

interesting to observe how, in the infancy of a great invention, conceptions which are perfectly just, struggle painfully and often for a long time abortively, to embody themselves into form; and it is sad as well as interesting to observe what chilling lack of sympathy usually attends their announcement; what obstinate prejudices rise up to oppose their introduction; what ridicule labors to dishearten their authors; and what contemptuous refusal of substantial aid operates to paralyze effort. The practicability of applying steam to river navigation was repeatedly demonstrated before the close of the 18th century; but it was only after the lapse of forty years from the invention of the engine that Fulton, in presence of a great multitude, assembled chiefly in the hope of finding amusement in his discomfiture, made at length the decisive experiment which was to force this truth upon the convictions of men beyond the possibility of further question.

Twenty years more elapsed before it was clearly seen in what way the same power might be made subservient to the uses of locomotion on the land; and ten more still before the problem which had been so long completely solved for inland waters was admitted to be so likewise for the ocean. We stand at the end of the first quarter of a century since the Atlantic was bridged by steam; and within that brief period the entire naval and almost the entire commercial marine of the world has undergone a complete transformation. The tonnage of vessels has been doubled, the duration of voyages has been diminished more than half, and the interchange of wealth between nations has increased no less in quantity than in rapidity. The effect of all this upon productive industry everywhere is too vast to be computed.—*The Manufacturer and Builder.*

A WARNING TO AMERICAN INVENTORS.

There is a class of unscrupulous persons in this country that speculates, and doubtless with profit, upon the credulity of patentees, as multitudes of the latter have found to their cost. Their method of procedure varies according to circumstances, but it consists usually in sending to the inventor, whose name has freshly appeared in the *Patent Office Gazette*, a circular setting forth the facilities the senders of the circular possess for turning inventions into money, and ending by a request for the remittance of a sum of money upon one or another plausible pretext. The veteran inventor, to whom this sort of thing is an old story, simply looks at such communications long enough to read the head-lines, and consigns them to the hospitable maw of his waste-basket. To the inventor who receives for the first time in his life the official document certifying his rights as a patentee, the circumstance is an event of uncommon importance, and especially if he happens to be a dweller in some village remote from the centres of industrial activity, after experiencing the pangs of disappointment through the failure of his efforts to realize promptly the substantial and fondly-anticipated reward of his ingenuity, he is frequently tempted by the flattering bait held out by the speculators in his credulity, and falls into the waiting net, only to find, after having responded to several further demands for money, that he has been victimized. This experi-

ence is so common that every one who reads this will recognize the truthfulness of the picture.

It has remained, however, for a Frenchman to devise a scheme of coaxing money from the pockets of unsuspecting and credulous American inventors, which, for originality and simplicity, is worthy to be called an inspiration of genius, and which, we feel thoroughly well assured, has within the year or two during which it has been set in operation, netted its originator a handsome income.

Within the last two years thousands of American inventors have received an official-looking document, informing each recipient that the Paris Academy of Inventors, Manufacturers, and Exhibitors, impressed with the manifest importance of his invention, had, in recognition of his ingenuity, accorded him the medal of the Academy, and the honor of election as a corresponding honorary member. All this is so gratifying to the vanity of the recipient, if he be inexperienced and susceptible to flattery so unctuously applied, that the intimation conveyed, a little further on, that the diploma and card of membership in the Academy, and the medal, and the bulletin of the Academy (in which he will be entitled to an article eulogistic of his interesting invention), will be sent forward on receipt of the sum of ten dollars, may not excite his suspicions. This modest fee, as a consideration for the distinction of recognition by a body so eminently respectable as the "Parisian Academy," is a mere bagatelle; and, no one but the inspired parent of the Academy can tell in how many hundreds of cases the glittering bait has been swallowed, and the ten dollars is sent forward by return of mail. This is "the milk in the cocoanut."

To the credit of the author of the scheme, it must be recorded that he keeps faith with his dupes, for in due course they receive a really artistically-designed medal (of gilded bronze), bearing on the obverse the arms of the City of Paris, surmounted by the words, "Ville de Paris," and on the reverse, a wreath surrounded by the title of the Academy (*Académie Parisienne des Inventeurs*, etc.), and within, the words, "Décernée à" (granted to); also a large and handsomely-designed diploma, and a small card of membership (reduced photographically from the diploma).

These formalities are well calculated to impress the recipient with an exalted idea of the importance of the "Academy," and with the feeling that he is really a much cleverer fellow than he had before imagined.

We regret to have to say that the so-called Academy is a specious humbug, and its medals and diplomas worth just the metal and paper they contain—and no more.

The following statements will explain the character of the scheme:—During the past year or two, the editor of this journal, in conducting the large correspondence relating to the business of the Committee on Science and the Arts of the Franklin Institute (of which body he is the secretary), noticed occasional references, in the letters of inquirers concerning the medals in the gift of this committee, to the Parisian Academy of Inventors, which had honored (?) the writers with election to membership, and a medal, as above set forth; and in one case, the correspondent