

Miscellaneous.

Indian Numerals.

Some singular developments are detailed by the National Intelligencer, which appear in the inquiries which are making under the authority of Congress at the Indian Bureau. It is found that while we are paying large annuities to many of the tribes who are still in the mere hunter and barbaric state, these tribes do not comprehend the simplest rules of addition and division. None of them have the slightest idea of mental arithmetic. They cannot multiply or divide a figure. And they have no clear appreciation of even moderate sums, of say five or ten thousand dollars, unless the pieces of coin are spread out before them.—But for all large sums they are in the dark, and are entirely unable to understand a mental divisor. Some of them cannot count a thousand. Bundles of small sticks tied up, are the ordinary mode of counting.

Their arithmetical root is clearly decimal.—Five fingers on each hand, held up, is a decimal; five toes on each foot, appealed to, converts this into a vingtesimal. There are separate words for the digits, from one to ten.—*Mi-tet-wa*. The nine former are then added after the latter to nineteen. Twenty is denoted by a new term *mi-tun-a*. The digits from one to nine are then added to this word till twenty-nine. Thirty is compound, meaning three tens; forty four tens, and so on, to ninety-nine. One hundred is a new term in *twank*. The terms one, two, three, &c., &c., uttered before this, render the account exact to one thousand, which is called a *great twank*, and the same prefixure of the names for the digits can be repeated to ten thousand. This is the Algonquia mode. But the pieces of money, or things of any kind, must be shown, to enable them to understand the sum. There is absolutely no mental appreciation of sums. This denotes how carefully, how simply and pains takingly money transactions should be conducted with the Indians, and how liable they are to misunderstand offers made for their lands, and to misapprehensions or deception.

The more advanced tribes are better arithmeticians. They have profited by education, and more by intermixture of races. The Choc-taws have native terms to ten hundred thousand. By adopting, at this point, the English terms "million" and "billion," with a peculiar orthography, they can compute higher. The agent for the Cherokees report original terms for very high sums—which, however, there is reason to believe, not one in a thousand of the common people understand.

The Bird and the Snake.

The Mobile Herald, of the 21st ult., relates the following: "Two gentlemen of our acquaintance, of unimpeachable veracity, witnessed a scene the other day worth recording. They observed at a distance of some thirty feet from them, very strange and unaccountable conduct on the part of a bird, commonly called the 'cow bird,' resembling in color and shape the mockingbird of this region, though somewhat smaller. One watching it narrowly they discovered that it was engaged in a conflict with a snake some eighteen or twenty inches in length. In a few moments the bird was victorious. It suddenly caught the snake by the head, and, flying with it to an old pine tree, succeeded, after a hard struggle, in fastening it to a pointed splinter. Thus pinioned, the snake was entirely helpless. The bird watched it for a moment with apparently the utmost complacency, and then continued its repast, devouring within ten or fifteen minutes three-fourths of the length of the snake."

[This is a snake story, and no mistake!]

Relics of Franklin.

An original portrait of Benjamin Franklin sold at auction in Boston, a few days since, for three hundred dollars. Twenty-five pieces of China ware, which formerly belonged to Franklin, were next offered. One large cake plate sold for thirteen dollars, and a bowl, with a large piece broken out of the rim, for five dollars and a half. An attempt was made to sell the tea-plates, but as only seventy-five cents were bid for a cracked one, the sale was

stopped—a much larger price having been offered at private sale for the lot.

That Mummy.

Well, our Boston scientific friends have paid the piper in the \$5 ticket, to see Gliddon's mummy unrolled. It was a most wonderful mummy that—the virgin priestess of a great priest who dwelt in Egypt 1900 years before our blessed era. Well, it was worth \$5 to see such a character revealed from amid her swaddling bands of linen and what not. How important was the subject, how intricate the wrappers!—more mysterious than a Boston one truly. Three days—yes, three long days were occupied in the unrolling process. How eloquently Gliddon discoursed on the subject—the age, the glowing virgin beauty of the within, as she long, long ago used to sing by the banks of the Nile. We can imagine the interest that was excited in the countenances of that intelligent and select audience, as Gliddon approached the last wrapper, and exclaimed, "Behold the hour is at hand!" There she was, the ancient maiden of the Delta, the long hid, the long desired to be gazed upon; but alas! for the changes of time upon the human race, she was a *man*—yes, a *man*! Some felt shockingly disappointed; but why should they? Perhaps it was no mistake at all. The sexes may now be misunderstood by us. The Egyptian women may have been men. There was Semiramis and the old Amazons. That is surely some evidence to prove this assertion. We therefore think that Mr. Gliddon had no right to say, that a mistake happened in the mummy family.

Decay of Peach Trees.

A singular fact and one worthy of being recorded, was mentioned a few days since by Mr. Alexander Duke, of Albermarle. He stated, that whilst on a visit to his neighbor, his attention was called to a large orchard, every tree in which had been totally destroyed by the ravages of the worm with the exception of three; and these three were probably the most thrifty and flourishing peach trees he ever saw. The only cause of their superiority known to his host, was an experiment made in consequence of observing that parts of worm-eaten timber, into which nails had been driven, were generally sound. When his trees were about a year old, he had selected three of them and driven a ten-penny nail through the body as near the ground as possible; whilst the ballance of the orchard had gradually failed and finally yielded entirely to the ravages of the worms, these three trees, selected at random, treated precisely in the same manner, with the exception of the nailing, had always been vigorous and healthy, furnishing him at that very period with the greatest profusion of the most luscious fruit. It is supposed that the salt of iron afforded by the nail is offensive to the worm, whilst it is harmless or even beneficial to the tree.—[Southern Planter.]

[As the decay of peach trees is a source of great trouble to our pomological friends, we insert the above hoping it may prove to be a correct remedy for the decay of the peach tree. It can easily be tried.]

Asphaltum of New Brunswick.

We have received a specimen of asphaltum from the County of Albert, in the Province of New Brunswick. It is the material from which Prof. Gesner obtains his new kerosene light, and for the use of which, in the manufacture of gas and a peculiar kind of retort required for its ready productions, he has obtained a patent in the United States and in other countries. This new and very beautiful material has been analyzed by Doctor Chilton, Doctor Jackson, C. T. Harris and others, who had found that it yields a much greater quantity of volatile matter than the best description of gas coal, and that the gas possesses very high illuminating powers, although it is said to be in some respects inferior for the above purpose to the asphalt of the great pitch lake of Trinidad. We understand that the Professor has commenced operations at the establishment of Messrs. Walworth Nason & Guild, John st., where the works and the light are open to inspection and scrutiny.

We will notice this again at greater length.

Fulton and John Fitch.

An Association has been organized to build a monument on the Ohio, to the memory of Fulton. It seems to us that no person, who is acquainted with the history of John Fitch, can regard this move with the proper favor, while the ill-fated genius whose successful efforts on the Delaware preceded those of Fulton, ten years, lies neglected—his last prayer, that his bones might be buried among those knolls of the Ohio, which would one day reverberate with the pantings of his own invention—forgotten. What has become of the design, originated three years since, to raise a monument to Fitch?—[St. Louis Reveille.]

[That is right, Mr. Reveille. The Hudson is the river where Fulton's monument should be executed. The unfortunate but ingenious John Fitch should have one on the Ohio.]

Telegraph Between England and Russia.

The Emperor of Russia has decided on placing St. Petersburg in Telegraphic communication with Vienna and Berlin, by means of electric telegraph, which will also pass through Warsaw and Posen. The wires are now being laid down between Berlin and St. Petersburg and the Black Sea. When the continuous line of wire, an important part of which is now being sunk submerinely between Dover and Calais, is completed in connection with the continent, a person in London may hold almost instant communication with another in Russia.

Southern Machine Shop.

We learn from one of our Southern correspondents that Messrs. Poe & Co., have in course of construction at Augusta, Geo., a machine shop 100 feet long, 50 feet wide and 3 stories high, together with additional buildings for smith shop and foundry, which are intended for the manufacture of cotton machinery, mill work &c. The tools are mostly from the manufactory of Messrs. Gay, Silven & Co., No. Chelmsford, Mass. The projectors of this establishment intend to have a good shop and to turn out as good work as any other in the country, which we trust they may be fully able to realize. The rapid increase of manufacturing through the South and South-west calls for the introduction of the machine shop, and we are gratified to perceive this enterprise coming into operation.

Notice

Our readers are referred to the advertisement of Messrs. Sherry & Byram, in another column. We are prepared to state that as a practical mechanic, Mr. Byram has no superior in this country, and the experience which he has had in this peculiar branch fully establishes his reputation as one of the first clock makers in the world. He is also the inventor of recent valuable improvements in the pendulum, for which he is about to secure a patent.

Wearing away of a Shoal.

The Savannah, Ga., Republican, of the 10th inst. mentions that the Shoal known as the "Wrecks," about two miles from that city, is gradually disappearing. In confirmation of this, it states that the British barque Sir Hen-Pottinger had loaded at town to a draft of sixteen feet two inches, and proceeded directly to sea without detention, on an ordinary spring tide. Since that time a large number of vessels have loaded to a draft of over fifteen feet, and passed over without difficulty; and on Saturday last the ship Georgia went down with a draft of sixteen feet four inches, two days before the highest spring tide.

A New Propeller.

A new Steamer named the Constitution has been built in Philadelphia, fitted with machinery and Loper's Propeller, which has made astonishing speed, viz., 13 miles per hour.—Her boilers are the first made of so large a size, on Capt. Loper's patent combination of perpendicular tubes and water tables, and their performance proved most conclusively their superiority over those of the ordinary construction. So perfect was the combustion of the coal that not a particle of cinders was thrown from the smoke pipe, and the boat travelled a distance of twelve miles without having a shovel full of coal thrown into the fur-

naces. Her engines also worked admirably. With but 24 lbs. of steam to the square inch, the propeller made fifty-four revolutions in a minute and yet worked so easily as scarcely to be perceptible. This boat is warranted to run at least ten miles an hour at sea with not more than five tons of coal in the twenty-four hours. She has been sold by her builders, Messrs. R. F. Loper and Lincoln & Co., to Lieutenant S. B. Bissell, of the United States Navy, who is to command her in the California trade, being designed to carry passengers between Panama and San Francisco.

New Use for Opera Glasses.

These useful and pleasing articles are put to a use in New England which was not probably contemplated by their European manufacturers. The most valuable and powerful glasses are sold for whale ships, for use at the mast head, in searching for whales. They are more powerful than the most valuable spy glass, while their small size enables the sailor to use them with greater convenience, and much less fatigue. The glasses used for this purpose cost \$25 to \$30 each, and have lenses of great power.

Gigantic Reptile.

At a recent meeting of the Royal Institution in London, Prof. Owen exhibited among other fossils the arm bone of an extinct species of Lizard, which was four and a half feet long and thirty-two inches in circumference. Prof. O. remarked that the animal to which this belonged must have been 90 feet in length.

Death of Miss Jane Porter.

The English papers by the Atlantic announce the death, on the 23d ult., of this lady, at the residence of her brother, Dr. W. O. Porter, in Bristol. The lady was in her 74th year. Her name will be familiar to all as the author of the "Scottish Chiefs," and other novels and romances. The immediate cause of her death was pulmonary apoplexy. Her faculties were retained to the last.

We are often enquired of by our country subscribers anticipating a visit to this city, as to "which hotel we can recommend them to stop at." For the benefit of all interested, we would state that so far as we can judge, "Lovejoy's Hotel" is by far the most agreeable home, to be found in this city for a business man. It is under the efficient management of James S. Libby, Esq., whose attention to guests has become familiar to nearly the whole country, for we do not hesitate to say that his house accommodates more guests in 12 months than any in America, and but one opinion exists in reference to it. The prices are reasonable and the accommodations ample and of a superior character.

Washington Irving, for a long series of years, enjoyed the privilege of copyright in England, but within the few past months, such has been the indignation with which American obduracy on the subject of an international copy-right law has been regarded in England, this privilege no longer exists, either for him or others of our countrymen. A Mr. Bohn is pirating his and other American writers' works by wholesale, and selling them at a shilling a volume.

A man has started for California by the overland route, with his effects in a "wheel-barrow." He is spoken of in the western papers, and his doings chronicled under the head of "the wheel-barrow emigrant." When last heard from he was beyond New Fort Kearney, three hundred miles from his starting point rolling on in fine health and spirits.

Fruit will be very abundant in Massachusetts this season. Apple trees have not made such a display of blossoms for several years, and cherries, pears, peaches and plums also give rich promise. Strawberries, currant and other small fruits are all doing well, and we in the city may expect soon to be supplied "at a reasonable rate."

Another Mathematical Wonder has sprung up in Pittsburgh in a boy ten years of age, named Theodore Hartman, who will respond to the most difficult arithmetical questions with a few moments mental operation.