

The Patent Review.

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INTRODUCTION.

Having been for years pregnant with the idea of representing the patent interests by a special organ, it somewhat suddenly developed a practical shape, and we have given birth to this—first number. Throwing ourselves upon the kind indulgence of our constituents, we trust to being judged leniently, and rather by our hearty good will and the tendency of our effort, than by what we have actually accomplished. In reference to the title, we owe an explanation. In the prospectus we had referred to the embryo as "The Patentee," but upon mature reflection, christened the new comer THE PATENT REVIEW—its present name. We trust this change will meet the approbation of our readers. First numbers are always surrounded with exceptional difficulties, and hence it is that this appears later than we could have wished, but we trust that we shall, by gradual reduction of the intervals, bring the time of publication as near as may be to the middle of that month which the number bears, or at least between the middle and the end of the same. Our columns, too, we know have room for improvement, and we rely on our readers and friends for assistance and suggestions tending to increase the usefulness of the paper, an object which we shall at all times be anxious to attain.

THE PATENT REVIEW is but small, our own opinion being that a large paper is neither necessary nor desirable. In fact we had only intended to print 8 pp., but when making up our material, we were compelled to increase it 50 p. c. Our efforts will be directed to the improvement of the quality of its contents rather than the augmentation of quantity. Nevertheless, as we may be wrong in this, we shall not hesitate to be taught by experience.

After all we have undertaken the task with considerable reluctance, hesitating to increase the pressure on our time already taken up by professional duties; and we also

shrank before the serious responsibility to be incurred in espousing a public cause, in the advocacy of which it will often, no doubt, be necessary to criticise actions of public bodies and officials, and to attack abuses. Now that the task is undertaken with a due sense of its responsibility we shall endeavor to do our duty without fear or favor, and trust to a generous support to enable us to carry it out successfully. We cannot close these remarks without a special appeal to the press for assisting us with comment and exchanges.

SYSTEMATIC INVENTION.

Prof. Hele Shaw, some time ago, read a paper before The Liverpool Politechnic Society, entitled, "The Invention of Machines." From a careful perusal of this paper we have risen disappointed, having failed to discover, what its title led us to expect, any new information likely to be of service to the practical inventor. The conclusion to which the author comes is, that a science of machines has not yet been founded, and that, realizing the difficulties in the way of such a science, it may be doubted whether its ultimate establishment is possible; or in other words, that it is doubtful whether invention can be performed scientifically, not to say by rule. The author however does not seem to abandon all hope of such a science being ultimately established, in view of the progress that has been made in chemistry, which only a few years ago was merely analytical, while at present laws have been established by which the building up of compounds can be scientifically performed. It would certainly not be true scientific spirit which held as impossible that which had not yet been accomplished, and the accomplishment of which is fraught with apparent difficulties. Mechanism, Machine Design and Prime Movers, it is true, ought to be understood by those who wish to engage successfully in inventing machines in order that due regard may be had to the three essentials of motions in machines, the nature and strength of materials, and the forces which actuate machines. That a large proportion of failures are due to a want of knowledge of these branches is proved by the experience of mechanical experts whose business brings before them examples of this kind almost daily. Professor Shaw points to the Records of the English Patent Office, referring to the large proportion of applications that are not proceeded with, and the large number of patents that expire at the subsequent tax paying stages, as proof that the inventor has discovered want of novelty or impracticability of successful execution and working of the machine. These failures, he thinks, result from ignorance either (1) of previous achievements, or (2) of scientific principles, or from (3) the want of suitable materials or of properties of matter which are not forthcoming. He admits that want of funds to carry on the work may account for a small portion of abandoned inventions. This cause, we think, he undervalues. We know it from experience to be a positive fact that this, coupled with want of pluck and energy, operates with deadly effect on a very large number of useful inventions, both patented and unpatented. Nevertheless, what is said remains true of those not affected financially, not to forget, however, those inventions which are superceded by subsequent progress. The employment of the expert would cure a goodly proportion of the now experienced disappointments.