

**WELL-DIGGERS TAP A VEIN OF HOT WATER.**

A strange geological phenomenon recently caused some excitement at Murk, in France, a village situated between the valley of Mount Dore and that of St. James. A civil engineer had caused a rectangular well to be sunk to a depth of fifty-three metres, through a stratum of hard tufa, which covers the primitive formation in that district. At this depth, which is insignificant compared to the shaft of a mine, the heat, nevertheless, became so intense that the workmen had to be relieved at short intervals. Their wooden shoes soon got intolerably warm, and they could not lie down to rest themselves on the hot ground.

On the other hand the appearance of the tufa denoted that the well had nearly reached the granite. The engineer, on leaving the spot for a while, had recommended his men to be very careful during his absence, and to content themselves with removing the rubble without going further down. One of them, however, in throwing the last shovelful into the skip, took it into his head to remove with his pickaxe a piece of tufa about thirty inches in circumference; but no sooner had he done this than he saw the bottom of the hole he had made swell up.

The men, in a fright, jumped into the cage and called to be pulled up; but they had barely got to the height of a dozen metres when a thick column of hot water, preceded by a violent report, rose up in the air, projecting huge stones upward. The water, in falling, scalded the men grievously. The jet diminished, and the well filled rapidly, the poor fellows succeeding, however, in getting out in time. In the course of ten hours, the well got quite full, and from that time a rivulet of thermal water has been flowing from the spot into the Borgegne. The liquid, on arriving there, still retains a temperature of forty degrees centigrade. Upon analysis it has been found to contain upward of twenty milligrammes (nearly half grain) of arsenate of potash per litre, a proportion unheard of before. The Minister of Public Works has sent a commission of engineers to the spot for further investigation.

**A WONDER—A REVOLUTION IN STEAM-ENGINES.**

The Jersey City Times has a description of a machine, now in operation in that city, which is destined to work a revolution in one department of mechanical industry—namely a new steam engine, which, with one-quarter of the weight and occupying one-quarter of the space required for an ordinary ten-horse engine, will give the same power, with twenty-five per cent. less fuel. This little machine sets at defiance all preconceived notions on the subject. Its motive power is all contained within the circumference of a broad stout wheel, about three feet in diameter, revolving upon a hollow shaft which receives the steam and delivers it alternately into two opposite reciprocal cylinders, each fixed between the center and the periphery. The power, therefore, instead of being at the center, presents the singular anomaly of being at the circumference; or in other words, the true center of power is at the periphery of the wheel. To use a familiar simile, the wheel is like the hand or drum of a squirrel-cage, in which two squirrels were conversationally—one in the usual position, the other in the opposite, but with his head down, and with a motion similar to that of a fly walking on the ceiling; both, of course, in continually reversing positions as the wheel turns. It is an application of the simple principle by which as any one can see, a grindstone may easily be turned by placing the hand upon its surface, while with only considerable muscular exertion a man's hand grasping the shaft can produce the same motion. The inventor, Mr. Roset, a Frenchman, resided at Communipaw until quite recently, where he was well known as the author and the patentee of several useful minor inventions. The Times says it is expected that a stock company will be formed immediately for the manufacture of the Roset engine, whose value for all uses requiring lightness of construction, combined with economy of fuel, may be seen by the simple statement that it will give ten-horse power with no more fuel than would be required in a calorific engine of two-horse power, occupying one-fourth of the space and at a much less cost. And one important feature is that the same engine can be used either to attain a high rate of speed or to do heavy hoisting.

**A CURIOUS MELON.**—The wonders pertaining to organized structures are not confined to animals, but there are many plants whose form, instincts and capabilities are most curious and interesting. In a tract of country in the south-western part of Africa, distinguished for its dry but rich soil, a gigantic perennial melon has been discovered, which is a most delicious, wholesome fruit, and which is largely consumed by the native inhabitants as food. In order that this melon may flourish, it is necessary that it should strike its roots down through the sand thirty feet to reach permanent moisture. This it does, and grows in great luxuriance where all else is shriveled and parched by heat. But this is not all. If it were simply a huge melon, with smooth and delicate skin, every one would be destroyed by wild beasts before half matured. To prevent this, nature has armed its outer rind with a covering of long, sharp, terrible thorns, which so lacerate the mouths and noses of animals, that they are glad to leave them alone in all their tempting freshness. Man, with his hands and sharp knives, finds little difficulty in opening the luscious fruit. The natives have no necessity for putting fences about their melon patches, for the plants are self-protective. —*Journal of Chemistry.*

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