

# THE EVENING NEWS.

Friday, April 22, 1870.

## ELECTRICITY AS A MOTIVE POWER.

We cut the following from the New York Tribune of Feb. 7:

M. Emile Prevost, a French electrician, who has been in this country some time with a view of introducing a new application of electricity as a motive power, extended an invitation to a few gentlemen, on Saturday, to witness the performance of his machine. Unfortunately, previous to the hour named, a very heavy current of electricity was sent from the battery through the main magnet, which had the effect of either overheating or burning the smaller magnets, so that the machine would not operate properly. It has been running the past forty days and nights at a cost of ten cents each twenty-four hours.

The apparatus consists of an ordinary galvanic battery, each jar being of about one gallon capacity. The poles of the battery cups are connected with a powerful magnet, and the increased electrical power is then transmitted to the electric engine. It varies but little in general principles from the ordinary electric engine, the novelty being in the magnet, which is first formed by taking an even-grained piece of horse-shoe wire and turning it down to the required proportions—the one shown being three inches in diameter and about 18 inches in length. The ends of the magnet on the poles are turned out so as to leave a face of five inches in diameter. The iron is not hammered but turned in a lathe, and afterward bent in the shape of a "U." The iron then passes into the hands of the inventor, who treats it to a series of bakings in various temperatures, the process being a secret. From two to three weeks are required for this tempering process. When it is complete, the iron again goes to the machine shop, when the faces of the poles are made smooth and even. The magnet is then placed in an upright position within a copper box 7 1/2 by 15 1/2 by 14 inches, and the space filled in with a preparation closely resembling sealing-wax. The faces of the magnet are perfectly in line with the upper end of the box. In this state the magnet is connected with the electric battery, and the wires are ready for connection with the electric engine.

The machine for transmitting the power and motion to a line of shafting consists of a flat-faced lever fastened at the upper end. A smaller magnet of the same construction is placed on the vertical bed-plate, with the poles so situated that they act alternately upon the lever, attracting and repelling it. The other extremity of the lever connects with another lever, or arm, in a reverse position to the main one, and by means of a connecting rod, the motion is imparted to the crank-shaft, on which is secured a fly-wheel and the pulley to connect it with the line of shaft pulleys. The starting or reversing of the machine is accomplished by means of the ordinary connections of an electric circuit, the application of one pole having the effect to move the machine forward, and the connection of the other pole to reverse it; both connections being removed, the machine is at a standstill.

Mons. Prevost has two machines on exhibition, one representing one-horse power, the other one-man power. In addition to the large magnet above described, which has a power capable of sustaining 2,500 pounds weight, he has two of about nine inches in length, five inches in depth, and four inches in width. These last named are supposed to exert each about one-horse power, and a smaller one about three inches in length, two inches in breadth and one inch in depth. This latter magnet, with a very small battery, is sufficiently large to run a sewing machine. The large magnet is estimated to exert a power of between seven and eight horses, and is applicable to printing presses, hoisting machines for store-houses, etc.; the cost of working the magnets being the same—ten cents per day. The inventor claims that his magnet is peculiarly valuable in the working of submarine cables, as by its application the cost of keeping up large batteries is reduced to a mere nominal sum, while it will produce far more equal and powerful results than are obtained by the present system of voltaic piles.

A few weeks ago the residence of M. Prevost was entered by burglars, who, strange to say, only took the magnets from his electric engine, although articles of greater intrinsic value were scattered around the room. He is of opinion that other parties interested in developing electricity as a motive power were unconsciously anxious to avail themselves of his labor and secret. If this invention proves successful—which is certainly probable—it must produce quite a revolution in the present system of telegraph batteries, and it will, doubtless, in time be applied to light labor-saving machines. It is the intention of the inventor to erect several large machines and practically test his theories.

AN ANCIENT CLUB.—In the time of Philip of Macedon, nearly four centuries before Christ, there was a club at Athens, called "The Sixty," which met once a week at the Temple of Hercules. The members were famous for their wit, and every good thing they said was entered on a scroll. This must have been a capital feat had been made, there were, of course, a dozen members ready with as many repartees and rejoinders, but they were obliged to restrain their impatience till the original joke had been entered, duly accredited in the club-famous King Philip, and lesser men than he, borrowed it whenever they were in need of being enlivened. One result was, that the stories and sayings it contained became so well known throughout Greece, that the public grew weary of them, and the words, "An old Sixty," conveyed just the same rebuke which is now implied under the phrase, "An old joke."

The present consumption of wood in the United States is enormous. One hundred and fifty thousand acres of the best timber is cut every year to supply the demand for railway sleepers alone. For railroad buildings, repairs and cars, the annual expenditure in wood is \$35,000,000. In a single year the locomotives in the United States consume \$50,000,000 worth of wood. There are in the whole country, more than 400,000 artisans in wood; and if the value of their

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