS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Names and Address must accompany all letters, or no attention will be paid thereto. This is for our information, and not for publication. References to former articles or answers should give date of paper and page or number of question. Inquiries not answered in reasonable time should be repeated; correspondents will bear in mind that some answers require not a little research, and, though we endeavor to reply to all, either by letter or in this department, each must take his turn. Special Written Information on matters of personal rather than general interest cannot be expected without remuneration. Scientific American Supplements referred to may be had at the office. Price 10 cents each. Books referred to promptly supplied on receipt of price. Minerals sent for examination should be distinctly marked or labeled.

(1) C. H. La P. wants a cheap method for melting rubber. A. Rubber can be melted by heating in a can over a water bath, that is, the heat must be hot enough to melt, but not burn.

(2) B. F. R. asks: Why is stale bread considered more wholesome than new? A. Presumably because it is more friable and porous, and not so tenacious.

(3) G. A. B. asks: Must the wire for armature and magnets in dynamos necessarily be all of one piece, or can several pieces be used, provided that they are very carefully spliced and of the same gauge? A. Joints in the coils of field magnet and armature should by all means be avoided. If it is necessary to join them, they should be soldered with resin flux, not with acid.

(4) J. N. W. writes: I want to construct a small dynamo, similar to the one illustrated in SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT, No. 161. 1. How many pounds of wire will it require to wind the magnets? A. Five or six pounds for the field, and a half pound for the armature. 2. If I increased the length of the magnets and armature, would it increase the power in anything like proportion? A. The power will increase in a more rapid ratio. 3. Will it give a sufficiently strong current to work a small incandescent lamp of four candle power, either with or without battery power, to excite the electro-magnets? A. Yes. 4. And will it answer to do electroplating on a small scale? A. It is not adapted for electroplating, but will answer on the small scale.

(5) E. A. S., Jr., says: In regard to an inquiry for a wash for preventing rabbits from gnawing fruit trees: A little tallow applied to the trees will preserve them from rabbits. Lard should not be used, as it is likely to strike into the wood. Some use a mixture of one part each of tallow and tar, but tallow alone is sufficient.

(6) G. O. K. asks how to make the composition that stove-pans makers use for ornamenting their wood patterns. A. The composition is the same as used in picture-frame work, and made of whiting and thin glue worked in a stiff putty, then pressed into moulds of wood or metal. Oil the mould with boiled linseed oil to prevent sticking, using a brush for this purpose.

(7) J. P. L. asks: 1. Is it known why the apses revolve? A. The revolution of the apses is due mainly to the unequal attraction of the sun on the moon and the earth. The sun being outside of the moon's orbit distorts its otherwise true elliptic orbit, and produces a swinging motion of the plane of the orbit, with a corresponding motion of the nodes and apses. 2. Is Kepler's observation of the radius vector, as laid down in his so-called second law, accurate? A. The second law of Kepler is accurate for elliptic motion of two bodies alone, but the perturbations of the planets among themselves produce deviations in the application of the law, which are well understood, and form some of the finest demonstrations of geometric astronomy. This is beautifully shown in the investigation of the center of gravity of the solar system, which is found to be moving in a set of very complex spirals, from near the center of the sun to as far as 800,000 miles from its center, or a half diameter beyond its surface, in a period of a little over 7,000 years for its completion.

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March 1, 1887,

AND EACH BEARING THAT DATE.

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