WHAT PEOPLE DIE OF.

We shall assuredly have to wait for the coming of the millennium, about which our friends of the Prophetic Conference have lately been exchanging views, before there will be an end of disease and death on the earth. Even among the most orthodox theologians, however, there is a great difference of opinion as to when the happy thousand years are to begin, and some of them doubt whether we shall have any millennium at all of the practical sort young Mr. Tyng believes in.

But while the Doctor and his friends are searching the prophecies, and ciphering out the date of the advent of the day when only the righteous shall remain on the earth to enjoy a thousand years of unclouded happiness, the doctors of medicine are directing their attention to the removal of causes of disease and death which have long been slaying the inhabitants of the world by thousands, bringing about untold misery, and shortening the average of human life. These preventable causes still remain in profusion, and therefore sanitary science has plenty of work before it; but it is steadily diminishing the death rate of civilized countries, and men in them are living longer now on the average than ever before.

We have of late years seen in New York what may be done by sanitary regulations and sanitary precautions in the way of checking disease and lessening the annual mortality, and New Orleans has shown us this year how much may be left undone in the same direction, and what fatal results follow the negligence. The work of removing the preventable causes of disease in the metropolis has only been begun, yet our death rate has already fallen off largely, and each year it is getting lower. New York now stands very well as to health in comparison with the other capitals of the world; and continued vigilance on the part of our health officers will still further cut down the mortality, especially among children under five years of age, whose deaths furnish a vast proportion of the whole mortality in all great cities, and the part which is so greatly the immediate result of bad sanitary conditions and ignorance or neglect of the laws of hygiene.

How much may be done to prevent disease and prolong life by attention to public hygiene is shown by the Massachusetts report for last year of the deaths in that State—a State whose vital statistics are gathered and presented with extraordinary care and fullness. So far as climate goes, Massachusetts is about an average Northern State, and therefore the facts obtainable from the report are of general value and interest.

The total number of deaths recorded in Massachusetts in 1877 was 31,342, an aggregate less by 1,844 than that of 1876. The mortality was at the rate of 18.4 to every thousand of the living, a rate less than that of any year since 1870. It is fortunate that the health of the State was so good last year, because fewer children were born than in 1876, and the birth rate was lower than ever before in the history of Massachusetts, except during 1865. If people did not manage to live to a good age in the old Bay State, and no foreign immigrants came in to swell its population, the census takers would have poor results to show in the ancient home of the Puritans. Still, owing to the reduced mortality, the births, though so small in number, exceeded the deaths by about 10,000. The majority of this natural addition to the population, however, was made by foreign-born parents. Both the births and marriages are fewer in proportion to the inhabitants than in any of the leading countries of Europe, and it is fortunate for the State, therefore, that its average of deaths is also less. Against the death rate of 18.4 to every thousand of the living in Massachusetts in 1877, the returns for 1876 show the rate of England and Wales to be 21; France, 22.7; Prussia, 25.4; and Austria, 29.4 in the thousand.

The health of the State is better, and there are fewer deaths in proportion to the population, in the farming counties than in those more densely peopled. Thus the death rate in Franklin County was only 14.4, and in Berkshire County only 15.1, while in Suffolk County, in which Boston is situated, it was 19.7, and in Essex County, also crowded with people, it was 19.3 in the 1,000. The general experience is that cities are at present more unfavorable to longevity than the country. Young children die off in them in great numbers, owing to defective sanitary precautions, and to the ignorance and improvidence of parents, and the idle and vicious elements of the population tend toward crowded settlements. Nearly one-half of the deaths in Massachusetts occurred in the ten chief cities, and the death rate in them was more than four per cent. greater than in the rest of the State.

In Massachusetts, as also throughout the country, the unhealthiest season of the year is the season of midsummer. Nearly a third of the whole number of deaths in the State occurred in the months of July, August, and September. The healthiest months were April, May, and June. The fewest deaths took place in June and the greatest number in August. February came next to June in its low mortality, and September next to August in its high death rate. Experience shows that our bitterest winter cold is not an enemy to health at all to be compared with the heat of the dog days, and that December, January, and February are among the healthiest months in the year. In England, however, the season of greatest cold is the season of highest death rates.

The deaths of females in Massachusetts in 1877 exceeded the deaths of males, but this was due to the unfortunate fact that the number of females in that State is much greater than that of males. If, however, we calculate the rate of deaths per 1,000 of the living of the two sexes, we find that the mortality was greatest among the males, the rate being 17.63 of females to 18.47 of males. Between the ages of 20 and 30, female lives were more encroached on than male lives, and at ages above 30 and between 5 and 20, the mortality among females was in marked excess. According to universal experience, the deaths of children under 5 years were what went most to swell the mortality total in Massachusetts for 1877. More than a fifth of all the deaths were those of infants; more than a third of the mortality fell on young children. But, numerous as these deaths were, they were less in proportion than in any year of the last decade, and the fact is proof of the better sanitary regulation of the State.

The average age at which death occurred was about thirty years; but if we omit the young children it rises to a very much higher figure, and one which puts Massachusetts among the healthiest communities in the world. Five males and nine females, ten of whom were born in Ireland, died during the year at an age of 100 and more, if we accept as true the returns of their years. An idea of the ages when people are most liable to death may be obtained from these figures. The deaths to each 1,000 living were over 61 under 5 years; over 9 between 5 and 9; a little above 4 between 10 and 14; less than 7 between 15 and 19; about 9 between 20 and 29; a little more than 9 between 30 and 39; over 10 between 40 and 49; over 15 between 50 and 60; over 30 between 60 and 69; about 68 between 70 and 79; and 159 at 80 and over.

The six most fatal diseases in Massachusetts were, first, consumption, which carried off last year 5,457, about one-sixth of all who died; second, diphtheria, which killed 2,624; third, pneumonia, 1,972; fourth, cholera infantum, 1,927; fifth, old age, 1,586; sixth, heart disease, 1,391, out of the total of 31,342 deaths. It is remarkable to see so large a proportion of deaths from old age, outranking the fatality of more controllable conditions, and the proportion is naturally greatest in the rural counties. In infancy, the diarrhœal diseases of summer surpassed all the other causes of death; in the period from 5 to 15, diphtheria was most destructive; toward the end of that period consumption began to assert its sway, and from 15 on to 70 its place is in the front rank of destroyers; typhoid fever found its victims most numerously between the ages of 15 and 30; in middle life, heart disease and pneumonia rank after consumption.

These are a few of the facts gathered from the admirable statistics of Massachusetts; but there are others of an even greater interest.

IRON AND STEEL IN FRANCE.

The recent session of the Iron and Steel Institute at Paris has directed attention to one of the most important industries of France. Not only were general statistics of great utility made public, but some interesting details were brought out by a visit of the members to the iron works of the Messrs. Schnieder, at Creusot, and the equally colossal establishments of the Messrs. De Wendel. The vast scale of these manufactories, and the perfection of their appliances, deserve to be widely known, for nothing in our country more strikingly attests the triumph of systematic organization and executive genius.

One word as to the present volume of iron and steel production throughout France. We must bear in mind that the country is far from possessing the remarkable and almost unlimited resources which have favored the development of the iron industry in England. The French ores are relatively scarce and poor, and need to be largely supplemented with importations from Algeria, Belgium, and Spain. Last year, for example, the making of a million and a quarter tons of pig iron required not less than 975,000 tons of foreign ores. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, it appears that pig iron is now produced for $8.75 per ton, a result not easily or often attainable elsewhere in the world. The fact is that although the cost of fuel is considerably higher than in Great Britain, this disadvantage is more than offset by the large production per shift, and the small consumption of coal, together with the lower rate of wages. As regards the actual amount of output, the figures show a falling off since 1874, although the iron trade in France is by no means so markedly depressed as it is in Germany. The returns for 1877 exhibit a decline of 10,000 tons of crude iron, as against 1866, when the figures were 1,260,000 tons. But while this is the position of the iron industry proper, the manufacture of steel has been steadily advancing. Within twelve years the steel production has increased some six hundred per cent., namely, from 40,000 tons in 1865 to upward of 260,000 in the past twelve-month. Much the largest part of this metal was produced by the Bessemer and Marlin-Siemens processes, and more than half of the whole quantity was devoted to the making of steel rails. In 1877, the French manufacturers supplied no less than 136,000 tons of steel rails to railway companies in their own country. Indeed, the most significant feature of these statistics is the fact that during recent years, while the imports of iron ores have increased, those of steel have been steadily declining. Such is the rate of progress that France may soon expect to be not only self-supporting, but to vie with England in foreign markets as a purveyor of steel.

The Schnieder iron works at Creusot—some 250 miles southeast of Paris—represent an annual production of 190,000 tons of iron and steel, wrought into rails, plates, forgings, and finished engines. As early as 1772 a cannon foundry was established here, but very little was done to utilize the neighboring coal deposits for manufacturing purposes until 1836, when the existing coal mines and iron works were turned over to Messrs. Schnieder. Within five years four blast furnaces were at work, a forge containing fifty furnaces was in operation, one of the first steam hammers ever made had been introduced, and a railway transported the products of the factory to the nearest canal. At the epoch of the Crimean war the works had attained a productive capacity of 150,000 tons of iron, which was taxed, however, to the utmost by the demands for material of war. By and by the mines of Mazenay were purchased and connected with Creusot by a private railway twenty-two miles long, and others were added, until the total number of workmen employed in the five groups of iron stone mines now reaches nearly 2,000, while the total annual production of crude ore is about 400,000 tons. Besides this, supplies are drawn from mines owned by the same firm in Spain and Africa. On the other hand, the yield of coal in all the Schnieder collieries for the year 1877-78 is returned at 549,000 tons, while the coal mines at Creusot alone give employment to 1,200 workmen. Returning to the plant and machinery, we find that in 1869 works on a very extensive scale were erected for the manufacture of Bessemer steel. At present the firm are owners of twenty-seven locomotives and 1,518 wagons, and they employ 281 stationary engines with an aggregate of more than 13,000 horse power, 58 steam hammers, and 1,050 machines of various other kinds. The area covered by the buildings, depots, and workmen's houses is 1,031 acres, while the total number of workmen employed is 15,252, distributed through the several departments. In a word, a flourishing city, which may be termed the Pittsburgh of France, stands on a site occupied by a small hamlet in the middle of the last century.

No less than three establishments are owned by the Messrs. De Wendel, the works at Hayange having been in the possession of the family since 1705, and the other two forges having been opened within the last fifty years. These combined factories produced last year 467,000 tons of iron ore, 322,000 tons of coal, and 145,000 tons of pig iron. It appears that the manufacture of wrought-iron sleepers here receives much attention, especially what is known as Hill's system of iron permanent way, of which there are said to be over 3,000 miles (equivalent to 800,000 tons) already laid upon the Continent. According to the members of the institute who visited these works, the perfect order and cleanliness presented a most favorable contrast with the state of things in English establishments. It was observed likewise that the best and most recently improved forms of machinery had been imported from England, or had been constructed in accordance with the most efficient English practice. When this spirit of enterprise was considered in conjunction with the conditions above noted tending to cheapness of production, the committee of the institute were able to understand why French iron and steel workers are beginning to wrest orders from their English competitors in the markets of the world.

The Grass-Grown Stile.

Unchanged amid a world of change,
It stands with stubborn kindness fast,
Which naught from memory can estrange—
A landmark of the precious past;
Where shade was sought, and time was lost,
And gossips met to chat awhile,
And many a step, now silent, crossed
The ancient grass-grown stile.

Thinned is the grand old wood endeared,
Trimmed the low hedge that ragged grew,
The brook's wild banks precisely sheared,
And even the bridge that spans it new;
A newer path winds in and out
Through many a green and leafy mile,
And makes a studied swerve to flout
The poor old grass-grown stile.

But still the shadows come and go,
And forest-scents are softly blown,
And flowering creepers to and fro
Swing, pendulous, o'er the steps of stone;
To the brook's brink, with thirsty haste,
The lone white-throated sunbeams file,
Yet falter ere the wave they taste
Below the grass-grown stile.

Here pious folk on Sabbaths met,
A-loitering on their way from church;
The schoolboy here his satchel set,
Mindless alike of book or birch;
And here the swain forgot to sing,
And rhymes forsook for jest and smile,
As the blithe milkmaid, carolling,
Tripped o'er the grass-grown stile.

And here fond lovers made their tryst,
To list the tale, forever new,
And mingled sighs, the while they kissed,
And blessed the sweet-stolen interview;
Until, as minutes lapsed to hours,
And rosier grew the impassioned smile,
It seemed an altar, strewn with flowers,
The dear old grass-grown stile!

All silent now, and lorn and gray,
No more is heard the rustic's rhyme,
Nor lover's sound, nor roundelay,
Nor any step save that of Time,
Whose haunting foot no prayer could stay,
Nor any tale of love beguile,
As, hour by hour, and day by day,
He, too, passed o'er the stile.

NATHAN D. URNER.

A RAILWAY TO THE DEAD SEA.

It turns out that France gains something by the Berlin treaty after all, and that her protectorate of Syria, supposed to be a nominal concession, will prove of substantial value. French capitalists have secured a grant for a railway line from Jaffa to the interior of Palestine, which will open up the Jordan valley and the whole region north of the Suez Canal. In certain contingencies this road might become of great military usefulness, but it appears further that the productive resources of the country are considerable, and, what is more surprising, that the Dead Sea itself can be turned to commercial account.

The whole valley of the Jordan, from Jerusalem to Damascus, is extremely fertile, and well adapted to the culture of the olive and the vine. The climate is dry and bracing, and well suited to northern races, as is attested by the fact that the European emigrants now resident in Palestine, and engaged in agriculture, already number some 50,000. Were Jerusalem and Damascus linked by an iron road to the Egyptian railway system, or merely to the coast of the Levant, they would become for Egypt what the slopes of the Himalayas, and other upland resorts, are for the British denizens of India. The well-to-do inhabitants of Cairo and Alexandria would go thither in considerable numbers to restore their health, and escape the prostrating effects of summer in the Nile land. Moreover, the fast increasing European colony in Egypt would look to the same quarter for their food staples. If we except grain, whose production is fast being curtailed, owing to the greater profit derived from cotton and the sugar cane, the banks of the Nile produce almost nothing fit for the nourishment of emigrants from the North. On the other hand, the uplands of Palestine and Syria offer in abundance the cattle, the fowls, the game, the wines, and the fruits of the temperate zone. Indeed, it may be said that Egypt will only become habitable on a large scale for Europeans when the opening of swift and economical communication shall relieve them from bringing at high cost from Trieste or Marseilles not only meats, fruit, and wine, but brick, stone, and plaster for buildings, and combustibles for their manufactures. All these products are plentiful and cheap on the northern side of the Suez Canal, and only await some miles of rails to supply the Nile land abundantly as well as all the desolate stations of the Red Sea, where at present all articles of European consumption must be imported from Great Britain.

It is as a purveyor, however, of fuel, rather than of food, that the region to be opened by the new railway deserves particular attention. Hitherto the main obstacle to the development of steam traffic in the Levant has been the total absence of combustible material. Not only Egypt, but the shores of Syria and the Red Sea are completely stripped of wood, and the coal imported from the West commands a price ranging from $12 to $24 a ton. Now the masses of asphalt continually thrown up by the Dead Sea attest the presence of vast subterranean layers of fossil vegetable matter, and these signs were not long overlooked by the enterprising men attracted to Suez by the opening of the canal and the movement of commerce in that direction. Recently numerous soundings have been made between Jaffa and the Dead Sea which, so far, have not disclosed any deposits of coal proper, but, on the other hand, have laid bare inexhaustible beds of lignite—a mineral, we need not say, which is coming into general use in Europe for the making of smelt iron, and is in great request as a combustible for many other purposes. Of itself this store of lignite is likely to prove an inestimable gain to the industries and commerce of the Levant; but we should add that the juxtaposition of asphalt in great quantities furnishes the elements of a mixture of lignite and asphaltum in the form of bricks, which is equal in heating capacity to the richest bituminous coal, while its cost on the ground is only $2.50 a ton. It is known that similar bricks, made up of coal dust and bituminous débris from gas works, are much sought after by French railways, since, besides their heating power, they greatly facilitate stowage, owing to their regular shape. Of course, the bitumen of lower Palestine has been known from immemorial times, and was used to impart solidity to the structures of unbaked clay in Assyria and Egypt; but it may be said that the discovery of the subterranean combustible has lifted once for all the curse which has so long rested upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and will transform the wasted shores of the Dead Sea into a focus of industry and a magazine of wealth. We are evidently about to witness the introduction of modern civilization and activity into those ancient and long decayed lands.

NORTH CAROLINA'S WARM SPRINGS.

Girls Who Make Nothing of Walking Barefoot Over the Rocky Roads.

From the Baltimore Sun.

The Warm Springs are situated in Madison County, N. C., in the western section of the State, and are surrounded by various spurs of the mountains, known in the immediate section as the Warm Spring Mountains. On every side from the springs rise acclivities of various shapes and beauty—wooded peaks, cut on either side by deep ravines, from which in early morning large squadrons of clouds float off to the adjoining peaks and gradually vanish in the infinite beyond.

The springs are themselves a centre of trade for the mountaineers of the surrounding country where they come to exchange their produce in the way of corn meal, corn on the cob and shelled, raw hides, skins of sheep, bear, and deer, together with chickens, squirrels, pheasants, and other game for the luxuries of coffee, sugar, salt, calico, cloth, powder and shot, and other things that they cannot themselves obtain at home. The stores here (two) deal only for trade or cash payments, making a discount of 12 to 15 per cent. for cash. The parties dealing here come from ten to twenty miles, or more, and make their trades only after a good deal of cautious bargaining, but all seems satisfactory in the end. Chickens, and tender young chickens, at that, sell from 5 to 10 cents apiece; eggs, warranted sound, bring from 8 to 12 cents a dozen; butter, with a good fair complexion, from 10 to 15 cents a pound; pheasants nominally 10 cents apiece, but raised to 25 cents by the aggressiveness of the boarders' appetites; squirrels are dropped from the lofty trees at 5 cents apiece, and chestnuts or "children's fruit," as some people call them, are dealt out at from 4 to 5 cents a quart. Everything else here is in proportion, but the parties bringing in the produce in air are much more unique than the prices charged for them. They are truly a study. They generally come in pairs, threes, fours or fives, and carry their goods on their shoulders, on horseback, in wagons drawn by horses, or, as is more usually the case, by that primitive and Scriptural vehicle, the ox team. There can often be seen here a single ox harnessed to a cart or wagon with regular horse harness and straw collar, or under saddle.

The women and men come together, each having their packages, which they trade separately. There is a peculiarity, too, about the mountain girls; they are not at all native, but come down to the two plain facts of yes or no. They are more hardy than the men, and when your correspondent attempted to express sympathy for a couple of damsels that had trudged fifteen miles barefooted over the rocky roads to reach this place, a venerable mountaineer remarked: "Them gals air tough; mind them rocks at all, but they make the sparks fly outen the flints, you bet." The "gals" here, as elsewhere, are fond of candy, but they only look at it with longing, and buy coffee. Of the men, "Old Uncle Joe," a regular in the mountains, and calling himself 68 years of age, walked here, a twelve miles' stretch, with two bushels of potatoes on his shoulder, and bargained for a pair of boots to hunt bears in. "When you 'tack a bar," Joe says, "you must go for him, and never let up till you have him. If you do," says he, "he's got you, or else your legs is bettern's his'n."

Fifty Cents for so Little a One!

From the Courier-Journal.

Elrod, treasurer of Macauley's Theatre, says the most interesting people he sees are among the feminine portion of the matinee audiences. Not long ago a woman came to the box office in company with a child about 10 years of age.

"I want ein dicket!" said the woman.

"Fifty cents," replied the affable Elrod.

"You don'd sharge anydings for dees shild?"

"Yes'm—fifty cents."

"Vat! for iesele dings like dot?"

"That's the rule."

"V-a-a-t! Feefty cents for a little ding like dot, vat ain'd got no sense?"

Elrod says it required all his nerve to refuse a pass.

Peter Hooper's Appeal.

Peter Hooper of 243 Wallabout street, Williamsburgh, fell on his knees in Justice Guck's court yesterday morning as the Justice was about to sentence him for beating his wife Eliza. Grasping his wife's skirt as she descended from the witness chair, Hooper begged her to forgive him. She pointed to her bandaged head and strove to release his hold. He held on tightly, and, looking from his wife to the Justice, swore that forgiven he would never beat her again. The wife relented, and asked the Justice to discharge her husband. Hooper was discharged.

THE MODERATE USE OF ALCOHOL.

Just now, when the so-called temperance agitation is so animated here, the appearance of three remarkable articles on the alcohol question in the November number of the *Contemporary Review* is a most timely incident. These articles are contributed by three distinguished English medical men, Sir James Paget, the eminent surgeon, Dr. T. Lander Brunton, who succeeded the late Dr. Austie as editor of the *Practitioner*, and Dr. Albert J. Bernays. The authors agree in recommending moderation in the use of alcohol rather than total abstinence.

There is no doubt whatever that total abstinence from alcoholic drink is imperatively necessary in some cases. As Dr. Brunton says, there are certain persons on whom the smallest quantity of alcohol seems to act like the taste of blood on a tiger. Such men must abstain absolutely. To them alcohol is simply a poison. Moreover, it is also wise for those to abstain whose immediate ancestors have been given to over-indulgence in strong drink. The abuse of alcohol is universally condemned by all intelligent persons, and any course which will inevitably or probably lead to it ought to be avoided. In such cases as we have mentioned, where, if a man drinks at all, he is likely if not sure to become a drunkard, all use of alcohol should be forbidden. But the total abstinence agitators go much further, and insist that grave injury, physical and moral, necessarily follows any use of alcohol whatever.

This is not the opinion of these medical practitioners. They advocate temperance, but not total abstinence. "My study," says Sir James Paget, "makes me as sure as I would ever venture to be on any such question, that there is not yet any evidence nearly sufficient to make it probable that a moderate habitual use of alcoholic drinks is generally or even to many persons injurious;" but he concedes the difficulty of defining what moderation is. It seems to us, however, that this difficulty is often exaggerated. Every man is conscious of a certain control of his faculties and clearness of his perceptions when in perfect health. It should be his object at all times to preserve this control and clearness. Any use of alcohol which lessens his ability to do this is manifestly an abuse of it in his case, and one which he can usually detect himself.

The conclusions of Dr. Bernays do not go quite so far as Sir James Paget, though they are in the same direction, as is indicated by the title of his paper, "The Moderate Use of Alcohol True Temperance." His contribution is especially valuable as showing what forms of alcoholic drink are most approved by those members of the medical profession in England—a large majority—who are opposed to total abstinence. Beer comes first; but, if possible, it should be made with malt and hops alone. Beer which produces thirst should be avoided. Next to malt liquor comes wine; but as wines vary so much in the quantity of alcohol they contain, the author advises an admixture of water with such wines as will allow it.

The views expressed in Dr. Brunton's paper on the action of alcohol are of a similar character. He regards alcohol as truly a food. To some persons, however, it is utterly poisonous. To others, who take it as a luxury, it may bring pleasurable sensations, and an increased ability to please the people they meet. And to others still it may become a stimulant to work which would be impossible without it. But it can be tolerated as a luxury or stimulant only in great moderation, and there is undoubtedly some danger of eventual excess to those who use it in either of these ways. "If alcohol were taken only with meals, and its use as an ordinary article of diet restricted to persons suffering from debility or above middle age," says Dr. Brunton, "it would be strictly in its proper place, and we should hear little about its abuse. If the taste for it is not acquired before middle age, there is little risk of acquiring it afterward; and as long as a man is healthy, eating well and sleeping well, he does not need alcohol, and as a rule is better without it." No doubt there would be far less intoxication than there is, if alcoholic drinks were never taken except with food; and we desire to emphasize the writer's condemnation of what he calls the practice of taking nips now and again. This practice is utterly without reason, and is really dangerous.

HOW OPERAS ARE COMPOSED.

Gounod, Meyerbeer, Rossini, Auber, and Offenbach Seen at Work.

From the London Daily News.

Composers differ as much as authors in their manner of working. M. Gounod is one of those whom composition throws into a very fever, and who can bear no interruption or domestic sounds about them while they sit at the piano, thumping the keyboard with one hand and noting down a score with the other. Poor Madame Gounod once drove him wild by coming in to ask him for her thimble while he was endeavoring to link two phrases of an aria.

Meyerbeer used to compose methodically, sitting down to his piano as a business man to his desk, and never showing the least irritation if called away from a work which he seemed able to take up and drop with the utmost ease.

Rossini composed best lying on his back in bed; and if once he was *en veine* he would indeed all day, humming his airs to himself until he had learned them by heart, and scoring down a whole act at a time after he had hummed and rehummed it to his satisfaction. His musical memory was prodigious; but his voice was so untuneful that once an Italian innkeeper, in whose house he once hummed for three whole days at a stretch, ran up to beg him that he would desist, for that his "noise" could be heard throughout the open window and disturbed some English tourists dining *al fresco* down stairs.

Auber, even up to an advanced age, used to derive musical inspiration from a glass or two of champagne; and Wagner can only compose with the assistance of suits of satin clothes of divers colors, which he dons and puts off, according to the style of thing at which he is working. For instance, when spinning off a pastoral duet he will array himself in primrose satin; when he composes a martial chorus, quick he bolts off to his dressing room to don a pair of scarlet satin pantaloons, with tunic and cap to match. These delightful antics were made known to the public through the very distressing circumstance that the author of the "Tannhäuser" was sued by his milliner for the cost of his composing vestments, and was made to pay an extremely long bill.

Among those whom we may call minor composers M. Lecocq is the most happily endowed, for he can forge solos and choruses anywhere and at any time—in trains, in a hot bath, on the top of a bus, in the train, or in a dentist's drawing room while waiting to have a tooth drawn. M. Vasseur, composer of "La Timbale d'Argent," who is an organist by profession, contrives his liveliest melodies by allowing his fingers to run wild over the keys of his large organ, and he, too, is a fertile workman. M. Offenbach, on the contrary, though he has composed so much, is only prolific during the spring time of the year, and while residing by the seaside. If he tries to compose elsewhere, and at other times of the year, his works are worth little, according to his own testimony.

Minister Mantilla and Wife.

From the Courier-Journal.

A private letter from the Marquise de Villa Manilla confirms the intelligence that she and her husband will not return to the United States. She expresses deep regret that there is no prospect of their return, and says that they will always retain the warmest regards for the country and the people they made here. She adds that, the war in Cuba being ended, there is no important business in this country for her husband, and that affairs in the Orient demand his services.

The Spider.

From the Atlantic Monthly.

Spinner of the silken snare,
Fell Arachne in your lair
Tell me, if your powers can tell,
How you do your work so well!

Weaving on, in limb and dark,
Segment and concentric arc,
Lace-like, gossamer designs,
Strict to geometric lines,

Perfect to the utmost part,
Occult, exquisite of art,
How are all these wonders bred
In your atom of a head?

Propositions here involved
Wit of man has never solved;
Demonstrations hard to find
Are as crystal to your mind.

How, in deepest dungeon glooms,
Do your Lilliputian looms
Work such miracles as these—
Faultless, fairy filigrees?

Careless flies that hither flit
Come to die; but there you sit,
Feeling with your fingers fine
Each vibrating, pulse-like line;

Eager to anticipate
Hourly messages of Fate—
Funeral telegrams that say,
"Here is feasting one more day!"

Spider, only He can tell
How you do your work so well,
Who in life's mysterious ways
Knows the method of the maze.

H. S. CONWELL.

THE NUT-PINE FORESTS OF NEVADA.

Picturesque Indian Nutting Parties—Getting In a Winter's Supply.

From the San Francisco Bulletin.

Every mountain, however far it swells into the sky, seems utterly barren. Approaching nearer, a low brushy growth is seen, strangely black in aspect, as though it had been burned. This is a nut pine forest, the bountiful orchard of the red man. When you ascend into its midst you find the ground beneath the trees, and in the openings, also, nearly naked, and mostly rough on the surface. A succession of crumbling ledges of lava, limestone, slate and quartzite, coarsely strewn with soil weathered from them by storms and sunshine; here and there a bunch of sage or linosyris, or a purple cluster or tuft of dry bunch grass. The harshest mountain sides, hot and waterless, seem best adapted to its development. No slope is too steep, none too dry; every situation seems to be gratefully chosen, if only it be sufficiently rocky and firm to afford secure anchorage for the tough, grasping roots. It is a sturdy, thick-set little tree, usually about 15 feet high when full grown, and about as broad as high, holding its knotty branches well out in every direction in stiff zigzags, but turning them gracefully upward at the ends in rounded bosses. Though making so dark a mass in the distance, the foliage is a pale grayish green, in stiff, thick-shaped tassels. When examined closely these round needles seem inclined to be two-leaved, but they are mostly held firmly together, as if to guard against evaporation. The bark on the older sections is nearly black, so that the boles and branches are clearly traced against the prevailing gray of the mountains on which they delight to dwell.

The value of this species to Nevada is not easily overestimated. It furnishes fuel, charcoal, and timber for the mines, and together with the enduring juniper, so generally associated with it, supplies the ranches with abundance of firewood and fencing. Many a square mile has already been denuded in supplying these demands, but so great is the area covered by it, no appreciable loss has as yet been sustained. It is pretty generally known that this tree yields edible nuts, but their importance and excellence as human food is infinitely greater than is supposed. In fruitful seasons like this one, the pine nut crop of Nevada is perhaps greater than the entire wheat crop of California, concerning which so much is said and felt throughout the food markets of the world. The Indians alone appreciate this portion of nature's bounty, and celebrate the harvest home with dancing and feasting. The cones, which are a bright grass-green in color and about two inches long by one and a half in diameter, are beaten off with poles just before the scales open, gathered in heaps of several bushels, and lightly scorched by burning a thin covering of brushwood over them. The resin with which the cones are bedraggled is thus burned off, the nuts slightly roasted, and the scales made to open. Then they are allowed to dry in the sun, after which the nuts are easily threshed out and are ready to be stored away. They are about half an inch long by a quarter of an inch in diameter, pointed at the upper end, rounded at the base, light brown in general color, and handsomely dotted with purple, like birds' eggs. The shells are thin, and may be crushed between the thumb and finger. The kernels are white and waxy-looking, becoming brown by roasting, sweet and delicious to every palate, and are eaten by birds, squirrels, dogs, horses, and men. When the crop is abundant the Indians bring in large quantities for sale; then they are eaten around every fireside in the State, and oftentimes fed to horses instead of barley.

Looking over the whole continent, none of nature's bounties seem to me so great as this in the way of food—none so little appreciated. Fortunately for the Indians and wild animals that gather around nature's board, this crop is not easily harvested in a monopolizing way. If it could be gathered like wheat, the whole would be carried away and dissipated in towns, leaving the brave inhabitants of these wilds to starve. Long before the harvest time, which is in September and October, the Indians examine the trees with keen discernment, and, inasmuch as the cones require two years to mature from the first appearance of the little red rosettes of the fertile flowers, the security or abundance of the crop may be predicted more than a year in advance. Squirrels and worms and Clark crows make haste to begin the harvest. The Indians make ready their long beating poles; baskets, bags, rags, mats are gotten together. The squaws, out among the settlers at service, washing and dredging, assemble in the camps; the men leave their ranch work, all, old and young, are mounted on ponies, and set off in great glee to the nut lands, forming cavalcades curiously picturesque; flaming scarfs and calico skirts stream loosely over the knotty ponies, usually two squaws astride of each, with the small baby midgets bundled in baskets hanging on their tacks or balanced upon the saddle bow, while the nut baskets and water jars project from either side, and the long beating poles, like old-fashioned lances, angle out in every direction. Arrived at some central point already fixed upon, where water and grass are found, the squaws widen baskets, the men with poles, ascend the ridges to the laden trees, followed by the children; beating begins with loud noise and chatter; the burrs fly right and left, lodging against stones and sage brushes; the squaws and children gather them with fine natural gladness, and the crunchy music mingles with the joyful scene of their labors as the roasting fires are kindled; and, at night, assembled in circles, garrulous as jays, the first grand nut feast is begun. Sufficient quantities are thus obtained in a few weeks to last all winter. They also gather several species of berries and dry them to vary their stores, and a few deer and grouse are killed on the mountains, beside immense numbers of rabbits and hares; but the pine nuts are their main dependence—their staff of life, their bread.

SHARK RIVER.

Sharks by the Thousand—Not a Desirable Place to be at Anchor in.

From the Forest and Stream.

Entering Shark River we noticed the light of Dr. Harris's boat ahead, and we made fast to her stern. The entrance to Shark River can easily be found by observing the following directions: Northwest from north Cape Sable, about four miles, will be noticed a heavily timbered cape projecting into the gulf; rounding this point, and keeping the timber on the right hand, the river will be discovered. As a heavy northeast gale was blowing, the Captain of the Doctor's craft had anchored a few hundred yards from the entrance, where we were protected from the storm by the giant mangroves.

We have wandered considerably, and sailed over many species, but never saw even an approach to the number and size of the sharks at this point. Their movements in every direction rendered the water luminous. Until we retired for the night they were visible, here, there, and everywhere. They were dashing hither and thither with a rapidity that surprised me. They would dart like lightning and double up on their tracks with an ease that astonished me. Their movements and size could be determined by the phosphorescence of the water. Bullet pots into the rivers with the tide and out with the ebb, and it is probable that the sharks were enjoying a feed of these toothsome fish. The water was eighteen feet deep, and looking over the side of the boat, flashes of light not larger than the hand could be noticed, probably proceeding from these monsters many feet below the surface.

About 8 P. M. one of the brutes struck the bow of the boat a severe blow in one of his rushes to capture his prey, and I denounced him for his stupidity. Although I had beat across Florida bay in a severe gale, my boat was comparatively tight, and mocked at little water. For another hour I enjoyed my pipe and watched the voracious monsters as they forwarded four, chassed and turned corners. At 9 P. M. I arranged my bed and stretched myself for a snooze. I was just about to bid farewell to this world, and exclaim with Sancho Panza, "Blessed is the man who invented sleep, for it wrappeth one like a cloak," when bang came one of the monsters against the starboard side of the boat, and the dory trembled from stem to stern. Satisfied that the boat had received some injury I turned out, lit my lamp, and examined the well to ascertain if the boat was leaking. I made a hasty examination, and fancying that all was right turned in. I awoke at 4 A. M. with a sensation of moistness about my hips and found that the boat was leaking badly, and that the water was over the floor. I attributed the leak to the butting proclivities of his sharkship, and on examination at a later date developed the fact that the blow had started a plank.

Elopement from Saco, Me.

From the Boston Post.

SACO, Me., Nov. 13.—The disappearance of the Rev. Charles H. Webster alone would not attract unusual attention perhaps, but when a girl is known to have been induced to loan her fortune with his it becomes very interesting. Webster was formerly a regularly ordained preacher of the Gospel in the Charlestown Baptist Church, Boston, and received a call some time previous to 1875 to the Cross Street Free Will Baptist Society of Saco. After several years of hard laboring in the vineyard, Parson Webster went into the insurance business. He was an admirer of horseflesh, and of late has been very attentive to certain young women, and it was rumored that his business was flourishing on as profitably as of yore, but nothing criminal was traced to the parson's door until Tuesday. On that day he took a train on the Eastern road. It was soon afterwards noised about that one of Saco's favorite misses, belonging to a most respectable family, and 18 years of age, had taken the same train. The City Marshal started in pursuit, but, as the train connected in Portland with the through train to Montreal, the fugitives escaped.

Marie Roze in State Prison.

From the Auburn Advertiser.

The most noteworthy event of Marie Roze's visit to Auburn, was her appearance before the prisoners in the State prison.

Warden Welles also invited a number of guests, and at the hour appointed the gallery allotted to spectators in the prison chapel was thronged with over 100 ladies and gentlemen. Marie Roze, Alfred Pease, the pianist, and Agnes Welles occupied seats on the platform while the 1,194 convicts were becoming seated. Mr. Pease played his "Souvenir de Marie Roze," in which variations on "Home, Sweet Home" occur. The convicts applauded vociferously, and then Marie Roze sang "Jesus, Lover of my Soul," and the tumultuous clapping of hands that followed showed the warm appreciation of the song. She followed with "Suwanee River," and was again rewarded with a storm of applause. The "Sweet By and By" was next given, and it seemed to meet with still greater appreciation. After a brief rest she sang, in conclusion, "Coming Thro' the Rye," and was interrupted in vociferous plaudits.

DANIEL WEBSTER'S DEER HUNT.

The Beautiful Doe that his Young Daughter Wept Over.

From the St. Louis Republican.

The death of Dr. Hoffman recalls to mind an animated account of a deer hunt which appeared in the New York *Spirit of the Times*. The hunt occurred in 1837 upon the prairies of Illinois, opposite Jefferson Barracks, and in it Daniel Webster distinguished himself by striking down a fat doe with the rifle. The correspondent, writing from Jefferson Barracks, says:

A party was formed, consisting of the Hon. William H. Ashley—whose devotion to field sports is so well known—Judge Walsh, Dr. Hoffman, and many other gentlemen equally ardent in the sports of the field, forming quite a formidable party. About 9 o'clock Mr. Webster and his family, with many other ladies and gentlemen in attendance, together with the hunting party, crossed the river. A short ride of about two miles brought them into the heart of a beautiful prairie, which stretched out for many miles in extent, and, those who were merely lookers on being stationed upon one of the singular mounds which dot the plain in every direction, the hunter's horn brought a noble pack of hounds on the *qui vive*. The dogs had scarcely put their foot on the hunting ground before a deep-mouthed bay from a veteran old hunter warned them to look out for game. A few minutes brought them on the trail of a fine young doe, which had just sprung from its bed of flowers, alarmed by its keen sense of danger, and flew with the fleetness of the wind across the plain.

The doe with a mighty effort cleared a broad and sluggish stream filled with a tangled mass of long grass and water lilies, almost impassable, except by leaping. The dogs came rushing on, and were soon entangled in the meshes of the rank grass. The frightened deer stood on a rising ground and blew from its nostrils a wild, unearthly whistle peculiar to itself. It stood but an instant to see how cunningly it had brought them into the snare, and again bounded forward, making for the wood. But the dogs were "old uns" at the game, and the hunters were used to the strategem which the deer made to elude them. In view of this movement a portion of the party, with two noble greyhounds belonging to Dr. Hoffman had been stationed near the skirt of the wood to intercept the flight in that direction. A few more bounds and the timid deer would have found an asylum in the depth of the forest—but its en