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Locomotive firemen's magazine.

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and America, brought about by war prevent the absorption of dampness, and the preparations for war at home and the shot manufacturer to polish his and abroad. The projectiles used in shot and make it so smooth and slippery that the navy are made from cast steel, requiring graphite crucibles, and the effect of the Spanish war upon the plum-bago trade is shown in the fact that its consumption has more than trebled since the beginning of the year.

In 1897, from January 1 to May 31 inclusive, the exports from Ceylon to the United States amounted to 1,318 tons, and during the same period in 1898 they rose to 3,976 tons. The heavy demand also cleared the European market of every available pound, and at present a scarcity exists, which taxes the resources of the Island to the limit.

As a lubricant, whether in dry form or mixed with oils or greases of any kind, it is recognized by both scientific and practical men as absolutely without an equal.

While its qualities as a paint pigment have long been recognized by many careful investigators, it is only during 1898 that it has been most conclusively demonstrated to the world generally to be pre-eminently the best preservative coating for exposed metal surfaces.

Graphite crucibles for melting brass and all other metals; and graphite stoppers, skimmers, ladles, and other heat-resisting devices are known to every foundryman and worker in metals, as are also graphite or black-lead facings and washes for molds and cores.

The electrolyper depends upon graphite for perfect electrolyses; the electrician uses graphite for resistance purposes in making up his rheostats and his lightning arresters, and for commutator dressing, as well as for many other purposes.

The powder manufacturer uses graphite for glazing his powder to

prevent the absorption of dampness, and the shot manufacturer to polish his and make it so smooth and slippery that the charges will not be crowded.

The organ and piano manufacturer uses graphite for lubricating piano action and organ slides; the housewife uses stove polish, and everyone uses graphite in the form of lead pencils. In fact, it can be said in all truth that graphite is more or less used by everyone in industry, and by everyone throughout the civilized world, and that it is quite as indispensable to the requirements of the world as iron itself.

Soldier Railroad Men.

In Belgium, the State not only operates both the army and the railways, but uses the one in connection with the other, so far as employees are concerned. Recently a competitive examination was held among the privates in the Belgium army to fill one hundred vacancies in the railway service. The competition was confined to volunteer soldiers in active service, ex-volunteers having previously served for a period of five years, and recommended by the war department, and ex-volunteers who, though not having served for five years, had obtained the rank of non-commissioned officers.

Trouble With Compounds.

"There must be good reasons," says the December *American Engineer, Car Builder and Railroad Journal*, "for the wide difference of opinion of well-informed railroad officers with regard to the value of the compound locomotive as a type, and because of the attitude of several of these, which has led them to issue instructions to their subordinates that no more compounds are to

be bought or built, we shall review what appears to be the most important of them. Many little difficulties, common to all mechanical developments, and have been found in compounds, and most of them overcome; but the chief reason for the failure of the type to become generally popular is that in the earlier days the cylinder power was insufficient, and the compound was not a success as a factor in operation. The question of first importance in designing a compound is to give it the ability to handle heavy trains. When the type reaches the stage of being satisfactory from an operating standpoint, it is almost certain to be satisfactory as to economy. The two go hand in hand.

The present tendency in increasing cylinder power is in the right direction, and the result is likely to be a change of conditions that will favor the compound, and the type will probably occupy a very prominent place in future practice." * * *

Safety Appliances.

The Interstate Commerce Commission has issued a report, of the number of cars and engines equipped with safety appliances, in accordance with the law, on June 1, 1898. This is the first semi-annual report on this subject since the meeting of last winter, when the time was extended in which the railways may comply with the law.

Of the 294 petitioning carriers that were granted two years' additional time to equip their freight cars and locomotives with safety appliances, 283 report 1,156,616 freight cars owned on June 1, 1898, this being an increase of 20,611 over the number so reported as owned on December 1, 1897.

There are 119,938 freight cars reported equipped with automatic couplers and 67,400 reported equipped with

train brakes during the six months ending June 1, 1898, which makes a total of 795,253, or 69 per cent. of the freight cars, equipped with automatic couplers, and 511,666, or 44 per cent., equipped with train brakes up to June 1, 1898. Of 32,408 locomotives owned June 1, 1898, there are 29,175, or 90 per cent., which are equipped with driving-wheel brakes.

There are 361,363 freight cars out of 1,156,616, or 31 per cent., that are still unequipped with automatic couplers; 644,950, or 56 per cent., that are unequipped with train brakes, and 3,233, or 10 per cent., of the locomotives unequipped with driving-wheel brakes, up to June 1, 1898.

More Pooling of Locomotives

"One of the latest railroad companies," says December *Locomotive Engineering*, "to adopt the pooling system of running locomotives is the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, and the change has brought much discontentment and resentment to the men who are deprived of their pride of individual interest in certain locomotives that have become objects of love and admiration. This change towards pooling, and therefore divorcing the affection and interest of the enginemen from particular locomotives, is the prevailing tendency of railroad companies, and the enginemen of the Santa Fe must fall in line with as much resignation as they can muster. We have never believed that the practice of pooling locomotives was economical to railroad companies; but the tendency is in that direction, and no words of ours can stem the tide. With individual engineers and firemen assigned to certain locomotives, the mileage performed by each machine is smaller than under the pooling system;