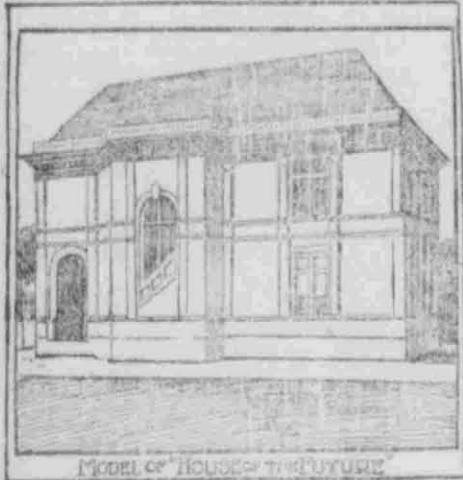


# EDISON'S THOUSAND DOLLAR HOME

The Great Inventor says the House of the Future will Be of Concrete and May Be Built in a Day.



Model of House of the Future

HAD certain recent statements ascribed to Thomas A. Edison come from any other quarter they would have been regarded as the babbling of an irresponsible dreamer. From such a source, however, they carry with them an air of authority that demands consideration.

For Edison is a man who has been making such statements now for many years. When he began to say things about electric possibilities that were not even hinted at in the text books the world was not startled out of its habitual calm. When he began to convert those possibilities into realities the same world accepted them wonderingly and called him "wizard."

So it has come to pass that when he gives utterance to some new thought conceived in the secret recesses of his wonderful thinking apparatus we do not scoff at him or refuse to listen. No matter how unreasonably he draws on our credulity—it cannot be denied that we have been subjected to some trying tests—we do not protest. Although our breath may be coming in fitful gasps, we "wait and see."

It certainly makes a fearful strain on our capacity for believing to be confronted with Mr. Edison's latest marvel—the indestructible three-story cement dwelling built in twelve hours at a cost of \$1,000.

When we have recovered a little from the shock of such a proposition, made apparently in good faith, we turn expectantly to the facts as they stand now.

On the second floor of Thomas A. Edison's laboratory at West Orange,

N. J., there may be seen the model of a very attractive Queen Anne cottage.

Appropos of this model, Mr. Edison has recently delivered himself as follows: "Some time next spring I intend to build a house after that model. By means of a system of molds which I have patented it will be possible for any one who understands the business to erect a house of solid cement, twenty-five feet in width and forty-five feet in depth, three stories in height and roomy enough to house

comfortably three families. The building will cost not to exceed \$1,000.

"The all important feature of the patent lies in the molds. They are of iron, and the inside facings are nickel plated and are fashioned exactly like the outside of the model. The material for the house is composed almost entirely of a composition of my own devising, consisting of one part cement, three parts sand and five parts of quarter inch crushed stone.

"At 8 in the morning we take the movable steel castings to a vacant lot. These are clamped together with bolts, and you have before you a house of iron, with hollow walls. Meantime we are mixing our concrete. The machinery to raise this soft concrete to the top of this iron framework—a big mold, you understand—is already on the spot.

"By 6 o'clock at night there is your house inside your ironwork. Everything, except the doors and windows, is in place. In six days the iron frame is unbolted and removed. In another eight days the concrete is completely hardened and the house ready to live in—fifteen days from start to finish.

"The only wood used is the strips around the edges of the floors on which to tack down a carpet and those around the wall for the picture molding. All this is put in place in the ironwork before the concrete has been poured in. The tiling around the fireplace and in the chimneys, the gas and water pipes, are also cast in the same way in the concrete walls. The

furnaces, the heating pipes, the bathtubs and closets are all cast with the walls.

The End is Not Yet.

All this without so much as the twinkling of an eye to suggest that you are being victimized. Do not flinch; there are further wonders to be told:

"I have built the model of this house on the basis of a laborer getting \$1.50 per day. The molding forms are of cast iron, and for \$1,000 the entire house can be built, this to include heating pipes, staircases of cement, floors and mantels of cement and a cement roof that won't leak. Plumbing and even bathtubs will be of cement.

"The durability of the house is unquestionable. It will last forever. Even children may go around with axes and chop as long as they like without doing any material harm.

"Therefore there will be no necessity for repairs. Even the window sashes will be of cement. Aside from the narrow strip of wood intended for the

holding of carpet tacks the only wooden thing about the house is the front stoop. I have given it a wooden stoop to make it more beautiful. I have been in consultation with New York architects on the subject of the wooden stoop, and I think it possible to omit that material in the stoop construction. It will cost a contractor \$30,000 to get the molds with which to build the house, but then he will be able to build over 30,000 houses with the one set of molds.

"The molds can be taken down in a few hours after the house has been finished, and they may be carried to any part of the world in less space than is required for shipping an ordinary derrick. That's what will appeal strongly to commercial economy. In selling contractors the iron castings I shall restrict them in the use of cement that will have no air bulbs. The cement will be poured into the molds until it flows over at the top. Then the house is practically finished. I won't let the molds to any one who does not satisfy me of the quality of his concrete formula. In the great San Francisco disaster the houses which withstood the earthquake were built of cement."

The Long Expected Battery.

Mr. Edison now makes the announcement that his storage battery proposition has been brought to a condition in which it is of economic value. For years he has been working on this great feature, and now he makes the confident statement that an early in December of this year his great battery will be seen no more in the streets of New York. The Edison works are turning out the new storage batteries at the rate of 300 a week.

This effort to obtain a storage battery that will do more than the work of a horse at less expense has been a long and sometimes discouraging one. After three years of almost constant labor and experiment Edison made a battery which would propel a truck 12,000 miles before a new plate became necessary. This result was gratifying, but it was not enough to drive the horse from the field. The inventor found that in order to run the truck animal out of business it would be necessary to construct a battery that would accomplish 50,000 miles without a new plate.

He has succeeded, he says, in doing this. He has perfected a 50,000 mile battery, and in a few weeks it will be on the market and cheap enough for common use. If half that is claimed for it is realized it will be one of the greatest labor saving devices ever invented. It will be able to carry twice the load of the ordinary truck, will have twice the speed and will take up but half the room.

Although Mr. Edison has patented his wonderful concrete house, he purposes to let any one who wishes to build it have the right without charge, stipulating only that every person who builds shall use the proper kind of concrete, enforce it with twisted iron rods and turn out an artistic product. He declares that the laboring man is going to get a "square deal" on this improvement. He disclaims all idea of personal gain from the invention and says that he will make a gift of it to the working people of America.

All of which is in line with the declaration made on his last birthday to the effect that all of his effort hereafter would be exerted solely for the benefit of his fellow men.

W. S. EMERY.

THOMAS A. EDISON AND HIS FAMILY



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### SCIENTIFIC MISCELLANY.

Investigating the mysterious noises common in Italy, where they are known as "brontidi," Prof. T. Alpi, of the Urbino observatory, has sent inquiries to 217 persons, of whom 135 in various parts of Italy and its African colonies have noticed the phenomenon. The sounds, which resemble the rumble of distant explosions, are popularly explained as echoes from strong tides at sea. They occur usually in the afternoon, both summer and winter, with a bright sky and calm air, but are supposed to give warning of bad weather. Prof. Alpi finds no evidence that they are due to mine explosions or gun firing. They occur chiefly in central mountain regions, but do not seem to be caused by wind or thunder, and the investigator is still in doubt as to whether they result from meteorological or earthquake causes.

In his new iron-making process, Dr. G. P. Laval of Stockholm, finely pulverizes the ore, coal and other materials, and causes them to be drawn by a current of air or carbonic oxide in a continuous stream into the hopper through a delivery pipe into the furnace. The furnace is a vertical cylinder, with a tap-hole for the iron and an escape-hole for the gas near the base. The coal is burned to carbonic oxide in the upper part of the furnace, and the slag and reduced iron collect on the furnace wall and flow down to the lower end.

The magnetic crane or derrick for hoisting glass, patented by C. T. Dodds, has a suitable electromagnet, with a plate or pieces of iron forming an armature. The armature is placed under the glass, and raises and transports it through the attraction of the magnet.

The apparatus for making black diamonds lately patented in France by M. Bonnet consists of a vessel of bronze or other metal, with two carbon electrodes, between which is a rod of pure carbon, while beneath the rod is a small vessel containing carbon bisulphide. The passage of a slight electric current vaporizes the carbon bisulphide. A high tension current passed through the hermetically closed vessel causes the vapor to yield a high pressure, and also fuses the carbon rod, which, under the great pressure is crystallized into black diamonds.

A French inquiry following 12 cases of illness, with two deaths, has shown that the liver of the edible mussel at times contains a poison—unaffected by cooking—that acts upon animals like curare. The fish, eels and sea urchins from the same basin were not toxic but the star fish were, and both quailed and starfish that were poisonous on May 20 and June 11 were harmless when eaten on July 2. Whether this temporary toxicity is due to contaminated food or is the result of disease has not been determined.

The water torch lately discussed by Swiss scientists consists of a metal cylinder of calcium carbide, with a generator of self-igniting phosphorated hydrogen, which sets fire to the acetylene produced when the carbide is wet. Thrown 1,000 yards by a special gun, the torch burns from 50 minutes to three hours with a light of 100 to 300 candlepower. It is suggested that such torches would protect battleships from night surprises, and that one attached to a life-belt would enable a drowning person to find the bell.

In a new process of saving tin, the scrap is carried by a conveyor continuously through a metallic U-shaped basket, suspended in an electrolytic bath, forming a moving anode, while cathode plates are held in the liquid.

Forest-building offers opportunities to the wealthy philanthropist seeking a change from the endorsement of college

ests to replace those that have vanished is too slow and costly to be undertaken by many owners of private lands, and only government aid or donations from capitalists are likely to make effective

any plan for an adequate future timber supply. Much might be done by bounties for tree planting, with the judicious offer of prizes for the best results. The intelligent competition that would re-

sult would not only increase the forest area, but would lead to greater production per acre, and doubtless to improvement in the tree varieties grown for timber and special purposes.

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