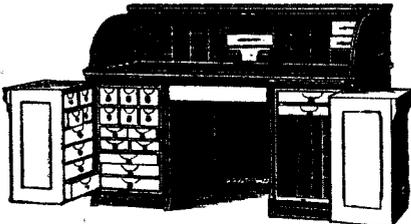


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The Source of Browning's Optimism. Mary M. Cohen.
Newton's Brain. A Romanetto. Jakob Arbes.
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A Pittsburg physician explains how the worm gets into the chestnut. When the nut is still green an insect comes along and, hunting a warm place in which to have its eggs hatched, lights upon the green chestnut and stings it. At the same time it deposits some of its eggs in the opening thus made. The chestnut begins to ripen and at the same time the eggs are hatching. The insect selects chestnuts as a place for depositing its eggs as being the best adapted place by instinct. The floury matter in the nut turns to sugar and sugar contains carbon, which produces heat.—New York Times.

Notwithstanding their diminutive size, pugnacity is one of the most conspicuous traits of humming-birds. Even kingbirds and the boldest hawks are afraid of them, being compelled to retreat before the impetuous assaults of the tiny warrior, whose boldness is only equalled by the lightning-like rapidity of his movements, thus baffling any attempt at resistance on the part of the more powerful adversary. The lance-like thrusts of the needle-like beak are usually directed at the eyes of the enemy. When two or more individuals of either sex happen near the same spot, spirited and often violent conflicts are almost certain to ensue.—Boston Transcript.

In 1880 there was but one cremation society in the United States; now there are in all thirty-two, in the following towns: New York, Baltimore, Md.; Boston, Mass.; Buffalo, N.Y.; Chicago, Ill.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Davenport, Iowa; Denver, Colo.; Des Moines, Iowa; Detroit, Mich.; Jersey City, N.J.; Lancaster, Pa.; Lacrosse, Wis.; Los Angeles, Cal.; Louisville, Ky.; Milwaukee, Wis.; Newark, N.J.; New Orleans, La.; Oil City, Pa.; Omaha, Neb.; Philadelphia, Pa.; Pittsburg, Pa.; Sacramento, Cal.; San Antonio, Tex.; San Francisco, Cal.; Savannah, Ga.; Springfield, Ill.; St. Louis, Mo.; Troy, N.Y.; Washington, Pa.; Washington, D.C., and Worcester, Mass. Europe has cremation societies in Berlin, Geneva, Hamburg, Copenhagen, London, Milan, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, The Hague, Vienna and Zurich.—Kate Field's Washington.

According to the Dyer and Calico Printer, there are two satisfactory methods for softening water in use. In the first process, hydrated baryta is placed in a filter press, which is traversed by the water to be purified, and produces an effluent showing only one or two degrees of hardness. Hydrated baryta, which is now largely used in sugar refining, and is easy to procure, precipitates all the bases, lime, magnesia, etc., as well as the sulphuric and carbonic acids, so that the carbonates and sulphates of lime and magnesia, which are the most harmful substances, are precipitated by one treatment. According to the other process, hydrated oxide of lead is employed instead of baryta, and precipitates the carbonates, sulphates, and chlorides. It is necessary to obtain the hydrated oxide of lead cheaply, and the following method has been devised for this purpose: A solution of sodium nitrate is placed in a vat, divided into two compartments by a diaphragm. Lead electrodes of large surface are placed in a solution, and a current from a dynamo is then passed through. The sodium nitrate is decomposed, caustic soda being formed in the negative compartment, and nitric acid at the positive pole, from which it dissolves a certain quantity of lead, forming lead nitrate. When the current has passed through the liquid for a certain time, the solutions are run from the two compartments into a second vat, and there mixed by means of an agitator. The soda precipitates hydrated oxide of lead, and itself forms sodium nitrate; the solution is then filtered, and the nitrate solution again submitted to electrolysis. When the baryta or lead oxide is used up, it is replaced by freshly prepared oxides. It is stated that the use of the filter press can be avoided by employing plumbate of sodium (a solution of lead oxide in caustic soda). The precipitate is simply allowed to settle out, and the water obtained shows a hardness of about two or three degrees.—Scientific American.

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