

phire tinted arabesques, decorating amber pillars witness the Golden Willow. Each gleam of sunshine investing this gorgeous tapestry with all the glories of Iris: here, rising above his compeers a stately lord of the grove, hoary with frost and years, whose outspreading boughs are furnished as if every twig had been touched by the wand of an enchanter; whilst there, under his shade, bends a sturdy mountain ash, smeared with the crimsoned berries of the preceding summer, now ice-coated bon-bons eagerly plucked by flocks of roseate grosbeaks resting on the whitened branches. How lovely the contrasts!

Such the scene in the gladsome light of day. But, of those objects, viewed by moonlight, who can becomingly depict the wild beauty? The same incomparable woodland landscape, with the silver rays of Diana softly sleeping on the virgin snow; on each side, an avenue of oak, spruce and fir-trees, the latter with their emerald feathery boughs wreathed in solid snow, and to the earth gracefully bending in festoons—now and again kissed by the night wind—at each wavy motion, disclosing their dark trunks, amidst the frozen foliage, like "Old Ocean's" billows breaking on dark rocks; the burnished gold of the morn melted into diadems of silver floss, twinkling with a mild radiance, under the eye of night, like diamond tiaras—a vista fit for Queen Mab. Of such mayhap dreamed Moorish maids, under the portals of the Alhambra. Where Armida's enchanted forests brighter?

Who can describe all thy witchery? Thy nameless graces, who can compass, serene majesty of Winter in the North?

Wouldst thou fancy another view, of aspect less serene—a contrast such as glorious old Kir North would have revelled in? Step forward, my witty, my sarcastic friend of the *Evening* newspaper—by name Henri Fabre.

THE JOYS OF WINTER.

"The true season of Canada is winter; winter with its bright skies by day and its brighter stars by night. Of spring we have none: April is nothing better than a protracted thaw, with scenes of mud and melting snow. May, the month dear to poets, is frequently but an uninterrupted succession of showers to fecundate the earth; its symbol, an array of outspread umbrellas in our streets. As to our summer, it is but the epitome of the joyous summer of France and Italy, for the use of new countries. Autumn is a shade better, but anon the first snow hits us on to blanch and disperse the leaves and dim the hues of mellowed nature. When the fields slumber under ten feet of snow, when human noses freeze before their sneezing owners have time to utter a cry for help, then is the *beau ideal* of our climate. He who on such an occasion dares to sigh for the boasted shade of trees and the murmur of gushing waters, that man is no true Canadian. The searching wind, the snow, the northern blast, are part and parcel of our country: one is bound to love them: should they increase in intensity, rub your hands, first to keep yourself warm, next to denote your patriotic joy."

But all this won't prevent us from exclaiming with a Canadian son of song:

"Oh! dear is the northern forest home,
Where the great pine shoots so high;
And the maple spreads its soft, green leaves,
In the clear, blue, cloudless sky.
Though the summer mantle paleth fast
Into winter's virgin veil—
There is health in the ferns, quick lightning blast,
And strength in the icy gale,
And life glides on quiet calm,
Like our own river's flow,
And dear to the hearts of her children all,
Is our own Fair Land of Snow!"

J. M. LEMOINE.

SILLERT, near Quebec, 1872.

ROYAL AND IMPERIAL JOKERS.

Jesting with Kings, particularly with the Emperor, was as if a swimmer, however experienced, should venture within the smooth but death-bearing current of Niagara, which inevitably carries all within its power over the Falls. People have played little teasing jokes with elephants, and when the jokers have forgotten all about it the gravely majestic beast has put his foot upon the offender, and crushed the humour out of him forever. It has been just so with malice-bearing monarchs, and with courtiers who thought they might joke with them. The incarnation of all such monarchs existed in the person of an African king named Chaka. He was given to joking at others, and would betide them if they did not burst with ecstacy at the joke; but if a "fellow of infinite humour" happened to cap the royal joke with a better, Chaka broke into hilarity, which he ended by exclaiming, "Cut off that wretch's head: he has made me laugh." The Caesars must have been almost as dreadfully dangerous men to joke with as Chaka. The great Julius, indeed, after he became great, had no leisure for jesting, but was the object of some popular jokes, which he took with indifference. The guests of Augustus were afraid to "crack a joke" in his presence. They would whisper one to a neighbor, and then turn pale if the Emperor invited them to "speak up." The imperial table was as grand and dull as that of the copper Augustus, Louis XIV, and the Emperor had recourse to merry-andrews, just as the Grand Monarque had to harlequins. But the harlequins of those days were gentlemen and scholars. The grim Tiberius, on the other hand, was remarkably facetious. His delight was to puzzle his learned guests with unanswerable questions, such as, "What was the name of the song the Syrens sang?" and the like. Fancy half a dozen members of the Society of Antiquaries dining with Her Majesty and being gravely asked who built the marble halls the Bohemian girl dreamt she dwelt in? or what was the Christian name of the "Minstrel Boy?" and at what period "Auld Lang Syne" had been young! Nevertheless, Tiberius was a nicer man to deal with than Caligula, all of whose jests were brutally cruel, in words, and oftener in deeds. What a serious joke was that, when having nothing on but the linen apron of a victim-slaver, he raised the mallet, and, instead of slaying the beast, knocked out the brains of the sacrificing priest? Claudius was too huge a feeder to have appetite for wit; but he would have eaten the whole beast that his predecessor should have killed. Yet Claudius, half beast himself, had a good deal of the scholar in him; as Nero had, who loved science, admired art, was mildly witty, and therewith as savage as an insane hyena. We must except the occasions of his visiting the theatre, when he sat in an upper seat, and found delight in flinging nuts down upon the bald head of the praetor below. That official was as proud of the attention as if every nut had been an especial honor. Joyless Galba had none of the Neronic fun in him. But though not witty himself, Galba could smile when he heard the popular slang name, in

allusion to his flat nose, "Simius." His successor, Otho, was just such a wit as a man might be expected to be who washed his face in asses' milk. If witty men went away from him feeling dull and heavy, it was the result of their exchanging ideas with their imperial master. He had his wit at second hand, as Vitellius had, who got his jokes from a stag-player and charioteer. In more modern times, when Astley's was in his glory, and the clown of the ring a joker that people went to listen to, that circus clown got his jokes, not from his own brains, but from the Westminster boys. Jokes used to be made at Westminster as they now are at the Stock Exchange, where fresh batches are served each morning, like hot rolls. But to return to the Caesars. Perhaps Vespasian was a greater joker than any of them, but his jokes were often broad and scurrilous. Titus was rather gracious than given to jesting, though he enjoyed one serry joke in promising to every suit or that his request should be granted. They went away radiant, "Every one," he said, "ought to depart joyfully from the presence of his Prince;" and then, "the delight of mankind" thought no more of his promise. The chief recreation of the gloomy Domitian was in playing dice; but he always won. Every antagonist knew what the joke would cost him if he beat the Emperor. Altogether, those twelve Caesars, were men compounded of the most opposite qualities, with a small modicum of what is called wit among the whole of them. Out of all those who followed one alone, Hadrian, made a standing and sterling joke—a joke which has descended to us and added a slang phrase to our vulgar tongue. To "scrape acquaintance" comes to us from Hadrian. He was at the public baths one day, when he saw one of his veteran soldiers scraping his body with a tile. That was such poor luxury that Hadrian ordered that his old comrades should be supplied with more suitable cleansing materials, and also with money. On a subsequent occasion, when the Emperor again went to the bath, the spectacle before him was highly amusing. A score of old soldiers who had fought under Hadrian were standing in the water, and each was currying himself with a tile and winking at the self-indulgent rubbing. The Emperor perfectly understood what he saw and what was the purpose of the sight. "Hadrian!" he exclaimed, "you had better scrape one another, my good fellows!" He added, "You certainly shall not scrape acquaintance with me!"—*Temp's Bar.*

THE RETENTION AND COLOURING OF EGGS AND THE MIMICRY OF SOUND BY BIRDS.

A correspondent of *Nature* forwards the following interesting facts observed in New Zealand: Regarding the length of time during which a bird can retain its egg, the case is mentioned of a kindfisher that began six nests, abandoning all in turn and depositing her eggs in the seventh, after working for over six weeks in a condition analogous to pregnancy. The labour was incessant, three of the homes that were excavated in a turf chimney and abandoned being so far finished that a deposit of eggs must have been imminent on three occasions during the above period.

In answer to the question: Can a bird influence the colour of its eggs protectively? the writer says that a female bittern, when kept in a grassy enclosure, laid an egg of a pale bluish green colour, precisely like that of a heron. The egg of the bittern naturally is of an olivaceous buff tint, which harmonizes well with the half faded leaves of aquatic plants, of which the nest is often built. It is doubtless probable that the egg thus became tinged to secure for it the protection of the verdure of the grass in which it was deposited. Another and more curious instance is that of the whistler or small cuckoo placing its egg in the nest of the blight bird. The latter is a bird foreign to New Zealand and builds a suspended nest; the eggs are clear blue green in color. The egg of the cuckoo is greenish dun, but in order to place it in the hanging nest where it will be free from reptilian invaders, the writer has found cases where it has manifestly changed the color to one closely resembling that of the eggs of its dupe, so that the latter would fail to distinguish the addition to its deposit.

Referring to the mimicry of sounds, it is stated that, in camping for some days on a river bed, the author frequently heard what he took to be one of the notes of the *Arctopus* but that wader was nowhere to be seen; at length he traced the call to the pipilo, a bird with feeble powers of flight, yet one that delights in the open glades of river beds. The mimic cry was always given when near to a stream just where the red bill (*Arctopus*) would be likely to be found. A pair of red bills can drive away a hawk; now a hawk, "from his place on high" perceiving something near the water, might forgo its swoop on hearing the mimicked note of the wary yet bold redbill. The common gray warbler, it is also stated, gives an exact imitation of the cry of the common tern, one of the boldest birds in defence of its young.

PRINTERS' ERRORS IN THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

The errors of the foreign editions of the Dutch and Scotch Bibles are almost innumerable. In a black-letter Testament of 1654, printed either at Edinburgh or in Holland, a mistake may be met with in every column. In Holland itself a vigorous attempt to insure correctness was made by the restriction of the right of publishing Bibles to the King's printers, and no more curious proof of the perpetuity of English usages could be found than in the history of this monopoly. The house of Christopher Barker, to which the patent was granted in 1577, went on steadily printing under it to 1799. The right was held for sixty years by Thomas Baskett, and purchased in 1769 by Charles Eyre, whose representatives, Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode, continue a succession which has been unbroken since 1655. But the monopoly failed in securing the various editions from even ludicrous and profane blunders. In one of the earliest issues, the second folio of 1611, in which the mistakes of the first were supposed to have been corrected, we find, "Then cometh Judas with them unto a place called Gethsemane." A folio of 1717 has received its name of "the Vinegar Bible," from a misprint in the heading of the parable of the Vineyard. In two quartos of the present century we are told that "the blast of thy terrible ones is as a s'one against the wall," and that "the dogs liked his blood." We may perhaps suspect a little irony in the compositor of 1838 (he may have been an acquaintance of Milton's), who makes the heathen vex the Israelites, not with their "wives," but with their "wives," or in the printer of 1640, who substituted "rulers in the wilderness" for "mules."

But the real mischief of such blunders lay in their tendency to perpetuation. The omission in the first folio of two important words in the fifth chapter of St. John's first Epistle is still perpetuated in our Prayer-Books, though it has been corrected in the text of our Bibles. "Strain at a gnat" was probably a typographical blunder in the first issue of King James' Bible for the "strain out" of the Bishops' and Geneva versions; but it remains to this day. So a misprint in the First Epistle to Timothy, which originated at Cambridge about 1629, went on uncorrected, edition after edition, till 1803. The fine of £3000 inflicted by the Star-Chamber on Barker for his omission of the prohibitory "not" in the Seventh Commandment is a well-known instance of the fruitless efforts to obtain correctness; the fine, however, as we hear from Mr. Lottie, "dwindles on investigation to £300, and this again is compensated for by the presentation of a set of Greek types to one of the universities."

Nor was free trade more conducive to correctness than monopoly. The great rebellion for a time threw upon the market, but the popular editions of Field and Hills were distinguished with a greater number of blunders than any that had appeared before. Their defects are mercilessly exposed in a rare tract by William Kelbourne, which Mr. Lottie has reprinted in his preface. Besides the greater errors, however, which we have noticed, we find an infinite number of smaller modifications going on in spelling and punctuation. During the first century which is comprised in Mr. Lottie's list the spelling of no two editions is the same. In such a change as that of "sometimes" for "some time" spelling becomes an important organ of revision. "We still," says Mr. Lottie, have such words as "astonish," "thoroughly," "praisings," "soon," although the authority by which they are retained has no more existence in reality than that by which such words as "shamefastness" or "impossible" were altered."

CAN THE STATURE BE IN ANY WAY AFFECTED BY THE WILL?

It is written that "no man by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature;" but if there be any truth in the following extracts from Babbage's "Passages in the Life of a Philosopher," it appears that man can, at all events, voluntarily do just nearly an equivalent amount from his height. At the opening of chapter eighteen of the work just cited Mr. Babbage makes the following statement respecting the celebrated tinker Valooq, with whom he had an interview: "He had a very remarkable power, which he was so good as to exhibit to me. It consisted in altering his height to about an inch and a half less than his ordinary height. He threw over his shoulders a cloak, in which he walked round the room. It did not touch the floor in any part, and was, I should say, about an inch and a half above it. He then altered his height, and took the same walk. The cloak then touched the floor, and lay upon it in some part or other during the whole walk. He then stood still, and altered his height alternately several times to about the same amount. I inquired whether the altered height, if sustained for several hours, produced fatigue. He replied that it did not, and that he had often used it for a whole day without any additional fatigue. He remarked that he had found this gift very useful as a disguise. I asked whether any medical man had examined the question, but it did not appear that any satisfactory explanation had been arrived at. Now if this had been the statement of an unscientific person, or one whose powers of observation were presumably untrained, it might be put aside unheeded; but coming, as it does, from one very unlikely to jump to conclusions, it seems to merit some degree of attention. This, then, being granted, the question arises, how can we account anatomically for this shortening in height? Of this the solution does not appear to be very clear. The only way in which an individual could alter his height would be either by adopting a stoop of his neck and shoulders, or by bending his knees and flexing his thighs upon his pelvis, or lastly, by actually shortening his vertebral column. The two first may be disregarded, as they would be pretty evident, even if a cloak were worn, and, if employed by Valooq, would scarcely have aroused the curiosity and wonder of Mr. Babbage. The last only, namely, a voluntary shortening of the vertebral column, remains then to be considered. There seems to be a general impression, both among doctors and the laity, so called—though it is difficult to discover any definite and concrete expression of it in the text-books—that, by virtue of the compressibility of the intervertebral fibro-cartilaginous discs, the stature of a man when he goes to bed is shorter than when he gets out of it, the amount of shortening varying according as the individual dangles a cane on the street, or is employed somewhat more actively as a porter at the docks. —*Nature.*

THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF DOGS.

A dog feels anger precisely as we do, and after provocation is sometimes vindictive and sometimes placable, according to his individual character. He is susceptible of hatred of the bitterest kind. He is so exasperatingly jealous that his life becomes a burden in the presence of a favoured rival. His envy continually leads him to eat what he does not want lest another animal should take it, and to illustrate the fable of the dog in the manger. Gluttony holds out to him temptations under which even his honesty sometimes succumbs; but, on the other hand, from drunkenness he is nobly emancipated. A dog mentioned by the Rev. Thomas Jackson ("Our Dumb Companions"), having been once made so drunk with malt liquor that he was unable to walk up stairs, ever after declined to taste the pernicious beverage, and growled and snarled at the sight of a pewter pot. Again, as to love, Don Juan was a cold and unenterprising character compared to a dog; and as to maternal affection, the mother dog feels it with heroic passion, starving herself to death rather than forsake her offspring. Gratitude may be almost said to be a dog's leading principle, supplying first the spring of allegiance to his master, and ever after reconciling him, with true magnanimity, to take evil from the hand from which he has accepted good. Regret and grief he feels so deeply that they often break his heart. Fear is a passion which dogs exhibit with singular variation, some breeds and individuals being very timorous, and others perfect models of courage, the latter characteristics and fortitude seeming to be more characteristically canine. A greyhound has been known, after breaking his thigh, to run on till the course was concluded. As to