

CHARLES HAYNES HASWELL.

By the death of Charles Haynes Haswell, New York city has lost one of its oldest, best-known, and most esteemed citizens, and the engineering world one of the most distinguished members of the profession. It is not often that the scope of a man's genius is matched by the term of his years of life in so generous a measure as in the case of Mr. Haswell, who was not only endowed with an uncommon share of the mental and physical qualifications which are necessary to the make-up of a successful practical engineer, but who continued in the prosecution of his work, uninterruptedly, for over three-quarters of a century. Time laid its hand gently upon this veteran, and on the occasion of his last visit to this office, a few weeks before his death, his erect carriage and brisk, almost jaunty, step gave little indication that he bore upon his shoulders the burden of close upon a century of years.

Mr. Haswell was essentially a New Yorker. Born May 22, 1809, in North Moore Street, he was identified with this city by the ties of residence, active professional life, and strong affection. After completing his education, and at the age of nineteen, he commenced his professional life in the boiler works of James P. Allaire, the well-known ironmaster. It was at this time that he took a step, which was destined both to bring honor to himself and place at the disposal of one of the government departments the services of one of the ablest engineers of the time. In the year 1835 he offered his services to the Navy Department in a letter which is of such timely interest that we give it in full:

NEW YORK,
Jan. 12, 1835.

Sir: Understanding that our government are about making experiments with steam and the steam engine, for the purpose of ascertaining the practicability of their application for naval purposes, it has induced me to address you, requesting such information on the subject (as your leisure and inclination will warrant your attention to it) both as respects the manner in which the proposed inquiries are to be made, and the objects desired to be accomplished. My object is the tender of my services as a steam engineer and draftsman, being particularly anxious to pursue my profession in the employ of the government.

Yours very respectfully,

CHARLES H. HASWELL.

To Hon. Campbell P. White,
Chairman Comm. on Naval Affairs.

Mr. Haswell's services were accepted, and he was enrolled as a naval engineer in the year 1836. His promotion was speedy, and after some years duty as Chief Engineer, the formal title of Engineer-in-Chief was conferred upon him in the year 1845. He was the first to obtain this rank, which he held until the year 1851. His work during this period, included the designing of the complete machinery for ten warships, in which was embodied several of his own original mechanical improvements.

Mr. Haswell was a man of fearlessness and independence of character, particularly where his professional convictions were concerned, and when the absurd proposal was made to build the "Missouri" with horizontal smokestack, the young engineer op-

posed the proposition with such zeal as to cause his suspension. The failure of the ship, which he had predicted, so greatly enhanced his professional reputation, that his reinstatement was promised if he would apologize to his superior officer—a condition which he, with dignity, refused to accept, stating that he would rather submit to injustice from others than do it to himself. Mr. Haswell re-entered the service of the navy, and after his final retirement engaged in engineering practice in New York. For over forty years he was surveyor for steamships for the Marine Underwriters of New York; he designed the buildings on Hoffman Island; built the crib bulkhead at Hart's Island; and solved successfully some of the most diffi-

cult early building foundation problems in New York. He was the engineer in charge of the costly improvements now being carried on at Riker's Island, to the oversight of which he devoted much time in recent years. At the time of his death he held the position of Consulting Engineer to the Board of Apportionment, and in spite of his great age he went three times a week to his office for the performance of the duties incidental to this last-named position. Perhaps his earliest claim to distinction was Mr. Haswell's construction of the first steam yacht, for whose designs he was entirely responsible. He launched the craft in the year 1837 on the East River, and it is upon this fact that his right to be known as the father of the steam yacht is based. To the world at large, however, Mr. Haswell's name is most familiar as the author of "Haswell's Pocket-book," which has already passed through no less than sixty editions. It is still a well-known and widely-used technical book of reference. His other work was his "Reminiscences of an Octogenarian," a book of memoirs covering old New York from 1816 to 1860.

On the social side of his character and personality Mr. Haswell was decidedly attractive, and he was beloved by a wide circle of acquaintance. To the very last, his figure was familiar in his favorite resort, the Engineers' Club.

From the very year of its foundation, Mr. Haswell was a frequent visitor at the offices of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, and the friendship formed with its proprietors sixty years ago continued to the very end, Mr. Haswell having expressed the deepest regret at the recent decease of Mr. Orson Desaix Munn. His own death resulted from an accidental fall in his dining room, which dislocated his shoulder. The pain and shock

proved too much for a vitality which, in the opinion of his physician, but for the accident would have probably carried him to the century mark.

The American consul at Nankin utters a caution to his fellow-countrymen, who spend lavishly on illustrated catalogues, on thick paper, handsomely bound, which appear to be highly prized by the Chinese at Nankin, where the supply is at times unequal to the demand. As the English language is not yet a general accomplishment among the citizens, the consul made inquiries, and discovered that the leaves of the catalogues were being used as inside soles for shoes.

