

Paris. The whole literati of the capital attended his funeral, and the most eminent supporters of French literature carried him to the grave. Victor Hugo pronounced the funeral oration—The great Barbarigo Gallery of Venice, known and celebrated for ages, has been lately purchased by the Emperor of Russia for 560,000 francs—The celebrated Latin Lexicon of Freund, edited by Prof. Andrews, is about being re-published by the Harpers. It will be a huge volume. It gives an account of all the Latin words found in the writings of the Romans from the earliest times to the fall of the Western Empire, the literary periods of their use, &c., &c.—Sir Martin Archer Shee, President of the Royal Academy, died at Brighton on the 19th August—Thackeray, a distinguished English writer and a contributor of *Punch* is about paying America a visit for the purpose of giving Lectures, as James is now doing at Boston—Charles Knight announces for 1851 a *Cyclopaedia of the Industrial Arts*.—The amount of the California gold received at the American mint from Dec., 1848, to June, 1850, was \$15,150,000, of which \$15,000,000 were entered at New-York—Wax figures of Drs. Webster and Parkman are being exhibited in the U.S.—Mr. Macauley, the eminent historian, was mentioned as a candidate for the representation in Parliament of the University of Cambridge, but declined.

Royal Polytechnic Institution.—A new and highly interesting mode of propulsion is now being exhibited at this Establishment, entitled, "The Nova Motive." It consists of a series of carriages, carrying with them a flexible tube, which is air-tight. This tube has a series of slide-valves, entirely under the care of a guard, who, by levers, has perfect control over his train. Along the whole line of railway is laid a pipe of any given diameter, in connexion with which, a series of pistons are fixed, between the rails, intended to receive the tube, above mentioned, in its passage. In these pistons are atmospheric valves, opening into the fixed pipe, which is always kept exhausted, so that when the train passes over the pistons, the slide valves in the tube are opened by means of inclined planes communicating with the levers, which levers are raised up on the train passing. The atmospheric air exists in the tube to supply the vacuum, and the train is impelled by external atmospheric pressure.

British Museum.—The reading-rooms of the British Museum were opened on Monday morning, when the readers were gratified with the exhibition of a "supplementary" catalogue in 150 volumes. Two copies are placed in the room for the use of the public, whose convenience has also been consulted by a new arrangement of lights, desks, seats, and of volumes for reference: indeed, the works now standing close to the hand of every reader form a splendid library in themselves, collected for gentlemen of moderate attainments in general literature.

Discovery of Archives of the Ancient Assyrian Empire.—At the recent meeting of the British Association, in the Ethnological Section, Major Rawlinson, at the close of some remarks on the interpretation of the Assyrian mode of writing, observed "that we had every prospect of a most important accession to our ethnological materials, for every letter he got from the countries now being explored, announced fresh discoveries of the utmost importance. In Lower Chaldea, Mr. Loftus, the geologist to the Commission appointed to fix the boundaries between Turkey and Persia, had visited many cities which no European had ever reached before, and had everywhere found the most extraordinary remains. At one place, Senkereh, he had come on a pavement, extending from half an acre to an acre, entirely covered with writing which was engraved upon baked tiles, &c. At Wurka, (or Ur of the Chaldees,) whence Abraham came out, he had found innumerable inscriptions; they were of no great extent, but they were exceedingly interesting, giving many royal names previously unknown. Wurka (Ur or Orchoe) seemed to be a holy city, for the whole country, for miles upon miles, was nothing but a huge necropolis. In none of the excavations in Assyria had coffins ever been found, but in this city of Chaldea there were thousands upon thousands. The story of Abraham's birth at Wurka did not originate with the Arabs, as had sometimes been conjectured, but with the Jews; and the Orientals had numberless tales about Abraham and Nimroud. Mr. Layard, in excavating beneath the great pyramid at Nimroud, had penetrated a mass of masonry, within which he had discovered the tomb and statue of Sardanapalus, accompanied by full annals of the monarch's reign engraved on the walls. He had also found tablets of all sorts, all of them being historical; but the crowning discovery he had yet to describe. The palace at Nineveh, or Koynujuk, had evidently been destroyed by fire, but one portion of the building seemed to have escaped its influence; and Mr. Layard, in excavating in this part of the palace, had found a large room filled with what appeared to be the archives of the empire, ranged in successive tablets of terra cotta, the writings being as perfect as when the tablets were first stamped. They were piled in huge heaps from the floor to the ceiling, and he wrote to him (Major Rawlinson) stating that he had already filled five large cases for despatch to England, but had only cleared out one corner of the apartment. From the progress already made in reading the inscriptions, he believed

we should be able pretty well to understand the contents of these tablets—at all events, we should ascertain their general purport, and thus gain much valuable information. A passage might be remembered in the book of Ezra, where the Jews having been disturbed in building the Temple, prayed that search might be made in the house of records for the edict of Cyrus permitting them to return to Jerusalem. The Chamber recently found might be presumed to be the house of records of the Assyrian kings, where copies of the royal edicts were duly deposited. When these tablets had been examined and deciphered, he believed that we should have a better acquaintance with the history, the religion, the philosophy, and the jurisprudence of Assyria 1,500 years before the Christian era than we had of Greece or Rome during any period of their respective histories."

Terra Cotta.—This is a species of artificial stone which is beginning to be generally used in England for a variety of purposes. Its first introduction into that country was by a lady, named Miss Goode, and took place about 60 years ago. This lady attained considerable celebrity by its manufacture, and several structures of an ornamental character, have been formed of it. The Statue of Britannia, which crowns the Nelson monument, at Yarmouth, is made of this material, and offers a singular instance of its durability; since the natural stone of the monument begins to give signs of decay, while the terra cotta remains unimpaired. The ornamental appendages of the St. Pancras' Church are all made of this artificial stone, and cost £6,500. The ingredients of English terra cotta are potter's white clay, one-half; pulverized stone ware, one-fifth; pulverized glass, two-fifths, and powdered white sand and flint, two-fifths. A beautiful material, of a similar character, in some respects, is made in New-York, and goes by the name of Leagliola.

Curious Calculation relating to the Building for the Great Exposition of 1851.—It is stated that the building for the exposition of 1851 will contain 500 miles of window sashes, 100 miles putty, 54 miles of zinc guttering, 8 miles to drive under cover. The building will be wholly of glass, wood frame and iron pillars. In one position the spectator will be able to see 1,000 feet before him in one unbroken view. It is believed that the building will be so superb that the public, on whose behalf the opposition has been made, will be the first to oppose its removal. A writer in the *Builder* states that 150 tons of putty will be required to make the building.

Millions of Pages.—The New-York Methodist Book Concern printed, in 1845, seventy-nine millions seven hundred and sixteen thousand pages of Sunday-school books; in 1847, forty-seven millions seven hundred and eighty-eight thousand pages; and, in 1848, forty-six millions nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand; making the astounding aggregate of one hundred and seventy-four millions five hundred and three thousand pages of Sunday-school books in three years. To this must be added the annual circulation of about eighty-five thousand copies of the *Sunday School Advocate*.

Geological Survey of Mississippi.—The Legislature of Mississippi, at its late Session, ordered a geological and agricultural survey of the State to be made under the direction of Professor Millington, of the State University, and gave a very liberal appropriation of funds for carrying this desirable object into immediate operation. A long list of statistical inquiries has also been made out and printed, and is now in circulation, for obtaining authentic information on the state of education, agriculture, and geology, together with the literature, history, and healthiness of each particular county in the State.

Time of the Morning Song of different Birds—From actual observation.—Probably one of the most curious examples of the apparently trifling pursuits of scientific men has been exhibited by one of the most esteemed members of the Academy of Sciences of Paris, M. Dareau de la Malle. He was anxious to ascertain at what hour different birds began their morning song; he therefore from the 1st of May to the 6th of July, made observations which he regularly published. It appears that for thirty years this vigilant naturalist went to bed at 7 o'clock in the evening and rose at midnight, during spring and summer, and that this eccentric habit was for scientific purposes. It seems that the concert is opened, about one o'clock, by the chaffinch, and that the sparrow is the laziest bird, not leaving his nest until five o'clock. In the intermediate hours, at marked intervals, which M. de la Malle has carefully noted down, other birds commence their natural melody. He has shown, on more than one occasion, that the different birds have mistaken artificial light for the dawning of day, and that a solar lamp has awakened the little choristers.

Silence on the Prairies.—One of the most striking things is the silence of the prairies. It is absolutely awful. All night, when the moon has gone down, and the stars are all out, to stand in the centre of one of these mammoth plains and mark the dead unbroken silence that surrounds you, is deeply impressive. I never witnessed any effect like it. Not a solitary sound can be heard—no insect, no bird, no beast, no human voice—or step, but all is one space of grand and fearful silence.