

Science Notes

BY WILLIAM G. HAYNES.

NEW TESTS OF DEATH.

It is quite natural, says a contributor to The Medical Record (New York), that the speedy and accurate diagnosis of death should receive increasing interest in those countries in which the business of killing seems to have supplanted all other forms of human activity. He describes three new methods of determining the cessation of life, discussed recently in Le Clinica Medica Italiana.

"The first of these is the ether test. A drop of ether is instilled into the conjunctival sac of one eye. If this is followed by a reddening of the conjunctiva it affords proof that the circulation is intact and that life is still present. The other eye is used as a control. The second test . . .

consists in the subcutaneous injection of fluorescin, which, if the individual is still living, is soon followed by a yellowish coloring of the skin and mucosa. The conjunctiva and the mucous membrane of the mouth, and particularly of the frenum of the tongue, show this coloration most distinctly . . . A negative result is obtained in cases of marked slowing or enfeeblement of the circulation. . . The third test . . . consists in direct exploration of the heart by means of a stilet. This is introduced through a small incision in one of the intercostal spaces. Any movement in the heart is communicated to the stilet. In some instances of suspended animation it is possible to arouse cardiac activity by means of gentle movements of the stilet, combined with artificial respiration."—Literary Digest.

FLOORING THE SEA WITH CONCRETE.

While a large portion of the na-

tions of the world are engaged in fighting one another, Holland quietly continues its age-long struggle against its old enemy, the ocean; every new attempt of the foe to snatch a bit of Holland's hard-won soil is met with some ingenious defensive device.

Some years ago, it was discovered on the coast of the island of Schouwen (in Zeeland) that, although the dykes remained intact, the waters oozed up in the dyke-protected polders; the sea was undermining the land, and this undermining process began far out from the coast under the waters. Insidiously the water ate into the land until the dykes, having lost their foundation, toppled over in their turn, leaving the sea undisputed master of the field. It was the engineer of the department of waterways for Schouwen, Mr. Yonk Heer (Yonk Heer is a title of nobility) de Muralt who devised a means of defense against these inroads. He caused the sea bottom itself, where

it sloped away seawards from the foot of the dyke, to be strengthened by laying over it a flooring of concrete. Such a flooring is in reality a sort of "mat" composed of blocks of concrete, each of one meter (39.37 inches) square. Every such "mat" weighs 200,000 kilograms (220 tons).

It is constructed on an incline built over the water. When the "mat" is ready an iron pontoon is drawn up just above it, and by an ingenious system of hawsers and pulleys, the "mat" of concrete is hoisted up until it rests against the bottom of the pontoon where it is fastened by means of the hawsers. A tugboat then tows off the whole affair—pontoon and "mat"—to the spot where it has to be sunk.

This proved so effective that the Netherlands government adopted the method for all places where the coast is menaced.—Scientific American.

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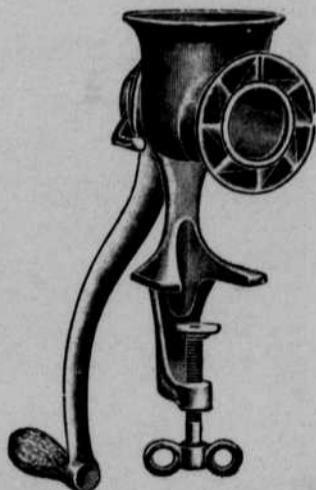
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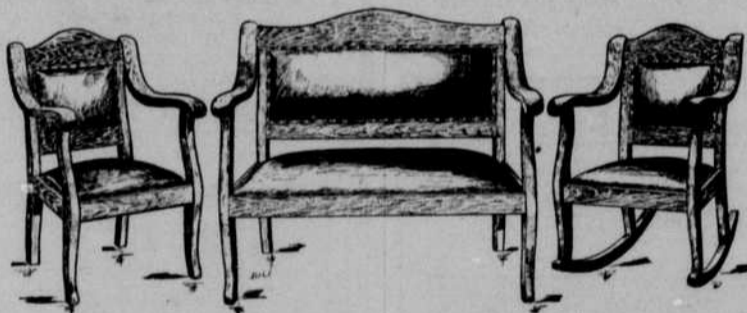
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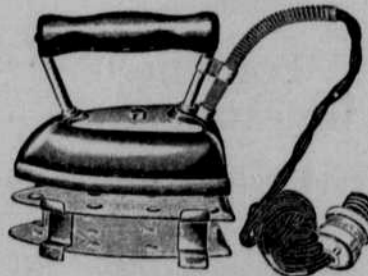
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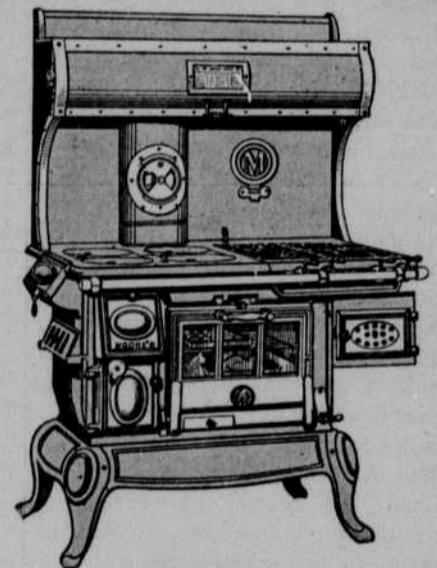
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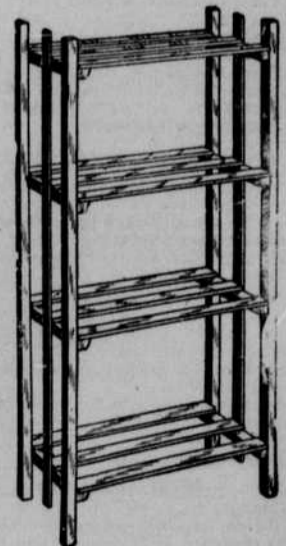
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