

[For the NEWS.]

MARCH.

The early Spring its charm will keep
While sight and other sense remain.
For Nature then from Winter's sleep
Awakens slow to life again.

The leaden clouds are rolled away;
The skies assume a deeper blue;
The sun pours in a brighter ray;
And earth again seems young and new.

Now March has reached its middle stage;
From plain and hill it flings the snow;
The swollen streams have spent their rage,
Once more within their bounds they flow.

We mark along the streamlet's course
How wild its recent ride has been;
How here its banks are rent by force;
How there its mud and drift are seen.

The plains are russet still and bare.
No buds are bursting yet in trees;
But plants are struggling up to air,
Called forth by whispering Zephyr's breeze.

The blue bird warbles in the grove,
And lightly floats on azure wing;
The Robin too,—whose voice we love,
Announces sharp and clear the spring.

Across the lawn a race he takes,
Then hops upon his favorite trees,
And frequent exclamations makes
About the sights that there he sees.

He scarce as yet will sing at all,
But spends his time looking round,
To see if on some tree or wall,
A place for nest of his be found.

Song—Sparrows too are northward come,
And pour their sweet ecstatic trill,
From out some bush, their modest home
By forest side, or sheltering hill.

Joy blazes in the vernal sun,
And warbles in the wild bird's lay;
Great Nature starts her course to run,
And sows bright light upon her way.

CROWQUILL.

Toronto, March, 1882.

PARROTS.

The varieties of parrots generally kept are six in number, parrots, cockatoos, macaws, parakeets, love birds and lorries, though these latter are more rarely kept on account of their not being so proficient in speaking as most of the other kinds, though their plumage is exceedingly gay and beautiful.

The parrots of Asia and Africa were known to the Greeks more than two thousand years ago, and we find frequent mention of their powers and mimicry in such writers as Plutarch and Euripides; and we have occasional mention also that they were favorites in the palaces of kings and princes. About the time of our Saviour's birth frequent notice is found in the writers of that day of parrots and macaws. Ovid, for instance, speaks of the emerald hue of their plumage, while Pliny draws attention to their rose-colored collar and brilliant green plumage.

It is said that macaws are the best talkers of the whole species, providing they are reared from the nest. And not only are they able to talk, but they also sing in a peculiar, soft voice. Though, perhaps not in volume, certainly in sweetness and softness, they are excelled by certain kinds of parakeets, particularly the green or grass parakeet. While the cockatoo is the hardest of the parrot tribe, and most easily tamed, it is at the same time the most difficult to teach to talk at all well. Its disposition is, however, more gentle, and its obedience more implicit than that of the other species. The gray or ash colored African parrot is very docile, and receives its lesson with great aptitude, hence it is the most general favorite though the common green Amazon parrot, from the little attention it requires, and being easily taught to speak, shares the favor bestowed upon the gray-colored one.

We know a green parrot who, as soon as its owner opens the door of the room in which it is usually kept, in a most natural voice, exclaims—

"Pa, dear, come in and kiss your pretty green beauty!"

Or, if its master knocks at the door it immediately shouts:

"Come in; come in, pa, and give us a kiss and a thousand more."

This done, the parrot shouts, "Hip, hip, hurrah! Three cheers for the Queen," and instantly begins to dance to the tune. "Polly, put the kettle on and we'll all have tea," repeating or rather singing the words perfectly.

Again, she frequently says, "Let the dear waiter bring pretty Polly a pot of beer, for she really wants her dinner." Then, sometimes, she says, "Who'll give thirty guineas to the pretty green beauty, and then she will ride in her carriage." Or,

"O you, Cookey rough, why did you promise to marry me and did not?"

This bird is most affectionate, and never allows its master to leave the room without giving it a kiss or shaking its foot. It has lovely green plumage, and belongs to that variety which is not commonly supposed to talk namely, the parakeets; but it is said when they do talk they excel the rest of the tribe.

A captain of a large sailing vessel, which frequently touched at the ports of the Western Coasts of Africa, at different times possessed two gray parrots, one of which from having had some hot water thrown on its head accidentally, lost all its feathers permanently. Being frequently asked what was the cause of his strange

bald pate, he used to reply, "I was scalded," but whenever he saw an old gentleman passing by in the street or enter into the room with a bald head, he would be sure to shout out, with a correct changing of the grammar, "You've been scalded!" and then, turning to the company, he would add, "He's been scalded."

Another of this man's parrots had been brought up by one of the sailors and taught to swear in a most horrible manner, and he was ducked in the water whenever he was heard to swear; this tended to cure him of the habit; but one day when a man was washed overboard, and upon the body being recovered and placed on the deck, the parrot hopped around it several times, shaking its head from side to side gravely, and saying, —

"You've been swearing, you've been swearing."

This reminds me of what once occurred in a clergyman's family. The bishop of the diocese had been holding a confirmation in the neighborhood, and was lurching at a rectory with several of his clergy. In the middle of lunch, one of those dreadful pauses in the conversation took place. No one seemed able to break it when, to the astonishment and dismay of all present, a most horrible swearing tongue poured forth a torrent of blasphemy and abuse upon the assembled guests. Every one looked aghast at these unusual sounds, and for a minute or two the cursing and swearing continued uninterruptedly; for, though every one looked at his neighbor, the mystery was not cleared until the hostess, hastily rising from the table, and drawing aside a muslin curtain from the window, discovered the offender in the person of a gray parrot, which she had purchased that morning, at the door, from a travelling bird dealer, and, thinking to show off her new acquisition, had hung it in the room.

A tradesman, occupying a shop in the Old Bailey, just opposite to the prison (Newgate), possessed two parrots, a gray and a green one, which had been taught to speak. When a knock was heard at the street door the green parrot used to speak; but when the street-bell was rung, then the gray parrot answered. Now the house in which their owner lived had one of those old-fashioned projecting porches, so that when a person stood on the same side of the street as the door he could not see the first floor. One day the parrots had been hung outside the first floor window, and so, hidden from a person approaching the door. A man knocked at the shut door:

"Who's there?" said the green parrot,

"The man with the leather," was the reply.

"O, O," answered the bird, and then was silent.

After waiting some time and not finding the door opened, the person knocked a second time.

"Who's there?" repeated the green parrot.

"Who's there?" cried the man outside;

"why don't you open the door and see?"

"O, O," repeated the parrot.

This so enraged the man that he rang the bell furiously.

"Go to the gate!" shouted a new voice.

"To the gate," said the man, not seeing one;

"what gate?"

"Newgate," responded the gray parrot, which so enraged the man that, stepping back into the road to have a view of his mockers, he saw for the first time that he had been outwitted and teased by a couple of parrots.

The parrot that belonged to O'Keefe, the actor, was, perhaps, the most remarkable in all England. Among other accomplishments, it would sing "God save the King" through without missing a single word, or losing the tune. While doing so it would also keep time, moving its head from side to side in a perfect manner.

This bird could never be induced to sing on Sunday. Various tricks were played on it to effect this purpose, but without avail; it was kept in confinement, placed in darkness, etc., etc., but all devices failed; it was never known to sing on the Lord's day. King George III, heard of the fame of this parrot, and of its proficiency in singing the national anthem and resolved to witness its performance in person. This was arranged, but not a note would the bird utter in the presence of the King. Disconcerted and disappointed, the King turned away, but no sooner had his majesty reached the threshold, than the parrot, in a peculiarly sweet tenor voice, began to sing "God save the King." His majesty turned, and with his hand raised to keep silence among the attendants, listened in rapt attention to the bird's song, which is said to have been perfect. He offered O'Keefe a large sum of money for the parrot, but it was refused. Its owner was often in difficulties, being of an extravagant disposition, and resorted to the strange expedient for raising money by pawning poor Polly. He always redeemed it, however, and regained possession. It is said when this bird died its skin was purchased by the trustees of the British Museum, while the skeleton is preserved in the museum at Oxford.

Another friend of mine possesses a parrot who always discriminates between the sexes and condition of life of its master's visitors. If a gentleman comes, well-dressed, he is invariably saluted with,—

"What a get up! What a swell you are!"

If an old lady comes,—

"O what a fright! What a pair of nut-crackers!"

If a young lady, he begins in a soothing tone,—

"Isn't she nice? Isn't she nice?"

But when a clergyman comes, he instantly, in the gravest and most solemn tones, such as for-

bid, at the moment, any feeling of levity, addresses him with the words,—

"Let us pray! Let us pray!"

An American parrot, that had been taught to whistle in the way which generally attracts the notice of dogs, was sitting in his cage one day, at the shop door, whistling with all its might. By chance a large dog passed by. The animal, imagining that he heard the call of his master, turned suddenly about and ran towards the cage of the parrot. This movement rather alarmed the bird, who instantly screamed out,—

"Get out, you brute!"

Which caused the astonished dog to hastily retreat, leaving those in the shop convulsed with laughter at the joke.

Some of these anecdotes seem to imply the existence of more than merely imitative power. —Quiz.

THE WANDERING JEW

There are some legends so universally spread through the popular folklore of various countries that one naturally looks for their origin in something more than arbitrary invention or local superstition. To this class belong the legend of the Wandering Jew—that is, of an eye witness of the Crucifixion of our Lord, condemned, for having insulted the Saviour, to a joyless immortality and a perpetual wandering over the face of the earth. The myth appears to belong essentially to a class of great antiquity, which occurs in every part of the world. Early peoples who had not as yet formulated the natural tendency to belief in the immortality of the soul, were unwilling to allow that their national heroes and the mighty chiefs who had led them to glory and prosperity, had gone from them for ever; and the wish being father to the thought, such personages were supposed to have sought repose in some secluded earthly paradise, from which they should issue in due time to continue their work of conquest, or to revive the fortunes of the race. To this class belong the legends of Odin, King Arthur, Barbarossa, and Charlemagne; as well as such minor sages as those of Tannhäuser, Thomas of Erloune, and even Rip van Winkle. Side by side with the heroes too holy or too great to die come the stories who for their sins were forbidden the repose of the grave. These are the legitimate congeners of the Wandering Jew, and believers in them could appeal to the Bible for instances of both class of the undying and unresting ones. Cain, the first murderer, is also the first wanderer; Lamech is another sufferer from the same curse, as shown by the ancient lines:—

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice!
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken to my speech!
For the man I slew for my own wound,
The child I struck dead on account of my own hurt!
Was Cain avenged seven times?
Lamech will be seven times seven times!"

Enoch, who "walked with God, and was not, for God took him;" Moses, who disappeared amidst the mountains of Meab, and no man knew where his resting-place might be; Elias, who was carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire, and who in later Moslem legend disappeared in his search for the "water of life"—these are all types of one and the same idea. Early Aryan mythology has a similar story of the mysterious disappearance of the Iranian god-king, Yima, or Jamshedd, who is hidden away in a terrestrial paradise, and bides his time to usher in again the Golden Age; while later Teutonic myths have a more sinister version of the story in the legend of the Wild Huntsman, who follows the chase amid the storms of the Hartz mountains, and in the fantastic story of the Flying Dutchman, who is beating about in a vain attempt to round the Cape, which is to last till Judgment Day. The popular Messianic idea, also—not the Christian promise, but the Jewish and Moslem notion of a temporal King who shall come to life again to restore the supremacy of his people—and the opposing Antichrist or Dajjal, are types of the same primitive conception. Classical mythology, also, furnishes us with apposite illustrations in the stories of Prometheus, Tiresias, and the Glaucus myth. It is curious to note the close approach which Greek mythology occasionally makes to the Semitic; the myth of Perseus and Andromeda being the counterpart of Bel and the Dragon, of Seth and Typhon, of Michael and Satan, and of our own St. George and the Dragon. Perseus is, in fact, a mere anagram of the Phœnician Apollo Resef, whose attributes and story are the same as those of the Archangel. The legend of the Wandering Jew, however, embodies another and more recent idea; it is the expression of that undying popular hatred of the Jewish race which found vent in the terrible persecutions of the middle ages, and which is again showing itself in the *Judenhetze* which disgraces modern Germany. The Christians looked upon the Jews as a race as the chosen of Satan rather than of Jehovah, and regarded them with a deadly and unreasoning hatred, not only because they had been the instrument in the death and sufferings of our Lord, but because they were a foreign race, and because the natural instinct of an uncultivated Aryan is to "heave half a brick" at the unknown. A well-known story aptly illustrates the common feeling of the uneducated against the Hebrews. A settler from the backwoods of America came into a town, and meeting a member of the chosen race whose lineaments too surely betrayed his origin, proceeded to inflict upon him grievous bodily injury. On being taken before a magistrate and charged with the crime, he pleaded that the prosecutor was a Jew, and therefore, by implication, a murderer of the

Savior, and consequently deserving of punishment. The humane magistrate pointed out that the era of persecution had gone by, and that, however creditable the Christian defendant's zeal might be, the event which had kindled his wrath had taken place some eighteen hundred years ago. "Now, do tell!" said the ingenious backwood-man, "and I only heard of it last Tuesday!" The story, which is probably true, is paralleled by that of the old Englishwoman, who, having the same events detailed to her by a sympathetic clergyman for the first time in her life, said it was all very dreadful, but it was a long way off and a long time ago, and she hoped it wasn't true. The miracle plays had much to do with keeping alive this race-hatred, and the Jew was long considered to be merely a creature to mock at, to torture, and to rob, and any pain or indignity inflicted upon him was thought to be a work of Christian zeal. The legends of the Wandering Jew has had great attractions for poets and artists of Europe. In Germany Schubert first conceived the idea of making "this antique cordon-rouge," as Carlyle says, as it were, "a raft at anchor in the stream of time, from which he would survey the changes and wonders of two thousand years." Goethe also contemplated a poem on the same subject, but was diverted by the more national legend of Faust. Many others have written on the same theme; but Chamisso, in his "New Ahasuerus," has perhaps clothed the whole myth in the most picturesque dress. In France its chief exponent is Eugène Sue, whose romance of "The Wandering Jew," published in 1844, has done more than anything else to revive the popular legend of the middle ages in our own day. His hero is, as Mr. Moncreux Conway points out, closely allied to the mysterious undying wanderer, El Khidhr, mentioned in the eighteenth chapter of the Koran. Moses, meeting with an ancient man, who, he is miraculously informed, is wiser than himself, travels with him, but not until the stranger has exacted a promise from him that he will not ask any questions, whatever he might see. El Khidhr, in the course of their peregrinations, commits various crimes; and Moses unable to control his indignation, at length asks for an explanation. The old man then reveals to him that the apparent wrongs were really either retractions or blessings in disguise, and, leaving the Hebrew lawgiver, goes on upon his endless journey through the world. Eugène Sue's Wandering Jew at length finds rest, together with Herodias, who had expiated her foul murder of St. John the Baptist by a similar restless doom. Pierre Dupont's poetical version of the romance, and Gustave Doré's imaginative designs which accompany it will be familiar to most of our readers. The last, especially, are a faithful transcript of the wild and weird conception which, having its origin in the vague yearnings of a primitive people, has survived until the present time in the ghostly figure of the ancient Jew who literally paid with his life for insulting our Lord. Mr. Moncreux Conway deserves our gratitude for having given a graphic and exhaustive account of this ancient and most curious myth.

THE OLD FASHIONED BANKER.

The old-fashioned banker used to go to his office so punctually that you might set a town clock by him. When he dined at the club or hotel he used to observe the manners of his customers, and, if he thought them extravagant, he showed them little mercy in "the shop" or the "sweating-room." He would stay in the office till the accounts were balanced; and we have known of clerks being kept up for hours until the error of a penny could be rectified. Old Simeon of Cambridge gave a man £20 to detect the error of a penny in his accounts. The old-fashioned bankers were the men who kept up to the last the powder and pigtail, the top-boots and knee-breeches. The half-holiday was an institution totally unknown. The country bankers sent up to town heavy parcels by Pickford's van, a guard with a blunderbuss keeping watch over them. In those days of expensive postage it was a great object to send letters by private hands. A Manchester bank calculated that it saved the pay of two clerks by this system. If any of their customers were found to have booked places at the coach offices it was soon arranged that they should take letters to town. Sir Rowland Hill's innovations have nowhere been more efficacious than in the province of banking. The banker in old times never concerned himself with literature. He would be regarded as going to professional perdition. He would be looked upon as the Cambridge candidate for honors who falls in love or betakes himself to poetry. When the news came to Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough that a young banker named Rogers had just published a poem on "The Pleasures of Memory," he exclaimed, "If old Gozzy"—alluding to the respect I had of the firm with which he was banking—"ever so much as says a good thing, let alone writing, I will close my account with him the next morning!" An absurd story is told of an old banker, of a single pint of porter being invariably placed at the bottom of his staircase for his landlady. In course of time the pint was exchanged for a pot. A customer forthwith remonstrated with him: "I must say, sir, that if you go on doubling your expenditure at that rate, it may be time for your customers to look after their balances." —Society.

The French Government has approved the scheme for a scientific expedition to the South Pole.