

# Scientific American.

ESTABLISHED 1845

MUNN &amp; CO., - - - EDITORS AND PROPRIETORS.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AT

No. 361 BROADWAY, - - NEW YORK.

## TERMS FOR THE SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN.

(Established 1845.)

One copy, one year, for the U. S., Canada or Mexico.....\$3.00  
 One copy, six months, for the U. S., Canada or Mexico..... 1.50  
 One copy, one year, to any foreign country, postage prepaid, £1 10s. 5d. 4.00  
 Remit by postal or express money order, or by bank draft or check.  
 MUNN & CO., 361 Broadway, corner Franklin Street, New York.

## The Scientific American Supplement

(Established 1876)

Is a distinct paper from the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN. THE SUPPLEMENT is issued weekly. Every number contains 16 octavo pages, uniform in size with SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN. Terms of subscription for SUPPLEMENT, \$5.00 a year for the U. S., Canada or Mexico, \$6.00 a year, or £1 10s. 5d., to foreign countries belonging to the Postal Union. Single copies 10 cents. Sold by all newsdealers throughout the country. See prospectus, last page.  
**Combined Rates.**—The SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN and SUPPLEMENT will be sent for one year, to one address in U. S., Canada or Mexico, on receipt of seven dollars. To foreign countries, eight dollars and fifty cents a year, or £1 10s. 11d., postage prepaid.

## Building Edition of Scientific American.

(Established 1885.)

THE BUILDING EDITION OF THE SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN is a large and splendidly illustrated periodical, issued monthly, containing floor plans and perspective views pertaining to modern architecture. Each number is illustrated with beautiful plates, showing desirable dwellings, public buildings and architectural work in great variety. To architects, builders, and all who contemplate building this work is invaluable.  
 Single copies 25 cents. By mail, to any part of the United States, Canada or Mexico, \$2.50 a year. To foreign countries, \$3.00 a year, or £0 12s. 4d. Combined rate for BUILDING EDITION with SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, to one address, \$5.00 a year. To foreign countries, \$6.50 a year, or £1 6s. 9d. Combined rate for BUILDING EDITION, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, and SUPPLEMENT, \$9.00 a year. To foreign countries, \$11.00 a year, or £2 2s. 2d., postage prepaid.

## Export Edition of the Scientific American

(Established 1878)

with which is incorporated "LA AMERICA CIENTIFICA E INDUSTRIAL," or Spanish edition of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, published monthly, uniform in size and typography with the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN. Every number contains about 100 pages, profusely illustrated. It is the finest scientific industrial export paper published. It circulates throughout Cuba, the West Indies, Mexico, Central and South America, Spain and Spanish possessions—wherever the Spanish language is spoken. THE SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN EXPORT EDITION has a large guaranteed circulation in all commercial places throughout the world. \$3.00 a year, or £0 12s. 4d., postpaid to any part of the world. Single copies, 25 cents.  
 MUNN & CO., Publishers, 361 Broadway, New York.

The safest way to remit is by postal order, express money order, draft or bank check. Make all remittances payable to order of MUNN & CO.  
 Readers are specially requested to notify the publishers in case of any failure, delay, or irregularity in receipt of papers.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1898.

## Contents.

(Illustrated articles are marked with an asterisk.)

Air friction of moving trains.....	103	Locomotives, American, exports.....	98
Air, liquefaction of.....	98	Magazines, old.....	100
Antiseptic, a new.....	99	Melting points of metals.....	103
Apollo, temple of.....	99	Mortality and wealth.....	102
Archæological news.....	102	New York Health Department.....	99
Artesian wells, South Carolina.....	103	New York Riverside Drive.....	97
Art works, prices for.....	103	Notes and queries.....	103
Asphyxiation.....	106	Paintings, cleaning old.....	102
Bicycle stand, Webster's.....	100	Patents granted, weekly record.....	104
Boiler, steam, De Puy's.....	99	Physical examinations, X ray.....	106
Books, new.....	109	Plants, feeding.....	106
Cathode rays in surgery.....	101	Quinine in India.....	103
Cosmetics.....	103	Railroad car seal, De Lamater's.....	100
Economy, false.....	98	Refrigerating plants, improved.....	104
Excavations at Branchville.....	99	Riverside drive extension, N.Y.....	97
Fluorometer, the.....	101	Science notes.....	103
Gold dredge, a river.....	105	Snake birds and plesiosaurs.....	107
Gun testing, Sandy Hook.....	99	Steamship companies, the largest.....	106
Health Department, New York.....	99	Telephones of the world.....	100
Ice boat, a lateen.....	106	Viaduct, steel, Riverside drive.....	97
Ink, autographic.....	103	Washington's tree.....	106
Inventions recently patented.....	103	Water, tapping rock for.....	103
Lacquer, negative.....	103	Wines, mites in.....	103
Liquefaction of air.....	98	Zoology, comparative.....	107

## TABLE OF CONTENTS OF

# Scientific American Supplement

No. 1154.

For the Week Ending February 12, 1898.

Price 10 cents. For sale by all newsdealers.

I. BIOGRAPHY.—Camille Flammarion.—A study.....	18438
Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce War.—An interesting account of this celebrated chief and various Indian wars in which he has taken a part.—1 illustration.....	18437
II. BOAT BUILDING.—A Lateen Ice Boat.—By H. PERCY ASHLEY.—A thoroughly practical article for the building by amateurs of a speedy ice boat, with elaborate working drawings.—11 illustrations.....	18442
III. CHEMISTRY.—Modern Alchemy.—By W. E. ORD.....	18451
IV. COSMOGONY.—The Philosophy of Hyper-Space.—Address by Prof. SIMON NEWCOMB before the American Mathematical Society.....	18450
V. ENTOMOLOGY.—Commercial Value of Scale Insects.....	18443
VI. EXPOSITIONS.—Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition at Omaha.—3 illustrations.....	18448
VII. FINE ARTS.—The Unfinished Statue of St. Matthew by Michelangelo.—1 illustration.....	18445
VIII. LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERING.—A Baldwin Passenger Locomotive for the Chinese Imperial Railways.—1 illustration.....	18441
IX. MEDICINE AND HYGIENE.—How Much Sleep Do We Need?—Determining Sex.....	18448
X. MINING.—Minor Minerals and Metals in 1897.....	18446
XI. MISCELLANEOUS: Engineering Notes.....	18447
Miscellaneous Notes.....	18447
Selected Formulae.....	18447
XII. PHOTOGRAPHY.—Photo-Ceramics in Three Colors.—An Industrial Process.—A full description of a method of obtaining burnt-in pictures on ceramics.....	18439
Micro-Photographs.—Translation by HENRY DIETRICH.....	18446
XIII. PHYSICS.—On the Liquefaction of Air and the Detection of Impurities (Separation of Helium from the Gas of the King's Well, Bath).—Prof. JAMES DEWAR.—1 illustration.....	18451
XIV. QUARRYING.—In the Italian Marble Mountains, Serravezza.—A description of the method of obtaining marble in the famous quarries which were opened by Michelangelo.—4 illustrations.....	18444
XV. RAILWAY ENGINEERING.—Railroad Accident at Pease, France.—A description of a terrible accident between two of the fast express trains in France.....	18440
Proposed Railroad in Abyssinia.....	18441
XVI. STEAM ENGINEERING.—Compound Portable Engine.—1 illustration.....	18441
A Continuous Steam Engine Indicator.—By THOMAS GRAY.—5 illustrations.....	18440
XVII. TECHNOLOGY.—Silver Glaze and the Varying Coloration it Produces in Different Glasses.....	18439

## THE LIQUEFACTION OF AIR.\*

If Baron Munchausen had recorded that he once came upon a people who were in the habit of changing air into the liquid state and carrying it around in vessels, the statement would have been regarded as a particularly happy effort of that accomplished artist. An assertion so at variance with all human experience would have failed to command belief, even if indorsed by the testimony of less impeachable witnesses than the observant baron.

We are speaking of a bygone age. To-day the public knows better than to deny a statement offhand merely because it contradicts or does not agree with its common experience. The loophole of escape from unexplained phenomena in the days of our forefathers was by assertion of flat disbelief or ascription to witchcraft or the devil. To day, at the first announcement of the wonderful, the public neither believes nor disbelieves; for the incredibly rapid march of science and discovery has taught the world that the marvels and impossibilities of yesterday may easily become the commonplace facts of to-day. But two brief years ago it was whispered from across the ocean that a certain German professor had succeeded in passing light through so-called opaque bodies—wood, leather, the flesh—and the technical press announced the fact with a prefatory "it is said," "a contemporary reports," etc., neither affirming nor caring to deny a statement apparently so preposterous. To-day the fluoroscope is a toy that has lost its charm, and an X-ray equipment is a necessary part of the surgeon's outfit.

The liquefaction of air is another of those feats of experimental science which, having their birth in the laboratory, ultimately graduate into the broader field of the industrial arts, and lose all their wonder as they become useful and familiar to the public. It must not be supposed, however, that because it has only now become possible to produce liquid air in commercial quantities, therefore the principles of its liquefaction are new or only of late discovery. It has long been known that air, like any other gas, was theoretically capable of liquefaction, and that its condensation was merely a question of suitable apparatus. To Prof. Dewar, of Glasgow, belongs the credit of first liquefying air in limited quantities, the necessary reduction of temperature being achieved by a successive series of evaporations. The process, however, was too costly to have any commercial value.

The economical liquefaction of air in large quantities has been recently accomplished by Mr. Charles E. Tripler, of New York, after several years of experimental work. Two and a half gallons of the liquid were recently sent from his laboratory to Prof. Barker, of the University of Pennsylvania, and its properties were exhibited in an extremely interesting series of experiments during a lecture delivered by Prof. Barker to his class and a company of invited guests. This was the first public exhibition of the kind of this article in the United States.

The laws governing the existence of air in the liquid or gaseous state are the same as those for water—to take a substance with which we are most familiar. Above a certain temperature and pressure (212° F. and atmospheric pressure at the sea level) water exists as a vapor; from 212° F. to 32° F. at the same pressure it is a liquid, and below that temperature it is a solid. In its normal condition air, as we know it, is a gas, just as in its normal condition water is a liquid; but if we lower the temperature or increase the pressure, or both, of air to a sufficient degree, we reach a point at which condensation takes place. The liquefaction point of air under normal atmospheric pressure is 311° 8' below zero by the Fahrenheit scale.

Mr. Tripler's method of liquefaction is based upon the fact that, if a gas be compressed and allowed suddenly to expand, it absorbs the heat of the surrounding medium, thereby producing intense cold. He compresses air to 2,000 pounds to the square inch, passes it through a coil and permits it to issue from a needle point orifice. There it expands and cools. This cold stream of air circulates around a second coil through which compressed air is flowing, reducing the temperature of the latter. The air issuing from this second coil has its temperature lowered to a point due to its own expansion, plus the cold imparted from the first expansion. The expanded and extremely cold air from the second coil is used similarly to cool a third coil, the air in which is brought down to a temperature of 311° 8' F. and below, at which it condenses and flows from the end of the coil in a liquid stream.

In the course of his lecture Prof. Barker made a number of curious experiments with the liquid, illustrating the operation of the laws governing the formation of solids, liquids and gases. When it was poured into a tumbler it boiled until it had absorbed the heat of the glass. The cold gas given off condensed the moisture in the air above the glass, which fell in the form of hoar frost. A piece of tin thrust into the liquid made it boil and the tin was rendered as brittle as glass. Copper and platinum were not so affected,

\* A series of valuable papers on this subject, by various authors, including Prof. Dewar, has been published in the following numbers of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT: 846, 932, 948, 967, 970, 972, 1042.

and it is evident that these metals will make suitable receptacles for this new liquid. When it was boiled over a furnace the ebullition was, of course, excessive; but the moment water was poured into the boiling liquid, the former was instantly frozen. Alcohol and mercury were frozen when brought in contact with the new product. The liquefaction point of the two constituents of air is different, that of oxygen for given pressures being several degrees higher than that of nitrogen. Hence, as the temperature of the liquid rises, the nitrogen is the first to escape as a gas. The remaining liquid is proportionately rich in oxygen—a fact which is proved by the bluish tint which a standing vessel of the liquid assumes if exposed to the air. Just what the economic value of this new and extremely interesting product is, time will show; but in experimental work in the laboratory it will be certain to find a ready field of usefulness.

## FALSE ECONOMY.

The reluctance of Congress to push forward the coast fortifications proves that the sound business principles which govern men in the conduct of their private business are too often forgotten or violated in the administration of public affairs.

No one who is entitled to speak intelligently on the subject denies that the wealthy cities on the United States seaboard are at the mercy of an attacking fleet. Our coastline is so extensive and the number of ships in our navy is relatively so limited that every one of our seaports should be in a position to repel, unaided by the fleet, a hostile attack. At present not one of them could do this. Admirable as are the plans of fortification drawn up by the War Department, they still exist, thanks to the indifference of Congress, largely upon paper.

Adequate fortifications are to the protected city what insurance is to a building. No good business man would think of putting up a factory without placing an adequate insurance upon it. No nation in the world but one would dream of allowing its wealthiest cities to lie exposed to the attack of any petty state that can afford to buy a cruiser or two from foreign and competitive nations that are only too ready to furnish them. Looked at from a purely business standpoint, the few million dollars asked for fortifications are to be spent in taking out an insurance upon the thousands of millions of property which are now exposed to possible destruction.

This year's fortifications bill has suffered, as usual, a reduction at the hands of the House Committee, and the knife has been applied so effectively that less is to be conceded than for the two years previous, and the War Department's estimate is cut down two-thirds. Two years ago the appropriation was \$7,377,888, and last year \$9,517,141. This year a request was made for \$13,378,571, whereas the bill as reported provides for only \$4,144,912.

The policy of the present Congress may, perhaps, have been influenced by the fact that our foreign relations are less strained than they were when the liberal appropriations of two years ago were made. But it should be remembered that the building of fortifications and guns of the modern costly type is not or should not be emergency work. Activity in this line should never be determined by the aspect of political affairs. To return to our comparison, no one thinks of waiting until his neighbor's house is on fire before taking out an insurance upon his own.

## GROWTH IN OUR EXPORTS OF AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVES.

The American locomotive is evidently winning favor in the foreign countries into which it has been introduced. Whether the disastrous strike of the engineers in Great Britain has had anything to do with the large number of orders which have recently been placed in this country or not, it is a fact that the foreign trade has been growing at a steady pace and helped materially to keep our builders busy during the past few months. Japan in particular has shown her satisfaction with the American locomotives which she has already purchased by sending in large orders for more. Her first purchases were made in 1894, when fifteen locomotives were ordered. This was followed by twenty-three in 1895 and another twenty-three in 1896. The figures for the current year will undoubtedly show a considerable increase over its predecessor. Our best customer is Brazil, to which country eighty-four locomotives were shipped in the year ending in June, 1897. Russia comes next with a total of seventy-four, while Mexico purchased twenty-three and Chile twenty-two.

There are many reasons why the American machine should give good satisfaction to these foreign countries. In the first place, it is considerably cheaper (35 to 40 per cent) than the European machine, and the lessened cost is obtained, thanks to our improved machinery and economical shop management, without any sacrifice of quality. It is possible that the American locomotive does not show so much bright work and costly painting as the European engine, but in all points that affect its efficiency it is fully up to the standard.

To this must be added the simplicity and accessibility