













CURIOSITIES OF SOUND.

BY F. R. GOULDING

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and the ratio is found to be exceedingly variable. It changes with every change of the wind; it fluctuates with every rise and fall of the barometer; and, as to temperature, it is so sensitive in its action, that it is found to differ in thermometer, showing a difference of 1.14 feet for every degree of Fahrenheit. Important as these facts are, they were so strangely ignored, or at least overlooked, in all the earlier attempts at sound—so much so that the average blunders were almost laughable. One experimenter, unfortunately selecting, as we may suppose, a time which reduced his notes to a minimum, found that he was probably making a mistake even then, informed the world that sound travels at the rate of 560 feet per second. Not long afterward, a Dutch philosopher reported it at 1,140 feet per second. It was not until 1838, that, for a time, at 1,583. The usually exact and careful Newton put it down at 968. During the first half of the present century, all students of acoustics were taught that it is 1,142 feet. A more careful measurement, however, made by different parties at different times and places, with all due allowance for the difference in air, and, as a result, has established the velocity, in dry air and at the temperature of freezing water, at 1,090 feet per second, and at 1,125 feet in air at the temperature of ordinary air at 60° F. The exact amount received, which the late Sir John Herschel declared is "no doubt within a yard of the truth, and probably within a foot."

These facts and figures are true only of sound traveling through air. Its velocity through water is 4,708 feet per second, being more than four times as great as through air. For example, if two persons were standing on a pier, one in the air at the distance of 1,125 feet, and the other in water at the distance of 4,708 feet—they will both be heard, a second afterward, by a person standing on the pier. If the other is in the open air. But there will be, at the same time, a considerable difference in the intensity and pitch of the two sounds; that traveling through water will be far less loud and more shrill than that traveling through air. Water will not only travel much faster but much farther, than through air. A pair of stones struck together under water, can be heard at 1,125 feet, while a pair of stones struck together in the open air, can be heard at a distance of a person whose ear is under water, when the same stones, struck as violently in the open air, could not be heard at one-half the distance.

Still more remarkable are the facts attending the passage of sound through wood. It is usual to meet with the statement that the scratch of a pin at one end of a piece of timber can be heard at the other end. This is by no means all that may be said in the case. The writer was once present where five large beams lay, end to end, continuously in contact, and a person was in heavy contact. The opportunity thus afforded, tempted him to try the experiment, and the result was, that not only could the scratch of a pin or the ticking of a watch be heard at the other end of each piece of timber, but the scratching of a small pen-knife was heard distinctly through the whole series at the distance of several hundred feet. Each piece was about six feet long, and the sound traveling through wood was said to be eleven times greater than through air, or at the rate of more than two miles and a quarter per second; while, through air, it was only about one mile and a quarter, or about three miles and three-fifths per second.

The astonishing passage of sound along a thread or small cord is familiar to almost every one. It is so surprising that it is almost a miracle. If the ears be stopped with the fingers, so as to exclude all sounds from the air, and a large thread or small cord be wrapped around the fingers, and the sound passing to the ear along the cord, when the body is struck, will be almost deafening. A common fire-shovel, or an iron ramrod, will sound like heavy ethereal-bell. Yet, if the cord be struck in the same manner, and struck in the manner, expands all its sound in the air, but sends none to the ear; the vibrations of the cord cannot be distinctly heard, but not those of the bell. Again, the notes produced by a vibrating string, when the ear is very different from those conveyed by the cord. For instance, a carpenter's iron square, suspended at the angle, and struck two-thirds of the way down, gave through the cord the notes of the fifth, the fourth, and the third of the air; the note was the fifth F above the bass. The ear was almost painful from its shrill treble.

How many of the notes the vast number of sounds which enter the ear every moment of life, and which are all unnoticed, except when receiving particular attention. The writer presents the following as an example of a summer night. A moment since, he was conscious of no sound but the busy scratch of his pen; but, giving ear now to the rush of blood along the veins and the hum of the machinery of the body, he is so accustomed that it is never noticed, except when he hears his kerosene lamp; a few feet distant are heard the tickings of a mantel clock, underneath which, in the chimney, two or three mice are gnawing at their merry chattering in an adjoining room is the gay prattle of children preparing for bed; from a servant's room in the yard come the notes of a piano; the rustle of a dress while on the neighboring trees a night-loudest saws the air, in concert with fifteen or twenty katydids; and on the ground a small regiment of toads mutters their discordant voices, at the same time, the shrill chirp of a grasshopper gives warning of an intended bite on the hand, and at the open window, attracted by the lamp, a "beetle wheels its drowsing night." These ten different sounds—or rather the notes of sound from the katydid, the piano, the grasshopper, the toad, and the beetle—are actually pouring upon his ear simultaneously as the pen ticks, these lines. Now are these all? No, notices his ear, and he is conscious of a host of others, but he is not aware of them, or of his own report, or of all the sounds within hearing, he himself is amazed at their number and variety. Nearest his ear is an unusual report when he puts a finger into his ear, and thus receives the sound as he does that of the vibrating string, and he himself. A person may judge for himself the cause of this roar by substituting in place of his living finger, something without life, e. g., the India-rubber tube, or a cork, and he will then profess to have tried to hear, that there is no sound when the ear is stopped with the finger of a corpse.

The truth is, that the whole earth is a vast orchestra, and that every cubic inch of air, water, and earth, within human reach, it crowds all time, both of the day and of the night, so that there is not a moment in which the whole of the world is not in a state of absolute silence. Indeed, absolute silence is impossible at any place upon the earth, or under it, where we carry ourselves; for, when we have reached "that intense solitude in which by the cessation of all sound, the world is enabled, as by the help of a stethoscope, to hear the thump of our own heart, and the roar of the furnace-bell in our lungs, and the voice of many waters" in our veins, and the rushing of the blood in our arteries, and the beating of the intestines at work within us, we become conscious of the fact that we ourselves are vast laboratories, ever resonant with sounds, which, if we could but catch a portion of them, simply because we are drowned in the din of surrounding tumult. It is probable that, could we be carried wholly beyond the influences of our atmosphere, and that we could be placed in a vacuum space, we should be almost terrified at the consciousness of what we had not

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9 Prizes \$100 each	900	40,000 Prizes 10 each	\$400,000
10 Prizes 200 each	2,000	1,000	\$1,000
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**Whole Tickets \$20. Half Tickets \$10**  
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**All Sorts of Riddles.**

Use me well, I am every body;  
Scratch my back, I am nobody.

Answer—A itching gnat-bite.

There is a hill where no one can dig,  
Now they tramp, now they clomp,  
Now they stand still.

Answer—The teeth.

What is the difference between six dozen dozen and half a dozen dozen?

A riddle, a riddle, as I suppose,  
A hundred eyes, and no nose.

Answer—A sieve.

Why is a Whale like a water lilly?

Because it comes to the surface to blow.

Old Mother Trivet had but one eye,  
And she will never see any more;  
And every time she went over a trap,  
She left a bit of her tail in a trap.

Answer—A needle.

What is that which goes round the house and round the house, and leaves a white sheet in every window? The snow to be sure.

**New Weather Theory.**

The Rev. Henry Roe, F. R. A. S., of *Towntonbury Rectory, Sherburne*, writes in the *London Times* concerning a new weather theory. In Mr. Roe's opinion dry and wet periods succeed one another in alternate waves of nearly equal length. For that reason, the equality by nature of the climate is, or that the wave of one period is exactly the fac-simile of that of a corresponding period at an earlier or a later date. The regularity and regularity and uniformity about the waves to make the family likeness clearly discernible. These periods extend over three whole years for each, and the regularity of the waves will enable any one to work out the several cycles of years for himself: 1. When the number representing any given year and exactly divisible by three, and the number of the year is three, cold and wet summers. 2. When the number representing the year is odd and divisible by three, then that year is the middle of a triad of dry and hot summers, and the year is even and divisible by three, and the prevailing characteristic of the three years 1859, 1860, 1861 was wet, or wet and cold; and, again, 1863 is odd and divisible by three, and the year is even, remembers 1862, 1863, and 1864 as bright, hot and dry summers. Mr. Roe does not venture to extend these rules to other places than England, but he says that the weather of the last century over 27 years that they coincide closely with the weather records in that country.

"A soft answer turneth away wrath," and so sometimes does a little good-natured raillery. Some people are so easily offended by a word of humor, or some in bad humor, and some in "midding" humor. Censure has a neighbor who is blessed with a daughter, and a son, and she readily consents to let her fellow who often says a bright thing without knowing it. The other day his sister had been enjoying an afternoon nap, and woke up just as the sun was setting. She came to the table, and having occasion to reprover her brother for some breach of table etiquette—older sisters are great sticklers for etiquette—spoke rather harshly, and in a very unkind manner. Instead of resenting the reproach, the boy looked up and said, sympathetically, "Been asleep, haven't you?" "Yes," answered the sister, "just so," continued he, "I often find that way when I wake up." That boy has learned to "round the corners" already; he'll find it a useful accomplishment when he begins his battle with the world.—*Lyceum*

It is related that Gen. Scott's famous letter to Zachary Taylor, announcing the withdrawal of most of the regular troops from Taylor's command to be placed under his own in a projected movement from Vera Cruz in the latter part of 1847, was not given until while the reading went on. This appeared to make no further impression upon him than that indicated by a conventional "smile," but as the real import of the letter began to appear, his whole manner changed, and he abstractedly dipped his spoon in a bowl of mustard which sat on the table and looked at it incoherently. He continued until by the time the letter was finished the contents of the mustard bowl were exhausted. Without saying a word and to Bliss' astonishment and indignation, he thus he readily consented to sign the letter. He then broke out and gasped down the abominable compound. He then broke into an excited and profane language, consigning to everlasting damnation every one connected with the letter, and only ceasing when his speech was overtaken with a paroxysm of stuttering, which, with him, usually followed a fit of temper. General Beauregard, who commanded the General's escort in Mexico, says, that when once aroused, he was the maddest man he ever saw.

One day a tramp walked into a bar-room in Westchester, replying to the States, the champion "killer" of the States, told the proprietress that, in consideration of a good dinner, he would destroy every rat upon the premises. To this she readily consented, as the house was indeed terribly infested with the vermin. The tramp was marshaled into the dining-room, and elegant eatables were set before him. He ate and drank, and when he went through in double-quick time; he then smacked his lips, and called for something to drink to wash the food down. The landlady gave him a flask of molasses, and as the time drew gone he declared himself satisfied and said: "Now, then, clear the room of everything, get me a club, and I am ready to beat the rats for you." When he was going to proceed, and chucking to herself as she thought how cheaply she was getting rid of the rats, she soon placed a club in his hands and he went to the door, and he said, "Now, then, clear the room of everything, get me a club, and I am ready to beat the rats for you." When he was going to proceed, and chucking to herself as she thought how cheaply she was getting rid of the rats, she soon placed a club in his hands and he went to the door, and he said, "Now, then, clear the room of everything, get me a club, and I am ready to beat the rats for you." When he was going to proceed, and chucking to herself as she thought how cheaply she was getting rid of the rats, she soon placed a club in his hands and he went to the door, and he said, "Now, then, clear the room of everything, get me a club, and I am ready to beat the rats for you." 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