

BLASTING WITH STEAM.

To Be Generated in a Cartridge by Electricity.

H. Schaw, an English engineer, suggests high pressure steam instead of inflammable explosives to blow out coal or ore in mines. Briefly the suggestion is that a cartridge of pure water lodged in a shot-hole should be converted into steam at a pressure of about 150 pounds per square inch by means of electricity of low tension, the cartridge or boiler to be made of such strength that it would burst at about this pressure, when the force set at liberty would break down the coal. Mr. Schaw made an experiment to ascertain whether it would be possible to boil water by the heat produced by a current of electricity passing through a platinum wire similar to that used for firing mines immersed in water, and found that it was successful. Mr. Schaw is of opinion that at the moment when the boiler bursts the wire will fuse and the electric circuit will be broken, and no risk of ignition of fire-damp or coal dust will remain from the heated wire. But the main question is, would this force be sufficient? It is, of course, very much inferior to the expansive force of gunpowder, or other explosive. Mr. Schaw continues: "Under the supposition, however, that the force so developed would be sufficient to break down the undercut coal in a mine, the writer thinks that the practical working of the proposed method would present no great difficulties, and that it would be perfectly safe in any coal mine; and this is its only recommendation, for it certainly would be more expensive and troublesome than the usual methods of blasting. As an approximation, the writer would observe that a water cartridge 1 3/4 inches in diameter and 3 1/2 inches in length, to be used in a two-inch blast hole, would hold about 8.4 cubic inches of water. It would be converted into high pressure steam and burst the cartridge in about 1 1/2 minutes with the electric power the writer suggests, and would thus exert a sudden force of about one and one-third tons.

STRANGE UMBRELLA DISEASE.

The "umbrella disease" is a strange new affliction. William Michaels, a lawyer of Parker, Pa., has just returned to his home, after a seven months' unsuccessful stay in this city, where he came in the hope of being cured of this strange disease.

A few years ago Mr. Michaels got into the habit of carrying an umbrella about with him everywhere, no matter how favorable the weather might be. The umbrella was no inconsiderable weight, and the constant pressure of the bend of the handle on the ball of his thumb finally resulted in the formation of a callosity there. Shortly afterward the callosity part began to sting at intervals, until gradually it became so that the pain was continuous and almost unbearable.

When Mr. Michaels came to this city eight months ago the first physician he sought told him that his hand was gradually turning to stone, and that the only thing for him to do was to have the hand amputated. Michaels refused to give up hope, and went about from physician to physician, until when, a few weeks ago, his hand had become as rigid and cold as marble, he reluctantly agreed to have his hand amputated at the wrist. Now he is relieved of all pain.

A somewhat similar case occurred in London a short time ago, when a member of parliament had his hand turn to stone from carrying a heavy cane.

It will be remembered also that the since dead ossified man claimed that his ossification began in his feet and that the doctors attributed the cause to the wearing of extremely tight shoes. "Corns" are simply a modification of ossification.—New York Journal.

An Ancient Pedigree.

The "tuatera lizard" is said to be perhaps the most remarkable animal now living in New Zealand, and the "oldest existing type of reptile." So deeply are naturalists interested in this curious species of animal, which seems to be as closely related to turtles as to lizards, that legislative protection has been secured for it. Unfortunately, the eggs of the creature appear not to be covered by the protective act, and Nature expresses gratification that only one man, a Mr. Henaghan, who can be trusted, knows where to look for the precious eggs. Before they are all destroyed it is hoped that the biologists will have an opportunity to determine how the strange animal is developed, and whether it is more a lizard than a turtle, or more a turtle than a lizard.

Statistics on Children.

As the result of a careful investigation of 24,000 cases, Dr. Jarosic presented to the director of the Hungarian bureau of statistics the following conclusions: The offspring of parents between the ages of 20 and 25 are likely to be weak and delicate, but between 25 and 45 will probably be strong and thrive. The mother bears most robust children between her twenty-fifth and thirty-fifth year. When the mother is ten years younger than the father the proportion of healthy children is greatest, the chances being 10 per cent more favorable than when the parents are of about the same age.

An Elephant's Smell.

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MORE TAXES ARE TO BE ADDED

How the Policy of Expansion Works in European Countries.

From the Springfield Republican: The French cabinet is elaborating a scheme of progressive income taxation. It is designed to raise 175,000,000 francs a year, and it will apply especially to the wealthier classes who manifest their means in living and pleasure expenditure. The rental value of the habitation will be used primarily to calculate the income of the occupant, and this calculated income is increased so much by each servant employed, carriage owned or employed, and other evidences of income, such as yachts, dogs, motorcycles and the like. Additions to taxable income from these evidences of wealth vary according to place. Thus, the employment of a female servant adds 800 francs to the taxable income of a person in Paris, and so on down to 400 francs for the country villages. The enormous demands upon the exchequer incident to the maintenance of the military and naval might of the nation necessitate radical measures of public revenue, and wealth must accordingly be placed under special contribution. Great Britain's imperial policy has forced upon the wealth of that nation the most radical system of graduated income and probate taxes existing anywhere outside of Switzerland and New Zealand, and it is only a question of a brief time at the present rate of imperial progress and navy and army expansion when the burden must be increased per capita or per unit of wealth. France is now to follow suit, and all over Europe wealth will be made more and more to contribute to the support of the luxury of colonial and military expansion—not so much because of the justice of this course, but because of the poverty of the masses and their inflammatory state of mind. There is no large nation in the world today where wealth is relatively so lightly taxed as in the United States. But with the entrance of the nation into the arena of the world-grabbing and military powers all this must change. Wealth will be made to foot the bill. Nothing can be more certain, unless we are to suppose that the middle and lower classes of people in the United States possess less of the spirit and strength of resistance to the encroachments of privilege and power than the crushed and broken masses of Europe.

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Grandmother had been explaining to the little girl how our earth is kept from flying off into infinite space by the attraction of the sun, which is constantly trying to draw the earth toward itself, while the latter always keeps its distance. "Grandma," said the little girl, "I should think the sun would get discouraged after awhile and let go."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

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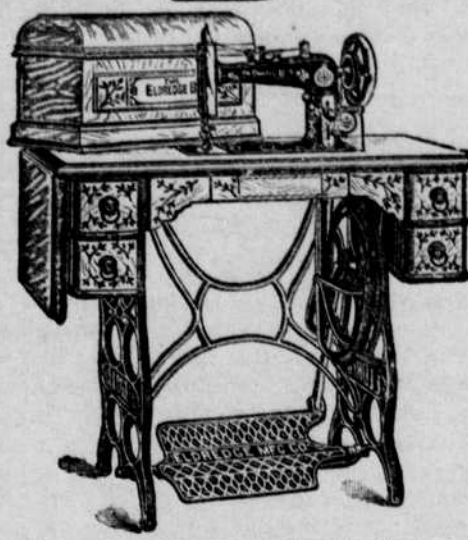
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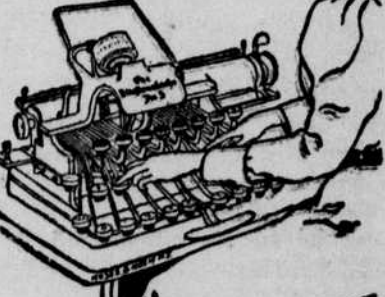
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