

sulted from carelessness in manufacturing the illuminant, and since the addition of a little water to calcium carbide produces acetylene, so that any man can set up "his own gas works" in a few minutes, underwriters expect further disasters, with heavy losses, unless the public is fully instructed in the matter.

F. M. Griswold of the special committee has noted in the *Insurance Press* some of the physical characteristics of calcium carbide and acetylene as developed from investigations conducted by MM. Berthelot, Moissan, LeChatelier, Lewes, Ravel and Clowes of Europe, and Profs. Morton, Jacobus and Long, of this country. The carbide is described as an "inert crystalline substance, not affected by heat or acids, and without hazard, except when exposed to moisture or in contact with water, in which case it at once undergoes a double decomposition and liberates acetylene to the extent of about five cubic feet to the pound of carbide." When obtained from impure material the carbide will produce gases which ignite upon contact with the atmosphere. The gas is said to be very unstable, its energy of explosive force being more intense than that of other gases. The critical point is said to be at 98.6 Fahrenheit. Commenting upon these and other characteristics, Mr. Griswold says: "The résumé clearly demonstrates that grave fire explosive hazards are inherent to both calcium carbide and acetylene under conditions liable to supervene in every-day practice, as now permitted by some of the insurance organizations throughout the country, and it is high time that some concert of action be had by the insurance interests to secure the adoption of rules and regulations which, while granting the broadest latitude consistent with safety, will not unduly hamper the vendor, nor prove too onerous for profitable use of the apparatus by the purchasers."

The committee has collected much interesting information upon the subject, and it is hoped before long to obtain the co-operation of insurance men everywhere, and bring about the desired reforms. The explosions at Jersey City, Wilmington, Del., and Columbus Junction, Ia., have been carefully investigated, and the lessons noted. Under the law, in England, packages of calcium carbide must be properly labelled and bear this inscription: "The contents of this package are liable, if brought into contact with moisture, to give off a highly inflammable gas."

THE COMING CONFERENCE AT QUEBEC.

In some comments upon the approaching meeting at Quebec, between the representatives of Great Britain, Canada and the United States, we ventured to emphasize a hint as to the strength of the commissioners appointed by the United States, by a quotation from Mr. Justice Haliburton's "Sam Slick."

Since the last issue of THE CHRONICLE, several papers have given expression to similar thoughts regarding the cleverness of our neighbours at the game of diplomacy. The *Gazette* says:—

"It is a strong commission that the United States Government has appointed to represent it at Quebec, next month. Mr. Kasson, of Iowa, has had a prominent part in the negotiation of United States reciprocity arrangements. Mr. John W. Foster is experienced in commercial-diplomatic negotiation, having been entrusted with important missions in Asia and Europe. Mr. Dingley, of Maine, is the reputed

father of the present United States tariff law. Messrs. Grey, of Delaware, and Fairbanks, of Indiana, are counted able men in the United States Senate. The British and Canadian commissioners will have to understand their work, and to do it, to hold their own in a meeting with such a delegation."

At the request of several readers, who are too indolent in this golden summer time to visit a library, we now reproduce "Shampooing the English," from *The Clockmaker*:—

"They (the Nova Scotians) ought to send a delegate to England, about it; but the fact is, they don't understand diplomacy here, nor the English either. They hav'n't got no talents that way.

I guess we may stump the universe in that line. Our statesmen, I consait, *do* understand it. They go about so beautiful, tack so well, sail so close by the wind, make so little lee-way, shoot ahead so fast, draw so little water, keep the lead agoin constant, and a bright look-out ahead always; it's very seldom you hear o' them runnin' aground, I tell you. Hardly anything they take in hand they do'n't succeed in. How glib they are in the tongue too! how they *do* lay in the soft sawder! They *do* rub John Bull down so pretty, it does one good to see 'em: they pat him on the back, and stroke him on the cheek, and coax and wheedle and flatter till they get him as good-natured as possible. Then they jist get what they like out of him; not a word of a threat to him tho', for they know it won't do. He'd as soon fight as eat his dinner, and sooner too, but they tickle him, as the boys at Cape Ann sarve the bladder fish. There's a fish comes ashore there at ebb tide, that the boys catch and tickle, and the more they tickle him the more he fills with wind. Well, he gets blowed up as full as he can hold, and then they jist turn him up and give him a crack across the belly with a stick, and off he goes like a pop-gun, and then all the little criters run hoppin' and hollowin' like ravin' distracted mad,—so pleased with foolin' the old fish.

There are no people in the univarsal world so eloquent as the Americans; they beat the ancients all hollar; and when our diplomatists go for to talk it into the British, they do it so pretty, it's a sight to behold. Descended, they say, from a common stock, havin' one common language and a *community of interests*, they cannot but hope for justice from a power distinguished alike for its honour and its generosity. Indebted to them for the spirit of liberty they enjoy,—for their laws, literature, and religion,—they feel more like allies than aliens, and more like relatives than either. Though unfortunate occurrences may have drawn them asunder, with that frankness and generosity peculiar to a brave and generous people, both nations have now forgotten and forgiven the past, and it is the duty and the interest of each to cultivate these amicable relations, now so happily existing, and to draw closer those bonds which unite two people essentially the same in habit and feelings. Though years have rolled by since they left the paternal roof, and the ocean divides them, yet they cannot but look back at the home beyond the waters with a grateful remembrance,—with veneration and respect.

Now that's what I call dictionary, said the Clockmaker. It's splendid penmanship, ain't it? When John Adams was minister at the Court of St. James's, how his weak eye would have sarved him a' utterin' of this galbanum, wouldn't it? He'd turn round to hide emotion, draw forth his handkerchief and wipe