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NEW YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 1887.

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(Illustrated articles are marked with an asterisk.)

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For the Week Ending April 16, 1887.

Price 10 cents. For sale by all newsdealers.

Detailed table of contents for the supplement, categorized by subject like 'I. BOTANY', 'II. CHEMISTRY', 'III. ENGINEERING', etc., with page numbers.

THE NEW COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS.

The President has appointed the Hon. Benton J. Hall, of Burlington, Iowa, to the Commissionship of Patents. The office recently became vacant by the resignation of the Hon. Martin V. Montgomery.

We hope and believe that the State of Iowa will be as well represented now as it was by Mr. Mason, over thirty years ago. The position of Commissioner of Patents yields in importance to few government offices.

The industries of the country, on which its wealth and position among nations depend, pass in continual review through the Patent Office. Every modification of its practice, as dictated by court decisions or as inspired by the personal convictions of the Commissioner, is felt far and wide.

The Western judges have rendered some of the best and most enlightened decisions in patent cases. In receiving from one of these States a new Commissioner of Patents, we venture to augur good from the selection.

JUDGE MONTGOMERY.

On April 1 the President appointed Martin V. Montgomery an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, to succeed Justice MacArthur, who has retired.

NATURAL GAS IN INDIANA.

H. C. HOVEY.

At New Albany, Ind., there is a thin seam of bituminous shale whence little rills of petroleum trickle down into the Ohio River. In former days, before the geology of the region was understood, it was supposed that this indicated coal, but now it is known that the shale in question belongs to an older period than the carboniferous.

Early last fall a boring was drilled at Portland, near the Ohio line and about forty miles north of Richmond. The result was a small flow of gas, but not in quantity sufficient to be of commercial importance.

The next well was drilled at Muncie (a city of 9,000 inhabitants) by the citizens of that place. Since then there have been six other wells drilled there, making seven in all, varying in capacity from 300,000 up to 2,000,000 cubic feet per diem.

All these gas wells are found in Trenton limestone, where the rock is porous and the strata have been free from disturbance. In localities where there have been upheavals, there are indications that gas once existed, but escaped through crevices, leaving the rocks barren.

The field as now developed covers an area of 20 miles wide by 60 long from east to west, and the strata run in a direction from north west to southeast. The region has been prospected on all sides of this area, but thus far with no success.

Expensive experiments are in progress at Indianapolis. A well was drilled there last fall to the depth of 2,100 feet without indications of gas. A number of test wells are now being sunk at Brightwood, a suburb of Indianapolis, but are not yet down to the level of the gas-bearing strata.

Artificial Whetstones.

The Guide Scientifique describes the following method of making artificial whetstones. Gelatine of good quality is dissolved in its own weight of water, the operation being conducted in a dark room.