

THE DISPATCH.

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NOVEL STEAMSHIP CHAIR.

Secured to Deck or Floor by Means of a Vacuum Cup. Many people in crossing the ocean have experienced inconvenience by reason of the fact that the chairs in the saloon and card rooms are rigidly screwed to the floor. The chairs are secured at such a distance from the tables that they will accommodate persons of very ample proportions, and therefore when a comparatively thin person occupies a chair he finds it necessary to sit merely on the edge, for should he endeavor to lean back in the chair he finds himself too far from the table.

While recently returning from Europe Colonel John Jacob Astor conceived of a very simple and practical scheme whereby the chairs may be firmly held in place at any desired distance from the tables or may be easily released and moved about.



IMPROVED STEAMSHIP CHAIR.

Colonel Astor's scheme involves the use of a vacuum cup beneath the chair, so mounted that it may be pressed into engagement with the deck or floor to hold the chair by suction, or the vacuum may be broken, the cup lifted and the chair released.

If the chair is on a deck or hardwood floor or on rubber tiling the vacuum will hold indefinitely, while if used on a carpet it will probably be necessary to depress the cup and raise it again occasionally to form a new vacuum. This device will undoubtedly add greatly to the comfort of the traveling public, as chairs may then be quickly and securely fastened at the desired distance from the table, to accommodate either fleshy or thin persons.

THE HORSE'S STUPIDITY.

Devoid of Mind, but Will Do Exactly as He is Told.

The horse, as the most stupid of all the dumb creatures man has made his friend, has been painstakingly studied by E. T. Brewster, says the Chicago Tribune. He is so stupid he can be taught anything—that is, any habit—having no mind of his own, can be trained on to do exactly as he is told.

All the authentic tricks, whatever the details, are worked in this way: The horse is taught by endless repetitions some mechanical habit. A given signal, and he begins to paw the floor. Another signal, and he stops. Press the vapor button, and he takes a sponge and rubs it over a certain spot on a blackboard or picks up a card lying in a certain position.

The meaning of the act exists for the spectator only. The pawings count the answer to a problem in addition. The card bears the reply to a question. But the horse does not know it. He merely follows a blind habit, just as he will stop when you say "Whoa!" though you interpose the word into your recitation of the Declaration of Independence.

The 2,000 tests to which James F. Porter of Indiana university subjected two English sparrows serves as the type of all experiments with animals' counting. They proved beyond question that the sparrows could not count. After a bird had been given its food 100 times in succession from dish No.

5, in the next twenty trials it went only nine times to the proper place. Moreover, after the bird became pretty certain of the situation of the colored dish when he came to it on the wing, walking up to it threw him all off again, while if he started his flight from a point to one side of his usual perch he was likely to hit correspondingly to one side of his objective point.

The sparrows guessed numbers better than most creatures that have been tested. They could not count certainly even two. Neither instinct nor reason is the key to the animal mind, but habit. The animal forms habits precisely as we do and, like ourselves, stores up as habits many common experiences of life. The difference is that what for us is a mere side line is almost the entire stock in trade of the beast. We are all of us, men and beasts alike, bundles of habits. But the man has more of other things wrapped up in the package.

DELUGE OF NOAH'S TIME.

Enormous Damage Done by the Flood, Says Scientist.

Professor Herbert William Magoun of Redfield college is studying Noah's flood as one of the greatest events of reliable history. In his latest chapter on it, just published, he says that it changed the whole earth, creating enormous seas where dry land was before and sinking large parts of the land. He tries to judge it by evidence that he can still find of damage done.

In this record he writes that the flood could not have been a myth. He does not undertake to say how much of Asia was covered by it or whether all the land on earth was covered. He hardly thinks so. He has no doubt that the change of which it was part was felt throughout the whole earth. It began in what are now the United States and northern Europe with the cracking of the earth's crust as great areas of land sank to lower levels. He thinks the earth's crust gave way upward or downward toward the close of what is called the great ice age in this country and Europe. The destruction of life was enormous. Wherever men then lived those who escaped saw the world changed as it has never been changed since.

The history of a flood of this kind, late in the history of the earth is so plainly shown in many ways that those who study the earth are fairly well agreed about its main points. Some of them might not agree with Professor Magoun that it was Noah's flood, but they might acknowledge that he has a right to call it so. The proof he relies on began with work done not quite a hundred years ago by a Scotch stonemason, famous now as Hugh Miller, who first showed how clearly the rocks may be read. Many learned men then had ceased to believe in a deluge. Now many of them believe in several.

GREAT ARTIFICIAL HARBOR.

Naval Port at Dover is Largest Area of Open Sea Ever Inclosed.

The opening of Dover naval port marks the completion of the greatest artificial harbor ever built entirely in the open sea. The scheme includes an extension of the admiralty pier for 2,000 feet, the formation of reclamation works for the protection of the shore at the eastern end of Dover town extending in the direction of St. Margaret's bay for 3,900 feet, a protecting arm extending from the eastern end of the reclamation for a distance of 2,900 feet into the open sea and an island breakwater approximately parallel with the shore line and extending from the end of the admiralty pier extension on the west to the end of the eastern pier already referred to, with wide entrance openings between the heads of the several breakwaters. If we include the eighty acres which constitute the present commercial harbor there is inclosed by these works a total area at low water of 690 acres of deep water harbor capable of floating the largest of modern battleships and ocean liners. This is the largest area of the open sea ever inclosed by solid masonry protecting works.

Although that portion of the inclosing breakwaters which is visible at high water gives an impression of their great length and of the wide extent of the harbor, it is a fact that the visible masonry represents only a small proportion of the work actually done. The total length of the sea works is two and a half miles, two miles of which are in exceptionally deep water. Thus the 2,000 foot extension of the admiralty pier measures from the top of the parapet to the foundation nearly 100 feet in height, and the eastern pier has a total height above foundations of eight or seven feet. The total width at the base of the piers is over fifty feet and at the top forty-seven feet six inches.

The fears which have been expressed that this, like other harbors, won from the open sea, might be subjected to shelving up by drifting sand, have not been verified, the depth remaining practically constant. Scientific American.

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OLYMPIAN GAMES

The Famous Contests in the Days of Ancient Greece.

MORE IMPORTANT THAN WAR.

Battles Might Be Forgotten, but Time Was reckoned and Events Dated From the Years of the Olympiads. The Fivefold Contest, the Pentathlon.

According to tradition, the oldest of all Olympian games were established by Zeus in honor of his success over Chronos in his struggle for the sovereignty of heaven. The more general belief among Greek writers, though, was that these famous games were instituted by the Achaean Hercules, the eldest of the five brothers to whom the cowardly Zeus after his birth. These games were held every fifth year, because, according to this story, the brothers were five in number. The games were therefore four years apart.

The first of the games, according to this tradition, was simply a foot race, to which Hercules and his four brothers were the only contestants. This straightaway foot race continued to be the only Olympic game till the fourteenth Olympiad, when a second contest, the double course, was introduced—i. e., to the end of the course and back again. In the eighteenth Olympiad they added wrestling and the pentathlon. Twenty-five years later boxing was made a part of the exercise, and four horse races, the pancratium and riding races were introduced.

The pentathlon was a fivefold contest in leaping, throwing the discus or quoit, wrestling and hurling the javelin. All contestants were admitted first to the leaping contest, and those who crossed a certain space were allowed to hurl the javelin. The four most successful in this part in a foot race. The last man in the race dropped out, and the last three threw the quoit.

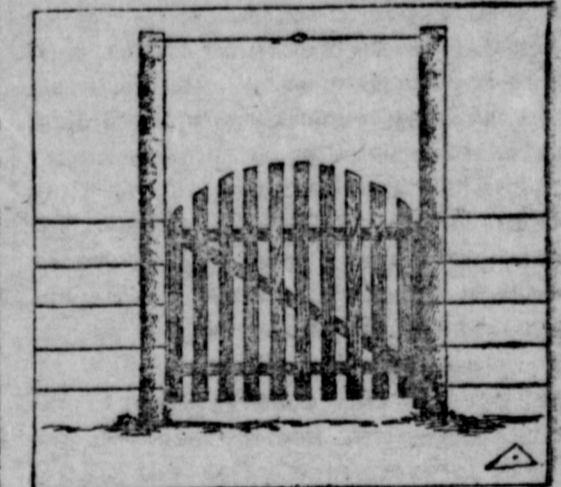
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WIRE FENCE GATE.

Simple Method of Solidly Bracing the Side Posts.

The posts of a gate placed in a straight line of wire fence requires just as much bracing as a corner post. A very effective way and one that will not require much extra material is shown in the accompanying sketch.

The two posts of the gate will need to be extra long and well set in the



GATE POSTS BRACED.

ground. The tops of the posts are then tied with wire so as to hold them in a parallel position with the right width between for the gate. The fence wires are twisted tight and held to the posts with staples.—Popular Mechanics.

New Steel Process.

An inventor in London has been doing some demonstrating in that metropolis to show the advantages of his new process for converting iron into steel. He declares that iron which is not worth more than 2 cents a pound may with ease be turned into steel which is worth a dollar a pound, and, what is more, ordinary iron, after it has been shaped into the tool or vessel desired, may then be turned into this high grade steel at a cost of about 5 cents a pound. The process has the advantage of being able to turn the iron wholly into steel or if it is desired, merely giving it a coating of steel. The inventor points out that a great saving is made by first shaping the tools in the soft iron and then changing them into steel.

BOON FOR THE SIGHTLESS.

New Magazine For the Blind and How It is Printed.

The Matilda Ziegler Magazine For the Blind is a boon to the sightless, many of whom have found their education largely useless. States educated them to read, but they had little of interest to attract them to reading. The magazines existent were in price in most instances wholly beyond the average blind person. In the course of a few years the educated blind forgot how to employ their education. They really forgot how to read. There have been thousands of such instances in the United States, and that became one of the problems with which the instructors had to deal. The blind, of course, read by touch.

Picture a sheet of heavy paper that has been run through a typewriting machine and covered with inkless periods. Imagine the period key of a typewriter has been struck again and again, and its heavy impression in the paper has been left unlinked all over the sheet. Turn the sheet, run over it with your fingers, and you have an idea of a page in a magazine for the blind.

The Matilda Ziegler Magazine contains about fifty pages. For each page a brass plate must be prepared. From this plate on heavy paper dampened to take the impression of the arranged points each page is printed. The plates are costly and involve labor of infinite pains. Sometimes they have to be changed again and again.

There are between 75,000 and 80,000 blind people in the United States. Even 10 cents a year, the subscription price of the magazine, is considerable to many of them. But 10,000 take the magazine, and if Mrs. Ziegler's hopes are realized for a law that will permit the free distribution of this wholly philanthropic paper all the blind are to have the opportunity of reading one of the most unique magazines in the world.—Chicago Tribune.

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