

## Scientific and Sanitary.

## ASBESTOS CLOTHES FOR FIREMEN.

Some novel applications of asbestos or mineral wool have recently been proposed in which advantage is taken of its well-known quality of incombustibility. These have been made possible by improvements in the methods of spinning and weaving the fibre, so that now it is practicable to weave a cloth of asbestos almost as fine as cotton cloth. This, of course, is not very strong, but by spinning thicker threads and doubling them a cloth can be made that is strong enough for most purposes and is still flexible. It is now recommended that this material be used as a protective dress for firemen, and at a meeting of the National Association of Fire Engineers at Montreal last Summer a representative of the company that is exploiting this idea demonstrated how it could be carried out. Clad in a suit of asbestos cloth, he entered a burning frame building especially prepared for this test, and remained there for several minutes, during which time he gave an exhibition of the utility of fire-proof asbestos rope for life-saving, etc.

The asbestos suit which was worn consisted of a pair of boots, protected by iron soles, gaiters, pantaloons, jacket, apron, gloves and helmet, the last being provided with eye-pieces of mica. Inside of the jacket is carried a respirator which cools and purifies the hot, smoky air, and allows the air breathed to be expelled properly. The efficiency of such a suit depends not only upon the non-combustibility of the material, but also upon the fact that it is a non-conductor of heat, becoming hot so slowly that the wearer has ample warning of the proper time to flee. It is in no way hurt by water. It is not proposed that every member of a fire department shall wear such clothing, but it is urged that one or two members of every company be provided with them.

Other uses that are proposed for this cloth are for protecting merchandise against cinders: to extinguish small fires by smothering; for drawing between buildings; and as a protection covering for the fire-hose. It is already used extensively for drop-curtains and flies in theaters.

According to a recent lecture of Professor Schuster, of London, the safest course for a human being in a thunderstorm is to get thoroughly wet. Benjamin Franklin remarked that he could kill a rat when dry by means of an electric discharge, but never when it was wet.

"A record for rapid rail-rolling," says *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, "was made by the south works of the Lackawanna Iron and Steel Company, at Scranton, for the week ending March 9. The converting mill made 6,042 tons of ingots in eleven turns, and the south rail mill rolled 5,201 tons of finished rail."

"Vaccination matinees have become quite the fashion in Paris," according to *The Medical Times*. "Persons belonging to fashionable society co-operate in arranging to have a doctor and a cow at an afternoon tea. The company are all vaccinated from the cow. In some of the larger houses on the Champs Elysées, the cow is taken up in the elevator, and is temporarily installed in the dining-room. The cards issued bears the words, 'On Vaccinera' [There will be vaccination]."

A Cat without a Stomach.—"Dr. Pachon has recently succeeded, in connection with Dr. Carvallo, in making an extirpation of the stomach in a cat," says *Modern Medicine*. "The animal was found to be as well nourished after as before the operation, but was less able to digest milk or raw meat than before. A mixture of milk, rice, flour and yolk of egg was well digested, but milk, when taken alone, was imperfectly digested. Cooked meat was digested without difficulty. It thus appears that the gastric juice effects changes in the stomach similar to those produced by cookery, preparing it for the action of the intestines."

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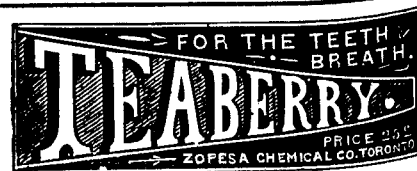
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