DON'T YOU THINK SO?

It's all very well to be jolly
When everything's going just right;
When, in Summer skies showing no hint of
A shadow, the sun's shining bright;
When around you your merry friends cluster
With many a laugh-bringing jest,
And wherever you turn you discover,
The world in its gala robes dressd
But, ah! 'tis sublime to be jolly
When mirth-loving spirits have fled;
When your path is in gloominess shrouded,
And the tempest bursts over your head;
When fainter hearts beg you to cheer them,
Though your own heart be lonely and drear,
And you scarce can help doubting if ever
The darkness will quite disappear.
The bird that sings sweetly when golden
The earth is and gentle the wind,
When the bees hum their joy o'er the honey
That, hid in the flowers, they find,
When, vying in beauty and fragrance,
Red roses and white lilies grow,
And butterflies, splendid in raiment,
Through their airy realm flit to and fro,
Is a dear little songster; but dearer
Is the bird that its joy-giving strain
Undaunted trills loudly and gayly
In spite of the chill and the rain;
For that to be jolly 'tis easy
In sunshine there isn't a doubt;
But, ah! 'tis sublime to be jolly
When there's naught to be jolly about.

—*Margaret Eytinge, in Harper's Weekly.*

# DAVID DOWNING.

BY PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

Music was the passion of David Downing's life. As a boy he had cared for nothing else. By the time he was fifteen there was scarcely a musical instrument on which he had not experimented. He had constructed not a few for himself. The two instruments which finally vanquished all others in his regard were the organ and the violin. His father was a country clergyman, and the lad was never so happy as when in the organ-loft listening to the long-swelling bass note, or the tender pleading of the flute-like stops. Of course he was happiest when making the music come himself. Often, in the soft summer twilight, he would sit there in the church playing and dreaming. Who shall say of what his dreams were, and who shall say how much the mystery of love may be felt from afar, as by the change in the air one journeying knows himself to be in the sea's neighborhood, though not as yet within sight or sound of it?

There are two powers from which no man shall escape, and they are love and death. David was twenty-five when he fell desperately in love with the slender, exquisite shape, the proud, animated face, the eyes like some blue mountain stream which mind and sunlight surprise together—fell in love with the beautiful hair which Swinburne well describes when he writes:

"And her hair had the sea's wave and the sea's gold in it."

Fell in love with the voice, with its subtle urgency of music; fell in love with the bright spirit, the fervent heart, which with all the other charms I have touched on, made up the whole of Rose Cameron.

They loved in June, and felt the witchery of long, lingering twilights, when grass and flowers get so glad of the dew and the moonlight. All these were part of their love, and added to its romance, surely.

In October they married, and they had not been married long when troubles came. Rose had been a spoilt child, and would brook no restraint; and her independent ways troubled David for her safety. He had often to go to town on business, and he had objected to a growing intimacy between herself and a certain Captain Selden, whose reputation was not of too clean a nature. It ended by his forbidding Selden the house. This led to a violent altercation; but a worse scene came later, when David discovered that his young wife had been audaciously taking walks with the forbidden captain. Then he did lose his temper, and spoke as if he had worse to complain of than merely her self-will in going contrary to his wishes, and choosing a friend for herself in spite of a jealousy she thought unjust. Mrs. Downing turned very white, and left the room. A trap was at the door to take her husband to the station. He sprang up, struck the horse sharply, and rattled away just in time to catch his train.

He was unhappy all day in London. He would have given much that Rose had not deceived him, but he would have given more still not so to have lost his temper. It was April then, and they had been married just half a year. It was a cold night when he got back to Dover, where they lived, he officiating as organist to one of the chief churches. Throughout the day it had thundered and lightened at intervals, but an easterly wind had sprung up and swept the sky clear, in which a moon, bright and sharp-looking as a scimiter, seemed to divide the windy darkness. He heard the roll and boom of the large spring waves as he skirted the beach over which he could hear some one trampling heavily. The light in his dining-room shone cheerfully from behind closely drawn red curtains. Rose was not in the dining-room, but on the table, addressed to himself, lay a note, in her well-known handwriting. He broke the seal and read:

"You have insulted me so grossly that I will live with you no more. I have taken with me what I need. I shall go to friends out of England, where any attempt on your part to find me would be worse than useless. You have made me feel, David Downing, that I hate you! I was your wife, but never your slave!"

He read the letter over two or three times; then he questioned the servants; but they could give him little information, except that their mistress had gone out with her maid in the afternoon, the maid carrying a good-sized bag and Mrs. Downing one of the smallest dimensions. The lady was thickly veiled, and wore a dark-violet waterproof. The boat had left for France about an hour ago.

Daniel Downing went down and questioned people on the pier, but no one answering to the description of Mrs. Downing had been seen. He went to the station, but could hear nothing of her there. He wandered, for some time, aimlessly about the windy streets, pervaded at that time by a briny smell. There was a sense upon him as if he had lost her in the wind, somehow.

Then he came back and shut himself up alone, with his fancy and his memory of her. That chair in which she used to sit, was it quite—quite empty? Listen! was not that her light footfall on the floor? Was not that the soft stir of her dress? He was dazed; yet in time he rose and went upstairs to her bedroom to see just what she had taken. He opened the wardrobe. There was hanging the dress she had worn only the day before; and, see, the violets she had pinned into the bosom of it were there still. He put his lips to the gown which had once been informed with the beauty of her shape. It broke him down, and he wept as only strong men sore stricken can weep; but the tears did not avert brain fever, which ensued the next day.

It was a desperately severe and prolonged attack. He recovered; but, alas! to find himself for ever in darkness, the optic nerves having been withered as by fire. The blow was, indeed, a terrible one. Not only had he lost her who was the delight of his eyes, but he had lost those eyes, too. Nothing was left to him then but his music; for, before very long, with much practice, he got to play nearly as well as in the old days.

He bore his troubles bravely, but twenty years did not materially lessen them. At forty-five he was white-haired, and walked with bowed shoulders. The face told of sorrow, but not of bitterness. He was in his forty-sixth year when he took the position of organist in one of the cathedral towns. Such a post he had long desired. He made fast friends with some people of the name of Taylor, and it was at their house that he became acquainted with Ursula Daincourt, a low-voiced, charming girl of twenty, and just as sweet as violets are. You could not see, or hear her, or even feel her near, without their fragrance being suggested. If Downing did not see, he heard and felt the sense of her presence. She loved his music, and they became great friends. He played to her; she read to him; being, as he was, fond of poetry; and they walked together. In this position there was nothing sentimental. She liked him. She was sorry for him, and to do gracious acts was as natural to her as it is to a rose to prosper in sunshine. They walked together in the Close, they sat together in the organ-loft, and no one talked foolishly. For one thing, Downing looked so much older than he really was. One early June evening he was practicing, when he paused in his music, feeling some one near. Then the tender voice he knew so well asked:

"May I come up?"

"Need you ask? but wait till I hold you a hand. Those steps are difficult to get up!"

"Yes; I should probably get on badly without your assistance."

In a moment more her hand was in his, and he was soon pointing out to her, as he delighted to do, the mysteries of his beloved organ.

"You are not well to-night," he said, in distressed tones, noting that a great shivering fit was on her. She answered, with a forced laugh, that she was only cold. He touched her hands, and found them burning. She was on a visit to her friends the Taylors, whither he would have taken her at once, had she not pleaded hard for a little more music.

"If I am going to be ill, and this should be the last time," she said, between laughing and crying, "you would like to think that I had my way."

Surely, he thought, his heart failing him, he was not going to lose this sweet friend, as he had lost his eyes and his loved! He played, but she did not respond. She had fallen into an uneasy sleep, and was moaning piteously, as if conscious of some vague distress. With a heavy heart David left the organ-loft and procured assistance; had a carriage sent for, and conveyed Ursula to her friend's house. He called later on, to hear the doctor's report, which for some days was uncertain. A wasting, low fever was at length declared. Exhaustion was the chief danger to be dreaded. Those were days of double darkness for Downing. He begged to be allowed to speak to her, but permission was declined on the ground of infection.

"But would it be bad for her?" he had asked of Taylor.

"No, not bad for her; but we can't have you risking things; beside, if you fell ill, we should have to nurse you; and we have our hands quite full enough as it is."

But Downing was a wily man. He called one day, and was informed that Mr. Taylor had gone to London, and Mrs. Taylor was lying down. He said he would rest a little while. Then he went into the hall and listened. The house was not a large one. The day was chill for June. From a room on the first landing came the sound of a fire softly stirred. This was all he wanted; he had a clew. Light-footed as a thief, he climbed the stairs. He found a door to his sight, and listened again. From behind it there was a low sound of voices, and somebody sighing as in great weariness. Then the voice he knew well said:

"Oh, I shall be so glad if ever people may came to see me. I wonder, nurse, if I am going to get better or to die?"

He opened the door and went in gently, saying:

"Well, here is one visitor. 'Where there is no fear, there is no danger,' so you must not mind. I did want to come and see how my dear child was getting on. I want to sit by you and hold your hand."

"Oh, you should not have come; but I am glad to see you. Mamma is with me now, but she is resting. Do my hands burn very much?"

"Scarcely at all. I am sure you are better."

With his hand holding hers, she seemed to grow much more composed, and after a little while fell into a refreshing sleep.

Once the door opened, and some one came in and remained some time, standing by the bed, and then went out with no word. From that day Ursula improved rapidly, and was soon pronounced out of danger. She began to laugh, and be almost her old bright self. She would give David her wrists to span with his lithe, strong fingers, and "My arms are thin, but they will be pretty again when I grow quite strong," she said.

One day, when they were alone together, the nurse being absent for a brief while, some one came in and stood by the bed, and so close by the chair on which David was sitting, that he felt a woman's dress brush his knee; and was not that the touch of a woman's hand on his? Not Ursula's poor little wasted palm, but a firm, cool, magnetic touch. And what is this but some one kneeling by him, and warm tears falling on his hands?

"Rose!" with a great gasp.

"David, can you forgive me? Indeed I did not know how things had gone. Your words stung me, and having left you, I was too proud to come back. From what our child here has told me—"

"Our child?"

"Born three months after I left you. From what she told me when I came here, I thought it must be you; and oh, my dear, my dear, when I came in and saw you sitting by the bed, our child's hand in yours, and stood close to you, and you did not know me, I thought my heart would break with very passion of tenderness. David"—and her voice was uncertain—"may I come home?"

"Of your own free will?"

"Because I love you, and always have."

"My darling!" he said, and putting his arms around her neck, drew her head down upon his shoulder.

"And she is just as beautiful as ever she was," said Ursula, in a voice which revealed decided traces of a joyful emotion, that young person having been taken into confidence by her mother.

When Rose left her husband, she adopted the old family name of Daincourt. What Ursula said was very nearly true. Mrs. Downing, at forty, was a very beautiful and unusually young-looking woman for her years. After all, a very happy man for many a long year to come was David Downing.

### The Shah's Wives and the Consul.

The following extract is from a report made by S. G. W. Benjamin, lately United States minister to Persia:

"I have the honor to report that on the 12th of June I was riding out to the country from Teheran in a carriage, on the way to the summer quarters of the legation. I was accompanied by my daughter. According to the custom of the country, the carriage was preceded by two outriders. The other legations on such an occasion take four to eight outriders, a matter of necessity as well as of display in Persia. As we approached a half-way coffee house I observed a line of carriages waiting by the roadside in the shade. As it is very common for such vehicles to be seen standing there, while the occupants are taking a smoke, I had no idea that any precaution needed to be taken. I was greatly surprised, therefore, to see a troop of mounted cavalry rush out from the shade of the trees and make a violent attack upon my outriders, who immediately cried out several times that the United States minister was in the carriage and had the right of way.

"I now recognized the soldiers to belong to the royal guard, and immediately after perceived that the wives of the shah were in the carriage. Although having officially the absolute right to pass, allowed to none, except ministers and their families at the risk of immediate death to all others, I ordered my driver to stop in order to give an officer opportunity to come to the carriage to apologize for the attack and escort us safely through the guards stationed in front and rear of the royal harem. But as no attention seemed to be paid to this, I ordered my men to keep on, thus throwing the responsibility of any results on the guards, who, not satisfied with beating the outriders with the flat of their swords, swarmed around the carriage itself with loud cries and flourishing their weapons. The lieutenant of the troop seized the carriage horses, others struck and thrust at the horses, and two even struck the driver himself. Fortunately the man was alike skilful and intrepid, and succeeded in both controlling the horses and driving us safely out of the disagreeable melee that at one moment threatened serious results. The number of men attacking was about twenty. It it proper to add that when the chief lady of the harem saw what was going on she despatched a eunuch to escort us through the lines, but he did not arrive until the attack was nearly ended. All my men and horses were more or less bruised, and one of the men had his arm nearly broken. They all behaved well."

Mr. Benjamin furthermore reports that he demanded "the prompt chastisement" of the offender, which was ordered, and ample apologies were made by the Persian office, and tendered to him.

### A Rascal's Shrewd Trick.

Among the distinguished characters who have made their headquarters in San Francisco in the past was a gentleman whose baptismal name appears to have been William Hayes, but who was popularly known among his associates by the endearing title of "Billy Hayes." This individual was a quiet, sleek-faced rascal, who was never known to chew tobacco, to drink, or to give utterance to an oath. William Hayes began his career as a skipper of a schooner on the lakes, regularly plying between Cleveland and Buffalo, and was a very excellent officer, making many friends by his universal courtesy and genial manners. He was a man of great originality of character, and his first piratical exploit, which marked his plunge into crime, committed at this stage of his interesting career, was unique in its nature. A prominent and wealthy gentleman of Cleveland, having a ten-year-old nephew in Buffalo, purchased a fine riding pony, a blooded animal of great beauty, and had him placed upon the schooner to be delivered in Buffalo when the boat had reached its destination, along with a note which he consigned to Capt. Hayes. Skipper Hayes found that this epistle read as follows:

MY DEAR NEPHEW: I send you a pony by Captain Hayes. I hope you will enjoy riding him. Your affectionate UNCLE.

Observing that the word "pony" was used in this letter, and remarking upon the brevity of the note, Skipper Hayes, perceived his opportunity and was not slow to avail himself of it. Upon his arrival in Buffalo he proceeded at once to a toy store and invested in a fine wooden hobby-horse, which he delivered to the lad along with his uncle's note. Then he hastened to a horse market and realized a goodly sum upon the handsome animal he had in tow. A week or so later the boy's uncle came up from Cleveland, and one of his first inquiries was after the health and whereabouts of the horse.

"How do you like the pony?" he asked his nephew with interest.

"Oh, pretty well," said the boy with an indifferent air.

"Where is he?" pursued the uncle.

"Out on the front veranda," returned the lad, a little impatiently.

Explanations quickly followed. The next inquiry was after the whereabouts of Skipper Hayes. But he had vanished from the lakes, and the deck of that particular schooner never more echoed to his honest tread. He next turns up in San Francisco.—*Alta California.*

### General Scott's Size.

Every one has noticed the heroic size attributed to General Winfield Scott in his statues and portraits. Few of them are exaggerations of his real proportions. He was six feet four and a half inches high, and perfectly formed. In his full-dress uniform he presented a superb appearance. It is said that the diminutive Mexicans were awe-struck when they saw him, and that many of them attributed the success of the American army to the grand physique of its leader.

The general was greatly inconvenienced by his unusual size, and whenever he had an opportunity always had special preparations made for his comfort. In an old album, in Washington, I find this letter written by his hand:

WASHINGTON, Friday, June 15, 1860.
Proprietors Girard House, Philadelphia.
GENTLEMEN: Expect me at the Girard House to-morrow night at 11 o'clock, and please give me a bed at least six feet six inches in length or one without a foot-board. Yours respectfully. WINFIELD SCOTT.

—*Atlanta Constitution.*

### The Grave Gaining on the Cradle.

A noteworthy fact in the vital statistics of New York city is the preponderance of deaths over births. While in the country at large several hundred thousand more people are born every year than die, in the metropolis there were 30,038 births last year and 35,696 deaths. The case was not an exceptional one, the figures for the previous year being 30,527 births and 35,044 deaths. The moral of all this seems to be that people who prefer to be born to dying would better live in the country.

# WATER SQUATTERS.

## DRIFTING FROM PITTSBURG TO NEW ORLEANS.

### A Printer who Took to the Novel Life to Escape Consumption—How he Lives with his Family—A Queer Existence.

"Fish, cats, muskrats and roots. Those are what we propose to live on this winter. You have asked me candidly and squarely how I manage to keep my family without working at a recognized business, and just as candidly I tell you."

He was not handsome. A critical eye would hardly have been satisfied with the few red hairs on the sides and upper lip of his leather face; it would have required more of them, more evenly placed, or less. He wore a soft felt hat, without band or shape, firmly fixed on his head by strings tied under his chin; his shirt was of unbleached muslin; his patched coat was a misfit; there was a fine compensation for the deficiency in the right leg of his trousers—the lower part of which had been torn away—by the top boot which he wore upon the right foot, the left being clad in a Congress gaiter. He was standing in the doorway of a shanty boat, which was tied up at the sand bar on the Kentucky shore of the Ohio river, opposite Cincinnati. The shanty boat was a rough pine box, thirty feet long by fifteen feet wide and eight feet high, secured upon the flat bottom of a home-made batteau. The cracks left at the joints of the upright boards had been battened with laths, and a stovepipe, from which was rising a stream of yellow smoke, pushed about eight battered inches of its length through the top of the box. There were half a dozen similar structures ranged along the length of the bar, some of them pulled well out on the sand and banked up, showing that they proposed to travel no more this winter.

"We generally manage to drift with the ducks, so as to have a pair of them for our Christmas dinner; but last Christmas they got ahead of us and are now where we ought to be—in the vicinity of Cairo. But all the same we had our Christmas dinner—six cats."

He held up four gnarled fingers and two thumbs, and laughed at the construction that might be put upon his speech.

"No, we didn't eat the cats," he said. "We skinned them, and sold the hides and inwards to merchants on Front street in Cincinnati. They average us fifteen cents apiece, which with fish and a 'possom I shot up the Little Miami, made us a feast fit for Lucullus."

The gray matter in the man's head was evidently more cultivated than its outer covering.

"Where did you catch the cats?"

"Right here on the river bank. There is generally a strong breeze blowing over the town of Newport from the river, and when I crush a few handfuls of catnip the wind carries the scent up among the houses. The cats follow the scent to its source like the hounds after a fox. It is only necessary to bait a few traps with catnip in the evening, leave them on the bank, and in the morning each holds a cat. Black cats bring the highest price—fifteen cents a pelt; white cats the lowest. When a man has no artificial wants, he can live fairly well on cats to be caught in the neighborhood of any city in this country; and when he knows the habits of muskrats and the appearance and qualities of roots—ginseng, yellow seal, blood root, wild ginger, &c.—he can live luxuriously if he can move up and down the rivers at will; that is, if he lives in a boat like mine.

"Seven years ago I had a wife, a new baby, cases on the Pittsburg *Commercial Gazette*, and the cheerful information from my doctor that unless I quit type setting I would have a rest from the cares of this world inside of six months. Incipient pulmonary consumption, induced by a sedentary occupation, was the way he diagnosed my trouble, a farmer's life was his prescription. After we had paid for our baby, Mary and I found that we had just seventy dollars in money and hardly strength enough together to upend a barrel of flour. Plainly we could not go West to plow the stubborn glebe just yet, especially as winter was coming on.

"I came home one morning at 4 o'clock, completely worn out, after a night of wrestling with the meanest takes that I ever lifted off a copy hook—not a line of fat, not a lead, nor a pickup head in the whole batch.

"Mary was wide awake and watching for me.

"'I've got it, John,' she said; 'we will go to New Orleans for the winter. The climate will help you, and the trip there will be a change and a rest for both of us. It will take three months to get there, and in those three months we will do nothing—actually nothing.'

"'Certainly,' I answered, 'and after we get there we will buy a villa on St. Charles avenue, and suck oranges and smell magnolia blossoms. We will get a servant—'

"'No,' she said; 'we will get a shanty boat. We can buy one for $35. We will take our kitchen and dining room furniture with us, sell the rest, lay in a supply of flour, vegetables and salted meat, and, with the fish you catch and the game you shoot on the way, we shall live on almost nothing, and land in New Orleans with more money than we have now, after resting for a whole quarter of a year.'

"That was the kind of a girl Mary was; and after we got our shanty boat—a poor little box, about half as big as this one—she was the happpiest woman in the whole Ohio valley. She did not care for style, neither did I; but all the same, we rigged the boat up for solid comfort, giving the floors carpets, papering the walls, and hanging pictures and little knick-knacks wherever we found room to drive a nail. We had a little garden on the roof of the establishment, and by the time we got as far south as this the morning-glory vines were hanging down over the windows as naturally as though they were growing around a stationary house.

"Of course we merely drifted with the current all day, and tied up at night, although we were impatient to get South as soon as possible, fearing that winter would set in early and drift ice catch us before we struck the warm waters of the Mississippi. When we are in a hurry, now, we drift day and night, with a lantern at the bow and stern. We draw no water to speak of, and accordingly can keep out of the channel and track of steamers; but even if we were in the thick of them, they would steer clear of us, knowing that we are helpless.

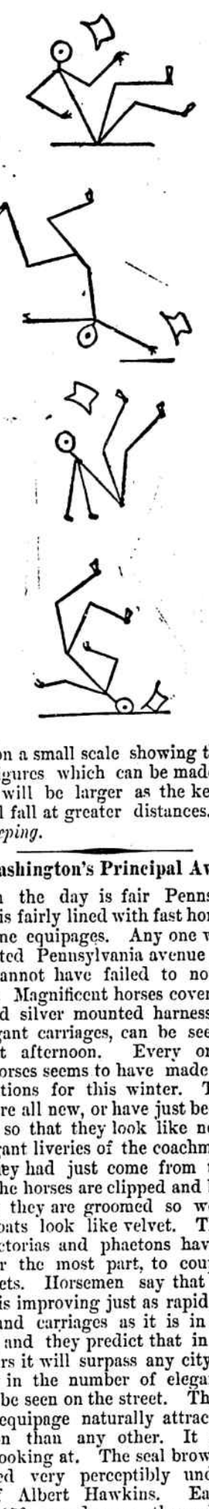
"Oh, yes, we can guide our boat to a certain extent with the long sweep or oar in the stern—enough to land, or to put out into the current whenever we wish; but it is slow work, and if we are in the track of a steamer, it is necessary for the boat to go out of its course to avoid us. We have just enough tight squeezes to make life interesting. The head of a tow of empty coal barges struck our bow one morning last summer, just below Wheeling, and the shock sent me flying from the sweep which I was trying to work, ten feet through the air head first into the river. Two of our children—we have four now, three having been born afloat—have tumbled overboard at different times; but the nearest we ever came to death was when I caught a floater just below Louisville.

"Oh, no; no more life on land for me., if you please. On our way to New Orleans during that first trip of ours we found it so easy to pick up a living from the river and along the banks that when we struck the Crescent City we stayed by our boat, living upon the proceeds of my fishing and duck hunts up the Bayou St. John's. In the following June we sold our shanty, took deck possage for Cincinnati, where we fitted out another and better boat, and began drifting again, tying up for a day, a week, or a month whenever we fancied the country. I have counted over 500 family boats on the Ohio river in the course of a single trip, and while some of the people owning them are chicken thieves and worse, others are honest and even cultivated.—*Correspondence New York Sun.*

### Five Points, or Rice Game.

Put together as many sheets of note paper as there are persons who are to play. Scatter on the upper one at random, five kernels of rice. Prick with a pin, without disturbing the rice, five holes through the spots where the rice has fallen. You will thus have a number of sheets of paper, each containing five pinholes arranged in the same order.

The game consists in each person drawing a figure which shall come within the points, using one for the head, two for the feet and two for the hands. The illustrations give some examples



drawn on a small scale showing the variety of figures which can be made. The figures will be larger as the kernels of rice will fall at greater distances.—*Good Housekeeping.*

### On Washington's Principal Avenue.

When the day is fair Pennsylvania avenue is fairly lined with fast horses and handsome equipages. Any one who has frequented Pennsylvania avenue of late years cannot have failed to notice the change. Magnificent horses covered with gold and silver mounted harness, drawing elegant carriages, can be seen every pleasant afternoon. Every one who keep horses seems to have made special preparations for this winter. The carriages are all new, or have just been overhauled, so that they look like new, and the elegant liveries of the coachmen look af if they had just come from the tailors. The horses are clipped and banged, or else they are groomed so well that their coats look like velvet. The summer victorias and phaetons have given way, for the most part, to coupes and landaulets. Horsemen say that Washington is improving just as rapidly in its horses and carriages as it is in its residences, and they predict that in a very few years it will surpass any city in the country in the number of elegant turnouts to be seen on the street. The President's equipage naturally attracts more attention than any other. It is well worth looking at. The seal browns have improved very perceptibly under the care of Albert Hawkins. Each one weighs 150 pounds more than when the team came here. They are spirited and are driven without checks, usually to an elegant landau, but sometimes to a victoria. The men on the box have new light livery with big black fur capes. The President sometimes rides out behind the office team—a spanking pair of clipped bays.—*Washington Star.*

### A Master of His Profession

Williams, a burglar, now in the New London, Conn., jail, has the reputation of being a smart one. "Give him twenty minutes alone with a safe," says Sheriff Hawkins, "and Williams can open the most intricate lock that ever was devised, and if you will give him merely the name of the maker he will tell you instantly all the parts in the lock and give you a diagram of the mechanism. He never breaks a lock, he simply finds out inside of twenty minutes the combination in which it is set, opens the safe and takes out what he wants and relocks it, and when the owner returns he finds the safe apparently just as he left it. To accomplish this work, Williams needs in addition to this quick wit and mechanical knowledge, three ordinary wires, which he forces into the lock about the handle in such a way that the number of combinations is reduced to twenty-four. He reasons that all persons in locking a safe make a certain number of moves, and a knowledge of this fact enables him to further recuce its probable combinations to two or three movements. These two or three moves he finds out by actual trial, which consumes the greater part of his twenty minutes. In the case when a safe is in an apartment that is in full view of the street, he drops a little quicklime on the floor, pours water on it and the steam that arises effectually cloaks the windows. In three instances Williams unlocked safes, abstracted the contents, relocked them and made off in the time that the men who were in charge of them were at their dinners. He got away with the valuables in a Stratford safe in this way."

In a course of lectures on food, Professor Stirling, of Aberdeen, Scotland, showed "a beautiful collection of compressed vegetables and an excellent solid pea soup."

# A CROW'S ROOST.

## INTERESTING DAILY SIGHT NEAR BALTIMORE.

### Many Thousands of Birds Roosting Upon Trees—Their Sentry System—Procuring Food—The Crows' Particular Foes.

A short distance beyond the city limits on the line of the Baltimore and Potomac railroad, an interesting sight is witnessed by travelers in the late afternoon trains. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon large numbers of crows, the most striking objects in our wintry landscape, begin to congregate from various parts of the country. Some have been down the Patapsco river, while others have spent the day near the headwaters of the Back, Bush, and Gunpowder rivers, and even upon the banks of the Susquehanna. By dark all have returned, and the low trees on both sides of the railroad track are covered with thousands and thousands of these birds. This assembly of the crows is known as a roost, and has been in existence for many years, changing each year according to the destruction of the trees. Now, crows as well as other birds fly southward upon the approach of cold weather, and it is said that whenever large numbers remain here it is a sign that the winter will be mild. This year so many more have remained that the presumption is that the weather will be unusually open, or the crows, who are so intelligent in other matters, are failures as weather prophets. Crows resort to their winter roost in the early fall, as soon as their young have been sufficiently trained in thieving and robbery to help support themselves. They congregate at this time for mutual protection and maintenance.

They have a perfect sentry system, by which they are warned of the approach of enemies, and their particular foe, the great horned or bubo owl. This bird dotes on crow. Place before him a plump fowl, a mouse, or a blackbird, which he would generally devour, then bring to him a scrawny crow, and he will turn from the other food and seize it with avidity. Consequently, when crows light upon a bubo they summon their fellows and apparently become oblivious to everything else, so great is their rage at having within their power a mortal enemy. Several will dash at him and beat about him with outspread wings. Driven to desperation he will fly away, and will immediately be followed by a black cloud of tormenters, whose angry, noisy cawing will be heard when they are a long distance away. It is suggested in this connection that farmers who are troubled by the visitations of crows should catch a bubo owl and tie him in some wood. Then, lying in concealment with their guns, they would in a short time be able to play great havoc among the pests of the corn fields, for where the bubo is there will the crows be gathered together. No, the crow will not be frightened away by the odor of gunpowder. Small boys say that is why one cannot shoot a crow. But it doesn't require a very great while for the crow, who can, with his kinsman, the raven, become so well educated as to talk and learn to commit suicide by eating sulphur matches, to discover that the man down yonder carries an implement which, if he can approach near enough, he will point toward a flock; there will be a flash, a curl of smoke, a report, some black feathers will fly into the air, and down to the ground will tumble in ungraceful curves one or more crows whose pilferings are at an end. So much for their self-preservation.

As to their food crows may be said to be almost omniverous. In summer time they will content themselves with eating the eggs of smaller birds, smaller birds themselves, young chickens, grain, mice, etc. But when ice and snow have bound everything almost in nature, the crows are hard put to secure food and drink. Then they travel in large flocks, levying upon barnyards, searching inlets or creeks for dead fish or other offal, feasting upon some dead animal or other carrion, and when very hungry attacking a disabled hare. Some few winters ago such was the scarcity of their food in the country that they whirled through the principal streets of the city, and beating down the river following the wake of the iceboat formed a black fringe upon the edges of the newly plowed ice, in search of drink and food. Though the crow follows civilization, driving the raven before it, he is a most cautious creature, and displays a great intelligence in eluding snares or dangers of any kind. For several months the crows will bide at their roost at night, flying away during the day and returning at evening in a straight tine, from which they will deviate only to aid one of their fellows. They will go to almost any ends to do this, and the large open field in Druid Hill park has been seen black with them, flapping their wings and uttering their cries over the mishap to one of them.

In the early spring the roost is deserted, and mating begins. Then each crow selects a certain region of which he is sole monarch, and no other crow dare trespass there unless summoned for assistance. People differ as to the balance between the good and bad qualities of the crow. While he may destroy the eggs and young of smaller and useful birds, and commit such depredations upon the corn-fields as to cause the husbandman to go to a great deal of trouble in devising scare-crows, yet he renders service to the farmer in destroying grub-worms, moles, snakes, and noxious insects. His characteristics may be summed up as follows: The crow is as wise as the serpent and as harmless as the English sparrow.—*Baltimore Sun.*

### Queer Names in Virginia.

Near Ground-Squirrel bridge, in Hanover county, where the South Anna river turns gracefully toward its junction with the North Anna, writes a correspondent of the Richmond *State*, there are four persons living within less than a mile of each other who respond to the patronymics of Hare, Owl, Coon and Minks, respectively. And, singular as it may appear, until quite recently the three first named occupied the same dwelling-house. Referring to odd names, I would also state that on my pilgrimage hitherward I passed through a farm in the historic county of Spottsylvania which is now owned by a gentleman by the name of Turnipseed.

### What's the Use of Fretting?

Away with melancholy;
It is folly, let's be jolly.
"Man never is but always to be blest," blest, blest.
There's wisdom in forgetting.
Then what's the use of fretting?
In future let us try to do our best, best, best.
Kind Providence is o'er us,
And chances lie before us,
Our errors and omissions to repair, pair, pair;
For while the lamp is burning
There's time still for returning.
Then henceforth to be Daniels let us dare, dare, dare.

—*Boston Courier.*

## POPULAR SCIENCE.

A favorite prehistoric unit of measurement, according to Mr. R. P. Gray, was eleven inches, and may have been derived from the length of the human foot.

The mineral matter taken from the soil by a five-pound fleece of wool, is only 1.6 ounces and five ounces of nitrogen. Wool production cannot be exhaustive in its drains upon the land.

A plant has been discovered in South America which possesses strong electrical properties. On breaking a twig a shock is felt, and a compass is affected at a distance of some feet from it. Birds and insects carefully avoid it.

During eighteen ascents of lofty mountains, from 5,000 to 6,500 feet in height, M. Vernet has made a number of physiological observations on himself. He finds that the strong exertion, both in mounting and descending, caused an average rise in bodily temperature of about three degrees; a rise in the pulse from about seventy-five to eighty-three in a minute; and increase in respiration from about twenty-one to twenty-five in a minute.

In recent experiments the average crushing force resisted by red bricks was 6,830 pounds per square inch. They were slightly cracked. Bricks supporting about one-seventh of this load—or sixty-three tons per square foot—have been accepted as safe for high towers if still uncracked. At the base of the tallest brick structure in existence—the famous chimney of 420 feet in height at St. Rollox, Glasgow—the pressure is calculated at 6,670 pounds per square foot.

Snow varies greatly in weight, according to the condition of the atmosphere. When very dry and "feathery," scarcely anything is lighter than a handful of snow. On an average it is found that a cubic yard weighs about 187 pounds, or about one twelfth of the weight of an equal bulk of water. Ice is lighter than water, but in nothing like the same proportion; and a certain quantity of snow would, on the average, weigh only about one-eleventh of the same volume of ice. The reason of course lies in the greater compactness of the ice.

Some experimental yellow fever inoculations by Dr. Charles Finley, of Havana, have been made in a somewhat curious manner, a mosquito being caused first to sting a yellow fever patient and then the healthy subject. A mild form of the disease resulted, which became more severe when two mosquitos were employed to convey the poison. Of eleven cases of this inoculation, six were efficacious, one doubtful, and four negative. The period of incubation varied from five to fourteen days, and the fever lasted, as in the ordinary form, from five to twenty-one days. Dr. Finley believes that the artificial yellow fever produced by this method will effectively protect against the natural and dangerous form of the disease.

### Big, Little, and Funny Fish.

A silver quarter of a dollar was found in the intestines of a trout recently caught near Virginia City, Nev.

For a mile about the depot at Cumberland, Me., fish recently fell in showers. They were the size of smelts, and were taken from the bay in a waterspout.

A monstrous eel was recently captured by Dr. Bullock, of Hartford, while taking an overland trip from stream to stream. It was four feet long and weighed seven and one-half pounds.

A cyclone is alleged to have lifted from its bed in the Gulf of California a beauteous sea star and to have landed it in St. Louis. It fell directly in front of the residence of Mrs. General Smyth, who picked it up.

The government ponds at Amsterdam, Holland, are to be stocked with American eels. In the tank at Fulton market the eels were found strong enough to tackle terrapin and turtles that occupied the tank with them.

Report says that a large fat duck, with no injury except a bite on the neck, was recently found in the stomach of a cod-fish that weighed thirty-seven pounds. There was also in the stomach another cod fifteen inches long.

A. B. Bidwell caught near Prattsville, Big Meadows, Cal., the largest trout ever taken in that locality. It was an old timer, and held the broken piece of a large set hook embedded in his jaw. It weighed fifteen pounds, and was thirty inches long.

A fish two and one-half inches long was taken out of an oyster by David A. Edsall, of this city. The fish was bleached white, and apparently dead. The meat of the oyster had been crowded to one side to make room for its strange fellow. When placed in water the fish revived.—*New York Sun.*

### Fingers and Forks.

Mrs. Emily Innes, in her book on the Chersonese, gives the following defence of fingers versus forks, made by a native rajah. He argued against the use of forks and spoons as being "such a dirty practice. We say to ourselves, 'What do I know of the history of this fork? it has been in a hundred, perhaps a thousand, mouths; perhaps even in the mouth of my worst enemy. This thought is very repulsive to us. 'But,' said I, 'the fork is thoroughly cleaned, or ought to be, every time it is used, first with soap and water, then with plate-powder. 'Ought to be; quite so; but how do you know that your servant does not shirk his work? If you have a lazy servant you are liable to eat with a fork that has not been thoroughly cleaned; whereas, I know that my fingers are clean, for I wash them myself before eating. They are quite as clean as the cleanest fork, and they have two great advantages over it—one, that they have never been in any one's mouth but my own, and another that they are never lost, or mislaid or stolen! They are always at hand when one wants them!"

### Teaching a Dog.

Miss Catherine Rae explained in a recent chit-chat on science in Aberdeen, over the sea, the way in which she got a dog, within three weeks, to ring a bell. She began by letting "Tiny" smell the bone of a mutton chop, and then tied the bone to the string of the bell. At first "Tiny" was in a great tremor, but by taking her kindly and stroking her, she found that she could induce her to pull at the bone and so ring the bell.

After that she tied a small piece of wood to the string, but the dog would not pull it. At last she pulled her gently back until the bell rang, and in this way in the short course of three weeks, with not more than one or two lessons a day, the dog would go and ring the bell by being told—"'Tiny,' go and ring the bell." At the end of three weeks she gave an evening party, and during the evening they were all electrified by the sudden and violent ringing of the bell. "Tiny" had been neglected to be indulged with any tid-bit, and had taken this means of receiving attention.—*Chicago Herald.*