

A WONDERFUL INVENTION.

The conversion says the New York Sun, of the soft and fleecy fibre of cotton into a hard and solid substance like horn and ivory, is one of those remarkable discoveries which distinguish the inventive genius of the present age. This surprising transmutation of vegetable matter has, however, been accomplished by different persons almost simultaneously, both in Europe and in this country, like many other great inventions.

In England, Mr. Alexander Parkes has obtained a patent for a process of treating cotton, flax, and other vegetable fibres, to produce a new material called Parkesine; and in this country similar patents have been granted to Dr. William E. Mason, Assistant Surgeon in the U. S. Navy, of Orange, N. J., and to Dr. John A. McClelland, a dentist, of Louisville, Ky.

These inventions are all fundamentally alike in treating cotton, flax and other vegetable fibre, by first converting it in the usual manner with nitro-sulphuric acid into pyrocellulose or gun cotton. The gun cotton is then dissolved with ether and alcohol to produce collodion. This chemical preparation is the basis on which all the patents rest. The methods of mechanical treatment subsequent to the chemical process constitute the essential difference between the processes of the several inventors, and form the subjects of the various patents; the results are substantially the same. The solvents are evaporated from the solution of pyrocellulose or gun cotton, by slow and difficult processes, and the residuum, when in a plastic state, is subjected to pressure in molds to form it into a solid substance in any desired mass or shape.

This new material is a substance as distinct from the original vegetable matter of which it is composed, as caoutchouc or India rubber in its natural state as a gum is from vulcanized rubber. It resembles horn and ivory in texture and quality, and like those substances, may be applied to the manufacture of combs, buttons and various objects of use and ornament. In its pure state it is transparent like amber, and admits of any shade of coloring, from pure white to jet black. Dr. McClelland has made a special application of it to dental plates in imitation of the natural gum; and for this purpose the purity of the substance, as well as its great strength and the beauty of the color, appear to adapt it admirably. Perfect imitations may also be made of coral and tortoise shell.

This new discovery, indeed, promises to furnish to art and manufacture a most valuable acquisition. — Chicago Commercial Index.

PHYSIOGNOMY. — Nature is honest. Every living creature on the face of the globe is compelled to carry its character at its moustache. There is no misprint in the book of nature; her language is unmistakable. Every creature has its own peculiarities, by which its characteristics and habits may be determined. Behold the difference between the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the earth. Here is the eagle with its savage beak and talons, and the gentle, cooing dove. The terrible lion and the timid hare. The monstrous elephant and the tiny quadruped. Who can fail to read their various characters, stamped thus indelibly upon them? And when we come to man, we find that the more he resembles any species or class of the lower creation the more his character approximates to theirs. Every thought and motion leaves its impression alike on the soul and on the face. There can be no evasion of the law. The bloated sot, and the upright man, the ignorant and the man of thought, the sturdy yeoman and the delicate female—all present themselves in proof of this theory. A little attention to this science would save many an honest citizen from the sly, designing and selfish villain, and give men a better understanding of each other. — Ec.

The wealth of the great Welsh family of Crawshay is larger than that of the Astors, Vanderbilts and Sturges combined, and like most great fortunes, commenced with very small beginnings. In the last century the original Crawshay, then a farmer's son, rode to London on his pony (his sole property) to seek his fortune. He began by sweeping out the ware-house of an ironmonger, who was of a discriminating mind, and saw that young Crawshay had good stuff in him. The ironmonger had been successfully speculating in sending out iron pots to America, and his astute apprentice observed that if the Americans used so many pots, they must want hooks to hang them on. Whereupon the master not only took the hint, but kindly determined that Crawshay should send them out, and that he would lend him the money for that purpose. Upon this venture was realized £100, and from that time the farmer's son moved rapidly upward, being first taken into partnership by his master, and ultimately becoming an iron king in South Wales, whose descendant, lately deceased, has left it, it is computed, above \$30,000,000 in personal property alone; besides enormous real estates. It is a curious fact that from this stock has arisen, in a very short time, two baronets and one peerage—that of Llanover.

SALE OF GIRLS IN INDIA.—One of the leading native papers of India contains an account of a sale of girls near Calcutta, at which the writer was present. When he first heard that such a sale was going on, he could scarcely believe that he was living under the British Government; however, he found that he had been correctly informed, for on going to a certain quarter of the bazaar at Manickgunge, he saw a cluster of girls, of from two to thirteen years of age, standing up for sale. The brokers were very busy summoning customers, as they received a commission of ten per cent. upon all bargains effected through their instrumentality. Besides some trifling offerings, the prices varied according to the age and beauty of the children; girls of seven ruled at about 400 rupees; an old man of seventy whispered an offer of 750 rupees for a very beautiful girl of thirteen, who was surrounded by quite a crowd of bidders. An exchange of daughters was taking place in another part of the bazaar. The writer of what he witnessed, implores the editor to direct the attention of the Government officials to this matter, and save many Brahmin families from perdition.

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