

through the avenues of manual labor. Men who have thus risen are often anxious that their own sons shall be brought up to some profession in which it is hoped they will attain more rapid distinction. It seems to be forgotten that skill and intellect will tell just as surely in many other ways as they will in law or any of the professions. There are triumphs to be gained in the material world, and this country, above all others, presents a broad and promising field for the exercise of mind in the subjugation of nature to man's dominion and use. This field is full of honor and profit, but it must be reached by toil, and those who would explore it successfully must begin at the foundation by making themselves personally familiar with the manual labor they expect ultimately to control. The renown of England's great engineers will outlive that of many of her distinguished politicians and statesmen; and the greatest of her engineers were once mechanics in the humblest sense. In America it is specially true that talent will show itself wherever it may be, and men will pay it willing homage. Why then, are young men ashamed to step on the lower rungs of a ladder that reaches so high? It is because parents and others give them false and foolish notions of the superior respectability of callings in which they may spend ten years without gaining a single idea or enlarging their education one iota. Some petty clerkship is preferred to honest, manly, ennobling toil, though it dwarfs mind and body, and yields not half the profit. Our public schools should, in a measure, prepare boys for the practical occupations of life. The College of the City of New York should have departments solely for education in the branches pertaining to mechanical pursuits, embracing the application of the sciences to every-day affairs, and their profitable employment in the various handicrafts of life."

#### A Niagara Falls Glacier.

"The London *Engineer*, in the course of a discussion of the fervent heat with which the elements composing the interior of the globe are supposed to be kept in a continual state of fusion, introduces the following story, which has been going the rounds of the French papers, all of which seemed to absorb it with edifying credulity as worthy the careful attention of scientific men:—not far from the Falls of Niagara was a glacier, belonging to a company who realized enormous profits from the sale of ice in the western cities during the summer months. A few days later than the Aspinwall explosion, aurora borealis of magnificent proportions was observed wheeling its shafts several nights in succession in the northern sky, causing two lightning conductors on the top of the glacier (!) to emit long electrical flames of a bluish colour. In the meantime a boiling noise was heard inside the glacier, accompanied with a disengagement of gas and occasional loud detonations. A captain of militia ventured to enter an opening in the ice with a light, when the glacier burst with an explosion that shook the whole country. Happily nobody was killed except the unfortunate captain, of whom not a trace could be found. The glacier contained 16,000 tons of ice, and after the explosion there was a fall of lukewarm water over a space of 500 yards in diameter. The theory of the cause of the explosion is that

the two lightning conductors on the glacier acted under the influence of the electricity as the two poles of a voltaic battery, and decomposed the ice into a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen gases, which of course exploded with resistless power on the introduction of a light.

The above is about as amusing a yarn as the following, which we cut out of the *Norfolk News*, of the city of Norwich, England, just after the Blondin feats of crossing the Niagara, witnessed by so many thousands of our citizens.--[ED. JOURNAL]:--

#### The alleged rope dancing at Niagara.

A citizen of Niagara in a letter to the *New York Times* of the 30th ult., exposes what he calls the "great Blondin humbug." He says he feels compelled to "speak out in meeting," and the upshot of his revelation is, "that for aught he knows there is no such person in the world, or at least in Niagara, as Mr. Blondin at all; that he has never crossed the falls on a tight rope, or a slack-rope, or any rope at all but the string of a very long bow; and that as the people of Niagara, Rochester, and the western railways of New York have already perhaps made money enough out of their 'jest's prosperity,' it is time that the thing should be put a step to. Since the immortal 'Moon hoax,'" he continues, "there has been nothing so successful in the way of a vast quiz as the rope-walking invention of a bright Niagara bar-keeper, with its echoes from Rochester and other places along our line of country. As I have not been away from home during the whole summer, I am a tolerably credible witness; and I must therefore assure you that the whole of this wonderful series of stories has grown up out of a bet made by a person in this town that he could bring more people to Niagara in two weeks than the Falls had ever brought here in as many months. How the rope-dancing dodge occurred to him I don't know, but he settled Blondin as the name of his hero, because there was a Blondin once in this country with the Ravels, a very good rope-dancer, now retired and living somewhere in the country of Savoy, who could not of course hear of the story in time to contradict it. Anything funnier or more foolish than the faces of the crowds which have succeeded each other down about the Falls on each successive day announced for the 'feats' you never saw, and the hotels have reaped a golden harvest. But you will observe that not a single individual has ventured in any of the letters to say that he saw Blondin do any of these things. Our local editors and others, of course, enjoying the joke, have joined in it, and a very good joke it has been certainly; but it seems to me it ought to be regarded now as played out. The good people of our town have had their fun out of you, you must admit, and have made a snug thing of it too in a pecuniary way. But a joke, as I said before, has its bounds.--R. E. P."

Recent experiments by the London Pneumatic Co. show that 120 tons of goods can be sent through 18 miles of tubes every hour, by means of atmospheric pressure, at a cost of about a penny a mile.

America has 90,000 miles of telegraph; Europe 60,000; India 3,000.