

MR. V. P. HUNT,

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Aluminum is now used instead of steel for the nails and heel plates of the German soldiers' boots. The results expected are quicker and better marching, with less fatigue to the men.

The U.S. Navy Department has just completed a test of aluminum as material for ship boats. The claim that barnacles would not adhere to the metal was not substantiated. In the opinion of naval experts the use of aluminum cannot be recommended near salt water under any circumstances.

Recent experiments by Drs. Waldo and Walsh, two English physicians, show that baking does not destroy bacteria in bread, hence the common excuse for lack of cleanliness among bakers—namely, that any disease-bacteria that chance to be in the dough are sure to perish in the oven—must fall to the ground.

Zinc is being extracted in Sweden by a new process, after the electrolytic manner, and it is claimed for it that very poor ores, which have been considered worthless, are made equal to the best. As in copper, it is reasonable to presume that the electrolytic process will do as much for zinc. Pure metallic zinc has not been produced in Sweden for thirty years. — *Hardware.*

Since the opening of the present century there have been several well attested instances of falls of stones from the regions of space. In the year 1803 a perfect shower of lithic missiles fell in the farming country adjacent to L'Aigle, France, upwards of 3,000 separate stones falling upon a wedge-shaped section of country, eight miles long by about four miles wide.

"Tulnol," a coal-tar derivative, is now being used as a substitute for quicksilver in the bulbs of thermometers. This substance, it is stated, contains water, can stand a much lower temperature than quicksilver without freezing, and when exposed to warmth expands with great regularity. In color, tulnol is dark blue, and, besides its other qualities, is said to be cheaper and much lighter than quicksilver.

According to a recent determination of Professor Richarz, the smallest possible quantity of electricity, which may be termed an atom of electricity, is such that 430 multiplied by a million three times, that is, by the cube of a million, will give the number of these atoms contained in a coulomb. That such a thing as an atom of electricity exists was the opinion of no less an authority than the late Professor Von Helmholtz. — *Electrical World.*

The calculations of the various observations of the transit of Venus are not yet completed. Professor Harkness of the National Observatory, Washington, D.C., about three years ago, gave the results of as many as had then been worked out. They gave 8,80903" as the solar parallax, with a probable error of 0.00567". This makes the mean distance from the earth to the sun as 92,776,950 miles, with a probable error of 59,715 miles. — *Popular Science News.*

Oppermann, a German chemist (*Electro-chemische Zeitung*, September), has patented a process of this kind. The current acts, according to the inventor's statement, not by directly destroying organisms but by decomposing the mineral salts that are found in small quantities in all drinking-water. Under certain circumstances, ozone and peroxid of hydrogen are thus produced, both of which destroy the organisms by oxidation, and thus exert a cleansing influence.

The new Tower Bridge of London is paved with the wood of the eucalyptus tree from Australia. The blocks are about the size of building bricks, and their top surface has beveled edges, thus affording horses a foothold. They are fastened together by means of pegs put through them and fitted into corresponding holes in the adjoining blocks. This wood is a dark, mahogany color, is very expensive, but heavy and durable. It was laid according to the Duffy patent system with special machinery. Wood is replacing stone pavement in many of the London streets.

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