

of these in authority, hoping that something will be done in the matter while it is fresh in our minds.

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**A**LTHOUGH the cause of the recent fire will never be known to a certainty, it is supposed that it was due to a lighted cigarette stump which was carelessly tossed aside, or an unignited match head which had dropped near the hot pipes of the radiator. Whichever cause is the real one, it shows a great deal of dangerous carelessness. What has happened before may happen again and under more favorable circumstances. This is not the first time we have had fire from such a cause. About four years ago a conflagration was raised by a cigarette stump being thrown into a waste basket when the occupant of the room went to class. It narrowly escaped being a serious affair, and did prove quite serious for the student himself, his loss being quite considerable. We know from our own observation that such carelessness is all too prevalent, and we can only call it good fortune that we have not had cause to be sorry for it. Fire may break out some night from a smouldering cigarette or cigar, and, before anything can be done, it may get beyond control, making the inmates of the building thankful for even escaping with their lives. One cannot be too careful in such matters, and we hope the recent fire will cause a marked improvement before we have the same truth taught us by a much more forcible object lesson.

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#### HINDOO MATHEMATICS.

NOTE.—I have fears that the title of this paper might seem too bold a compromise between science and language, lest it should suggest a passage in the Pickwick papers, where a distinguished literary light is let loose on the drawing room and announced as the author of a book on "Chinese Metaphysics." To whom, Pickwick's mild remark that he had not heard of the Chinese having any Metaphysics, the author replies, "No, no; that was not my point of view at all. I simply read up the Encyclopedia article 'China', and again

'Metaphysics' and combined my information." Though the present paper is merely a compilation, without the slightest pretence of originality, I assure you that it has not been compiled in the same way, nor from the same sources.

It has occurred to me that it might be interesting to take a brief view of the condition of mathematical learning among the Hindoos as shown in their literature, at a time before it was modified by contact with European research and practice. Prof. Whitney, in the preface to the first edition of his Sanscrit Grammer notes, says that "the astronomical Science of the Hindoos is a reflection of that of Greece, and its literature of recent date;" of that, then, we need take no account; "but as mathematicians, in arithmetic and geometry they have shown more independence." Let us speak first of the latter.

The origin of geometry as known to Europeans, in a few simple land measures used by the Egyptians to re-establish the metes and bounds of their fields in the valley of the Nile after its annual overflow is too well known to need comment; we know, too, that the Greeks made the new science so thoroughly their own, and developed it so far, that almost nothing was done to extend the subject in Europe until the time of Pascal.

Now, turning to the same subject among the Hindoos, we find it beginning in an alleged revelation delivered about four million years earlier, (according to that literal cronology of the Hindoos which utterly vitiates their astronomy,) a time when man was ten feet or more in height, and lived about ten thousand years, and used his time to as little advantage as the notorious Methusalem. In this mass of absurdity one finds the elements of a reliable geometry and in addition the basis for a rational system of trigonometry. (Surga Siddhauto.) The latter, by the way, is treated at length in a learned article by Prof. Playfair in Volume IV, Edinburg Philosophical Transactions.

Like the Babylonians and the Greeks, they divided the circle into three hundred and sixty