

Correspondence.

For Star Gazers.

To the Editor of the Scientific American:

Will you please make the following correction in the date of one of the minima of the light of Algol, in the article "For Star Gazers," in your issue of September 24, 1887? Under the heading "Eastern Time," January 20, 5:44 P. M. should read January 20, 6:44 P. M.

ROYAL HILL.

C. O. D. by Mail.

To the Editor of the Scientific American:

The article in your issue of this date, "The Parcel Post," credited to the *American Architect*, and referring to the announcement that the Post Office Department has established a postal parcel service between the United States and Mexico and certain islands in the West Indies, and referring to the superior postal service of Germany in this respect, interested me deeply.

Germany, Austria, France, and Belgium have had for years a system of collecting bills by mail, through the postal authorities. In all these countries, I believe, packages can be sent C. O. D. by mail. This is certainly the case in Austria, for in 1882 I availed myself of it, and found it to work most admirably. A day or two after leaving Vienna I sent an order for some articles of merchandise to that city, to be delivered to me at Innsbruck on my arrival; and on reaching there I found that the postman had previously been there with them, and he being informed of my arrival brought them the next morning; and I paid for the goods, the postage, and the cost of returning the money to the seller. Greatly impressed by the manner in which this service was performed, I wrote a letter to our then Postmaster-General, Howe, advocating it for the United States. He never, so far as I am aware, took any action in the matter. Since then I have repeatedly urged it upon a member of Congress, a very active member of the Post Office Committee. He has been very favorably impressed by it, but has never urged it upon Congress. Of course the express companies would make a very determined fight against any such innovation on one of their privileges; but this is a reform which is bound to come, and when once the people take hold of the idea, the express companies will be powerless to prevent it.

In this connection it is worthy of note that all, or nearly all, of the reforms in our postal service have been borrowed from Europe, and have not originated in the United States, from the postage stamp pretty much all the way down, without a break, to the postal note. But Europe is still in advance of us, and it seems extremely difficult to catch up with it. The C. O. D. postal idea, like so many other good postal reforms already borrowed, is sure to be adopted by us, and the sooner the better.

HENRY CAREY BAIRD.

Philadelphia, September 10, 1887.

DECISIONS RELATING TO PATENTS.

U. S. Circuit Court.—Southern District of New York. MCNAB & HARLEM MANUFACTURING COMPANY vs. NATHAN MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

Shipman, J.

William Gee's patent, No. 106,150, dated August 9, 1870, for an improved lubricator, declared invalid for lack of patentable invention.

Self-feeding regulated lubricators where the drip of the oil from a reservoir was visible being old and well known, and self-feeding regulated lubricators where the oil flowed from a reservoir into a transparent pipe having been described in an earlier English provisional specification, it required no invention to make a self-feeding regulated lubricator where the oil was delivered in drips from the reservoir into a transparent chamber below the same.

Neither did it require invention to employ a transparent chamber to avoid the effects of wind and dirt upon the old and well-known unprotected drips.

Where an earlier English provisional specification did not precisely anticipate the patent in suit, it may be used to show that no invention was required to make the simple alteration or addition which distinguishes it from the patent in suit.

U. S. Circuit Court.—Eastern District of Pennsylvania. DOSH vs. THE A. J. MEDLAR COMPANY (LIMITED).

Butler, J.

The suit is for infringement of claims 1, 6, and 7 of letters patent No. 90,577, issued May 25, 1869, to Joseph Repetti, for cracker machine; and, also, for infringement of claim 3 of letters patent No. 209,963, issued to Henry Dusch, November 19, 1878, for improvement in soft dough machines.

Held as follows:

Where two old and well-known devices are brought into juxtaposition, and each continues to perform its old function, without any new result issuing from their united action, no patentable combination is produced.

Where a patent is limited by disclaimer to a flat or

"tape wire" knife for cutting dough, there is no infringement in the use of a round wire.

Bill dismissed with costs.

U. S. Circuit Court.—Southern District of New York. RAILWAY REGISTER MANUFACTURING COMPANY vs. BROADWAY AND SEVENTH AVENUE RAILROAD COMPANY.

Wheeler, J.

An injunction granted in this cause February 5, 1886, is not violated by the defendant in the use of a device which is a stop on moving the trip hand of a fare register forward beyond zero, but is not capable of being fixed where registration is begun away from the proper place, so as to indicate that fact.

U. S. Circuit Court.—Southern District of New York. COTTLE vs. KREMENTZ et al.

Wheeler, J.

This cause rests upon patent for invention No. 202,412, dated April 16, 1878, issued to the orator for an improvement in the construction of collar and sleeve buttons. The specification describes the making of such buttons by striking up the post from the back, forming them in one piece, thickening the post at the base for strength, and soldering the head to the post. There are two claims, one for the improved process of constructing the button and the other for the button, whose tubular post and back are formed in one piece, and having the metal thickened at the base of the post. The defendants' buttons are formed wholly in one piece, but without using the orator's process.

Held as follows:

Letters patent No. 202,412, granted April 16, 1878, to Shubael Cottle, for an improvement in buttons, construed and held valid as to the first claim covering the process, but invalid as to the second claim covering the product.

Buttons similar to those made by the patentee's process were old, and the defendant in manufacturing a like article is not liable for infringement of any patent.

Complaint dismissed with costs.

U. S. Circuit Court.—Southern District of New York. HOFF et al. vs. IRON CLAD MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

Wallace, J.

Letters patent No. 279,871, granted June 19, 1883, to Charles Hoff, for an improvement in coal hods, again considered (see 35 O. G., 1230, for former decision), and in view of English patent to Haseltine, of November 3, 1873, limited.

Under the limited construction the defendant does not infringe.

Bill dismissed, with costs.

U. S. Circuit Court.—Southern District of New York. COOKE vs. GLOBE FILES COMPANY et al.

Wheeler, J.

This suit is brought upon patent No. 282,275, dated July 31, 1883, granted to the orator for a letter and invoice file for the reception and classification of papers. The specifications of the patent describe a file having pockets formed of leaves and partitions connected by gussets at the ends, with a piece of tape of linen or other suitable material pasted or otherwise applied to the gussets and connected to the sides of the file by having its ends fastened between the sides and outside covers. The object of the tape is set forth to be to strengthen the tape of the gussets and give stiffness to the parts to which it is attached, and to connect the opposite sides of the file by a stronger and more durable material than the gusseted ends of the pockets are required to be made of.

Held as follows:

Letters patent No. 282,275, granted July 31, 1883, to William A. Cooke, Jr., for an improvement in letter and invoice files, declared void.

The use of a piece of tape, linen, or other suitable material as a re-enforce piece to strengthen the parts of the files in places where they were weak was not the discovery of anything new nor the application of genius to things known, but simply mechanical skill, and does not cover a patentable invention.

Bill dismissed, with costs.

California and Ohio Oil.

The first year in which attention was seriously paid to petroleum in California was 1879, and the following table of the annual production of petroleum in this State since 1879 will illustrate the growing importance of this industry. The figures represent gallons:

|      |            |
|------|------------|
| 1879 | 568,000    |
| 1880 | 1,763,000  |
| 1881 | 4,194,000  |
| 1882 | 5,403,000  |
| 1883 | 6,000,000  |
| 1884 | 6,000,000  |
| 1885 | 8,760,000  |
| 1886 | 10,950,000 |

In 1885, California ranked third among the petroleum producing States, and at the present rate of increase she will soon be second only to Pennsylvania. In the

oil fields of Southern California much activity prevails. A pipe line from the Sespe wells to the Santa Paula station has just been completed, and another pipe line from the Puente district to Los Angeles is being located by surveyors. A firm of this city is having a steamer built, with a carrying capacity of 3,500 barrels, to ply between Ventura and San Francisco, and a San Diego company is also building a vessel for the same purpose to use between Ventura and San Diego. The Sespe wells, referred to above, appear to be of actual and permanent value. Well No. 1 is good for 600 barrels or more a day, and well No. 2 is flowing 125 barrels a day at a depth of 200 feet.

The Ohio fields, however, are the latest developments, and the entire State has gone crazy over the oil and natural gas boom. They have lately held a week's jubilee in Toledo, and have illuminated the city with natural gas spouts, which can be seen a distance of twenty miles. The natural gas was burning from twenty standpoints, and after the ceremonies were opened by speeches by ex-President Hayes and others, the river was turned into a fountain of fire. This was done by running gas pipes out into the river, and when the gas rises to the surface it is lighted, producing a most beautiful effect.

To give an idea of the gigantic production which so alarmed the editor of the Cincinnati *Commercial*, and caused him to predict a speedy collapse of the earth, we give the following facts, culled from the Toledo *Blade*:

Cygnets is a town of tanks. It is at Cygnets that the Buckeye Pipe Line Company has already built a dozen 35,000 barrel tanks, and will build without delay as many more. A few months ago, where Cygnets now stands the wind whistled through a poor potato patch, and sighed among the trees of the Black Swamp. Now trees, potato patches, large clumps of golden rod, and beautiful bunches of blue asters must all get out of the road of the tank men.

"The greatest gusher in the world," recently mentioned in the *Blade*, was next visited. Wonderful as are the stories told of other wells in other fields, this well certainly stands without an equal in the world.

The well, which is only a short walk from Cygnets, had been flowing at the rate of 250 barrels a day when Mr. Parker said "Shoot it," and Mr. W. J. Morrison, of Findlay, dropped the "go devil."

Never before in the history of the oil fields has such a result been achieved. The oil burst forth in a mighty volume, and it seemed as if the fountains in the center of the earth had been broken up and were being forced up by an unseen and unknown force. Through four lines the oil poured, and the tanks shook and the earth in the vicinity of the well trembled. The thunders from the well can be heard all over Cygnets.

In less than an hour and a half the well flowed 500 barrels into the tanks, and this will give the "oil volcano" a capacity of 8,000 barrels per day. The well is keeping up its reputation for being the greatest gusher in the world, and at the rate it is flowing now all the 35,000 barrel tanks at Cygnets will soon be filled from the "oil volcano."

Wiring a Fractured Knee Cap.

A new method of treating a fracture of the knee cap, "wiring the patella," as it is called, was successfully demonstrated at Bellevue Hospital a day or two ago. The operation, says the *N. Y. Tribune*, was performed by Dr. W. F. Fluhrer, assisted by the house surgeons of the hospital, Drs. M. A. Crockett and W. C. Braisted, and before many prominent members of the profession, some of whom were returning from the Medical Congress on their way to their homes in Kansas City and St. Louis. The liveliest interest centered in Dr. Fluhrer's treatment, not merely on account of his remarkable success in treating fractures of this kind, but as offering an admirable illustration of the careful and complete system of antiseptics used in the hospital. Every possible thing was done toward perfecting the aim and the conditions of the operator. Before the patient was put under ether, Dr. Fluhrer described the case and gave a general outline of his method of treatment, and showed himself ready fully and clearly to answer such questions as any of those present chose to put. The skill with which he manipulated and the ease with which he went about the work elicited the enthusiasm of his fellow surgeons present.

After that portion of the leg to be operated upon was thoroughly lathered and shaved, an incision was made across what is familiarly known as the knee cap. The two sides of the fracture thus revealed were now to be brought together. A sort of crochet needle passed through at carefully sought and directly opposite points on either side was made to carry threads, and these in turn were used to draw through a wire by means of which the two sides of the fracture were pulled closely and firmly together, carefully leaving the tissue outside, which was sewed together in position. Antiseptics were used uninterruptedly during the entire process of the operation. The operation lasted over two hours and a half.