

tino for the gum in its original state; for, whole warehouses full of goods manufactured by the speculators in winter, became a mass of muck in summer. The apparent impossibility of preventing this melting in warm weather, and also of preventing the preparation from stiffening in the cold, caused the failure of the numerous India rubber stock operations of that day.

In 1835, the now celebrated Goodyear, who had previously turned his attention to the subject, commenced experimenting in earnest, with the view to divest the material, when prepared, of its soluble qualities, and of those which caused it to stiffen in the cold. He set out in the belief that, if he could attain these ends, subsequent experience and study would enable him to adapt it successfully to almost innumerable uses. These experiments were first conducted in New York, afterwards in Connecticut, and finally in Roxbury, Massachusetts, where an India rubber manufacturing company, that had been severely injured by the speculation, as a forlorn hope for retrieving their losses, offered him the use of their establishment, and the means of persevering to the end. For seven years he laboured faithfully, satisfying no one but himself, however, that he was a step nearer to the realization of his hopes than when he abandoned everything else to chase this apparent chimera. With courage and patience worthy of his New England origin, he did persevere to the end. At the termination of seven years, gaining additional information by every successive experiment, he succeeded in perfecting a more metallic gum composition which answered the long sought ends. With this discovery dates the real value of gum caoutchouc. Subsequently, however, he discovered and patented a kind of India rubber felt, which is now made into cloths an inch thick, or so thin as to be driving silk cloth out of use for some purposes. Thus prepared the gum is nearly non-elastic. In perfecting this particular article, the inventor himself is said to believe he has achieved his great victory. It is made of raw cotton—not cloth—combined with the metallic fluid, somewhat after the manner in which the hatters make hat bodies. We have seen several different articles made of it, from the thick substance necessary for seamen's charts, down to notes of the New Haven county Bank, some of which have been printed on it.

A stranger to the application of Goodyear's preparation, would indeed be surprised on going into an establishment where articles made of it are sold. From ship sails down to sheaths for pins to fasten children's clothes, and elegant and delicate articles of ladies' apparel, one will find a countless multitude of different things, in the construction of which, but yesterday, as it were, leather, cotton, linen, silk, woollen, iron, wood, or tin was thought absolutely necessary.

There are now manufactured with complete success, top-sails for some of the New York and Liverpool line ships, which though the body is of the most inferior quality of cotton sail cloth, are found to be almost invaluable, because, in addition to their remarkable durability, they shed ice like glass, and do not stiffen with frost as do all other kinds of sail cloth. It is already applied successfully to supply the place of hair cloth and velvet for coverings to furniture—such as sofas and easy chairs. There are specimens of its application after this fashion, to be seen at Coleman's Hotel, in this city, which, if he has affected nothing more, should bring Mr. Goodyear great fame as an inventor.

But the war department is availing itself of the fruits of his labours so extensively, for some time past, as to have kept sixteen factories working under his patents, constantly employed. They are making for the United States, pontoon boats, (which though light and portable, will ferry fifty men, it is said, at a time, and in perfect safety, it matters not what current they have to contend with,) tents, knapsacks, haversacks, provision bags, (to take the place of boxes and barrels,) ammunition sacks, water sacks and covers, and a great many similar articles for which, after a full and fair trial, this preparation has been found much better adapted than ought else. Flour cloths, instead of oil cloths, trunks, portmanteaus and travelling bags; ships mattresses, hose pipes, harness of all descriptions, buckets, piano and table covers, maps which exhibit the most delicate touches of the graver, with as much distinctness as the best qualities of drawing paper; kitchen utensils formerly made of tin or cast iron only; umbrellas, suspenders that have driven everything else almost entirely out of use; over-shoes, cloaks,

top-coats; gloves for handling vitrol, mail bags, &c., are also made of it. But we might fill a column with the bare enumeration of the purposes to which this preparation has been successfully applied within the last three years. Unlike Oliver Evans, whose friends are said to have considered worthy of a mad house, because, in reply to their entreaties to turn his mind from experiments with steam, he insisted that in less than fifty years carriages would travel by steam at the rate of ten miles per hour; and unlike Whitney, who died before the application of his gin doubled the value of every acre of cotton land in the southern States, this inventor lives to witness the beneficial effects of his labours, and, we trust to realize his fair portion of their profit to society. But this inventor has not alone benefited his own country; for in this age of rapidly increasing international communication, Europe will not be slow to adopt what we find more economical and better suited to many industrial uses. As yet, no European has struck out in the same path, and this American's mechanical fame, therefore bids fair to proceed with the application and use of the invention, which, if it continues to advance as rapidly for twenty years, as for the last three, will in that time be found applied in almost every house in the Union, to very many purposes. As most tropical plants of the fig genus produce the glutinous juice or sap from which the caoutchouc may be made, there is far less danger that the supply will not run apace with the growing demand, than that our own pine forests will eventually fail to afford turpentine in sufficient quantities to supply the market.

We have but the other day seen a description of a large gum elastic tree, which was found by our troops on the Island of Lobos. It grows in Cayenne, the Brazils, and in great quantities in Paraguay. From this last country we may look for copious supplies, as soon as our efforts to open an extensive commerce with that strange country's interior territory shall have succeeded, and as soon as greater facilities are secured by exempting the navigation of the rivers from the blockading restrictions imposed in consequence of war between Buenos Ayres and Montevideo. It is well worthy of consideration, whether the tree cannot be translated into our southern States, Florida especially, and cultivated to a great extent. It would furnish a new and lucrative material for one of our most ingenious and productive manufactures. Specimens of this extraordinary plant, with its uncommonly thick leaves, are to be found in our hot-houses; and the one which is growing in the green-house of the flower depository, attached to the patent office, is the finest we have ever seen.

This country is much indebted to Mr. Goodyear for his great ingenuity in the application of the gum to so many manufacturing purposes. It is, however, no less profitable to himself than useful for many purposes. His patent right is extremely productive—brings him in a large income, and his interest in his inventions is said to be worth from two to three millions of dollars, perhaps more. We congratulate him on his success, and honour his efforts as another proof of the unparalleled inventive ingenuity of the freest people in the globe. This character of our countrymen, of which we witness so many proofs in the Patent office, and in the variety of specimens that are every year exhibited in Washington, from the most useful, common manufactures, to the fine arts, and to those splendid productions from the pencils of Rosseler and Powell, is at once the result and the embellishment of the free government we enjoy.—Wash. Union.

MAY-DAY CUSTOMS.

Time was when May-day was looked forward to by all ranks, classes, and ages, as one especially devoted to sport and merriment. Chaucer, in his "Court of Love," says, early on the first of May, "fourth goth al the court, both most and lest, to fetch the flowris freshe, and branche and blome;" and Stow describes the May-day amusements of Henry VIII. and his queen. They departed from Greenwich for Shooter's Hill, where they were met by Robin Hood and his archers bold (personated by two hundred of the king's guards), who, after discharges of arrows, invited the royal party to see their mode of life. Accordingly, amid the blowing of horns, the king, queen, and suite, accompanied them unto the wood under the hill, where an arbor received them, formed of green boughs, and including a hall, great chamber, and inner chamber, the floors being covered with flowers and sweet