

**Killed by a Meteor.**

An intelligent black boy was trudging along a highway at night in the vicinity of Palestine, Texas. There was a negro woman riding a horse in the direction in which the boy was going. The intelligent black boy re-appeared in Palestine that night out of breath and as pale as he could get. He said he saw a ball of fire come out of the sky and strike the woman and set her ablaze. The horse ran one way with the woman afire on his back, and he ran back to town to tell the people what had happened. The people went to look after further particulars of this curious incident. They found the woman lying on the ground with all her clothing burnt off, but with life enough in her to tell that she had been struck in the breast by a ball of fire. The horse was found with his mane singed, and the woman died the next day. The people think she was hit by a meteor.—*St. Louis Republican.*

**Novel Toy.**

An ingenious toy, apparently of Japanese origin, has recently been introduced into London. It consists of a small picture, on paper, of an individual pointing a firearm at an object—bird, target, or second person. By the application of the hot end of a match, just blown out, to the end of the gun, the paper commences to smolder toward the object aimed at, and in no other direction. When it is reached, a report is heard, from the explosion of a small quantity of fulminating material.

**THE OWL PARROT.**

This singular bird, sometimes called the night parrot, belongs to New Zealand, and is called by the natives the kakapo. Dr. Gray describes it as having a high and short bill, grooved on the sides, with acute top, dentated lateral margins, and a base covered with fine, down-like feathers. The wings are short and rounded, and the fifth and sixth quills are equal and the longest; the tail is moderate in size and each feather points out, with the shaft projecting. The *tarsi* are short and robust, and covered with round scales; the claws are long, strong, and slightly curved. In general, the bird has the form of a parrot, but bears a facial aspect resembling that of an owl, of which it also has the nocturnal habits, and the almost noiseless flight. But it is not a bird of prey, as it eats corn and nuts readily when in captivity, its food in a wild state consisting of seeds, roots, and the outer covering of the stalks of New Zealand flax (*phormium tenax*). Its only vocal effort consists in a short croak; it breeds in February, laying two or three eggs; and it becomes gregarious in winter, and in the advent of spring resumes its solitary habits. The flesh is white, and is said to be good eating. The specimens herewith illustrated are domiciled in the unrivaled collection in the gardens of the Royal Zoological Society, London, England.

**THE OPIUM POPPY.**

The opium poppy is a native of Persia, and probably also of the south of Europe and Asia Minor. It is largely cultivated in those countries, and also in Egypt, Arabia, and British India, for the sake of its opium. Dr. Joseph Hooker



THE OPIUM POPPY (*papaver somniferum*.)

thus describes this process: "The capsules are sliced in February and March with a little instrument like a saw, made of three serrated plates tied together. From the incisions made by this instrument, the opium oozes out as a milky juice, which, as it dries, becomes a soft brown sticky paste; each morning this paste is scraped off by means of small shells, and collected into jars, the contents of which are afterwards made into balls of about half a pound weight;

these are often coated with the seeds of some species of *rheum* or rhubarb plant. The balls are packed into chests, and exported to other countries."

Opium is produced in large quantities in India for consumption in China, on account of the great sale there, in spite of all prohibitions. Eastern nations generally are very fond of opium, which they smoke with their tobacco, or alone, and take in the form of pills. With us it is much used in medicine as an anodyne, especially in the well known preparation called laudanum; and the delusive habit of taking it to obtain a fleeting repose of the nervous system has recently grown, as our medical men can testify, to alarming proportions.

**Poisoned Arrows of the Papuans.**

The warlike habits of the Papuans and their implements of warfare are described in a private letter recently addressed to Dr. Hooker. The writer says that no man leaves his dwelling, for his bit of cultivation even, without his powerful bamboo bow and a few deadly poisoned arrows. These poisoned arrows are only a few among a great number not poisoned, the former being distinguished by elaborate carving and painting, probably to prevent accident among themselves. They are each pointed and barbed with human bone brought to almost needle-like sharpness, most carefully and neatly finished; they are poisoned by plunging in a human corpse for several days. Poor Commodore Goodenough and his men suffered from arrows so poisoned. It is a sort of blood poisoning that, like other kinds of inoculation, does not develop itself for several days, the slightest scratch being sufficient to render almost inevitable a horrible death. The symptoms are accompanied by violent spasms like tetanus, with consciousness until the last.—*Nature.*

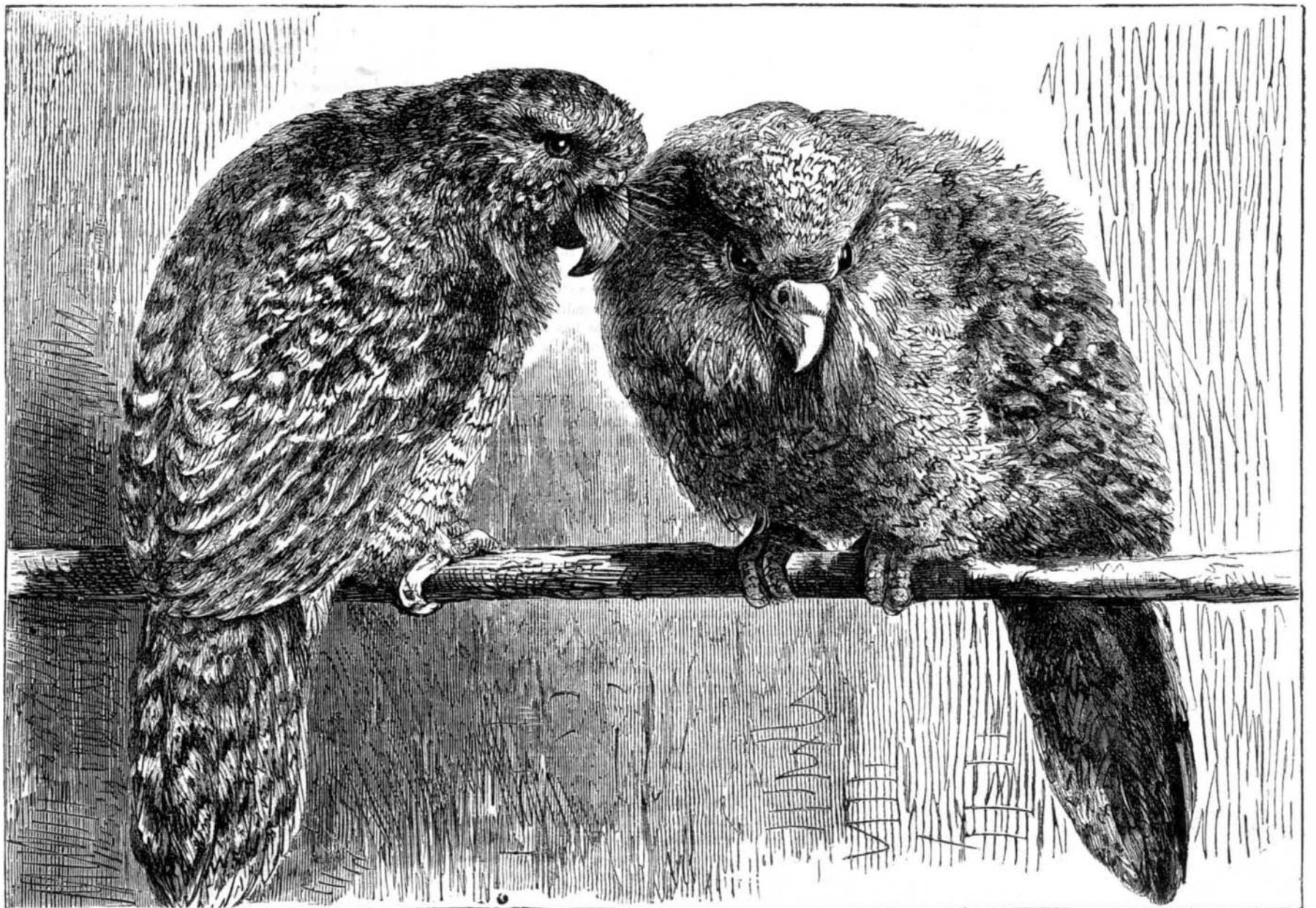
**Life in Great Cities.**

The relative healthfulness of some of the great cities is shown in the following table, which exhibits the annual mortality for each 1,000 inhabitants:

Madrid .....	65.0	Turin .....	24.8
Vienna .....	32.7	Brussels .....	24.8
Berlin .....	30.6	Paris .....	23.2
Rome .....	29.3	London .....	22.2
New York .....	27.9	Philadelphia .....	20.3

The above estimate for Madrid is from a recent compilation given in *La Gaceta Industrial* in that city. The capital of Spain is thus made to rank as one of the most unhealthy places in the world

A GOOD cement for covering the joints of ovens, which becomes very hard and does not crack, is made by mixing equal quantities of finely sifted wood ashes and clay. Some salt is added and then sufficient water to form a dough. The cracks should be covered while the oven is cold.



THE OWL PARROT —(STRIGOPS HABROPTILUS.)