FONTHILL ABBEY.

We present herewith a view of the west and north fronts of Fonthill Abbey, a remarkable building which once existed between Shaftesbury and Salisbury, in Wiltshire, England. Before describing the house a short account of its remarkable builder may prove interesting. William Beckford was born in 1759 and was the son of the fearless Alderman Beckford, who presented a protest to the King in defiance of all precedent. During his minority young Beckford was carefully educated, and studied music under Mozart; he traveled extensively, and when only twenty-two he wrote one of the most remarkable works of the imagination ever produced. This was the "History of the Caliph Vathek," somewhat in the vein of the Arabian Nights. "Vathek" was written at one sitting of three days and two nights and in French.

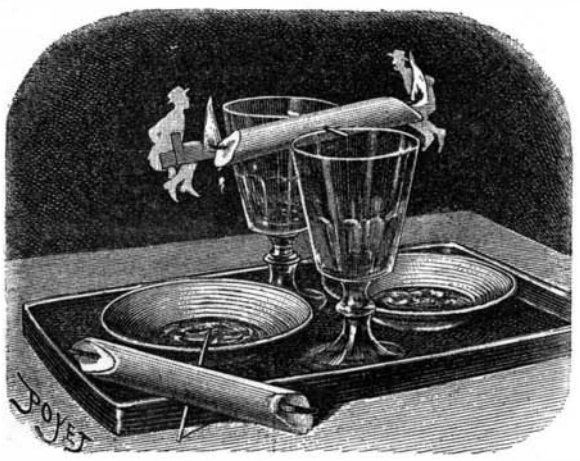
Beckford's fortune was immense; besides £1,000,000 in ready cash he had an income from estates in Jamaica which amounted annually to £100,000. Beckford soon got the building mania and spent £250,000 on Fonthill Abbey.

The building was begun for Mr. Beckford in 1796 by Wyatt, who did so much to ruin the English cathedrals by so-called restorations. The general arrangement was to be that of a convent with cloister, so the form of a true Latin cross was selected for a ground plan. Its external characteristics were to be those of a convent partly in ruins and partly perfect; probably nothing could be more happy than this idea which the architect laid before his patron, and it was perhaps to the very excellence of the original design that we may ascribe the cause of its not being carried into execution. The plans were modified until much of the original idea was lost and a great deal of the purity of the design was sacrificed. Permanence did not seem to be thought of, and timber and cement usurped the place of stone. Work was kept up day and night, and when the tower reached the height of three hundred feet it was blown over by the wind acting on a large flag fastened to the summit. The only regret expressed by Beckford was that he had not witnessed its destruction. A new tower was immediately begun and was built of stone. The building from its shape was a very uncomfortable one to live in, and some of the rooms could not be properly warmed. The rooms were magnificently decorated and all the furniture, like the building itself, was Gothic. The ceilings were covered with most beautiful tracery and the windows were filled with exquisite stained glass, and here in almost regal state lived the wealthy commoner, who was never so happy as when in his library.

The great central tower rose to a height of three hundred feet. The plan of the tower was octagonal with angle buttresses. The tower rose in five stories and was surmounted with an embattled and perforated parapet, above which ascended the tapering forms of the pinnacles. decorated with crockets and finials and bound together by a cradling of iron. Beckford lost a large portion of his property owing to a flaw in the title to his Jamaica estates, the domain of Fonthill was sold, and he removed to Bath; he died in 1844. Beckford frequently ascended a tower in Bath and looked through a telescope at the tower of his former residence. It is said that one day as he was looking at the tower it suddenly vanished. Beckford spread the report that the tower had fallen, which was confirmed the next day, for the foundations were weak and the tower had again fallen on the lath and plaster convent. Hardly a vestige of the original abbey remains, and the site is occupied by a modern house. Our illustration is taken fron a rare work entitled "Delineations of Fonthill and its Abbey," by J. Rutter, Shaftesbury, 1823.

THE STEARIC MOTOR.

The little motor represented herewith operates not by steam nor by electricity nor by compressed air. It



THE STEARINE MOTOR.

possesses no boiler, no cylinder, no piston, and consists simply of a stearine candle. Let the reader take a candle and perform the experiment for himself. Insert in the center of the candle, and at right angles with it, the heads of two pins previously heated. These pins will constitute the axis of the motor, and are to be placed upon the edge of two wineglasses.

If the two ends of the candles are lighted, they will burn and a drop of stearine will fall into one of the plates placed beneath in order to receive it. The equilibrium of the scale beam will be broken and the other end of the candle will descend, causing the end that has just lost the first drop of stearine to rise. This oscillatory motion will cause several drops to fall from the end that has just descended, and which, in its turn, becomes the lighter, and will, therefore, rise while the other descends, and the oscillatory motion, slight at first, will take on a greater and greater amplitude, the candle, slightly inclined upon the horizon at first, finally taking a nearly vertical position.

There is nothing more interesting than to watch this oscillatory motion, which does not cease unless one blows out the two flames or the two candles are entirely consumed; that is to say, at the end of half an hour.

If, now, it is desired to utilize the motion of the candle while it is in operation, it may be connected by a thin iron wire with small figures cut out of cardboard and jointed, to which it will give a to-and-fro motion. It may be considered as the walking beam of a Watt engine, and to each extremity may be connected a small piston moving in a vertical cylinder. Finally, and more simply, there may be fixed to the axis, by means of pins (which will keep it at a distance, in order to prevent the contact of the flames), a strip of light cardboard representing a plank, to the extremities of which may be glued two figures that will play at see-saw, and thus render the experiment still more attractive to the young.

Albinism Among Animals.

A correspondent writing from Norwich, Conn., to one of our daily papers calls attention to several rather remarkable instances of albinism recently observed among the lower animals. This season, he says, an unusually large number of albino birds have been seen in eastern Connecticut. A day or two ago three milk-white young robins flitted about in the trees of the Congregational church yard, at Stonington. Some persons who doubted at first that the birds were robins became convinced when a pair of mature natural-hued robins, putting in an appearance, took charge of the freaks, and coaxed them away from the neighborhood of a curious crowd that had gathered there. The little fellows were only just learning to fly, and two of the Stonington citizens finally captured and caged them. The birds are said to be getting on well in captivity. Two albino "red" squirrels were seen in the outskirts of Norwich about a fortnight ago. Abram I. Kinne, a farmer of East Plymouth, discovered recently a perfectly white crow in a nest of other normal little ones, which was built in an oak in the woods near his house. He has domesticated the queer bird.

A FLAT car costs about $380, a flat bottom coal car $475, a gondola drop bottom $500, a double hopper bottom coke car $540, a box car $600, a stock car $550, a fruit car (ventilated) $700 and a refrigerator car $800. A four-wheeled caboose costs $550, and an eight-wheeled one $700. The prices given on the above cars include power brakes and vertical plane couplers. A 50 foot mail and baggage car costs $3,500, a second-class coach $4,800, a first-class coach $5,500, while a first-class Pullman car costs $15,000.

FONTHILL ABBEY—ERECTED AS A RESIDENCE, IN 1796, BY WILLIAM BECKFORD.