THE STEINAU JEWELRY CO.'S **FOR ONE DOLLAR!** IMPERIAL CASKET.

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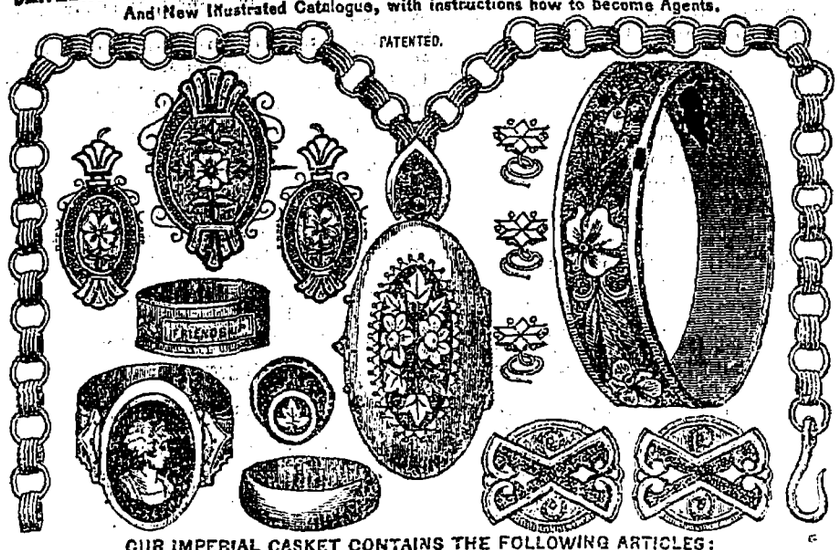

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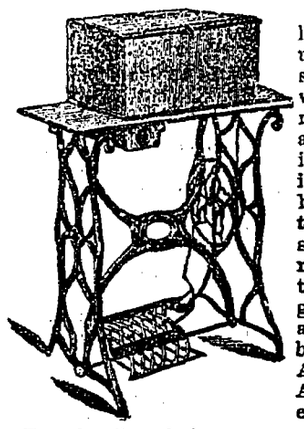

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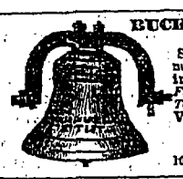

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NATURALISTS' PORTFOLIO.

STORKS.—It is said that the stork retains its affection for its parents to the close of life. After the relations of the nest are broken up, they will feed and protect them in old age, as they were protected and fed by them in their youth.

THE IVORY-NUT TREE.—The ivory-nut tree is very common in South America. It is a species of palm; the nuts make choice buttons and small ivory articles, while the broad and substantial leaves form a covering for the huts of the natives.

A GREENLAND SHARK.—There arrived at St. Pancras goods station the other day a rather unusual freight—a Greenland shark, 15 feet long, weighing three quarters of a ton, and consigned to the authorities of the British Museum by Mr. Montague Browne, naturalist, of Birmingham, from whom it was purchased as a great rarity.

THE TORTOISE-SHELL CAT.—The Spanish or tortoise-shell cat is the most beautiful and pleasing of the cat species. These animals are often kept for their beauty alone, and at one period a well-marked tortoise-shell among cat fanciers, brought a high price. It is said that the tortoise-shell cat is found wild in South-America, where it was probably introduced by the Spaniards.

A NEW WHALE.—The gigantic whale captured in February last in the Gulf of Taranto, Italy, has been subjected to a critical examination by Professor Capellini, who, in a report lately published, states it is as his opinion that the whale is a species hitherto unknown to science, and he has named it Balena Tarentina, in allusion to the locality of its capture.

MONSTER SKATE—FOOD OF SEA FISH.—A gentleman in Scotland sends the following:—"Amongst other fishes which came to our baits, my daughters caught upon their long line a skate weighing 152 lbs. Inside the skate was a codfish weighing 14 lb., and inside the codfish a plaice, weighing about one pound. As there was a hook inside the plaice, no doubt the flat fish took the bait first, and was afterwards swallowed by the cod, who in his turn was swallowed by the skate."

A VENERABLE CHESTNUT TREE.—The largest chestnut tree probably in the State of New Jersey was felled recently in Camden. On account of its giant size, it was left standing when the land on which it grew was cleared by John Sickler in 1774. For many years this monarch of the ancient forests has been a landmark in Camden County. Under its shade Indian children have doubtless sported, probably in the time of Columbus. It was 21 feet 9 inches round the butt.

SIZE OF THE GREENLAND WHALE.—An idea of the enormous size of the Greenland whale is obtained on reading in an account of captures that "some of the men descended into the mouth of the whale to remove the baleen." The mouth is a capacious chamber in which several men can be busy at once chopping or detaching huge blades of baleen from the roof of their temporary workship. As much as two tons weight has been obtained from the mouth of a single whale.

VEGETATION WITHOUT RAIN.—That vegetation of a certain kind will not only exist but flourish without rain, appears to have been proved beyond doubt, for in Dr. Schweinfurth's account of his journey across the Arabian desert, published in *Petermann's Mittheilungen*, he mentions that in one part where no rain had been known for six years he found some acacias and tamarisk still green and flourishing, while the last traces of herbaceous plants had disappeared. A sky blue salvia was found in profusion in more favored localities.

ARTIFICIAL CULTURE OF CRAWFISH.—The Piscicultural Institution of Schwerin has recently made some important experiments with a view to ascertain whether the artificial culture of river crawfish (*Astacus fluviatilis*) is possible on a large scale. The experiments were entirely successful. In the spring of 1876 some seven hundred crawfish with ova were put into two circular ponds of only six feet in diameter, and for each animal a separate hole had been constructed. At the end of November the ponds were drained in order to separate the young crawfish from the old ones. It appeared that of the latter only three or four were crawling at the bottom of the pond, while all the others had occupied their respective dwellings. The young were of the size of a bee, and extremely lively. They were taken out of the ponds, and already on the following day could be fed artificially on carrots and meat. Many a land and garden proprietor could thus make crawfish culture a lucrative pastime at very little cost, particularly since the consumption of these crustaceans increase largely every year.

AMERICAN CROWS.—It is not generally known that crows go on further south than Washington during the winter. They congregate there by the millions, and have roosting-places within three miles of the city. Early in the morning, in huge flocks, they course down the Potomac, and late in the evening return to their roosts in the pine groves which lie adjacent to the river. They follow the tide swamps whenever bared by the ebb tide and subsist upon the crabs and other water animal life which may be left exposed. But why they do not remain some twenty or thirty miles down the Potomac, where the pine groves are a hundred times more extensive than here, and where ice never forms, is unexplained. We have gone near a roosting-place, of a few acres extent, about dusk, and were surprised to note the immense number of these birds clinging to the branches of the trees. They keep up an incessant cawing all night long, and when disturbed, literally fill the air with their confused masses and cries. When warm weather comes, they leave us, and are as rarely seen here during the summer as they are urther north during the winter.

WAY BEES WORK IN THE DARK.—A lifetime may be spent in investigating the mysteries hidden in a bee hive, and still half of the secrets would be undiscovered. The formation of the cells has long been a celebrated problem for the mathematician, whilst the changes which the honey undergoes offer at least an equal interest to the chemist. Every one knows what honey fresh from the comb is like. It is a clear, yellow syrup, without a trace of solid sugar in it. Upon straining, however, it gradually assumes a crystalline appearance—it candies, as the saying is, and ultimately becomes a solid mass of sugar. It has not been suspected that this change was due to a potographic action; that the same agent which alters the molecular arrangement of the iodide of silver on the excited collodion plate, and determines the formation of camphor and iodine crystls in a bottle, causes the syrupy honey to assume a crystalline form. This, however, is the case. Mgr. Schelber has enclosed honey in stoppered flasks, some of which he has kept in perfect darkness, whilst others have been exposed to the light. The invariable result has been that the sunned portion rapidly crystallises, whilst that kept in the dark remained perfectly liquid. We now see why bees are so careful to work in the dark, and why they are so careful to obscure the glass windows which are sometimes placed in their hives. The existence of their young depends on the liquidity of the saccharine food presented to them, and if light were allowed access to this, the syrup would gradually acquire a more or less solid consistency; it would seal up the cells, and in all probability prove false to the inmates of the hive.

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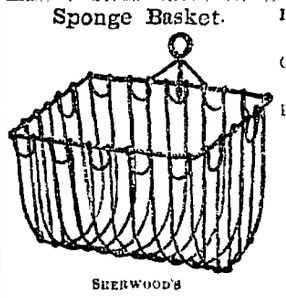

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IMPERIAL FRENCH COOKING RANGE.
HENCHEY'S HOTEL,
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