Dr. Tesla recently told the editors an amusing incident in this connection. He had approached a Wall Street capitalist — a prominent lawyer — with a view of getting financial support and this gentleman called in a friend of his, a well-known engineer at the head of one of the big corporations in New York, to pass upon the merits of the scheme. This man was a practical expert who knew of the failures in the industrial exploitation of alternating currents and was distinctly prejudiced to a point of not caring even to witness some tests. After several discouraging conferences Mr. Tesla had an inspiration. Everybody has heard of the “Egg of Columbus.” The saying goes that at a certain dinner the great explorer asked some scoffers of his project to balance an egg on its end. They tried it in vain. He then took it and cracking the shell slightly by a gentle blow, made it stand upright. This may be a myth but the fact is that he was granted an audience by Isabella, the Queen of Spain, and won her support. There is a suspicion that she was more impressed by his portly bearing than the prospect of his discovery. Whatever it might have been, the Queen pawned her jewels and three ships were equipt for him and so it happened that the Germans got all that was coming to them in this war. But to return to Tesla’s reminiscence. He said to these men, “Do you know the story of the Egg of Columbus?” Of course they did. “Well,” he continued, “what if I could make an egg stand on the pointed end without cracking the shell?” “If you could do this we would admit that you had gone Columbus one better.” “And would you be willing to go out of your way as much as Isabella?” “We have no crown jewels to pawn,” said the lawyer, who was a wit, “but there are a few ducats in our buckskins and we might help you to an extent.”

Fig. 4. This photograph represents a collection of a few of Tesla's wireless lamps, such as he proposes to use in lighting isolated dwellings all over the world from central wireless plants. The two lamps at either corner at the bottom are illuminated, owing to the fact that a high frequency oscillator was in operation some distance away when this photograph was being taken. These tubes were filled with various gases for experimental research work in determining which was most efficient.

Mr. Tesla thus succeeded in capturing the attention and personal interest of these very busy men, extremely conservative and reluctant to go into any new enterprise, and the rest was easy. He arranged ror a demonstration the following day. A rotating field magnet was fastened under the top board of a wooden table and Mr. Tesla provided a copper-plated egg and several brass balls and pivoted iron discs for convincing his prospective associates. He placed the egg on the table and, to their astonishment, it stood on end, but when they found that it was rapidly spinning their stupefaction was complete. The brass balls and pivoted iron discs in turn were set spinning rapidly by the rotating field, to the amazement of the spectators. No sooner had they regained their composure than Tesla was delighted with the question: “Do you want any money?” “Columbus was never in a worse predicament,” said the great inventor, who had parted with his last portrait of George Washington in defraying the expenses of the preparation. Before the meeting adjourned he had a substantial check in his pocket, and it was given with the assurance that there was more to be had in the same bank. That started the ball rolling. Tens of millions of horsepower of Tesla’s induction motors are now in use all over the world and their production is rising like a flood.