

small, out-of-the-way place, and the opportunities for having a good time were insignificant. The meeting in New York was apparently of a different character, very possibly not less beneficial to the members. Wednesday was devoted to the routine business of the society and the discussion of papers; but on Thursday the members of the society took advantage of the invitation of the managers of the new Croton aqueduct, and made an excursion of inspection along the line of the work.

Two prizes were awarded at the meeting, — one for a paper by Mr. Elliot C. Clarke of Boston, on a report on cement tests; and the other to Mr. A. M. Wellington, for a paper on experiments on journal friction at low velocities. The committee on uniform standard time reported encouraging progress, and stated that seventy-one managers of railways in America have favorably considered the twenty-four o'clock system, and that the Canadian Pacific railway has adopted it, and has changed its time-tables, its clocks, and the employees' watches, to adapt them to the new standard.

At the last meeting, Prof. T. Egleston of Columbia college presented a paper on the cause and prevention of the decay of building-stone. At this meeting Professor Egleston had something to say in regard to the disintegration of the surface of the obelisk in Central park, and took ground similar to that of Mr. Arnold Hague, whose views were published in *Science* for Dec. 11, and held that the disintegration was due to the great changes in temperature to which the obelisk is now exposed, and that the coating of paraffine might arrest the decay, but that nothing short of housing would stop it entirely. He stated that granite will absorb about one per cent of moisture, but that he had found that specimens from the side of the obelisk in London will absorb over seven per cent, this increase being due to its disintegrated condition. So far as the paraffine keeps out moisture, and thus prevents the formation of ice in the cracks, it would aid in the preservation of the stone.

Dr. Rothwell exhibited a system for submarine tunnelling. The company which Dr. Rothwell represents is contemplating tunnelling the Northumberland Straits to Prince Edward Island, which is now often cut off from all communication with the rest of the world for a month at a time, on account of the ice.

The next meeting of the society will probably be in or near Denver. The officers for 1886 are: president, Henry Flad; vice-presidents, T. F. Rowland, T. C. Keefer. The secretary and librarian, John Bogart, was re-elected.

ACCESSIONS TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUM.

THE most complete catalogue ever printed of the Catlin collection of Indian paintings, now in the national museum, will shortly be issued, and will be profusely illustrated. The manuscript is now in the hands of the printer. This catalogue will form an appendix to the 'Report of the national museum for the half-year ending July 30, 1885.'

The national museum has recently received from Paris four life-sized models of Africans, executed by Jules Hebert, — a Wolof, from Cape Verde; a Bambarra, from the upper Niger; a Soumali, from Cape Gardafui; and a Masai, from Lake Victoria Nyanza. These models are clad in native costume, and form a very attractive group in the museum.

AN interesting example of the manner in which the Eskimo amuse themselves is afforded by a collection of twenty-five ivory carved figures, made by Mr. J. W. Johnson at Fort Alexander, Alaska. The group represents the game, 'the tug of war.' Two Eskimo on a raised platform are pulling at a drum-hoop, each one trying to dislodge the other from his position. A group of musicians are playing instruments in the foreground, and the spectators are located on the sides, enjoying the fun. The effect is very spirited, and the whole scene exhibits rare ingenuity.

One of the old tally-sticks used by the bank of England to keep account of loans, before the present system of banking was invented, has recently been acquired by the museum. This specimen bears the date of 1776, and represents a hundred thousand pounds of a loan made at that time. The stick is about four feet in length, and notches are cut on both sides of it. The stick is then split, the government holding one half, and the creditor the other. It is impossible to make any change in the condition of the loan by either party, because the notches on the two sticks would no longer fit, and thus fraud would be detected.

WORTHLESS BAYONETS.

THE examination of bayonets at Aldershot has revealed a state of affairs which is disgraceful to the English war-office, and most discouraging for the public. Three regiments have submitted their bayonets to the test, — the first Royal Lancashire, the second West Riding, and the first Seaforth Highlanders. All turned out very badly, but the badness was not uniform. Out of 700 bayonets belonging to the West Riding regiment, 55 broke under test, and 180 were found soft and otherwise defective, giving an average of failures of a little