

## GABLE ENDS.

### AN ABNORMAL SPECIMEN.

WITHIN a half-hour's ride of Lake Huron, in the very garden of Western Ontario, is the picturesque village of F—, where one may look at Nature's beauty of flower and field, or listen to Nature's music in the early morning chorus of birds, and the vesper hymn of the evening thrush. In the month of June, 1892, having to visit this village in connection with an ordination service, I was royally entertained by my friend, Mr. S—, who has a passion for ornithology, and an eye for any rare and curious thing. In the course of a drive about the village, my friend said: "We have an educated gentleman here; let us go and call on him." While I was mentally pulling myself together and reviewing the rules of etiquette, in view of being presented to the "educated gentlemen," we turned a corner, and approached his "residence."

It was a low, one-story house, in the centre of a lot that was overgrown with grass and weeds. Evidently the proprietor was not an agriculturist. The front and only door, swung awkwardly back upon its broken hinges in answer to our knock, and we entered. The one room was furnished with a broken-backed chair, on which lay half a loaf of bread; a dilapidated lounge, and a shake-down bed that seemed to defy all the sanitary rules of the municipality. An antiquated stove competed with the floor for pure and unadulterated dirtiness.

The solitary occupant of this strange dwelling was a young man in the prime of life, whose name was H—. He received us with the confident air of a man accustomed to society, and at once began a conversation.

As I looked about the room I saw hanging on the wall a certificate of an exhibition examination of Oxford University, and several other evidences of scholarship. But the most striking feature of the establishment was the inside of the door. This was covered from top to bottom with inscriptions chalked in colors and in various styles of letter-

ing. The substance of these inscriptions was a series of proverbs from Latin, Greek, German, Spanish, French, Italian and Welsh writers; and they were all quoted in the original. The whole made a veritable curiosity, worthy of preservation in a much better form; and it is to be hoped that when the owner passes away the door may be secured in some local resting place. On the lounge lay a standard edition of the Greek Testament, which H— handled as one who understood its value, and several modern and classical authors. In his head this strange mortal carried a detailed knowledge of every important public work, railway tunnel, bridge, etc., and could give date of construction, gauge, height, and any other fact connected therewith. He was a walking encyclopædia on mechanical engineering.

The brief talk we had that day has never been forgotten, nor have I ceased to wonder by what course of unfavorable circumstances this young man had been led to this peculiar mode of living. A few days ago my friend secured a sketch of his life, which I hereby condense and present.

H— was born in Truro, Cornwall, England, August 23rd, 1860, where his father was rector of the parish of St. Mary's. His grandfather had been a Prebendary of the Established Church, and rector of the same church. His first steps to knowledge were taken under his father's direction, as he, with his brother and sister, received their daily drill of three hours, and he declares that what he then learned he has never forgotten. In 1871, he was sent to St. John's Foundation School at Lower Clapton, Middlesex, and he attended this institution till 1874, in which year he obtained a scholarship at Forest school, Walthamstow, Essex, worth between £60 and £70 per year. Entering there in January, 1875, he remained till Christmas, 1877. In March, 1878, H— entered Hertford College, Oxford, and by the end of 1879 he had passed two examinations. At this time, the Cornish Bank, and the Union Bank, of Helston,