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Contents.

(Illustrated articles are marked with an asterisk.)

Table listing various articles such as Agricultural inventions, Carborundum, Cereal crops, Chinese, Cocoon, Cotton, Death rate of large cities, Digging machine, Electric dynamo telegraphy, Electrical machines, Niagara, Electric storage battery, Electric trolley on the canal, Exposition, Columbia, East India building, Items, Railway, Garnet rock, Gas cylinder, Gasocution.

TABLE OF CONTENTS OF SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT No. 936.

For the Week Ending December 9, 1893.

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Table listing various articles such as I. AGRICULTURE, II. ARCHEOLOGY, III. BACTERIOLOGY, IV. BIOGRAPHY, V. CHEMISTRY, VI. CIVIL ENGINEERING, VII. COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION, VIII. ELECTRICITY, IX. HORTICULTURE, X. MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, XI. MEDICINE, XII. MISCELLANEOUS.

"GASOCUTION."

The editorial in your issue of November 18, on "Death by Gas Asphyxiation," prompts me to suggest a question which has often occurred to me, as it doubtless has to others, why this would not be the best method of executing the death penalty upon criminals. Hanging is shocking to the finer sensibilities of mankind, and "electrocution" is not considered by many as altogether satisfactory; but execution by carbonic acid gas would be free from every objection that could be brought against either of the methods named.

URIAH SMITH.

[The system of inflicting death by electrocution is undoubtedly successful, but none the less is an absurdity as regards expense and complication of apparatus. When we consider that the puncture of a needle can kill, the use of an expensive electric plant for the purpose seems unnecessary. The execution by carbonic acid gas, in the style of "Armada," is also clumsy, as a great quantity would be required to fill a room to the necessary height. But by the use of illuminating gas one or two cubic feet would do the deed.

THE WRECK OF THE LOUISE H. RANDALL.

The past week has witnessed a scene enacted on the shore of Long Island which brought near to our doors the battle of human life with the elements, and which, after long agony of suspense and suffering, ended happily. We allude to the wreck of the schooner Louise H. Randall. Carrying a heavy cargo and caught in a gale off the inhospitable shoals of the southern shore of Long Island, she grounded. She was at once seen some six hundred yards distant from shore, and the life savers began to congregate on the beach near her.

The mortars and life lines were next tried, and shot after shot was discharged all falling short or missing the vessel, except two. These fell across the hull only to be cut by the wire rigging. In face of the gale and distance of the vessel from shore, the Federal Life Saving Service was helpless. Private assistance had to be invoked. The powerful seagoing tug of a wrecking company was dispatched from New York, eight hours distant, and reached the scene in time to rescue the unfortunate, who for a day and a night had been exposed to the sea and wind on the masts of the sunken vessel. Had the wreck occurred in January or February, probably all would have been lost.

Our life saving service is admirable in many respects. Its use of light surf boats in place of the heavy life boats used in England is characteristic. The English type could not be launched from our sand beaches. The same thing operates against the use of steam life boats. But where a coast is so notoriously unsafe as that bordering on the bay of New York, it would seem possible for the life saving department to maintain a steamer ready for instant call to the relief of a distressed vessel, anywhere from Montauk Point to

Barneгат. It would also seem possible for more powerful line-throwing apparatus to be provided.

Another striking feature may be noticed. Life saving operations are always operated from the shore. But would it not be possible for a ship to do something herself? The use of drags to carry a line to shore has been proposed, and Professor Davis' kite gives some suggestion to the shipwrecked. When a captain finds his ship going ashore, if he could but secure enough light line, it should be a simple matter to rig up some kind of a float which would, under the influence of the wind and "send" of the breakers' crests, carry the end of the line ashore. This would give the necessary facilities for carrying out a breeches buoy tackle. In the accounts of the wreck it is said that even the empty donkey boiler was carried ashore. This would have had power to carry the end of a heavy rope on shore had a long enough one been at hand. Life and death hinged upon getting a line across six hundred yards of water, and it could not be done.

The account of the wreck and rescue reads like a romance in every detail. The work of the life saving crews was heroic, if ineffectual. But it should have been effectual.

Manufacture of "God" Money in China.

A correspondent of the North China Herald, writing from the interior of Kiangsu province, mentions that one of the industries there is the manufacture of mock money for offering to the dead. Formerly the Chinese burnt sham paper money, but in these days of enlightenment and foreign intercourse the natives of Soongkong, Hangchow, and other places have come to the conclusion that dollars are more handy to the ghosts than clumsy paper money. Hence they now to a great extent supply their ancestors and departed friends with mock dollars. These are only half the size of real dollars, but there appears to be no more harm in cheating the dead than there is in cheating the living. Besides, the deceased are not supposed to know the difference, for many of them departed this life before silver dollars were imported into China. A hundred mock Carolus dollars, done up in boxes, are sold for 34 cash. The operation of making this money is interesting. First of all there are blocks of tin which are melted down and then poured between boards lined with Chinese paper, and when the upper board is pressed down on the lower, a thickness of tin remains. This is next cut up into strips four inches long, one wide, and an eighth of an inch thick. Some ten of these strips are placed evenly together, one on top of the other, and one end is held between the fingers, when the workman proceeds to hammer them out till he has beaten them so fine that they are now three feet long and a foot broad, and so thin that they are not thicker than the thinnest paper. This is next pasted on common cardboard, which is then cut with a punching machine to the size of half dollars, and this having been done, a boy takes the cut-out pieces in hand and with two dies, one representing the one side and the other the reverse, hammers impressions of dollars on them, and the money is ready for use.

Another very curious instance of the practice of cheating the gods is recorded in the same journal, but from quite a different part of the country. It appears that districts of the Anhui province have lately been ravaged by an epidemic, so that in many places the people were unable to attend to the harvesting of the crops. An attempt was then made to deceive the gods by "playing at" New Year's Day, and pretending that September 1 was the first day of the new year. Every preparation for celebrating the bogus new year was made, such as burning fire crackers and pasting happy sentences in red paper on the doors. The object was to make the god of sickness think that he had made a mistake in the seasons and had erred in bringing an epidemic on the people at a time when no epidemics in the course of nature should appear. As any action contrary to nature done by the gods is liable to punishment by the King of Heaven, the actors in this farce thought that the god of sickness would gather his evil spirits back to him for fear of the displeasure of his superior divinity. This child's play received the permission and co-operation of the local authorities, but so far no visible effects for the better are apparent.

Recruits of the American Army.

The Army and Navy Journal says: Of the nearly 10,000 men enlisted in the army during the past year, seven placed themselves on record as lawyers, three as dentists, two as chemists, thirty-nine as druggists, six as newspaper men, eight as civil engineers and surveyors, two each as actors and artists, four as draughtsmen, and sixty-two as school teachers. Twenty-six students entered, thirty-nine salesmen, thirteen photographers, and one doctor. One music teacher and a piano tuner were accepted, and are now in service; carpenters numbered 204; painters, 106; cooks, 108; machinists, 106; butchers, 104; printers, 95; and bakers, 91. Of 86 who gave no occupation, 78 were