

Literary and Scientific Intelligence.

—THE NEW READING ROOM OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM—This magnificent room contains ample accommodation for 300 readers. Each person will have a separate table, four feet three inches long. He is screened from the opposite occupant by a longitudinal division, which is fitted with a hinged desk graduated on sloping racks, and a folding shelf for spare books. In the space between the two, which is recessed, an ink-stand is fixed, having suitable penholders. Thus the whole table top is free from writing implement or other embarrassments, and every precaution is taken to preserve the books if the readers will but use common care. The frame-work of each table is of iron, forming air distributing channels, which are contrived so that the air may be delivered at the top of the longitudinal screen division, above the level of the heads of the readers, or, if desired, only at each end pedestal of the tables, all the outlets being under the control of valves. A tubular foot rail also passes from end to end of each table, which may have a current of warm water passed through it at pleasure, and be used as a foot-warmer if the reader have a slow circulation, or perchance there comes a Moscow Winter. It is calculated that the inner library shelves in galleries within the Dome room will contain 80,000 volumes. Two lifts are placed at convenient stations for the purpose of raising the books to the level of the several gallery floors. For convenience of access to the galleries, the staircases have been placed so that, throughout the building, they are within forty feet of each other. The building contains three miles lineal of bookcases, and which in all the cases are eight feet high; assuming them all to be spaced for the average of octavo book size, the entire ranges form twenty-five miles of shelves. The cost, above £150,000, includes the fittings and furniture and the necessary shelves for the working of the existing library establishment. The decoration of the interior dome is happily an exception to the monotonous and dingy shadows usually adopted in this country. Light colors and the purest gilding have been preferred. The great room therefore, notwithstanding its circular shape, has an illuminated and elegant aspect. The growth of the British Museum Library has been rapid since the days when the late Mr. Disraeli and two or three others were all who availed themselves of the books and manuscripts which were stored in Montague House, and the changes since then have been great. The number of readers who now use the Library annually is upward of thirty thousand. In 1836, two years before the opening of the old reading room, the library of printed books consisted of 230,000 volumes. In 1851, it consisted of 470,000 volumes, or at the rate of 16,000 volumes a year on an average. It is probable that the increase of books added to the British Museum will, as education advances among the masses of the people, both at home and abroad, be much more than 16,000 volumes annually; but even at that the library in 1900 (forty-three years hence) will contain 1,270,000 volumes. In 1851, the library occupied 51,050 feet, or very nearly ten miles of shelves; at the end of this century the shelves will extend nearly thirty miles, or ten miles further than from London to St. Alban's.

—A NUBLE DONATION TO THE NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY.—Letters recently received from Mr. J. V. L. Pruyn, now in Europe, advise the trustees of the State Library, that the Great Seal Patent Office of Great Britain has granted his application, on behalf of the State of New York, for a copy of the great work on patents now being published by the British Government, and of which but 250 copies are printed. This publication is comprised in two series. Of the old series, or patents granted prior to 1852, there are 14,200 specifications, which will fill not less than 200 folio and 200 quarto volumes. In the new series, extending from 1852 to 1857, there are about 13,000 specifications, which will fill about 170 folio, and the same number of quarto volumes. The whole work, therefore, will be completed in about 740 folio and quarto volumes, the cost of which (a single set,) is not less than \$25,000. Through the advocacy of Senator Wadsworth, the requisite appropriation for the binding of this splendid work, \$4,000, was made at the last session.—*Albany Atlas*.

—THE INDIAN MATERIA MEDICA.—The Government of India pays upwards of £40,000 a year for quinine alone. Notwithstanding this vast expenditure, the supply might be tripled with advantage. Indents for quinine are jealously watched. At civil stations it is almost refused, and during an outbreak of fever it is always the first article to fall short, and the last to be sufficiently replaced. Of the cost of the remaining drugs we are not informed, but it can scarcely fall short of something like thirty laes of rupees a year. These two figures are sufficient to prove the importance, in an economical point of view, of the substitution of native drugs. There is probably not a medicine imported from Europe, not a

costly drug from South America, which has not its counterpart in India. A skilled chemist, communicating with all India, testing every drug, and bringing all experience into one focus, would do more in a year to ascertain the true qualities of the native pharmacopœia than the board will accomplish in a century. Such an officer would be no very expensive addition to the staff of the medical service.—*Bombay Telegraph*.

Departmental Notices.

PRIZES IN SCHOOLS.

The Chief Superintendent will grant one hundred per cent. upon all moneys transmitted to him by Municipalities or Boards of School Trustees for the purchase of books or reward cards for distribution as prizes in Grammar and Common Schools.

SCHOOL REGISTERS.

School Registers are supplied gratuitously, from the Department, to Grammar and Common School Trustees in Cities, Towns, Villages and Townships by the County Clerks—through the local Superintendents. Application should therefore be made direct to the local Superintendents for them, and not to the Department. The supply for the present year has been sent out.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO TEACHERS.

Public notice is hereby given to all Teachers of Common Schools in Upper Canada, who may wish to avail themselves at any future time of the advantages of the Superannuated Common School Teachers' Fund, that it will be necessary for them to transmit to the Chief Superintendent, without delay, if they have not already done so, their annual subscription of \$4, commencing with 1854. The law authorizing the establishment of this fund provides, "that no teacher shall be entitled to share in the said fund who shall not contribute to such fund at least at the rate of one pound per annum." This proviso of the law will be strictly enforced in all cases; and intimation is thus early given to all Teachers, who have not yet sent in their subscriptions, to enable them to comply with the law, and so prevent future misunderstanding or disappointment, when application is made to be placed as a pensioner on the fund.

TEACHER WANTED.

A HEAD MASTER wanted immediately for the Union Grammar and Common School of Cayuga, County of Haldimand. A liberal salary will be given. Apply to Mr. Winram, Secretary to the Board. Cayuga, 25th July, 1857.

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All communications to be addressed to Mr. J. GEORGE HODGINS, Education Office, Toronto.