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SCIENTIFIC AND SANITARY.

A scientist states that bees do not
begin to gather honey until they are sixteen
days old.

Asthma may be relieved by burning a small
piece of blotting paper which has been im-
mersed in a strong solution of saltpetre and
then dried.

The physicians of the United States now
number 118,453; New York leads with 11,171;
Pennsylvania has 9,310, and Illinois ranks
third with 8,002.

In the United States 276,360 telephones
are in use. The largest switch-board in the
world is that at the Cortlandt Street Exchange
in New York. It has a capacity for 6,000
subscribers is 263 feet long, and is divided into
40 sections. There are 260,000 holes or "jacks"
and 780,000 soldered joints.

Ophthalmia, according to an English autho-
rity, is especially prevalent in schools in that
country. It now appears that the disease is
definitely contagious, and there is little doubt
that it has been propagated in many instances
by means of the school towels. *The British Med-
ical Journal* therefore advises parents to forbid
their children to wash at school.

A new explosive cartridge, invented by Dr.
Ochse, formerly with the Messrs. Krupp, is a
sealed glass tube or ball containing acidulated
water into which two platinum wires are led.
For use a current of electricity is sent through
the wires, decomposing the water into hydro-
gen and oxygen. Upon the ignition of the
mixed gases an explosive force of 5,800 atmos-
pheres per square inch is developed.

It is said that a German officer has invent-
ed a motor in which a fine stream of coal dust
is utilized to drive a piston by explosions in
the same manner as the gas in the gas-engine.
The Krupps are now making the engine in
their works at Essen. It has long been known
that finely pulverized coal in suspension in the
air is highly explosive, and it has been held
responsible for some of the most frightful col-
liery disasters, but this is the first attempt
to utilize it in this way.

The Rev. G. Henslow, of the Linnean
Society, London, has attempted to show the
existence of a power in living vegetable proto-
plasm of responding to purely mechanical
external forces by enveloping supportive
tissues, by means of which the plant is enabled
to resist the effect of gravity, tension, pressure,
etc. He thinks that the peculiar structure of
climbers are all the outcome of a response to
external mechanical forces acting directly upon
the stems, without the aid of natural selec-
tion.

A new composition for hardening steel
named "Durol" has been tried for two years
or so in German manufactories, and is said to
have given satisfaction to such firms as Krupp,
Mannesmanns, and others. Drills hardened
by it cut through the hardest steel without the
aid of any lubricant, and last much longer than
usual. The drill or other object is brought to
only a dark-red heat, then dipped in "Durol"
for ten to twenty seconds, then heated slowly
until cherry-red, and cooled directly in tepid
water.

It is now two years since the new star in
Auriga first became manifest in sky-photo-
graphs. Since then it has undergone many
irregular fluctuations in brightness. At the
Paris Observatory this was observed to dimin-
ish perceptibly in the latter part of last Octo-
ber, and then to increase up to November 8,
but at that time it had not regained the
brilliancy of October 10. Micrometric meas-
urements by M. Bigourdan show that this
star, which is now named Tau Aurigae, has
not changed its position sensibly in eighteen
months.

It is a commonly observed fact that the
enslavement of women is invariably associated
with a low type of social life, and that, con-
versely, her elevation towards an equality
with man uniformly accompanies progress.—
Herbert Spencer.

Educational.

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A dressing gown which formerly belonged
to Balzac was recently found by the French
troops in the Royal Palace at Abomey, in
Africa. It is of red velvet embroidered in gold,
and was presented to the great novelist in Paris
by one of his admirers. Balzac never wore it,
and after his death it was sold to a dealer in
curiosities, who, finding he could not dispose
of it in France, sent it with a parcel of other
showy goods to the West Coast of Africa. It
was then bought by Behanzin, King of Da-
homedey, who has just been deposed by Colonel
Dodd, and who used always to wear it on
great occasions as a royal mantle.

A COMPANY'S PROMPT ACTION HIGHLY
COMMENDED.

Not long ago it was customary for life-in-
surance companies to defer the payment of
claims under their policies for a considerable
time, but it is pleasing to note that that prac-
tice has been abolished by a majority of the
companies.

The pioneer company to introduce the im-
mediate payment of death claims, on satisfac-
tory completion of proofs of death, was the
North American Life Assurance Company.

It still continues to adhere to this excellent
and generous practice, as will be seen from a
perusal of the following letter, lately received
from the beneficiary of a deceased policy-
holder:—

"Seaforth, April 30, 1894.
"To Wm. McCabe, Esq., Managing Director
North American Life Assurance Company,
Toronto:
"Dear Sir,—I desire to thank you very
much for your kindness in so promptly send-
ing me a check for the full amount of the
policy on the life of my late husband,
Samuel Kestle. Such prompt settlement
is more satisfactory than you may prob-
ably be aware of, and I have much pleasure in
commending you for your generous treat-
ment.
"Thanking you again for your promptness,
and assuring you that I shall not soon forget
your kind action, I remain,
"Most respectfully yours,
"MARIA KESTLE."