

should clearly perceive the import of the signs positive and negative, and be impressed with a full confidence of their use in a process of reasoning.

The principles here adopted are rigorous in the highest degree, and the mode of applying them is interestingly novel; but we cannot accord assent to the confused appearance of the pages, for it is our firm conviction that a succinct system of ordering the steps of operation greatly facilitates the acquisition of the subject, and gives the reader a taste for accurate arrangement. We, however, recommend the work to the students of algebra as being well adapted to the purpose for which it is intended, namely, showing the use and application of the positive and negative signs.

Elementary Practical Geometry. London: Groombridge and Sons, 1853.

As the author of this useful little manual states in his announcement, it is one intended for the young workman, or for pupils in schools where theoretical geometry is not taught. It explains the more simple facts and operations in that science, which every person ought to know, in a manner essentially practical, most of the workings out being in accordance with the system currently recognised as the "rule of thumb." *Ex. græ.*—For drawing an ellipse, "stick two pins upright into paper on a board, a distance apart. Tie one end of a stout thread to each pin, but let the thread be very loose. Cut a notch as near as possible to the point of a pencil; put the thread into that notch, and mark round with the pencil, always keeping it upright, and the thread stretched. The less loose the thread is, the narrower the ellipse will be." This, however, alone would give a meaner notion of the book than it deserves.

Miscellaneous.

BRITISH MUTUAL LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY.—The report, read at the annual meeting of this Society on the 22nd, showed that during the past year the business transacted has exceeded that of any previous year, 261 policies having been issued, assuring 44,108*l.* 15*s.* Since the accounts were made up, 73 more policies have been issued, assuring 14,095*l.* 10*s.* making the gross total assured since the commencement of the Society, 253,244*l.* 4*s.* In addition to these, there are now 27 proposals for assurances, amounting to 7,599*l.* which have either been accepted and are not yet completed, or are under consideration. The deaths during the year have been but three, involving claims amounting to 600*l.* which were immediately admitted and paid; and it may be here worthy of remark, that of these three claims one was a case in which the assurance was effected to secure the repayment of a debt, and that, in the other two instances, the benefits resulted to the widows and orphans of the assured, and at a cost only of about 4*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per cent. upon the amount they received. It is an interesting fact that while the amount received upon policies which have become claims, and those which have been allowed to lapse is 3,887*l.* 10*s.* 11*d.* the claims paid, up to the date of these accounts, amount only to 3,498*l.* 19*s.* The subscription loan classes have been very successful: About forty of these classes are now in full operation; many thousands of pounds have been subscribed and lent out to deserving persons, so far as the directors are capable of judging, who have been greatly benefited by the advances they have obtained, while only a surprisingly trifling amount of loss by bad debts has been incurred. While a channel has thus been provided for the extension of business, in the shape of new policies, the Society has been enabled materially to aid the operations of the classes by way of loans, and it is believed that satisfaction has been given to all who have connected themselves with them.

WAVERS AT DEVONPORT DOCKYARD.—The smiths in the dockyard, whose pay was reduced by the late Board of Admiralty from 4*s.* 4*d.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* a day, have, by order of the present Board, had their original pay restored to them.

A "COMMERCIAL CREDIT MUTUAL ASSURANCE SOCIETY."—A society for mutual assurance against bad debts is now in operation in the City. It is said to be based on principles similar to those which have already been in operation for some years in Paris. The society gives to the assured the full benefit of all the premiums; thus differing from a proprietary society raising a capital, and giving to shareholders, instead of the assured, all the profit arising therefrom. A reserved fund, however, is to be accumulated to a certain amount wherewith to aid assured in times of commercial pressure, and a premium fund for the reduction of future premiums to the preciously assured. Any excess, every five years, is to be divided proportionably amongst the assured. The practical rules of the society are said to have been laid down with a view, amongst other purposes, to prevent fraud or improper speculation on the part of the assured, to restrict individual rights to mutual advantage, and to afford the assured information as to the commercial stability of traders throughout the United Kingdom.

MEMPHIS AND NIMRUD.—At the Syro-Egyptian Society, on the 8th inst. a letter was read from Mr. Harris, of Alexandria, with an account of the French excavations in the neighbourhood of Memphis. There had been opened a gallery, tunnelled into the hills, 2,000 feet long, with cells on each side, each cell containing a huge granite sarcophagus of one of the sacred bulls. There were thirty of these great sarcophagi. Mr. Sharpe gave an account of Mr. Harris's new work on the standards of the Egyptian towns, containing the curious discovery of the list of towns contributing to the cost of each temple. Some of the standards Mr. Harris has been able to identify with the names of the towns. They are all arranged in geographical order, from Nubia to Memphis, and Baïs in the Delta. Mr. Ainsworth read a paper by Dr. Grotfeld, "On the Plan and Destination of the Edifices of Nimrud, according to the Specifications in Mr. Layard's Work." Dr. Grotfeld's two papers entered largely into details concerning the destination of the various edifices and apartments of Nimrud, and developed the mythology of the Assyrians from a primeval worship of the starry hosts, with their golden chariots and their leaders, to Baal, the leader of the most perfect chariot, imaged in the well-known circles which are so variously modified.

A REVOLVING WARDROBE, says a contemporary, has been made by Mr. Johnston, of Gloucester. It can be made to contain any number of books from twelve upwards, on each of which a dress of any kind can be hung: by pulling a cord the whole of these revolve, so that the particular dress required can be at once removed without disturbing the others. Underneath is a space for hat or hand-boxes, &c. which also revolves with the books. This seems to be just an adaptation of the idea of a revolving desk for business papers, &c. such as appeared at the International Exhibition.

ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY AND MUSEUM.—I take the liberty of suggesting to the enterprising class who read your journal, the propriety of supplying, what I have long thought to be a very great and remarkable want, among the public buildings of so renowned a mercantile country, viz. an astronomical observatory and museum, where that wonderful science might not only be taught and illustrated, but also practically pursued. I should think that Government would not refuse to contribute to the erection of such a building, or a site for it in one of our public parks, out of the reach of the vibration of passing carriages, or on Primrose-hill, if the passing of the railway trains through the tunnel there should not render that situation ineligible. They might even be disposed to found a college of astronomy, and in course of time it might become the custom of captains of merchant vessels to pass an examination there before they obtained the command of a ship of any consequence. Such an institution would do honour also to Liverpool and Bristol, and to others of our great seaport towns.

JOHN PRECEVAL.

INAUGURATION OF THE WELLINGTON STATUE.—The colossal statue of the duke, weighing about twelve tons, having been safely removed from Mr. Steel's foundry, and deposited and fixed on its pedestal in front of the Register House, Edinburgh, was inaugurated with great ceremonial, and in the presence of a multitude of people, on Friday last. The uncovering was somewhat appropriately accompanied not only by the firing of the Castle guns, but by thunder and lightning. The bronze of the statue, for the present, retains its natural bright colour, Mr. Steel preferring the slower tarnish of natural influences to the more rapid and blackening agencies of chemistry. The pedestal is of Aberdeen granite, and was designed by Mr. Bryce, architect. The removal was effected under the practical superintendence of Mr. James Gowans. The day of inauguration was a complete holiday in Edinburgh, and the inauguration was graced by a grand masonic and general procession, with military music and other holiday accompaniments.

THE METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATION FOR IMPROVING THE DWELLINGS OF THE INDUSTRIOUS CLASSES has held its annual meeting at Willis's Rooms. Sir Ralph Howard presided. The Earl of Carlisle, Lord Robert Grosvenor, Viscount Ebrington, Earl Fitzwilliam, and several ladies of distinction, were present. The Chairman stated a number of facts which went to show that the affairs of the association are becoming remunerative, even in a pecuniary point of view. The gross rent from the buildings in Old Pancras-road have yielded a net balance, after deducting expenses, of 773*l.* 1*s.* 9*d.* being 19*l.* 12*s.* 4*d.* more than last year. The family dwellings in Albert-street Mile-end New Town, have yielded a similar balance of 523*l.* 4*s.* 11*d.* The chambers for single men, in the same street, have not answered so well, the net return being 137*l.* 2*s.* From the Sobu Chambers the association derived a surplus available for interest on capital of 340*l.* 19*s.* 1*d.*; from the houses in Pleasant-row, 108*l.* 15*s.* 7*d.*; from those in Pelham-street, 134*l.* 19*s.* 10*d.*; and from those in Guy-street, Borough, 36*l.* 10*s.* The report speaks favourably of the progress made by the Ramsgate and Brighton branches of the association, and expresses regret that other towns have not availed themselves of the benefit which the association offers. The directors mean to confine their efforts for the present to providing dwellings for families.

EXPLOSION AT THE OXFORD BATHS AND WASHHOUSES.—The jury on the inquest have given a verdict of accidental death, in which they say, "We are unanimously of opinion that the hot-water cistern should have been an open instead of an enclosed vessel, and that the escapement pipe and valve were too small for the purposes intended, and imperfect in their operation. Having examined the building, we express our opinion, that its erection had been satisfactorily completed, and the foundations were found after the accident to be in a perfect state. The jury cannot separate without earnestly recommending to the committee that in the restoration of the baths and wash-houses they should adopt measures to reconstruct the machinery in accordance with the system adopted in many similar institutions in other parts of this kingdom."

CITY IMPROVEMENTS: MEDAL PRESENTED TO MR. R. L. JONES.—Several of the more influential members of the Corporation of London have presented to Mr. Richard Lambert Jones a gold medal, as a testimonial of their gratitude for the exertions made by him in introducing into the City of London a variety of improvements by which the city has been advanced, art encouraged, and health and commerce promoted.

IMPROVEMENT OF HOLY TRINITY, ROTHSEATH.—The committee for improving this church having waited on Mr. Peter Rolt, the contractor, for a subscription towards the purchase of an organ, he offered at once to erect one at his own cost, and present it to the church, as a proof of the kindly feeling that he entertained towards the inhabitants of the district, with the greater part of whom he had been acquainted from his childhood.