

with the perishable nature of the substances fallen, have hitherto prevented a complete and exhaustive examination. The specimens of the "Kentucky shower," however, reached this city well preserved in glycerine, and it has been comparatively easy to indentify the substance and to fix its status. The "Kentucky wonder" is nothing more or less than the "Nostoc" of the old alchemist. The Nostoc belongs to the confervæ; it consists of translucent, gelatinous bodies joined together by threadlike tubes or seed-bearers. There are about fifty species of this singular plant classified; two or three kinds have even been found in a fossil state. Like other confervæ, the Nostoc propagates by self-division as well as by seeds or spores. When these spores work their way out of the gelatinous envelope they may be wafted by the winds here and there, and they may be carried great distances.

Wherever they may fall, and find congenial soil, viz., dampness or recent rain, they will thrive and spread very rapidly, and many cases are recorded where they have covered miles of ground, in a very few hours, with long strings of Nostoc.

On account of this rapidity of growth, people almost everywhere faithfully believe the Nostoc to fall from the clouds, and ascribe to it many mysterious virtues. The plant is not confined to any special locality, or to any climate; sown by the whirlwind, carried by a current of air, in need of moisture only for existence and support, it thrives everywhere. Icebergs afloat in mid ocean have been found covered with it. In New Zealand it is found in large masses of quaking jelly, several feet in circumference, and covering miles of damp soil; and in our own country it may be found in damp woods, on meadows, and on marshy or even gravelly bottoms.

All the Nostocs are composed of a semi-liquid cellulose and vegetable proteine. The edible Nostoc is highly valued in China, where it forms an essential ingredient of the edible bird-nest soup. The flesh that is supposed to have fallen from the clouds in Kentucky is the flesh-colored Nostoc (*N. carneum* of the botanist); the flavour of it approaches frog or spring chicken legs, and it is greedily devoured by almost all domestic animals.

Such supposed "showers" are not rare, and are entirely in harmony with natural laws. In the East Indies the same Nostoc is used as an application in ulcers and scrofulous disease, while every nation in the East considers it nourishing and palatable, and uses it even for food when dried by sun heat.

WHILST the Prince of Wales was at Lisbon on returning from his Eastern tour, His Royal Highness paid a visit to the flagship, the *Minotaur*, and a number of naval officers were on that occasion presented to the Prince. The naval medical officers, however, were conspicuous by their absence, and the circumstance not unnaturally gave rise to some surprise and comments. As we have good reason for knowing that the fact did not escape the attention of the Prince of Wales, and that His Royal Highness caused it to be subsequently intimated to the medical officers that it was not in accordance with his Royal Highness's desire, the blame may be fairly attributed to the Admiral and Naval authorities. The Admiralty may issue Warrants and Orders in Council for the improvement of their medical service, but it is this sort of thing which makes that service unpopular with medical men possessed of the self-respect found in gentlemen of every service. —*Lancet*.

Births, Marriages, and Deaths.

BIRTHS.

At 295 Dundas Street, London, on June 10th, the wife of Dr. W. H. Street, of a son.

MARRIAGE.

At St. Paul's Church, Kingston, on June 7th, by the Rev. W. B. Carey, M.A., Incumbent, John Kennedy Oliver, Esq., M.D., to Mary Ellen, second daughter of Richard Town, Esq.

DEATHS.

In Montreal, on Monday, 29th May, Catherine Joseph, aged 66 years and 3 months, beloved wife of Dr. A. H. David.

At his residence in Colborne, on Tuesday, 13th inst., W. C. Deans, M.D., late of Oshawa, aged 39 years.