

creature lived a year. It never regained regularity of movements. It was reduced to the condition of a drunken man.—*Ibid.*

MISCELLANEOUS INTELLIGENCE.

— An immense iron-clad fleet is now in the course of construction in this port (New York), and the most intense activity is being displayed to complete some of these vessels at an early date. At the Continental Works of T. F. Rowland, Green Point, five turret ships are in progress, and one of these has been launched, and will soon be finished. They are called the *Passaic*, *Montauk*, *Katskill*, *Onondaga* and *Puritan*. The latter will be 320 feet in length, with a beam of 50 feet. At Colwell and Co's, Jersey City, the turret ship *Weehawkin* is being rapidly pushed forward; and at the Delamater Iron Works, the *Dictator*—a double turret Ericsson 350 feet in length, with a beam exceeding 50 feet—is also being urged forward with great energy, there being about 1,000 men employed upon her.

Besides these seven armor turret vessels, ranging from 200 to 350 feet in length, now in different stages of progress, W. H. Webb is also about to commence the largest iron clad war vessel yet designed. Her length will be 360 feet, beam 78 feet. She will be 7,000 tons, and have engines of 5,000 horse power. In addition to being furnished with two turrets she will have a common gun deck, and her accommodations will be as ample for her crew as those of a wooden frigate. Her plates are to be 4½ inches thick and she will be of light draft in proportion to her size owing to her great breadth of beam. A small iron clad is also being built at Jersey City for the defence of San-Francisco harbor as a floating battery. She is being built in sections, which will be put together when she reaches her destination.

These vessels are all of the revolving-turret class, designed, we understand, by Captain Ericsson. The *Roonoke*, one of our wooden steam frigates, is now at the Novelty Works, having the remainder of her plates put on. She is of the *La Gloire* class, and will be a very efficient vessel, we believe. At the Dry Dock Iron Works, Mr. S. W. Whitney's novel armor gunboat, the *Moodna* is in a forward state. She will have two stationary gun turrets, and be propelled by two screws, driven by two pairs of powerful engines.

We have thus briefly enumerated no less than eleven armor war vessels now being built at this port for our navy. The smallest of these vessels will be a formidable war ship to encounter, but the three largest will be perfect leviathans, especially as they are to be armed with 15-inch Dahlgren guns—the largest in the world. They will all be capable of acting as rams also, but in this respect their efficiency will depend chiefly on their speed. And besides this large iron-clad fleet for the American navy, two powerful iron-clad frigates are also being built by W. H. Webb for the King of Italy. The frames of both of these frigates are put together, and the planking of one is in a forward state. These two frigates will be of the *La Gloire* character, the framing being wood and the outside covered with 4½ inch plates. Each is about 280 feet in length with a beam of 55 feet. The sides will be no less than 33 inches thick—oak 28½ inches, the iron plates 4½ inches. The latter are to be made in France and sent out to be put on. Each frigate will have two fighting decks, the upper one being armed fore and aft with eight very large guns, the under deck with sixteen guns on each side. The construction of these two armor-clad war vessels in an American port, and by the designer and builder of the *General Admiral*, affords evidence of the esteem in which American shipbuilders are held abroad.—*Scientific American*.

— There are 2,800 streets in London, which, if they were placed in a straight line would extend 3,000 miles, or twice the distance from Calais to Constantinople. If a person should undertake to walk through all these streets, and should go ten miles a day, each working day, it would require a whole year.—*ib.*

— The *Journal d'Anvers* has the following by M. Depaire:—

The wrought and cast iron vessels which are to be placed on the fire are often covered with enamel, which protects the liquid from metallic contact with the sides.

Two compositions are generally employed for this purpose, one having for base silicate of lead, and the other boro-silicate of soda. These enamels are applied to the scoured surface of the metal in the form of a powder, which is fixed by heating it to a sufficiently high temperature to fuse it; it then spreads over and covers the metal with a vitreous varnish.

The boro-silicate of soda enamel possesses great superiority over that of silicate of lead, for it is unattacked by vinegar, marine salt, the greater number of acid or saline solutions, even when concentrated, and resists the action of the agents employed in cooking or chemical operations.

The silicate of lead enamel is whiter and more homogeneous, which explains the preference given to it by the public; but it gives up oxide of lead to vinegar or to common salt; it acts upon a great number of coloring matters, and it is attacked by nitric acid, which immediately communicates a dull appearance to it. On evaporation the liquid leaves a white crystalline residue of nitrate of lead. This enamel is instantly darkened by dissolved sulphides, and also by cooking food containing sulphur, such as cabbage, fish and stale eggs.

It is very easy to distinguish these two enamels by means of a solution of sulphide of potassium, sodium, or ammonium. On allowing a drop of one of these re-agents to fall on the vessel to be tested, the lead enamel darkens in a few moments, whilst the boro-silicate of soda enamel retains its white color.—*Scientific American*.

— What can be done to stop the madness of destroying birds? \* \* \*

In the early spring boys were birdnesting all over the country. In a multitude of townships there is a standing offer of rewards for birds' eggs, and thousands of dozens have this spring been paid for within an area of two or three parishes. Where no such inducement exists there has been the same plunder; and long rows of speckled eggs are hung in cottage windows, and over the fire places, under the approving eye of the farmer, if not of the curate and the squire. As the season advanced, and the bloom of our fruit trees afforded as fine a promise of fruit as ever was seen in this country, the war against them became very animated. They were accused of having sometimes, after very severe winters, eaten out the heart of fruit buds; and if they were left alive, they would eat the juicy shoots of young peas, and hereafter some of the peas themselves, and cherries and black currants; so not only have the guns been heard popping in many country parishes, but men have shewn themselves in markets and fairs, all hung over with strings of dead finches, and robins, and thrushes, and sparrows, as an advertisement in their line of business. Members of sparrow clubs have met and awarded prizes, and dined, and drunk destruction to the order of birds. One prize winner, the other day, boasted of having killed 1,860 sparrows in the course of the year. A lady, meantime, had at one stroke killed, with strichnine, 800 small birds in her own garden; and if one owner of a garden has done such a thing, how many more may have lessened the number of our winged friends? The discovery of the efficacy of poisoned grain in killing off the birds has wrought prodigiously. One rookery after another has gone to destruction—the birds dropping in their flight, and lying dead all over the lawns and fields, while their young are starving in the nests. There has been silence in many lanes and copses formerly all alive with songsters; and travelled men have observed, in some part of the country, that it was becoming almost like France for the scarcity of birds.

This is a part of the picture of this year; but it is not the whole. In the same districts there are now scores of old women and boys employed in trying to save the fruit from the caterpillars. There are more weeds than ever in the fields and gardens, because the weeds never were so rampant. While there is all this picking of grubs and caterpillars, and rooting up of weeds the country gentlemen and ladies are declaring that they must give up gardening, on account of the overwhelming increase of the wireworm and other vermin.

The mice devoured the bulbs, so as to entirely spoil their spring show of flowers; and now, between the wireworm, aphides, grubs, caterpillars, and the prospects of wasps, there is little encouragement to gardeners. There never was anything like that plague of insects in former years. The farmer smiles grimly at these distresses of the getry, for what are they compared with his? If they would look at the whiteworm and the wireworm, and the fly (as it will be presently) in his fields, they would be ashamed of complaining of injury to mere flowers and fruit. His prospects are too like that of the French farmers when the practice of killing off birds brought three bad harvests in succession (1853-56). In one of those years the wireworm destroyed, in one department alone, £160,000 worth of corn, and at that rate we shall have to pay, very soon, if we allow ignorant men, and ladies, and boys to destroy the natural check upon insect ravages.

Most of the birds that we are hunting out of life eat both insects and grain; and some take to fruit; but their attacks upon the fruit are more useful in destroying the insects that eat more seeds of weeds than of corn so that we have a plague of weeds as well as insects when the birds are destroyed.—*London News*.

ERRATUM.—In the number of this Journal for September last, page 138, last line of the 2nd column, "May 4th, 1858" should read, *May 4th, 1859*.

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