

and on fictitious subjects. Fabricius mentions sixty writers who followed in the wake of Lysias, Polycrates amongst them and the worst of all. Under the early Roman Emperors the school rose to eminence. The subjects were either passages in history, or wholly fictitious, and often gross. Mere amusement was the end and aim. The step from such speeches to a story—a novel—was easy to men familiar with the Iliad and the Odyssey. But it is not a little strange, that a Christian bishop, Heliodorus, was the first who made the departure; his 'Æthiopica' is the first novel in prose. There is nothing in it unworthy a Christian or a bishop, but it is a love story, and relates the fortunes of Theagenes and Chariclea. The bishop had better have confined himself to his sermons and pastorals; his work was the inspirer, at least so far as form is concerned, of Achilles Tatius, Longus, Eumathius and other authors whose motif was, like that of the ordinary French novel writers, to gratify the erotic sentiment and whose influence like that of their modern anti-types was corrupting, especially to the young. Hence the romance of the middle ages, and by a clear genealogy the modern novel, which has at present reached a stage of imbecility that marks the nadir of vitiation in public taste.—But what I wish particularly to point out to you my dear young friend—

"I am not young," said Helpsam.

(McKnom) "You are young as compared with me—I wish to point out the teaching of Plato as to the necessary connection between morals and politics unless the State is to go to ruin."

What this venerable man had to say on an equally important subject must be reserved for another article. Many, perhaps most, will not agree with all he said; but he said nothing which was not worth considering, and if it should lead some of THE WEEK's readers to examine the teaching of Plato afresh, that of itself will be a good.

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.

SOLITUDE: A SONNET.

ALONE we came here and alone must go,
What if some spirit attend our ways unseen,
And oft when danger threatens come between?
It is but solitude except we know.
Why is it we are ne'er contented so?
That, weary, we must still to others lean,
Or fly to books at least from them to glean
That blest companionship by which we grow?

Solitude fits the beast whose world is pent,
Within the circle of his low desires;
It fitteth God, self-poised and self-content,
Who all things ever hath and naught acquires;
But man, in whom both low and high are blent,
Must turn to others—for of self he tires.

MATTHEW RICHEY KNIGHT.

Benton, N.B.

ONE OF THE NEVADA WRITERS.

WHEN the *Overland Monthly* had printed Bret Harte's first and best stories, there came to its office an article from a strange and attractive genius in the midst of the sage-brush and sand of Nevada. He was a teamster—a man of surprising literary ability, who had a "silver-claim" somewhere in the desert, and lived near it with his family. He left them for weeks, at times, while he plodded beside his mules and high "washoe freight waggon," back and forth across the miles and miles of desolate country to the nearest railroad town. He wrote for the Nevada papers—all sorts of articles, grave, gay, sarcastic, denunciatory, imaginative, until his pen-name of "Single-line" became known to every reader in the Silver State, and to many beyond its borders. Nevada then, as now, was a place where no poor writer could gain a hearing. In fact Nevada, though politically the despair of the reformer, and often the most exasperating "pocket-borough" in America, has turned out a greater number of crisp, capable and pugnacious writers than any other region of equal population. They have made their mark in every city and every newspaper office in the country.

As it turned out "Single-line" was Dr. J. W. Gally, a lawyer, physician, miner, prospector, and frontiersman; and his first contribution to the *Overland Monthly* was a story in its way unique, and as much the result of pure genius working in the Nevada environment as Harte's "Luck of Roaring Camp" was the result of genius working with the material of the California mining camp. This story was "Big Jack Small," and it may be fairly said that it created the type of the teamster of the deserts of Nevada. No story ever received a more instant recognition. It sold every copy of that issue of the magazine, and was reprinted again and again. It made Dr. Gally's reputation, and, though he has never done anything better, he has done much that only the author of "Big Jack Small" could have done.

I have always held that Dr. Gally's eccentric and powerful genius has missed its adequate expression, and has failed to receive full literary recognition. He flung out sketch after sketch, as "Single-line," or over his own name, in hundreds of directions, that no man can trace, and on subjects of every conceivable nature—politics, theology, philology, Indian legends, and whatever took his fancy. He did some of his best work for the *Overland*, the *Californian*, and the *Argonaut*, but some of his most remarkable fragments were in the local newspapers of

Nevada, stories of men, stories of the desert, and the life of the frontier, apothegms, and glimpses of a philosophy as grim and strong as that of Carlyle. Dr. Gally's wife was a woman of fine literary taste, and it was undoubtedly during her life that he did his most finished work, though I am not able to say how much actual criticism and suggestion she was in the habit of making. The strongest point about him, when at his best, in this earlier work, was a power of throwing in a phrase that photographed the scene or the event, "once for all." His desert scenes have the sort of a place among word-paintings that Gerome's deserts have in art. One feels the vast reality, the desolation and monotony of the region; one feels that Gally has lived there in the midst of it, has brooded over its meaning, has grown into the very heart of its mystery, and like Bagarag, by whom Shagpat was shaven, is "Master of the event."

The old man lives alone on his ranch in Santa Cruz County, near the Pajaro River, a rich bottom-land farm that he bought when at last he "sold his silver mine." He settled down here some fifteen years ago. Here his wife died, and here he has stayed most of the time since, writing less each year, taking less and less part in affairs about him, but true as steel to his "old friends, old books," and old picturesque forms of thought. I first met him a few months after he bought this little place in the willows. It was July; the old man and his daughter were in the orchard packing apples; his son was in the trees gathering them. He told me about their life in Nevada, their journey to California, their delight in being where men could have gardens, and where the ocean was near.

One of his first remarks was: "Now you are a valley man, and I am a sage-brush fellow. This is all new country to me. Bought this orchard just so, and don't know one apple from another. Suppose you help me label them." Pretty soon the remark came out with twinkling eyes, "You know your apples as well as I know the bushes in my grandmother's door-yard in Virginia. Guess you can pass on that examination. Come in the house, and look at some books, and some Nevada ore, and see the cabin." An hour later he said: "Your horse is put up, and you must stay over night at my wickiup, which is Piute for shanty, all the same." Then he fell to telling stories, most of which he has never written out, and which no one else ever can. On the whole he struck me as being very nearly the best story-teller I had met in any part of California. As I have said, he knows the type that belongs to the sage-brush and sand region, and his stories were stories generally different from the pioneer stories of any other State or territory with which I am acquainted. For one thing, there was less exaggeration about them; for another, there was more humour and of a better sort. How much of this was the genius of Gally, and how much was Nevada atmosphere and the actual thing itself was of course impossible to determine. But Dr. Gally's own view appeared to be that the "Man of the desert" was a fellow with lots of "sand," and with a curious dry humour of his own, a fellow who went by himself, and "took in" everything by the way, and was American to the backbone; and lastly, that the particular beauty of his own stories was that they could only have been "developed" from their crude beginnings in such an atmosphere as Nevada. He once ended a soul-moving political story that would have been worth five hundred dollars to a man like Mark Twain, with the pensive remark: "That story represents twenty years of the unrequited labours of innumerable Nevada liars, whose humble and faithful chronicler I am. Perhaps I could pridefully point out a few variations of my own, but in the main the story represents an evolution. If it goes on it will be as much of a myth some of these times as the yarns the old Greeks used to tell around their camp fires."

Dr. Gally's fame as a writer must rest upon half a dozen short stories and sketches, all of them crude, but all strong and noble in conception. His heroes in these shorter stories are as much flesh and blood as Winthrop's mountaineers and his horses are as real as Winthrop's "Don Fulano." But when he took a larger canvass, and mingled society notes with frontier elements, his young Maydole with all his muscular Christianity, such as would have delighted the heart of Kingsley, lacked the sense of reality that is the best thing about "Big Jack Small," the silver-freighter of the Nevada desert.

CHARLES HOWARD SHINN.

THE plush, velvet, and silk hangings must go. Seats must be covered with smooth leather that can be washed off, carpets give place to rugs, to be shaken in the open air at the end of every trip—better still, abolished for hard wood floors; the curtain abomination must make way for screens of wood or leather, the blankets of invalids' beds be subjected to steam at a high temperature, mattresses covered with oiled silk, or rubber cloth that may be washed off, and, above all things, invalids provided with separate compartments shut off from the rest of the car, with the same care which is taken to exclude the far less offensive or dangerous smoke of tobacco; cuspidors half filled with water, and consumptive travellers provided with sputum cups which may be emptied from the car. It is not necessary here that the sole and only danger lies in the sputum. The destruction of the sputum abolishes the disease. When the patient learns that he protects himself in this way as much as others—protects himself from auto-infection, from the infection of the sound part of his own lungs—he will not protest against such measures.—Dr. I. W. Whitaker in the *American Lancet*.

THE PHILOSOPHY CLUB.

PHILOSOPHY in Canada? Certainly! Is there anything in a low thermometer or a high latitude to prevent it? Several concrete answers to this question exist in the shape of works of world-wide acknowledgment, such as those of Professor Schurman of Dalhousie, and Dr. Watson of Kingston on Kant, and the "Psychology" and "Solomon Maimon" of Clark Murray; and perhaps we may lay some claim to Romanes and Grant Allen, both leaders of British thought, and born in Canada. Another concrete answer, but of a more retiring description, is the little Philosophy Club, of Montreal.

Three years ago a few friends, who felt that it would be worth while to try such a study together, met at the house of a well-known lady and began. They believed that it would be pleasant to them even to merely talk and clear up their ideas about the questions of greatest importance in life—the nature of the world, the future of their souls, and the Powers that be. Accordingly, they agreed to take up the best modern thinkers and make their works the text for a fortnightly conversation. The circle was to be kept small, without being illiberal towards admissions. Only those were asked who felt a real earnest interest, not solely a desire for intellectual exercise, and least of all for a display of superiority. The group attacked first Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason." This very difficult book, when taken passage by passage, and discussed colloquially with attention, was found tolerably easy to comprehend, and the club was thus encouraged and justified. Taking it without any haste, nearly the whole winter passed before the "Critique" was laid down; and in comparison with it, the first three chapters of Herbert Spencer's "First Principles," the chapters containing the grand conclusions of that philosopher, were discussed. The next winter, Sully's "Psychology" was gone over chapter by chapter, and Fichte and Schelling were attacked, with several evenings on Plato, the Scholastics, Bacon, Descartes, Leibnitz, Hume, Berkeley and others. During the present winter a similar course proceeded, taking Hegel's "Logic" as the chief work; an evening was held on Jean Paul Richter, others on John Stuart Mill, T. H. Green, and so forth.

The results have delighted all those who have taken part. The meetings, which were held at the houses of members by turns until this winter, when they have been in the house of Mrs. John Lovell, have had very regular attendances, while the members showed, from first to last, a fascination for the study. When such a matter as Immortality, for instance, became the subject of discourse, the instruction got from combined information and suggestions on such a theme pleased and surprised all. One would produce James Hinton's "Life in Nature"; another the argument in Wordsworth's "Ode on the Intimations"; a third, the speeches of Addison's "Cato," and "Hamlet"; another would treat the matter from the point of view of Hegel, or Richter, and of course the Christian idea had its share of discussion. The club organization was of the mildest character, no officers being appointed. The only rules were to punctually attend at eight o'clock, to commence at once and continue work till ten, and not to speak during the two hours on any subject not in some way connected with philosophy. But the slightest connection with that subject, even a pun, or a personal anecdote about a philosopher, is considered sufficient. Usually a portrait of the great author of the evening is produced. As to the *personnel*, it has always consisted of five or six ladies and four or five gentlemen. An occasional visitor was introduced from time to time.

I think it is not too much to say that, even should the evenings soon come to an end, of which there is no present sign, the members of this society will remember these conversations and studies all their lives as having been a marked mental stimulus and personal satisfaction; and that they look upon their lives and the universe with larger, clearer views. The difficulties of studying philosophy, for practical purposes of life, disappear by this method, for persons of fair intelligence. It is desirable for the good of our beloved country, that all its higher interests should be organized, nor is it at all unlikely that out of such organizations, humble though they seem, may come a share of the thinking that now and then turns the course of the world. The students of philosophy will always be comparatively few; but if we create in Canada, by all kinds of such organizations, an atmosphere of intellectual endeavour and encouragement, we shall be reproducing the condition out of which the world's great movements have sprung.

Montreal.

ALCHEMIST.

THE RAMBLER.

LAST week, when my remarks upon the subject of summer outings were rudely cut short by the arrival of a precious packet, per English mail, of letters from two fortunate friends footing it in Gloucestershire and Somerset, I had been about inditing a paragraph descriptive of the difficulties we endure upon this side in the pursuit of summer journeys. That paragraph must ever remain unwritten, or if it stand, stand it will in a different manner from what was originally intended.

Yet, I like at times to endeavour to convince my Canadian readers that there is nowhere anything so comfortable, so easy, so pleasant, so instructive, as a gentle sauntering from village to village, from town to town, from hamlet to hamlet, along ivied lanes and across "half