

In some individual instances, the ratio of destruction has been much higher. On one station on the Matatapu, out of a flock of twenty Lincoln rams, nineteen were within one month killed by these parrots. On an other run, a flock of three hundred and ten strong, young wethers were, within a period of five months, so seriously injured by the keas, that at the end of that time only one hundred and five remained alive. In consequence of this destruction, men were engaged to kill the bird at a shilling a head; and these men, taking advantage of its nocturnal habits, now range the mountains at night, lighting fires to attract their game. In the daytime, they rest and prepare the skins for sale. But the kea, with the cleverness and cunning of its tribe, has grown very shy and wary, and knows very well when it sees a man carrying a gun, what he is likely to do with it.

Mr. Potts gives a striking account of the cruelty and rapacity of the keas in the prosecution of their horrible taste for sheep fat, the part especially liked by them being the fat that surrounds the kidneys. With this view, they do not hesitate to tear open the animal's flesh till they arrive at these organs, after tearing out the fat of which, they leave the poor animal to linger on or die in excruciating agony. "Sheep," says Mr. Potts, "whilst being got out of snowdrifts, are often mortally hurt by the attacks of the keas; especially are the birds prone to molest those carrying double fleeces, as though they knew how firm a foothold they could maintain with their grip. When one of these sheep, temporarily exhausted with its exertions in toiling through deep snow under the burden of two years' growth of wool breaks off from the mob and leaves the track, desperately floundering into deeper snow-wreaths, a flock of parrots, ever watchful as they hover round soon perceive their opportunity for mischief; they alight close to the spot where the sheep, unconscious of approaching danger, stands gazing fixedly in a state of helpless stupidity; gradually hopping or moving towards the victim with some show of caution. One of the keas at least settles on the back of the sheep, which terrified at the strange visitor that thus besets it, bounds away; the bird now rises only to alight again on the same place, and clutches into the wool with its sharp claws, retains its hold more firmly and tenaciously. In vain the tortured animal it the direst agony seeks to rid itself of its cruel persecutor, that boldly keeps its vantage; after running and struggling some distance, its efforts to escape becomes feebler; it is at length so hard pressed that in a few minutes it yields passively to the tearing and searching beak of the kea."

These repulsive, flesh-devouring propensities may have been acquired through the bird's being forced in severe winters, to approach the stations in hopes of finding food, and there feeding on the flesh in the meat-gallows, and thus gradually forming a carnivorous appetite of such strength, that its former frugivorous tastes are entirely destroyed, and flesh now forms its sole food. The kea in the Zoological Gardens was struck down while it was in the act of attacking a sheep; but the man did not succeed in capturing it till it had torn his cloths in many places and severely lacerated his hands. Its food consists mainly of mutton, raw; it does not care for cooked meat, but will take it if very hungry. Occasionally it will take beef, and is fond of pork. But its vegetarian tastes seem almost completely eradicated, for it will not touch bread, though it likes the seed of sow-thistle. It is altogether a remarkable and curious bird.

His Crazy-Bone.

The man that struck his crazy-bone
All suddenly jerked up one foot
And hopped three vivid hops, and put
His elbow straight before him, then
Flashed white as pallid Parian-stone,
And clinched his eyes—and hopped again.

He spake no word—he made no moan—
He muttered no invective—but
Just gripped his eyelids tighter shut;
And, as the world whizzed past him then,
He only knew his crazy bone
Was stricken—and he hopped again.

J. W. RILEY.

Mental Work.

From Modern Thought.

Mental work, can, as a rule, only be carried out for lengths of time and successfully by persons who are originally of very sound constitution. There are very few exceptions to this rule, and in making this observation I am speaking from an experience which few possess, inasmuch as for a long part of my professional life I have been brought specially into contact with those who are engaged in almost all the departments of literature. My experience is that those who are not habitually strong and have fair health pass out of the work of literature altogether, some by death, but far more by transition into other spheres of labor. I am quite aware of course, that there are exceptions to this rule, and that some very bright and great characters in letters have not been of the healthiest type. Pope has often been adduced in illustration of this fact, and Johnson and Cowper, and Keates. But these must really be taken as exceptions, and in regard to Johnson I should infer that, although he was of a nervous, lymphatic temperament, and of strenuous diathesis, yet that he was very strong, that he had the facility of acquiring rest and strength through prolonged legarthy, and was capable of sustaining periods of excessive fatigue; that he wrote "Rasselas" in three weeks is perhaps a sufficient proof of this supposition. Putting aside the exceptions, the evidence of the general rule is extraordinarily clear. Defoe must have been a model of strength and endurance; Scott could hardly have been less favored; Newton, though delicate, was always healthily active when he could get his eight or nine hours of sleep; Christopher Wren must have been a marvel of strength, and in a word all in the main who had lived to influence the world by their thought have originally had the sound mind based on the sound body. Here, then, alone we have a basic reason why mental workers should, on the whole, present a good range of longevity. A second explanation of the advantages of mental work is that such work, by the love of it, by the absorption in it which it brings to the worker, relieves the mind from the corroding influence of the passions, and saves thereby the wear and tear of life in the most extreme degree. A poor man of letters is, in fact, far better off in respect to health than a rich man, who is fighting to amass and hold his riches. There is nothing like it as a means of retirement from the hurry-scurry of life. Harriet Martineau it will be remembered by many, tells in her autobiography how she would sometimes sit down to literature, and looking up at the clock, would discover that several hours had passed away, as if they had been minutes rather than hours, and I can for my own part fully bear out this kind of experience. I do not say that this degree of absorption is in itself intrinsically good; I am sure that by the interruption of physical activity which it induces, it is a source of injury, but it is safely compared with the bustle, strain, expectation and hazard connected with other forms of human labor. A third explanation is that mental work, except when carried to extremes, favors nutritive changes, and at the same time prevents the worker from indulging in hurtful luxuries and modes of life that interfere with the performance of successful work. The successful mental laborer is soon made conscious of the truth that if he indulges heavily at the table, that if he partakes freely of wine or other strong drink, that if he reduces his hours of sleep below the natural requirement, he cannot perform his necessary amount of labor, and that what is done under such circumstances fails to come up to the mark, and had better have been let alone altogether. So it occurs that our best men, those who leave behind them the records that live in history, pursue more even lives than their fellows, and in that way attain a greater length of days. A further explanation of the advantages of mental work is supplied in the circumstance that mental workers are not exposed to physical shocks and vicissitudes of weather like persons engaged in less protracted occupations. They may travel, and many of them do travel far and wide—it is a propensity with them to see the world—but travel, in their case, partakes of refined pleasure, in which they are pursuing their avocation with variety of thought and observation, and by which the weariness of travel is greatly alleviated;

while in their own homes they are protected from extremes of heat and cold, and are able to live a methodical life, with regularity of meals, and regularity of times for recreation, rest and sleep.

A Fog Bow Before Sunrise.

The phenomenon of the ordinary rainbow is familiar to every observer of nature. White fog-bows, or 'fog-eaters,' as they are called by the sailors, are frequently visible in some localities favorable for their formation; and they are generally regarded as indications of clearing weather. 'A fog-bow was observed,' writes Mr. H. C. Hovy, 'on the morning of the 8th of January, from my residence on Fair Haven heights, near New Haven, Conn., at the mouth of the Quinnipiac river, and about 100 feet above the sea level. No rain was noticeable in any quarter, but the valleys were filled with fog, above which the hilltops stood like islands. At exactly ten minutes before sunrise (due at 7.26 a. m.), on looking westward I saw a brilliant arch of prismatic colors spanning the East Rock range, the highest point of which is 350 feet above the sea. As the sun arose the arch diminished in height and vividness, and by the time the orb was visible in the morning sky, the fog-bow had vanished.'

Wet and Dry Thunderstorms.

A correspondent of the London Times, writing from the Transvaal, South Africa, says; 'Every afternoon tremendous storms of lightning and thunder burst upon us. These were of two kinds—the wet and the dry. The first is harmless, though noisy; the second exceedingly dangerous. During the dry thunderstorms, which were prevalent toward the end of October, the lightning seemed quite stupifying. It was unaccompanied by either wind or rain. The angry flashes were followed almost simultaneously by awful crashes of thunder, which seemed to shake the earth. One or two tents were struck, and the grass was set fire to in several places within sight of our camps, but no life was lost, only some arms damaged. The dry thunderstorms were soon followed by wet ones. The rain, mixed up with enormous hail-stones, soused the thirsty earth, and every crack on the little veldt bore its burden of water to the Vaal, which rose and became impassable.'

From Nature.

Fish Mortality in the Gulf of Mexico

From time to time since 1844, a wide-spread destruction of all sorts of marine creatures has occurred all along certain well-marked out tracks in the Gulf of Mexico. In 1854 the fishes suffered all along the southern shore; in 1878 there was again an excessive mortality; in 1879 the plague again appeared; while in 1880, we learn from the recently published report of Inspector Ingersoll to Prof. S. F. Baird, it has been very intense. The poisoned waters occur in streaks or patches, sometimes near to one another, at other times many yards apart. These seem to drift with the flow of the tide, and ultimately become diluted. The most probable solution of this strange phenomenon is to suppose that eruptions of noxious volcanic gases arise through the bottom of the sea; certain it is that the marine life on the sea-bottom suffers first. Sponges, sea-anemones, mollusks, and the ground fish die in mass, and apparently at once. Upwards the deadly pestilence mounts, and the small fish swimming at or near the surface are killed by thousands, and float lifeless on the water. The large surface fish would seem to escape, and rarely is a mullet to be found destroyed. Fishing in such districts has to be abandoned, even although in the pure streaks the fish abandoned, for should a smack fill its well with the results of a successful catch it had to run the gauntlet of the broad patches of the poisoned waters, and if any of these were encountered, and entered the well, a few moments would suffice to bring about the death of every fish in the cargo. The keeper of the Egmont Lighthouse writes on February 21 in this year: "As the tide came in on October 17, 1880, there were thousands of small fish floating on the water, most of them quite dead. The next day the fish were dying all along the shore; between