

birds to a nicety of tone and modulation, and their range of mimicry reaches to fair imitation of the whinneying of a horse; while their saucy pranks are supported by more than bravado; for while each is a confirmed barrator in bird strife, the rascals are without exception undaunted fighters.

A curious incident of a great industry having almost its origin, and certainly deriving its necessary physical support, from a children's game, came to my notice recently in Labrador. This game is called "copy." It is similar under its peculiar conditions to that of your own children when they boisterously "follow your leader."

Indeed it is a wild and dangerous pastime but is heartily encouraged by parents, as being at the basis of all success in seal hunting. When the ice begins breaking up in march, all Labrador and Newfoundland children hail the arrival of their annual play-spell with joyous delight. "Coping" consists in leaping from one floating slab, on pan, of ice to another. The most daring of leaders are selected, and the sport is followed with tremendous vigor so long as the floating ice remains. Its utility lies in its educative power. The very expertness and bravery thus engendered are the supreme requisites in youths and men as seal hunters.

In the middle of the narrow straits of Belle Isle, between Newfoundland and Labrador, stands weird, desolate Belle Isle itself, the first land sighted on the grewsome coast. There is a lighthouse on its southern headland, but no other sign of human habitation. The island is simply a tremendous monolith of stone nine miles long and three broad, rising precipitously from the sea at the outer entrance of the strait, with not an iota of verdure upon its iron like sides and top. I once sailed close enough to Belle Isle in a little schooner, to supply its hardy keeper with a few newspapers and some comforting American tobacco, which prompted this reminiscence from the skipper of our craft.

"Yes," he said ruminatively, "only once a year any government vessel lands there; and the storms are so terrible that every time we sailors pass we dread to look up there, fearing the light 'us 'll be blown away. How hard does the wind blow? Well, I can't rightly give ye the v'locity, but I can furnish facts. Twenty years ago—'n' I well remember him—a keeper named Vaughn had charge of the light. He got sort o' hankerin' arter green things. Awful foolish; but twus hard to git any body to stay there at all, so they 'lowed his scheme for a garding. They took hull boat-loads of soil up there 'n' made him a garding 'n acre big. Notin' would grow on it, but he liked to dig in it, prob'ly. One evenin' a whirlin' sort of storm riz, 'n' sorter kept risin' all night. When Vaughn poked his head out in the mornin' he could'nt see the garding nowhere. He didn't know at first but he was a leetle confused hisself; an' climbed back an' took his bearin's, but ther, was no garding nowhere certain. That tornader had jest yanked up the hull sile an' spilled it all over th' 'Lantic. Vaughn had sperit, he did. He wouldn't stand that. So he threw up the job an' took to 'shovin' seals."

A few years since I found a lighthouse keeper in still greater misfortune than

the Belle Isle keeper who lost his garden. This was while coasting among the Bahama Islands. It was at Double Shot Head keys at the edge of the grand banks of Bahama, which you would pass, were you crossing the banks Cubaward, as you entered the Gulf of Mexico. It is a dangerous spot in navigation, low, ugly-looking, dreary and juts out of the sea savagely. The English government has a lighthouse here. A half-dozen men who make salt, and the lighthouse keeper and his wife, are the only souls who have existed here for a score of years.

The woman is a character. In England she was such a shrew that the government finally took cognizance of her powers of home and neighborhood ruin and provided her husband, who was a lighthouse-keeper on the Dovenshire coast, with his forlorn and isolated charge. The woman is forty incarnate fiends. Besides, she is a pirate in her way. Alone and unaided she will haunt the channel for merchant craft plying between Cuba and American ports, demanding tribute. Skippers have a wholesome fear of her tongue and a superstitious dread of her "evil eye," and will humbly toss her pork, beef, sacks of onions or potatoes and the like, glad to thus easily escape her wrath and maledictions. Her husband is an humble prisoner and slave. Several half-serious but altogether ridiculous attempts to rescue him have been made by wreckers and other hunting the Floridan and Bahama reefs and keys, and in each instance this virago of Double Shot Head keys has nearly clubbed them to death for their pains.

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

### THE PRESIDENTS' CABINETS.

WASHINGTON, February 20, 1893—President Cleveland has given out considerable news about his coming cabinet. So many changes are made, however, in such things at the last moment that nothing is certain. The cabinet history of the past is full of curiosities, and I have found this week some curious letters showing the troubles of Presidents in this regard. One is from President Polk asking James Buchanan to be a member in his cabinet. In it he states as a condition of the acceptance that he shall not be a candidate for the presidency or vice presidency while in the cabinet. Buchanan accepted the office as secretary of state on these conditions. I wonder if Gresham has made the same promise to Cleveland. Frank Pierce wrote about a month after he was elected, to Buchanan, telling him that he intended to put new men in his cabinet, and in his letter concerning the cabinet he asks Buchanan to "Burn this letter." He said he intended to make up his cabinet before he left Concord and that he would not change it after he got to Washington. To this Buchanan replied that Concord was not a very good place to make up a cabinet and advising him not to settle upon his ministers before he got to Washington.

HOW DANIEL WEBSTER BULLDOZED PRESIDENT TYLER.

I had quite a chat some time ago with Gen. John Tyler, the son and private secretary of President Tyler. He was close to his father during the whole of his administration and he has given me a large amount of unwritten

history. Said he: "When my father succeeded to the presidency he continued President Harrison's cabinet in office until he found that they were working against him. His first cabinet meeting was held on the day succeeding the death of President Harrison, and it was perhaps the most remarkable cabinet meeting in history. When all the members were present and the doors were closed Daniel Webster, the secretary of state, arose and addressed my father, saying: 'Mr. President, I suppose you intend to carry out the ideas and customs of your predecessor and that this administration inaugurated by President William Harrison will continue in the same line of policy on which it has been begun? Am I right?'"

"My father, much astonished, nodded his head almost involuntarily and looked at Mr. Webster with wonder. Daniel Webster straightened himself up at this and continued:

"'Mr. President, it was the custom in our cabinet meetings of President Harrison that the president should preside over them. All measures relating to the administration were to be brought before the cabinet and their settlement was to be decided by the majority of votes, each member of the cabinet and the president having but one vote.'

"My father was always courteous, but he was also firm. He had his own ideas of how his administration had to be managed, and he was not backward in responding to this exhibition of adamant cheek. He rose to his feet and confronted Webster, and then looking about the cabinet room he said: 'Gentlemen, I am very proud to have in my cabinet such able statesmen as you have proved yourselves to be. I shall be pleased to avail myself of your counsel and advice, but I can never consent to being dictated to as to what I shall not do. I am the president and I shall be held responsible for my administration. I hope I shall have your hearty co-operation in carrying out its measures. So long as you see fit to do this I shall be glad to have you with me. When you think otherwise I will be equally glad to get your resignation.' This," concluded Gen. Tyler, "settled the question, and there was no further trouble as to who was the head of the cabinet."

HOW JOHN C. CALHOUN GOT INTO TYLER'S CABINET.

I spoke to Gen. Tyler about John C. Calhoun and he told me how he became a member of his father's cabinet against his father's will. It was all accomplished by Henry A. Wise. Upshur, who had been made secretary of state on the resignation of Daniel Webster, was blown up on the Princeton on the Potomac river in 1844, and this made a vacancy in the cabinet. "Henry A. Wise," said Gen. Tyler, "was my father's chief representative in Congress, and he took it upon himself to go as soon as he heard of Upshur's death to MacDuffie, the leading Senator from South Carolina, and told him to write to John C. Calhoun that President Tyler wanted him to accept the portfolio of the secretary of state. He did this without saying a word to my father. The next day he came into the White House and told father what he had done. He said the letter had been sent and to withdraw it would make the whole south angry. My father was thunderstruck. He gripped his chair with all his force and it was all he could do to keep from telling Wise to