

the pitch lake of Trinidad, and from it extracted a burning oil for lamps. Afterwards he extracted an illuminating oil from coal and other bituminous substances, and in 1854 patented it under the name of Kerosene in the United States. This invention laid the foundation in America of a large industry, leading to the use of petroleum for illuminating purposes and to the enormous petroleum industry as it now exists.*

At the time Dr. Gesner began the manufacture of Kerosene at New York, camphene—a mixture of alcohol and spirits of turpentine and whale oil—and certain vegetable oils, were with tallow and spermaceti candles used for affording light as well as gas.

In the manufacture of oil from coal and bituminous matter, a waxy substance called paraffin was produced in considerable quantity, and in naming the new oil it was thought best to call it “wax oil” from the Greek words *keros* “wax,” and *elaion* “oil.” The term “Keroselene” was first proposed and afterwards shortened to “Kerosene” to distinguish oils of this kind, and under that name was patented.

Even with the best skill at command the first kerosene, or coal oil, as it was also called, had when prepared for market, very considerable odor. The kerosene oil works on Newton Creek, near Penny Bridge,

* A copy of this paragraph was sent to the Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D. C., U. S. A., with a request for an official confirmation of the claims of Dr. Gesner to this important discovery, and the following reply has been received:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

Washington, D. C., June 4, 1896.

MR. PERCY G. HALL, Secretary of N. H. S. of N. B.

Market Building, St. John, New Brunswick.

Sir,—In reply to your letter of May 30th, you are advised that patents Nos. 11,303, 11,304 and 11,305 were issued June 27, 1854, to Abraham Gesner, assignor to the Asphalt Mining and Kerosene Gas Co., of Williamsburg, N. Y., for manufacturing kerosene oil.

Copies of the drawings of above patents can be furnished for ten cents each, and manuscript copies of the specifications for ten cents per hundred words.

By order of the Commissioner,

Very respectfully,

GEO. L. MORTON, Chief Clerk.

Per W. W. H.

Please refer in answer to letter 72,814.