

Mr. Grant Allen, since writing his three volume novel, the "Scallywag," has also published "Science in Arcady" and "Ivan Greet's Masterpiece," and has a new short story in the Press called "Michael's Crag" as well as a little railway stall book, "An Army Doctor's Romance." He is also bringing out a small volume of Poems under the title of "The Lower Slopes." In consequence of being attacked by "the writer's cramp," he is now forced to have recourse to dictation only in the composition of his works.

Professor Goldwin Smith, in issuing the fourth edition of his now well-known work on the Political History of the United States, adds a new preface from which we take the following: "The writer cannot send this fourth edition of his work to press without specially acknowledging the kindness of his American readers and reviewers, whose reception of a book which in some things contravenes cherished traditions is a proof of American candor and liberality. Perhaps they have discerned, beneath the British critic of American history, the Anglo-Saxon who, to the Republic which he regards as the grandest achievement of his race, desires to offer no homage less pure or noble than the truth."

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

BITING NAILS.

Gnawing the nails is popularly believed to be a sign of constitutional bad temper and nervousness in the person who bites, but a French doctor, named Berillon, has discovered that it is much worse than that. He calls it "onychophagy," and sees in such a habit a symptom of degeneracy, of nervous excitation and debility, of incipient lunacy, and half a hundred different kinds of "phobie" which are well known to practitioners in Paris. He finds that it is more prevalent in towns than in the country, more common in girls than in boys, and has investigated the causes thereof and statistically tabulated the results. Perhaps some day it will be proved that there are no such simple things as mere bad habits, and that even eating peas with a knife is only a subtle form of some disease.—*Invention.*

ON THE TRACK OF MONTAIGNE.

"When young," writes Montaigne, "I studied for show; afterwards to grow wiser; now I study for diversion." He liked to have his books around him even when he did not read them. Numerous lecterns were distributed over the brick floor of this circular room, and upon them he placed his favorite volumes. He, therefore read standing, according to the very general custom of his time, which was doubtless better than our own, of making our backs crooked by sitting and bending over our books. According to his own admission he had a bad memory, therefore he must have been in frequent need of referring to his tomes for the quotations from ancient authors which he was so fond of bringing into his text, and which make a writer at this end of the nineteenth century smile at the thought of how all the quills would rise upon that fretful and pampered porcupine, the reading public of to-day, if Latin and Greek were ladled out to it after Montaigne's fashion.

The room is bare, with the exception of the wreck of an armchair of uncertain history, but upon the forty-seven beams crossing the ceiling are fifty-four inscriptions in Latin and Greek, written, or rather painted, with a brush by Montaigne. Their interest has suffered a little from the restoration which some of them have undergone; but there they are, the crystals of thought picked up by the hermit of the tower in his wanderings along the highways and byways of ancient literature, and which he fastened, as it were, to the beams over his head, just where the peasants to-day hang their dry sausages, their bacon, and strings of garlic. Many persons copy sentences out of their favorite books, with the intention of tasting their savour again and again; but if they do not lose them, they are generally too busy or too indolent afterwards to look for them. Mon-

taigne, however, had his favorite texts always before his eyes. The curious visitor intent upon a discovery will be sure to find in these the philosophical scaffolding of the Essays; but I, who examine such things somewhat superficially, would rather believe that Montaigne inscribed them upon the rough wood because they expressed in a few words much that he had already thought or felt. By the extracts that a man makes for his private satisfaction from the authors who please him, the bent of his intellect and cast of character can be very accurately judged. If other testimony were wanting, these sentences would prove the gravely philosophical temper of Montaigne's mind, notwithstanding the flippant confessions of frailty which he mingles sometimes so incongruously with the reflections of a sage. Most of the extracts are from Latin and Greek authors, but not a few are from the Books of Ecclesiastes and Ecclesiasticus and the Epistles of St Paul. Here one sees written by the hand of the sixteenth century thinker the noble words of Terence:—

"Homo sum, humani a me nihil alienum puto." Then one catches sight of this line by the sagacious Horace:

"Quid aeternis minorem consiliis animum fatigas?"

Looking at another piece of timber one slowly spells out the words:—

"O miseras hominum mentes! O pectora caeca!"

And so one follows the track of Montaigne's mind from rafter to rafter. There is a tradition in Perigord which some local writers have accepted as fact, that the Montaigne family was of English origin. It is not easy to ascertain the ground on which it rests. The patronymic was Eyquem, and the *chevalier-seigneur* who settled in Perigord and took the territorial title of Montaigne or Montaigne came from the Bordelais. This is about all that is really known of the family. If the Eyquems had borne a prominent part against the French kings in the long wars which had not ended a hundred years before the birth of the moralist, this would have been sufficient to account for their being described as English.—*Temple Bar.*

STAMMERING AND STAMMERERS.

The following from a local daily voices the sentiment of the Toronto Press regarding that very successful institution, Church's Auto-Voce School for the cure of stammering:—

A representative of The Mail yesterday visited that interesting institution, Church's Auto-Voce School for the cure of stammering, located in one of the most desirable residential portions of the city—Wilton crescent. The visit certainly served to confirm the good impressions already extant concerning the school and its work. Since its organization in 1890 its capacity has been fully taxed, even the usual holidays being passed by unobserved. A perusal of the books showed an increasing number of applications for admission, but in spite of this large volume of business, the poor who stammer have not been forgotten, between one and two thousand dollars' worth of training having been given gratis. The school and its principal enjoy the full confidence of its numerous graduates, and the testimony given by them is convincing, and shows that the Auto-Voce method, which can apply to no two alike, is in the highest sense of the word educational. Considering the certainty as well as the genuine character of the work, the rates charged are very moderate indeed, and no payments are required until a cure has been effected. A visit to the Auto-Voce school, and a brief conversation with its business-like principal, Mr. S. T. Church, is sufficient explanation of the reason why so many have successfully graduated from this institution.

In answer to a question by the reporter, Mr. Church said:—"Stammering is a condition not confined to the voice, but manifesting itself in very many different ways. We are dealing with it as it affects the organs of speech in the expression of thought. It appears to be no respecter of persons, the young, however, being more susceptible to the condition than

their elders. The causes of manifestation are numerous, and the latter may, and does, become habitual. The condition cannot be permanently removed, and the stammerer restored to a healthful and normal condition as regards the liberty of his voice, by magnetism, hypnotism, or by drugs or surgical operations. My experience is that so-called stammerers have, as a rule, from an anatomical standpoint, vocal organs in a normal condition. Stammering is not a physical or mental defect, but is a disturbed condition of the relations normally existing between body and mind. The cure can be effected by restoring these relations, and each individual case requires a special method of treatment under our system, for the proper carrying out of which a deep knowledge of human nature, combined with keen perception, are required on the part of the teacher."

The examinations witnessed were most interesting, the successful graduates receiving well-deserved congratulations. In closing, it may be said that in addition to the success of the stammering department, a large number of persons, including public speakers, have been trained for voice defects of various kinds, and with marked success. The same experience has been manifested in connection with children's voices. Altogether the Auto-Voce school is, perhaps one of the most interesting, and at the same time beneficial, institutions in the city.

Since the establishment of the school 118 students have graduated, and there have been no failures. There are at present 16 students, being six above the number supposed to be in the school at any one time.

HOW WILLIAM COBBETT LEARNT STYLE.

William Cobbett, born, apparently in 1762, was the son of a small farmer, and grandson of an agricultural labourer. The house in which he was born is still to be seen near the railway station of the little town of Farnham. Arthur Young, according to Cobbett, says somewhere that Farnham is at the head of the finest stretch of land in England—speaking, of course, from an agricultural point of view. The chalk ranges of the Hog's Back run eastward from it to shelter the picturesque Surrey villages towards Godalming and Guildford. The southwest the chalk again forms the "hangers" amidst which nestles the country sacred to White of Selborne. Wide heaths spread southwards to the pine-crowned Crooksbury Hill and the Quail-Alpine summit of Hindhead. Near Cobbett's birthplace, lay Waverley Abbey, with its ancient ruins and Moor Park, where Swift had once made a pet of Stella, and, in Farnham itself, the stately palace of the Bishop of Winchester. There is no finer bit of English scenery; and in Cobbett's childhood the agricultural population had been passing through a period of marked prosperity. From them sprang the burly, beef-eating soldiery who held one Englishman to be equal to three Frenchmen (that was Cobbett's settled conviction), and the end-egrel-playing, bull-bating, beer-swilling peasantry, who accepted Squire Western and Parson Trulliber as essential part of the order of Providence. Cobbett, brought up in poverty, but not in misery, remembered every detail of the old country with singular fondness. He remembered the sandhill down which he had rolled with his brothers, and the big elm tree into which he had watched a wild cat; and he recurs enthusiastically to a day when the linnets were singing and bluebells flowering, the ploughboys whistling, and their horses' harnesses jingling near Waverley Abbey, when suddenly the hounds came up in full cry, and he, then eight years old, joined for miles in the chase. Characteristically he refers to this as one of the perfectly happy moments of his life; also to another occasion, equally happy, when he heard of the suicide of Castlereagh. He was proud of his education in the "sweet air": had he been brought up like a milkop, with a nurserymaid at his heels,