

AMERICAN vs. ENGLISH MACHINERY

The competition between English and American textile machinery is carried on very keenly in the United States, where large quantities of English machinery, especially in the cotton and worsted branches, are sold, and where leading English machine builders have regularly established agencies.

The same rivalry exists in this country, but not to so great an extent.

The *Boston Journal of Commerce*, in the course of what seems a fair and unbiased article, says, there is no necessity of comparing American with English machinery for no better purpose than decrying the merits of one in order to show off to advantage the merits of the other. Every machine, wherever made, should stand on its own merits, even in its advocacy by the party making it, as it surely does or will in time in the estimation of the person using it. It is a libel on the intelligence of American manufacturers to assert that they do not know what they are about when they purchase foreign machinery in preference to that made in this country. The libel might be extended to machine builders themselves, when they feel enforced by the necessities of the demand to follow English patterns with great preciseness in the production of some special piece of mechanism. Foreign textile machinery is coming to this country in considerable quantity, because it supplies a want that cannot be satisfied here, notwithstanding the heavy import duties it is obliged to bear. Two recently formed corporations, familiarly called combines, embracing a number of plants at distant points, depend largely for their success upon their control in this country of two English patents. For some purposes, English machinery is superior to the American, and it is absurd to deny it for no better reason than in the estimation of some it is unpatriotic.

Honorable rivalry between machine builders, foreign or domestic, is the very best incentive that can be devised to bring any mechanism to a high state of efficiency.

Our contemporary goes on to say: "While we have profited by the competition with English machinery, and though the latter has encroached in some respects on our domains because of its superiority, our foreign competitors have received some of their best ideas from American inventions, and freely adopted them with excellent results. Though it be not blazoned to the world, it is none the less true that there is a comprehensive reciprocity of ideas between the machine builders of England and America, in which there is a mutual profit; and it would be no easy task to determine which country is the greater gainer.

If American textile machinery cannot be made here and exported, it can be and is, in some instances, made in England and on the continent. The best looms for fancy cassimeres and worsteds for men's wear are made abroad after American pattern. A recently invented American cotton-waste cleaning machine is being manufactured to some extent in foreign shops. The Wellman self-stripping cotton card is widely employed in Europe as well as in the United States; and this system

of raising flats automatically was, at one time, extensively used in Great Britain for fine counts, till replaced by the revolving-flat card. The ring frame, as is well known, is a product of American ingenuity, but its manufacture and use in England is a prominent feature in the textile industry of that country. But the English ring frame would be of little account if it did not adopt the Sawyer, Rabbeth or Whittin gravity spindle, all American inventions. On the other hand, we are indebted to English ingenuity and mechanical skill for some of the best machines used in our factories. The revolving-flat cotton card is of special prominence, though now made to a conspicuous extent in this country. All of the combing machinery, for cotton or wool, in our mills, is obtained from abroad, and represents foreign ideas. Exceptions may be made as to cards and wool combs. The garnetting machines and the cotton slasher are the results of English thought. Instances could be multiplied, to show that the textile industries of the United States and Great Britain could not exist purely on the inventions and machinery of one country to the exclusion of the other."

DANGEROUS FREIGHT.

The recent discussion as to whether ocean liners should carry cotton as well as passengers, at the same time has brought out another fact. It is, says the *New York Recorder*, that they carry other kinds of freight that makes the danger of fire just as great as from cotton. A person who knows something of such matters, states that just at present there are being made large importations of French silk that are especially dangerous as a freight.

"At present, importers here," the gentleman said, "are receiving large consignments of a heavy-dyed silk known as French twist. The French manufacturers do not spare the dye of these goods, for it adds to their weight. In this dye, chemicals of a peculiar kind are used, and it is this fact that makes this silk dangerous freight.

There is always fear of spontaneous combustion, unless the greatest care is taken in packing the goods. These come in bales of various sizes, but generally averaging about five hundred pounds. They are wrapped in cotton bagging with underlying layers of straw and brown paper, and are made compact by hydraulic pressure. There is constant danger of fire originating from them, and they must be watched with care while in transit. There have been cases where bales have been destroyed from the causes mentioned, and not many years ago a serious fire was caused on a French steamer by these same goods."

Steamship men generally say that they are aware of the danger of carrying these silks, and that the greatest care is taken whenever they are carried as freight. One or two lines indeed, discriminate against this freight and will not carry it.

It is announced that the British admiralty has resolved to give \$20,000 to Admiral Colomb for his invention for flashing night signals.

EGGS.

We have good reasons to believe that the egg trade of a great many retail grocers in the city is about on a par with their sugar department, so far as profit is concerned, the small margin between the trouble and selling price barely paying for the cost of handling the staple. There is decidedly something "rotten in Denmark" when retail profits on an article or series of articles have sunk so low that their sale is unremunerative and persisted in only because it is a convenience to customers, and in this case we believe the usual explanation will hold good, i.e., that quality has been sacrificed for some reason, probably in an effort to catch trade by holding out low prices as an inducement. We think this is a serious mistake with any food product like eggs, and butter which, if not good, must be actually worthless. There are many descriptions of groceries, which in point of quality, cover a wide range, yet the most inferior grades possess their merits and a positive intrinsic value. It is different with eggs. A stale egg is an abomination, and there is but little leeway between the finest fresh-laid and the grade below which no prudent, experienced retailer cares to pass in selecting eggs. We believe it will pay grocers to give especial attention to the quality of the eggs which they handle, and to take pains to secure a grade that will invariably give satisfaction even though the price has to be marked up correspondingly. In other words, we believe that fine eggs at a good profit will sell more freely than poor or irregular stock at just about cost.

The neglect of retail grocers to "caudle" eggs often leads to a loss of custom. A bad one will be found occasionally in packages of really good stock, and if left with the rest may disgust a good customer and provoke her to the point of transferring her trade to another store. "Caudling" takes time and is perhaps unnecessary when absolutely fresh eggs are procured from a quarter beyond suspicion, but when the quality of an invoice is in the least degree doubtful, it should be rigorously practiced and the stale eggs removed.—*Merchants' Review*

ONE WAY OF PUTTING IT.

The wayward young man, broken in health, had gone to the far south-west to recuperate. He was in jail at Tombstone, Ariz., for stealing a hindquarter of beef. In the loneliness of his cell, he sat down and wrote as follows:

"Dear Father,—I have picked up some flesh since I came out here, but I am still confined to my room. Please send me \$100," etc., etc.—*Chicago Tribune*.

The annual report of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad, for the fiscal year ending June 30, is issued. It shows gross earnings, \$27,594,224, an increase of \$1,083,516; operating expenses, \$18,336,500, an increase of \$1,193,402; net earnings, \$9,137,724, a decrease of \$94,886; income from other sources amounted to \$334,207, making a total income of \$9,471,931; fixed charges were \$7,237,251, leaving a balance of \$2,234,680, after paying 7 per cent. dividends; on the preferred stock there is a surplus of \$909,168.