

We said it was basely coated with a worthless incrustation; and is it not deformed by sin, original and actual? Have not these completely hid its brilliancy and buried it in obscure darkness? Oh! how hath Satan's thrall disfigured the precious gem! Teacher, shall it remain neglected and despised? Shall it still be smothered and enshrouded by the crust of sin and vice? Shall it remain in the possession and service of him whose chief desire is to crush, and ruin, and destroy it? Shall it be trodden under foot of the powers of darkness, numbered with the worthless pebbles of the world, and perish in the general fire? Or shall it be one of the "jewels" which Christ, in the day of his coming, shall gather up? Teacher, you must supply the answer. Yours it is to bring to light its dazzling beauties; 'tis yours to lead the young immortal to the fountain of divine mercy, to the Lamb of God who shall wash him in His all-cleansing blood. 'Tis yours to take him to the feet of Jesus, who will "turn his hand upon him," will purely purge away his dross, and take away all his sin; he will "refine him as silver is refined," and will make him as gold seven times purified. Snatch him from the devouring flame, and by God's free grace he shall richly radiate in heaven, shall add to the refulgence of the crown of glory which decks the brow of heaven's High Majesty.—*Wray's Sabbath School Teacher.*

VENTILATION.—AIR POISON.—People have often said that no difference can be detected in the analysis of pure and impure air. This is one of the vulgar errors difficult to dislodge from the public brain. The fact is, that the condensed air of a crowded room gives a deposit which, if allowed to remain for a few days, forms a solid, thick glutinous mass, having a strong odour of animal matter. If examined by a microscope, it is seen to undergo a remarkable change. First of all, it is converted into a vegetable growth, and this is followed by the production of animalcules; a decisive proof that it must contain organic matter, otherwise it could not nourish organic beings. This was the result arrived at by Dr. Angus Smith, in his beautiful experiments on the air and water of towns; wherein he showed how the lungs and skin gave out organic matter, which is in itself a deadly poison, producing headache, sickness, disease or epidemic, according to its strength. Why, if "a few drops of the liquid matter, obtained by a condensation of the air of a foul locality, introduced into the veins of a dog, can produce death with the usual phenomena of a typhus fever," what incalculable evil must it not produce on those human beings who breathe it again and again, rendered fouler and less capable of sustaining life with each breath drawn! Such contamination of the air, and consequent hot-bed of fever and epidemic, it is in the power of man easily to remove. Ventilation and cleanliness will do all, so far as the abolition of this evil goes, and ventilation and cleanliness are not miracles to be prayed for, but certain results of common obedience to the laws of God.—*Dickens.*

SKETCHES IN NATURAL HISTORY.

(Continued from page 109.)

IV. MINO, THE TALKING BIRD OF JAVA.

Wonders will never cease. How few persons have heard a bird talk in plain, good English! We have all heard pretty Poll when she says "Good morning;" but pretty Poll has no command of language,—she is not an adept in etymology, syntax, or prosody,—she cannot talk syllogistically, like the talking bird of Java—she cannot, like him, give three propositions—as for example, "My name is Mino—Mino is a pretty bird—How do you do?" We are aware that the present Queen of England once had a parrot that said "Good morning, Vic," but never could pronounce the words "Queen Victoria," and on account of an unfinished education was suddenly neglected, or turned over to the unstrappers of Windsor.

There is a talking bird now living in modern Athens that has either been remarkably well educated, or has intuitively caught the true spirit of the literary atmosphere we are all permitted to breathe, and this bird talks common sense in good, plain English. He is a rare curiosity; and we do not believe that our old friend Audubon would have sent a bullet through Mino's head, even for the sake of enriching his superb ornithology with another beautiful specimen, especially if Mino had said to the distinguished ornithologist, in his winning and good natured manner, "Good morning, sir."

We saw the talking bird, Mino, at his home, No. 74, Tremont Street, a few days since, and were much astonished and pleased. It is difficult to give an adequate description of him. He is about the size of the American crow-blackbird, although a little heavier. His length from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail feathers, is about twelve inches. He has a yellow bill, one inch in length. His plumage is remarkably beautiful, when it glistens in the rays of the sun. It is a very rich variegated purple and green. The wings are nearly black, with white bars near the ends. The feathers on the head are short, fine, and thick, and resemble the richest gloss of dark velvet. He has a long and beautiful lappel of bright yellow, extending from each side of the back of his head to the nape of his neck. There is

also a small oblong mark on each side of his head. His legs and claws are yellow. His tongue is long, pointed at the end, broad in the throat, and flat,—thus differing from that of the parrot, which is round, short, and somewhat curved.

Mr. James Mann, the well-known taxidermist, of this city, informs us that the Mino birds, so called, are natives of Java, and that they are rare even in that island; moreover, that they seldom talk. They have a great appetite, and will eat voraciously cooked or raw meat, bread, potatoes, and fruit, although they appear to relish simple meal and milk. Mr. Mann possessed a Mino bird, some years ago, which could whistle and imitate different sounds, but it could not pronounce words.

The Mino bird in Tremont Street, the property of Mr. J. Chesley, has a fine tenor voice, and shows what may truly be termed intelligence. We have seen several persons looking admiringly at him, and have heard him say, in the most distinct manner, after he has gazed intently, apparently listening to the conversation,—“My name is Mino.” After waiting sometime, as if he expected a compliment to be bestowed upon him, he has raised his beautiful head, and proudly said,—“Mino is a pretty bird.”

If nobody offers any words of praise, he jumps about his large cage a few times, turns his back to the astonished spectators, and indignantly and emphatically says, in a sharp tone, “Go away! go away!” He then gives a loud and hearty guffaw, exactly like the “ha-ha-ha!” of a human being. Of course every person laughs at the droll bird, and the droll bird laughs again, and says, “Good morning.” When he sees his admirers disperse, he tells them, in the plainest language, to “Shut the door.” If he is asked his name in an affectionate manner, he will immediately reply, “My name is Mino: how do you do?” When he hears several persons conversing earnestly together, without taking any notice of him, he exclaims, “What are you talking for?” The words are so suddenly spoken, and the sound so closely resembles a human voice, that one is really inclined to reply that it is none of your business. But Mino is polite, well educated, and very amusing, although he is vain and fond of flattery.

Every phrase that we have given we heard Mino speak in the course of fifteen minutes. He could probably be so taught to extend his knowledge of the English language, that he could do all the talking at the next session of our legislature for nothing, and thus save considerable money to our tax-paying citizens. It is a fact that, when he is in the humour, he speaks the Malay language, *sotto voce*, and apparently for his own gratification. We hope that Mr. Elihu Burritt, the learned blacksmith, will listen to Mino's foreign lingo, and give us a translation of it, for, mayhap, some long lost lines of an ancient poet may yet be preserved to us by this very remarkable bird. He certainly manifests a degree of intelligence. He apparently takes pleasure in listening to conversation, and has extraordinary imitative power. If we had the enthusiasm of an Audubon, Wilson, Buffon, Cuvier, or Gould, we should place this bird in a rank above all other birds. The Mino lives to a greater age, and is said to be the only bird among the five thousand species known in the world that talks from the lungs, and perfectly imitates the human voice.—*Boston Traveller.*

Educational Intelligence.

CANADA.

—**EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT, LOWER CANADA.**—During the recent meeting of the American Association, at Montreal, the writer had an opportunity, through the courtesy of the Chief Superintendent of Education and his principal officers, of visiting the Lower Canada Education Office, and McGill Normal and Model Schools. The offices of the department, in the old government house, are handsomely fitted up and in admirable working order. The council room and library are also appropriately furnished. The Library contains a very valuable collection of neatly bound French and English Educational works of reference, and a selection of works in general literature, etc. The McGill Normal and Model Schools are attached to the Education Office Building, and are fitted up and furnished in the same manner as are the corresponding schools in Upper Canada. Every thing indicated the zeal and ability with which the department is managed.—A visit to Quebec, also, furnished an opportunity, through the kindness of Rev. Mr. Horan and the Ecclesiastics of the Seminary, of seeing the Jacques Cartier Normal and Model Schools, and the Laval University. The visit to these institutions was a highly gratifying one. The arrangements of the Jacques Cartier School are excellent, and in one or two respects superior to our own. The Laval University, with its new and extensive additional buildings, its valuable library, interesting Museum, laboratory, and beautiful collection of philosophical instruments, is admirably adapted to promote the cause of higher education in Lower Canada.