

the last ten years, so many other needs have arisen to which it appears especially adapted, that the manufacture of clothing is forced to take a comparatively unimportant place. Thus in chemical laboratories fine asbestos cloth, or even finely teased out asbestos fibre, is now used very extensively for filtering various solutions for which no other material yet discovered has been found so well adapted, especially for strong acids and alkalis which would quickly destroy the ordinary filtering paper. The advantages of the asbestos filter are also apparent in the fact it can be ignited without being consumed. It is also rapidly coming into use in sugar refineries for filtering the saccharine juices, and as a filter for water it has been found to possess very superior qualities over most of the substances in use, and will doubtless, before very long, become an important agent in the purification of our supply of water in large cities.

Its value as an ingredient in the manufacture of fire-proof paint has already been alluded to slightly, in which respect it ranks with steatite. Applied to woodwork it is capable of successfully withstanding a very considerable volume of flame and so confining the fire to a limited space. As a material for fire-escapes also, owing to its very considerable tensile strength, it is largely made into rope, the fibres of which are sometimes strengthened by the addition of brass or copper wires, from which ladders are then made, which are practically indestructible. More recently, also, its properties as a non-conductor of electricity have been discovered and a great demand has sprung up for it in the construction of dynamos, and other portions of electrical apparatus requiring insulation. Wall paper, also, printed in ornamental colored patterns, which when applied to the walls of a room reduce the risk of conflagration to the least possible degree, are manufactured even now in considerable quantity, and even writing and fine printing papers are made which have the property of resisting destruction by fire, and though becoming altered to some extent, even then preserve the writing or printing which has been made on them. A great difficulty, however, in the former case is to give the paper a sufficiently hard and smooth glossy surface over which the pen can glide freely; but this defect will doubtless be remedied in time, and with a fire proof ink the preservation of deeds and important papers can thus be readily effected.