Department Notes.

At a recent meeting of the American Society of Civil Engineers, a communication was read from the Engineering Society of Michigan University, requesting the co-operation of the society relative to the granting of the degree of Civil Engineer by colleges, and a committee was appointed to take the matter into consideration.

It would be worth while for the Civils to notice the plans, shown in the last Engineer, of a cheaply constructed and convenient thirty-foot hand derrick for unloading or loading stone and heavy timber.

A school of carpentry has been established in connection with the University of Atlanta. According to the Commercial Bulletin, several buildings for farming purposes, a blacksmith shop, a fine dormitory, and some of the prettiest cottages in Atlanta have been erected by the students.

Students studying mill-work will find in the American Machinist of March 24 a description of the "Framing and Chimney of the Holyoke Machine Company's new Shops," which it will be worth their while to read. In the same paper an engraving of the Colt disc engine applied to a dynamo is worthy of notice, as embodying the neatest and most compact arrangement for this purpose which we have ever seen.

Good blue copies may be taken by means of the electric arc light, though a longer exposure is required than is necessary in direct sunlight. The Mechanical News says: "The managers of the Smithsonian Institution have undertaken the addition to it of a new and eminently interesting feature. Its design is to present, in all the leading branches of mechanical and manufacturing industry, examples on the one hand of the old, crude, and primitive appliances which exist as relics of a past age, and on the other the most approved specimens of American machines or devices which those arts in their modern state afford." Such an exhibition cannot fail to be very instructive.

Arrangements had been made for the entire second-year class in mechanical engineering, with some members of the senior class, to have practical work in mill draughting and knowledge of mill machinery by a series of trips to the Amory Mill at Manchester. Saturday being the only day for which arrangements could be made, it was decided to take these afternoons, substituting Monday afternoon as a holiday. After one trip to Manchester the agent of the Amory objected to further visits of the students, on the peculiar ground that they were using their common-sense in too great a degree, and were carrying away the mill secrets which it had taken the managers many years to accumulate and apply to the business. The Tremont and Suffolk Mills in Lowell have, however, been opened to the department, and regular work will go on there for the next five or six weeks. The first Lowell trip was made on Saturday last.

The late transit of Venus curiously proved the accurate calculations of the ancient makers of that famous horological curiosity, the Strasbourg clock. A few days before the transit, the American Register tells us, visitors to the cathedral inspecting in the planetarium attached to the clock noticed that one of the small gilt balls representing Venus was gradually moving toward a point between the sun and the earth, and on the day of the passage the ball stood exactly between them. Old Conrad Dasypobius, the Strasbourg mathematician, superintended the manufacture of the clock and its accompanying planetarium some time between 1571-74, the dates differing according to various authorities; and it is interesting to note that, after three hundred years of existence, the clock faithfully fulfils the calculations of its dead inventor. — Ex.

[We are of the opinion that we are not quite sure whether we can positively say that we are fully confident that the above account is worthy entire credence — Eds.]