

compositors are constantly at work, some of whom have already set up the beginning, whilst others are committing to type the yet undried manuscript of the continuation of a speech, whose middle portion is travelling to the office in the pocket of the hasty reporter, and whose eloquent conclusion is, perhaps at that very moment, making the walls of St. Stephen's vibrate with the applause of its hearers. These congregated types, as fast as they are composed, are passed in portions to other hands; till at last the scattered fragments of the debate, forming, when united with the ordinary matter, eight and forty columns, re-appear in regular order on the platform of the printing press. The hand of man is now too slow for the demands of his curiosity, but the power of steam comes to his assistance. Ink is rapidly supplied to the moving types by the most perfect mechanism; four attendants incessantly introduce the edges of large sheets of white paper to the junction of two great rollers, which seem to devour them with unsated appetite; other rollers convey them to the type already inked, and having brought them into rapid and successive contact, re-deliver them to four other assistants, completely printed by the almost momentary touch. Thus, in one hour, 4000 sheets of paper are printed on one side; an impression of 12,000 copies, from above 300,000 moveable pieces of metal, is produced for the public in six hours!" *Mr. Babbage's Economy of Manufactures.*

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LETTERS OF MARQUE.—Letters of marque and reprisals were first issued in 1395. A Merchant of Bayonne in Gascony, where Edward I. then was, had gone with a ship to Barbary, where he took on board a quantity of almonds, raisins, and figs; and on his voyage back from England, he and his ship and cargo were seized by some armed force from Lisbon, as he lay at anchor on the Portuguese coast, and were carried into Lisbon, where the captors paid the King of Portugal a tenth share, (the ship and cargo being valued at £700 sterling,) although peace then subsisted between England and Portugal. King Edward, therefore, granted the merchant letters of marque against the subjects of Portugal, wherever he could seize their effects, and especially against those of Lisbon, for five years, or until he should reimburse himself for his losses; on condition that he accounted to the King for any surplus he might take over and above his real damages and expenses.

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COCHINEAL INSECT.—Why was the Cochineal insect originally supposed to be a grain, or seed?

Because, during the whole term of its life, it remains fixed to the spot where it first settled, and to the vegetable nipple of the nopal plant which feeds it.

Why are these insects propagated with such rapidity?

Because the nopal plant is inoculated with them, by being rubbed with a small portion of the young resembling blight, and in proportion, as the plant increases its leaves, it is sure to be covered with this costly parasite. When the plant is perfectly saturated, the cochineal is scraped off with great care. Plantations containing 50 to 60,000, acres, growing in straight lines, may be seen in some districts of South America. The quantity of insects annually ex-