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PATENT TRICKS—OLD AND NEW.

When an inventor receives a patent, his name is immortalized in the Official Gazette, and he immediately becomes the object of attack from a horde of hungry aspirants for money, among whom are ex-clerks, patent brokers, and pretended inventors of varying degrees. The patentee is deluged with circulars and letters from this class of gentry. Some write to inform him confidentially that his patent is good for nothing; but on receipt of a certain fee they will set it right and make it sound as a silver dollar. Others pleasantly inform the new-fledged inventor they have read his patent with great pleasure, consider it to be a very valuable invention. If properly introduced, much money can be soon realized. The State of Iowa, they say, is worth \$50,000, Ohio \$45,000, Pennsylvania \$65,000, and so on. All that is necessary is to print some circulars and do a little blowing, which the broker generously offers to do on receipt from the inventor of ten to fifty dollars cash in advance. Another writes to say he has an actual offer of \$10,000 for the patent for Canada, provided the patent is at once taken, which he will procure on receipt of the necessary money. It is almost needless to suggest these schemes are designed to fleece the inventor. The so-called patent sellers rarely effect a bona fide sale. They depend upon the advance fees obtained as above for a livelihood. Some of them have thus grown rich and prosperous.

These pretended sellers try to make it appear they are reliable by giving respectable references, and cite names of patentees for whom they purport to have sold patents. One mode of procuring these references is as follows: They write the patentee they have a customer who will buy a county right in Minnesota for \$500, and pay by deeding 25 acres of land in Arkansas, really worth \$1,000, but the parties are so anxious to obtain the patent right they are willing to let the land go and take the right, in settlement, provided \$50 cash is paid and a mortgage is given for \$500. This done, the patent broker closes the transaction, receives the \$50 cash, which is the full value of the land, also receives a mortgage for \$500, together with the patent deed. At the same time the broker is careful to obtain a written certificate from the inventor stating, "I take pleasure in saying that X. Y. Z. & Co. have sold a patent right for me, at my price, and on terms satisfactory, and I recommend them," etc. In this way references are secured which make quite an impressive show on circulars, while the inventor is so ashamed of having been so easily duped, he keeps mum.

One of the latest tricks is the following: The patentee receives a letter from A. & B. asking for how much he will sell his patent for such and such a State. He replies, giving a price, say \$5,000. The patentee soon after receives another letter from X. Y. Z., saying that A. & B. write they have corresponded with you, and now say they have decided to purchase the patent on the terms named, provided the title and claims are found to be correct. To ascertain this, they require that X. Y. Z. shall examine and report upon the patent, otherwise A. & B. will not purchase; that if the patentee wishes to complete the sale, he must remit fifty dollars to pay for the examination, which is a work independent of the sale, and must be independently paid. The inventor sends the money; a report is made adverse to the patentee; no purchase is made; none was ever intended. Such are a few of the adroit schemes now in vogue for swindling "innocent" inventors.

Bills have been introduced in Congress to protect innocent purchasers of patents, i. e., infringers. Might it not also be well for somebody to formulate a law to protect innocent inventors?

THE BOARD OF HEALTH AND PRIVATE STABLES.

Until quite recently, it has been almost the universal custom for owners of private stables in this city to have, outside the walls of the building, a cemented brick vault with a wrought iron cover, for the refuse of the stable. The contents of this vault were carted away once or twice a week. And this was considered not only the most convenient way of disposing of the manure and litter of the stable, but in a sanitary sense the most desirable, as all emanations from the inclosure were dispelled in the open air. But about one year ago, our Board of Health (in its wisdom?) passed a resolution requiring the vaults outside of stables to be permanently closed. Notices were accordingly served upon the occupants of stables to empty, disinfect, and close the manure vaults, so there shall be no access to them from the outside. Forming part of this notice was a clause stating that, failing to comply with the requirements set forth, within five days, legal proceedings would be commenced to enforce the ordinance, the penalty for non-obeyance of which, we have since learned, is \$50 and costs.

Our health board is undoubtedly one of the best administered departments in the city. Nevertheless, we cannot but think it has made a serious blunder in passing its resolution of March 2, 1887, suppressing the outside manure vault of private stables, especially if the measure was adopted for sanitary reasons, and we are reluctant to believe the commissioners had any other motive.

The result has been that the short time allowed for closing these objectionable out of door pits, and providing other receptacles inside, without incurring a penalty of \$50, and probably as much more for costs, induced the occupants of the stables receiving the notices to scurry about and provide wood boxes which must be kept inside the walls, without any regard for the comfort, convenience, or health of the occupants.

Most private stables in this city have convenient apartments for the coachman's family, which is largely composed of young children, whose health must be jeopardized by inhaling, night and day, the steaming, odoriferous atmosphere which always emanates from the manure and bedding of the stable, but which has heretofore been stored outside the building.

We would recommend the health board, as the warm season is approaching, to look into the matter, and see if it did not make a mistake in passing the resolution preventing the use of out of door manure pits, and its rigorous enforcement, and if it would not be wise to rescind that ordinance at once and institute in its place as a sanitary measure a resolution requiring the refuse of stables to be deposited outside the walls. And might it not properly go so far as to require that it shall be deposited in brick or stone lined vaults, secured with iron doors, as formerly used, and to which plan we have never heard any objection advanced?

The following extracts from the Monthly Bulletin for February, issued by the Iowa State Board of Health, bears somewhat on this subject. It may be well for our health board to procure a copy, and read the entire report:

We had an experience a few years ago that led us to the conclusion that stable manure—especially the straw and litter from horse stables—was specially adapted to the reception and propagation of diphtheria germs under favorable circumstances. We were then county physician, and had charge of the county jail. In the south end of the court house, in the basement, the jailer, with several children, lived. East and a little north from the jailer's quarters was located a fountain with a basin perhaps four feet in depth and thirty feet in diameter. This, in the fall, was filled with straw and horse manure to prevent the freezing of the pipe, the water having been turned off. In the latter part of the winter, or early spring, spontaneous heat was generated. Steam and a very offensive odor were generated, and the wind being largely in the east was carried into the living rooms of the jailer and through the cells. After this had continued three or four days, diphtheria of a most fatal and malignant type broke out in the jailer's family. There were two or three deaths, and almost every member of the family was more or less affected. Quite a number of the prisoners also had diphtheritic exudation upon the tonsils, and there was a general condition of debility and prostration. At the time we believed the exhalations from this manure pit were the cause of the sickness, and we have believed it ever since. The Medical News, January 21, 1888, contains, on page 82, an article confirming our opinion. It is as follows: "A writer in the British Medical Journal of December 17, 1887, remarks that the works of Klebs, Ferrand, and others show that straw and manure heaps play a considerable part in propagating diphtheria. An army surgeon has tried to prove by statistics to what extent these statements are reliable. He has collected the following facts: In the French army, diphtheria causes three times as many deaths in cavalry regiments as in the infantry. This affection is most prevalent in the cavalry barracks in Paris, which are in the vicinity of stables belonging to Paris omnibus companies, and near a large depot for manure. In the German army, the same proportion exists, there being three more deaths from diphtheria in the cavalry regiments than in the infantry," etc.

Another Timber Raft.

Mr. Leary, the log raft champion and promoter, is, according to the Timberman, rapidly consummating his plans to make another attempt to stem the tide with a timber raft from Nova Scotia to New York. His raft is being built in the shape of a ship, with six masts and a large spread of canvas. This is merely a re-adoption of the principle on which timber rafts were built in Maine half a century ago, and sailed across to England. The voyages were uniformly successful, only one being lost; but the exposure and sufferings of the crew were so severe that this plan of transporting timber was finally abandoned because seamen would not risk their lives across the Atlantic. Mr. Leary expects that his new raft, which will be a solid mass of logs chained and spiked together, in the crude shape of a vessel, will be ready to launch by August.

A Remedy for Bedbugs.

A correspondent writes to the British Medical Journal as follows: "The best remedy for bugs in hospitals is a bug trap made by boring a series of holes in a piece of wood with a gimlet, and placing this under the mattress of each cot. The piece of wood is to be placed periodically into a basin of boiling water. This is an Indian hospital plan."