

MR. V. P. HUNT,

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A unique trolley-car fender is proposed by a Boston inventor. He has taken the large revolving brushes from a street-sweeper and placed them in such a position under the car that a person who happens to fall in front of the car will be swept from the track—a much better arrangement than sweeping up the remains from the track after an accident.

In a recent report to the New York City Rapid Transit Commission on systems of rapid transit abroad, Mr. William B. Parsons said that he had not concluded that any one system of transit should be recommended for adoption in that city. The only statement in the report approaching a deduction was that electricity should undoubtedly be the motive power of any road in the future. The experiences of some of the larger capitals of Europe proved this to his satisfaction.

An English paper tells of a Manchester man who carries on his person a complete museum of electric appliances, including a burglar-alarm or, rather, a pickpocket-alarm—system. An attempt to steal his scarf-pin or watch rings a tiny bell; a fine platinum coil furnishes the means of lighting a cigar regardless of the weather; and an incandescent lamp at the end of a cane furnishes very good light when needed. The needful electric plant weighs only about twenty-two ounces.

Pictet, the French chemist, whose recent researches on the properties and behavior of various substances at extremely low temperatures have attracted so much attention, now finds that phosphorescent bodies cease to glow under such circumstances. Where powdered sulfid of lime—the material used in the so-called "luminous plant"—was placed in a tube, it glowed as usual in the dark after exposure to the sun's rays, but when the tube was lowered into liquid nitrous acid at -140° F., the glow was quenched. The phosphorescence did not appear at once when the tube was removed from the cold liquid, but it returned when the sulfid had become heated again.

An idol's head of baked clay has been found in the sand dunes near Tangier, where it was laid bare by the wind. The mouth is large and wide open, the eyes small, the cranium very small, the brow retreating, and the back of the head flat. It is said to have in extraordinary degree a likeness to idols found in Mexico, particularly to the good called Xipe. Eyes and ears are very little modeled, and on the top of the head is a pointed object. Xipe was a god worshipped on the coast of Mexico with rites of uncommon cruelty; he was also the god of smiths and goldworkers. His human sacrifices were flayed alive. The Tangier idol has been decorated with gold mica. This discovery may revive old theories of a primitive connection between the Phœnicians and the Indians of Central America.

The sand-blast is used extensively in England for the removal of molding sand, scale, etc., from steel, iron, and brass castings, forgings, plates, and for cleaning the stone-work of public buildings. The air-pressure employed is from eight to ten pounds per square inch. Chilled iron globules instead of quartz or flint sand are used with good results, and the surface thus prepared is ready for tining, galvanizing, plating, bronzing, painting, etc., the innumerable little indentations causing the projecting materials to adhere with greater force. This method of cleaning castings acts with equal rapidity and thoroughness upon flat, curved, angular, and indented surfaces. Small castings are placed in a slowly rotating barrel, through which the blast is directed, so that no portion of the surface escapes the action of the sand. One hundred weight of castings can be cleaned in from ten to fifteen minutes with a blast created by two horsepower, and the same weight of small forgings and stampings in from twenty to thirty minutes.

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