

that some of the cards do not present registrable matter.

Under section 5 of the bill above mentioned, the registration of this class of objects is provided for as follows :

"Section 5. That every pack of playing cards printed and manufactured in the United States shall be entered under the copyright law in the office of the Librarian of Congress, under the same conditions and provisions of law as those relating to books ; one of the cards in each pack of playing cards so copyrighted to bear the notice prescribed by section 4962 of the Revised Statutes as amended."

There is every reason why this measure should become a law, for it will clear the air in regard to this class of registration, and will afford protection, not only for new designs for the faces of ordinary playing cards, but will cover such classes of cards as are designed to be used for the purpose of educating children in the use of words, or in history, geography, the languages or familiar quotations.

PTOMAIN POISONING.

Within the last few days a number of persons in New York City have died from ptomaine poisoning, so that public attention is now directed toward the mysterious nature of these poisons, which are not generally well understood. "Ptomaine" is a generic name for alkaloid bodies formed from animal and vegetable tissues during putrefaction and the similar bodies produced by pathogenic bacteria ; it comes from Greek words meaning a "corpse that has fallen." Very often, perhaps generally, the degeneration in the food product is not far enough advanced to offend either the taste or the sense of smell; consequently, suspicion is not excited, and a person eats or drinks something which contains enough of the poison to make a great deal of trouble, if the result is not fatal. We often hear, in the summer, for instance, that persons who attended a picnic were stricken with a violent illness, and that the physicians in the neighborhood were kept busy for hours. The fact is developed that only those who ate ice cream were made sick. Sometimes it is reported that some one had poisoned the food maliciously, but it is known that the cause of most, if not all, of these distressing experiences was the presence of ptomaines in the milk out of which the ice cream was made.

It is not an easy task to trace the history of milk back far enough to reveal the precise conditions under which the ptomaines were developed, but it is believed that failure to properly cool the milk immediately after it was taken from the cows is a partial explanation of the evil. Warm weather favors this condition. The ptomaines of ice cream (tyrotoxin) are particularly to be dreaded, as well as the other poisons, such as mytilotoxin, found in mussels.

It is not pleasant to contemplate that the air we breathe, and the water we drink, and a large proportion of our food abounds in bacteria of different kinds. Most of them are, fortunately, harmless, or should be if proper precautions are taken. Milk is far from being the only medium for the transference of this poison to human beings. A great variety of solid foods of animal origin are also likely to develop ptomaines. One frequently hears of poisoning by canned goods, such as potted meats or canned salmon, for instance. In some cases a metallic agent, perhaps the solder, is the cause of the trouble, but in the majority of cases the sickness, especially if it is of an intestinal and painful character, is due to ptomaines. To all appearances, the food may be entirely fit for consumption, and perhaps none of those employed in the canning house may be responsible, but the chances are that unperceived putrefaction has set in and that ptomaines have been produced.

Fresh fish and oysters are not exempt from the tendency to develop ptomaines. Indeed, fish was one of the first sources from which these poisons were obtained by chemists. The earliest feat of this kind was performed with gelatine in 1882. Since this time Brieger and others have found a variety of ptomaines, such as cadaverine, putrescin, peptotoxin, muscarin and mydalaïne.

Several cases which have occurred in New York City have resulted from eating shad roe, and though it is probable that the tragic death of the great musical conductor Anton Seidl was not caused by this poison, as was at first thought, still this delectable delicacy has been tabooed by many people, owing to the fear which they have of being poisoned by it. The symptoms of ptomaine are vomiting, nausea, diarrhoea and retarded respiration, and in advanced stages coma.

There is no known antidote for this poison, though of course emetics and purgatives should be used where the poison is suspected. There are numerous ptomaines in the body, but they are absorbed by the oxygen or expelled by the bowels, liver and lungs. If not, they strike the nerve centers and sickness results. The real cause of many mysterious deaths is ptomaine poisoning, but there are, of course, many cases of it which do not result seriously.

THE NAVIES OF THE WORLD.

The World Almanac for 1898 contains some most usable tables, showing the comparative strength of the various navies of the world, and we are indebted to this publication for the annexed tables. They were prepared by Lieut. W. R. Hamilton, Fifth Artillery, United States Army, and have been corrected from the latest official reports on file at the War Department, December, 1897.

NAVIES OF EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES.

Table of navies of Europe and the United States, listing classes of vessels (Battleships, Cruisers, Gunboats, etc.) and their counts across various countries (Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, etc.).

* This column is inserted for purposes of comparison. † Includes marine corps. H. G. Heavy guns or primary battery. S. B. Secondary batteries or light guns.

In the table given above, the enumeration of vessels of the United States Navy includes those built and building.

NAVIES OF MEXICO, SOUTH AMERICA AND ASIA.

Table of navies of Mexico, South America and Asia, listing classes of vessels and their counts across various regions (Japan, China, Korea, etc.).

H. G. Heavy guns. S. B. Secondary battery.

JUBILEE ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN SCIENCE ASSOCIATION.

BY HORACE C. HOVEY.

Fifty years ago the American Association for the Advancement of Science was organized for the purpose of promoting intercourse between scientific men throughout the continent, encouraging systematic scientific research and increasing the facilities for more thorough investigation and enlarging the usefulness of scientific labors.

The completion of the first half century of this noble work will be celebrated in an appropriate manner in the city of Boston, August 22-27, 1898, and the preliminary announcements for the jubilee are already made. The meeting will be held in response to the invitation of the Governor of Massachusetts, the Mayor of Boston, and the numerous scientific and educational institutions that cluster about that center of intellectual life and activity.

Geology, Chemistry, Botany, Forestry, Entomology, Mathematics, Engineering, etc. All general and sectional meetings will be held in the halls and rooms of the Institute of Technology and of the Boston Society of Natural History.

Members who have allowed their membership to lapse are requested to renew their connection with the Association. A thousand new members are called for, and every scientific man in America is appealed to in order to make this Fiftieth Anniversary of a great Association a marked event in the intellectual history of our continent.

FLOORS FOR MAGAZINES.—Cement floors in powder magazines are dangerous, because cracks and cavities may form in them, constituting receptacles for inflammable matter, besides which cement nearly always contains silicious particles which may cause ignition by shock or merely by rubbing.