CLAY EATERS.

STRANGE HABITS OF A PECULIAR PEOPLE.

They Satisfy the Cravings of Hunger by Eating a Blue-Gray Clay, Found On the Banks of a Creek.

The special correspondent of the Philadelphia *Press*, writing from Wise C. H., Va., gives many interesting facts concerning the habits and manners of the clay eaters of Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina and Virginia. He says:

The recent trial and execution of the notorious Talton Hall, who is charged with numberless crimes and murders, with a list of at least nineteen persons named, dated and located as victims of his bloody rapacity, and the arrest and imprisonment of the almost as notorious "Doc" Taylor, the wholesale murderer of Ira Williams and his family, some time since, near Pond Gap, together with the fact that "Doc" Taylor was the captor of Hall, while acting as an officer of the State, has made the little mountain village the sensational center of attraction to the newspaper correspondents of the country.

The story of the life and crimes of the two notorious citizens above mentioned has been detailed in the press of the country, and it is not my purpose to add at this time to the terrible record, but to give the readers some information upon the customs and habits of a most peculiar class of people who live upon the narrow creek valleys and mountain sides, some miles away from the county seat. The readers have doubtless heard of a people called Clay Eaters, who reside in the wildest parts of Kentucky, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Virginia, and doubtless many, if not all of them (the readers, I mean), believed the stories to be nothing more or less than emanations of the vivid imaginations of the writers.

But many of the stories were true. There are such human beings, and they are clay-eaters in the literal meaning of the term. One day, not long since, the writer, accompanied by a guide, crossed the Cumberland Mountains at the Gap, near McClure Creek, and rode into the depths of a wilderness over a narrow and but partially defined trail for twenty-five miles. At the end of our trip we found ourselves on a narrow ribbon of a creek or stream which came down out of the mountains, clear, pellucid, and cold. For ten miles we had not seen a sign of human habitation and the first one, the beginning of a settlement of a hundred cabins, perhaps we struck shortly after beginning our ascent of the stream.

"Every person long this yer crick is a clay-eater," said the guide as we approached a low crowned, rude log cabin, which stood in the open, close to the branch.

A sallow, stoop-shouldered man of 50 or 60 stood near the door, out of which the faces of seven or eight bare-headed and bare-footed children, varying from 3 to 18 years of age, peered with curious eyes as we approached.

The guide called the man by name, "Polter," and said: "This gentleman rode over here from the Court House to see some of you folks eat clay. He doesn't believe anybody ever eats it, and wants to see for himself."

"Yer kin lite down an' kum in, Hank," calling one of the boys, a tow-headed urchin of 13 years, "tek offin them saddles an bridles an' turn them hosses into the paster lot."

The boy took charge of our animals and after unsaddling led the animals a short distance up the creek to a small patch of ground fenced in with a brush fence.

After alighting we politely declined to enter the cabin on the plea that it was much pleasanter under the shade of the big tree in front of the door. At our request Pelter sent another, a lad of 16 or 17, who, like his brother, was tow-headed, bare-headed, and bare-footed, after a piece of the clay, about which there has been so much written. The guide and myself went with him, curious to know where and how they got the stuff. A few yards below on the bank of the creek, the boy stopped in front of a ledge or layer of blue-gray clay about two or three inches in thickness. The stuff, when taken in hand, had a feeling, and when wet directly became pliant and soft, like putty, and had very much the same general appearance.

The boy brought back a handful of the stuff, which he rolled into a ball and handed his father. Polter gave the clay another light wetting and then began manipulating it, much as a painter works putty, until the greasy, slippery stuff became soft, pliable and tenacious. He then separated the mass into big pills or balls, from the size of a bullet to that of an ordinary marble, and a few perhaps twice as large. He gave the smaller children several of the smallest pills and the larger ones two or three of those as large as marbles, reserving to himself two or three of the biggest boluses in the lot.

The boys and girls, and the male and female heads of the families, placed the balls of clay in their mouths, where by constant chewing and manipulating and by the aid of the secretions they soon converted them into a soft mucilaginous mass, which, with no apparent difficulty they succeeded in swallowing.

Determining to try for myself to satisfy myself that there had been no sleight of hand or hocus pocus about the affair I took a piece of the clay about as big as a bullet and put it into my mouth. In a very little while, and without manipulating or chewing, I found that the saliva had dissolved the mass. There were no gritty particles apparent; on the contrary, there was an oily feeling, without semblance of taste. I didn't swallow the stuff, but could have done so easily enough, but for the repugnance I felt.

After the clay had been disposed of I said:—

"Will this sort of clay satisfy hunger?"

"Certainly; that's what we eat it for. A feller ken eat 'nuff to las' three ur foh days, but this what I et'll only last till to-morrow."

"Don't it make you sick? Don't it hurt you some way when you make what you would consider a full meal of it?"

"Never heern uv its makin' enybody sick, but some claims it makes a feller weak. Don't know 'bout that."

"Do the other people living in this neighborhood eat clay also?"

"All uv 'em do. But we don't eat it all uv the time. Its only when we get short o' grub an' thar's no game. In summer time an' fall thars plenty o' grub, an' then we don't tech it."

A half hour later we were again ascending the creek, and at the end of another half hour came to a second cabin, a prototype of the first even to the number and appearance of the family. All were lank, cadaverous, and bluish looking, with dull, leaden eyes and an appearance physically as if the whole neighborhood had become partially paralyzed. They were all, so far as I could find, mentally slow and obtuse also. At the second cabin the same questions were asked and the same admissions as to the habit of earth eating made, and again the entire process precisely as at the first cabin was gone through with.

We stopped at three other cabins and found at each one a family of earth eaters and none of them appeared to think anything strange of the custom. Some of them said in explanation that this habit had been handed down, inherited as it were, from generation to generation, and none of them could inform us of the origin of the clay eating custom. One thing peculiar I noticed about these people, and that was wherever a clay eating family was found there were invariably several of them. They had either become communicative by preference or more likely had been ostracised by others who believed the habit to be disgusting.

The latter supposition is probably the correct one. What there is in the stuff to support life I cannot tell, and although I have talked with a number of well informed people among whom were Government and civil officers, who knew of these peculiar people, none of them could give any explanation of it. Several well informed persons say that the clay contains in condensed form some highly nutritive properties, but they gave no analysis of these alleged properties, and all of the theories, suppositions and opinions in the end amount to nothing tangible. That there is something of this sort, however, in the peculiar clay eaten by the earth eaters must be true, from the fact, which is undisputed, that these people often go days at a time without other food than that dug out of the banks of the creeks.

Right-Handedness is Now Natural.

The causes of right-handedness have given anatomists much material for speculation, and more than one curious theory has been advanced to account for the fact that men habitually use the right hand in preference to the left. Some have attempted to explain the difference on anatomical grounds, declaring that the course of the artery to the right arm, being more direct from the heart, admits the blood in greater quantity to that member, so conducing to its superior strength. This, however, is assigning a cause which, on close examination, seems inadequate, for the causes of phenomena have often a deeper source than the mechanism of means. In considering the subject the Globe-Democrat thinks it should not be forgotten that the preference for the right hand is, save in exceptional cases, universal; the accounts of travelers stating that right-handedness is as general among savage nations as among the civilized, a fact which goes to indicate that their may be some constitutional tendency toward the use of the right hand in preference to the left. In this connection it should not be forgotten that there is a marked distinction between not only the right and left hands but also between the two sides of the body, the right being larger and stronger than the left, the superiority extending even to vital properties, as the left is more frequently attacked by such diseases as paralysis. The right foot is almost as superior to the left as the right hand, for in the case of dancers, not only are the more difficult feats of agility performed by the right, but a double amount of training is required to give the left foot and limb a degree of efficiency that will prevent a contrast being seen by the spectators. Few people walk evenly and the greater strength of the right side is the cause of persons lost in the woods traveling in a circle, always turning to the left. These facts, with many others that may be cited, lead to the conclusion that nature is the guide in the more frequent use of the right hand, but whether the present preference is the result of an original condition or of hereditary training will always be an open question.

A MARVELLOUS MEMORY.

Encyclopedic Knowledge of a Little French Girl of Five.

An infant phenomenon has been discovered at Plaisance, a suburb of Paris, in the person of a little girl called Jeanne Eugenie Moreau, aged only five, but endowed with a most extraordinary memory. She is a walking encyclopedia on all matters appertaining to the history of France, and especially of the great revolution; is an adept also in natural history, and at the same time answers without hesitation or error practical questions about cooking, gardening and household management.

The youthful prodigy was born in Paris in January, in 1887; her father, Phillippe Moreau, being a humble laborer, but descended from a revolutionary hero whose name figures in the annals of 1786, and who was decorated by General de Lafayette after the taking of the Bastile. Owing to the poverty of her progenitor, Eugenie Moreau was adopted by a widow—Mme. Cally—who, noticing the retentive faculties of the child, cultivated and developed them with assiduity until the phenomenon had become capable of passing a stiff competitive examination and of putting to shame many a schoolboy or schoolgirl of maturer years and more extensive education.

The fate of Eugenie Moreau will no doubt be that reserved for all intellectual prodigies of years. She will be exhibited to scientific men and reported upon; she will probably receive an offer from an enterprising showman, and in all likelihood Eugenie, should she survive academical testings and public examinations, will eventually settle down to the life of a schoolmistress—a calling for which her marvelous memory will preeminently fit her.—[London Telegraph.

The dark horse is acquiring a military as well as a political value. German military authorities say that the smokeless powder makes it death to be on a pale horse, and white steeds will hereafter be excluded.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

One of the best and most convincing results of the unselfish activity of women that can be found in the whole wide range of woman's activity is the work done at Hull House, Chicago. This is an old residence that, as the city has grown, has become surrounded by the densest population, the greater proportion of whom are foreigners who have not yet adapted themselves to American ways—Italians, Germans, Jews, and all the medley that dwell in the most crowded tenements. In Hull House some years ago a little band of devoted women set up their residence in order to try to improve the condition of their neighbors, and it has grown to be one of the most notable institutions in the Christian world. It nurses babies for poor women while they have to work, it teaches foreigners the literature of their own tongue, it keeps relentless landlords from committing cruelties to poor tenants, it finds homes for deserted children, it enters the law courts in defence of many an oppressed woman, it has distinguished lecturers and attentive listeners to them even on abstruse subjects—so that in every practical way, from ministration to the most rudimentary wants of the poor to stimulating their most ambitious intellectual efforts, this multifarious work is carried on. There are classes almost innumerable; there are art exhibits that would do credit to the wealthiest portion of the city; there are social entertainments—in fact, there is hardly a want, physical, mental, or moral, that Hull House does not manage in some way to supply. A detailed and exceedingly interesting account of the growth and management of this great institution is published by Miss Jane Addams, one of the founders of it, in the Forum. Miss Addams claims that this work, which she calls "An effort toward Social Democracy," is not charity work—indeed, is not even philanthropic; but that it is simply the outgrowth of what ought to be the natural desire of all persons to give practical aid to the best tendencies in the life of their neighbors, and she asserts that quite as much good is received by those who do this excellent service as by those who are the recipients of it.

Some time ago the Imperial German Postal Museum of Berlin requested the United States Government to have perpared for it two models of United States railway mail cars to be placed in the Postal Museum at Berlin. Pursuant to this request the Postoffice Department ordered two models from the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company. These models when completed were ten feet long, just one-sixth of the size of the regulation postal car, and cost the German Government $1,000 apiece. The Department at its own expense had the models fitted up with the regular appliances and apparatus of the service which made an exact reproduction of the postal car in use. They were then shipped to Germany. The other day the Postoffice Department received a communication from the German Government acknowledging the receipt of the models in good condition and extending thanks to the United States for its courtesy in the matter. The letter adds that the museum will now be able clearly to demonstrate to its visitors the excellent arrangement and operations of the United States Railway Mail service, and at the same time give an idea of the great development of the United States postal traffic.

Buffalo capitalists propose to erect a steel observatory 250 feet in height at Niagara Falls. The ground has already been purchased; it is near the corner of Falls and River Streets—and the contract for the steel work has been given out. The plans and specifications call for a structure 70 feet at the base, 250 feet high, tapering to 18 feet at the top. The frame will be built of four main columns 15 inches square, around which the covering will be placed. A platform 88 feet in circumference will surround the top, furnishing room for 80 people to stand. Another lookout point will be provided at about midway up the tower for those who fear to ascend to a higher altitude. Two elevators propelled by electric power will travel the vertical path leading to the top. They will have a capacity of 25 passengers each, and make the journey in half a minute. The entire structure will be brilliantly illuminated by electricity. A three-story brick block 66 by 100 feet, suitable for offices or other business purposes, will be erected at the base of the tower. The view from the observatory will take in Lake Ontario, the tortuous course of the Niagara River, and, on a clear day, the spires of Toronto.

The law of Denmark now gives to every Danish subject, man or woman, the right to a pension at 60 years of age, except in cases of convicted criminals, of those who have fraudulently made over their property to relatives, of those who have brought themselves to distress by extravagance, or who have during the preceeding ten years received relief from the parish, or who have been convicted of mendicity. The parish examines each case and reports the amount of relief to be granted. It may be withheld if the beneficiary becomes ineligible through misconduct or improper expenditure of his pension, or if he marries. The State contributes half the expense of the parish in distributing relief provided the expenditure does not exceed $270,000 each year from '91 to '95 and $350,000 in subsequent years. There is no appeal from the decision of the parish authorities.

No matter how crowded a harbor may be, the American ship can almost always be distinguished from all others, even at first glance. She is better kept and cleaner; her sparring is more graceful, her sails are more neatly furled; her rigging is in good shape, her yards are precisely trimmed, and her whole appearance is more shipshape and man-of-war-like than that of the vessels of any other nationality in the world. But, all the same, American ships are lamentably few.

The Chinese who come to this country engage in almost every occupation which gives them the most returns. Of course there are many things which they can do, but which they are not permitted to do on account of there being enough white residents to perform the same. Almost every city has at least one Chinese laundry. They have proven to be of some use out West in various capacities, such as cooks, servants, and laborers. The latest occupation of some seem to have a great tendency toward agriculture, and large numbers of them are engaged in farming in Montana. Certainly, what will the pig-tailed celestial next embark in?

The United States is credited with having the best blooded stock in the world, and there is no reason why this country should not always hold that honor, considering the careful attention given by the majority of our leading stockmen to the breeding of their animals.

The French have developed the making of butter to a higher point than any other people in the world, and their product brings a bigger price than any other people's. We can raise just as good butter here when we set ourselves earnestly to learning how to do it.

Wallis Brooke, a writer in the London Times, is of the opinion that "we shall soon see milk imported from Australia in frozen blocks and retailed in London streets. It can be done as easily as importing butter and apples."

How a Trout Swims.

We sat an hour or more a few evenings ago on the east bank of the Beaverkill at Rockland, says the American Angler, and watched the trout of that celebrated river passing over the dam, which is nearly three feet high, with about a four-inch volume of water pouring over it.

The trout ranged in size from ten to eighteen inches, and during the time we sat there at least twenty managed to get over. In many instances a first attempt failed, owing, however, more to an apparent want of judgment, or perhaps experience, than from lack of physical ability in the fish to accomplish the feat; the smaller fish, as a rule, failed to get over in the first effort. But a few of the larger fish made a clean jump into the smooth water above the apron of the dam. Most of them passed perpendicularly up the falling waters, and with apparent ease.

These fish were enabled to swim straight up this downpour of the waters by the great muscular power they possessed; there was no trick, no sleight of hand about it—it was mere strength of body, which is evidently centered in the peduncle or tail and the tail fin. They actually sculled their bodies up this comparatively dense mass of water.

The query naturally arises: If a ten-inch trout can swim up such a fall what is the capacity of a salmon forty inches under similar conditions? What we saw the trout do has never before, so far as we know, been placed upon record, and it establishes a fact from which greater swimming power should be assigned to the salmonidæ than has been given them by previous observers.

A Wonderful Railroad

When the railroad between Moscow and St. Petersburg was opened it inspired great terror in the breasts of the superstitious peasantry, who thought there must be some witchcraft in an invention which could make a train of heavy cars run along without horses at the rate of twenty miles an hour. Some of them would not go within sight of a train. Others took timid peeps at the smoke-breathing creature, which they believed to be alive and ready to devour whatever came in its way. When the whistle sounded they said: "The monster is hungry; he's screaming for somebody to eat!"

By degrees, however, their terror wore away, and following the example of the village priests, the peasants began to try the "smoke-wagons," though with fear and trembling. The superstition had gone, but the mystery still remained.

One day an old man who had never been away from his own village determined to take a look at "Mother Moscow," which is regarded by all the Russian peasantry as the most wonderful city in the world.

The down express and the up express met at Bologoe—half way between St. Petersburg and Moscow—and the passengers of both trains were allowed half an hour for supper. Among the people who alighted from the other train the old peasant recognized a friend whom he had not seen for a long time.

They had a delightful chat together over their tea in the restaurant and then, without any thought of what he was doing, the old peasant boarded his friend's train instead of his own.

The talk was very merry for some time, but at last the old man became grave and silent and appeared to be puzzling deeply over something. At last he broke out:

"Ah, Ivan, what a wonderful thing are these railroads! Here we sit in the same car, I going to Moscow and you to St. Petersburg!"—[Youth's Companion.

Columbus or Vespucci.

Every schoolboy of course, knows that if Columbus had never lived America would have been discovered all the same, when Pedro Alvares Cabral, the Portuguese admiral, was carried by the trade winds over to the coast of Brazil in 1500. But in that case it would not have been discovered by Spain and the whole course of the inevitable European settlement on the continent must have been modified. When that can be said of any particular event there can be no question as to its importance. There is a kind of historical critic, rather conspicuous in these latter days, who finds a peculiar satisfaction in pointing out that Columbus discovered America without knowing it—which is true. That he believed and died in the belief that he had reached Asia is certain. It is not less sure that Amerigo Vespucci, from whom the continent was named, by a series of flukes, misprints and misunderstandings, went to his grave in the same faith. He thought that he had found an island of uncertain size to the south of the equator, and that what Columbus had found to the north was the eastern extremity of Asia. But the world which knows that Columbus did, as a matter of fact, do it the service of finding America, and is aware that without him the voyage from Palos would never have been undertaken, has refused to belittle him because he did not know beforehand what was only found out through his exertions.—[Saturday Review.

FOR THE CHILDREN.

BE JUST YOURSELF.

O little bird of golden wing,
Go to your wild-wood nest,
And to your downy nestlings sing
The song that seemeth best.
Be just yourself—a birdling true,
Whether the song be old or new.

O daisies, in the scented field,
A glorious sisterhood,
Be simple daisies as you yield
Your heritage of good,
To deck in white the meadows fair,
Just showing the bright gold you wear.

O, simple blossom by the walk,
So very plain and small,
The flower that grows on the high stalk,
O, envy not at all;
But bloom in just your pretty dress,
Revealing your own loveliness.

O, learn a lesson, little child,
From flowers you daily see:
Of singing bird in forest wild,
Just your own self to be,
And you will better fill your place
By wearing your own pleasant face.

—[New York Observer.

FLOWERS FOR CHILDREN.

Among the best sorts for children are balsams, nasturtiums, portulaca, phlox, pinks and sweet peas. These good, old-fashioned flowers grow easily, last long in bloom, and are among our brightest and best flowers.

As a rule, these bright, easily grown flowers please the children well; sometimes children whose parents pay much attention to flowers, and have many rare sorts, with the keen sense of justice all children possess, grow dissatisfied with annuals alone and long for a share of the rarer flowers that their elders have. "I don't like my bed at all," confidentially said a little girl to me once. "It is just full of petunias and larkspurs that no one else will have. Mamma has beds and beds full of geraniums and gladiolus, lilies and roses, and I haven't one. I just hate my old bed!" Don't be afraid to give the children a few gladiolus or geraniums. They often take more pains than grown-ups with some plant they think is extra choice, as I have reasons to know.—[Vick's Magazine.

WHAT A TAME OTTER DOES.

The expected advent here of a great German animal-trainer bringing numerous tamed wild beasts, suggests various things, and among them the idea that he hasn't an otter in his collection, says the Chicago Journal. Yet a tame otter is one of the most interesting animals possible. It is handsome, and its long neck with the small head and the glittering eyes give a serpentine grace to the creature. Very well able to take care of itself, too, is the tame otter, despite the fact that dogs attack it instinctively.

In its wild state the otter is accustomed to catch fish under water and the movements of its head are incredibly swift. Once accustomed to fighting dogs and the otter is more than a match for them. A Missourian some time ago owned a tame otter upon which he would allow any one to turn his dog, making the matter interesting usually by suggesting a little stake on the issue. The dog would rush to the attack, but never one was found quick enough in his movements to catch the otter at a disadvantage; there would be a dart of the head swifter than the eye could follow and the dog would become in a moment a yelping beast with a torn nose. Repeated attacks would but increase the extent of his injuries. The otter, if taken in hand young, tames easily, and the wonder is that one never sees the animal on exhibition.

PUSSY IN A STRANGE ROLE.

In the mountain district of Pennsylvania two wrens had built their nest under the eaves of an old farmhouse, and there they reared a small and interesting family. Among the attaches of the farmer's household was a white cat, and when the wrens became so tame that they used to hop around the piazza in search of crumbs the cat would lie in wait for them, and several times came within an ace of catching the adult birds. When the farmer noticed this he kicked the cat, and she finally learned that it was dangerous to fool with the wrens.

When the baby wrens grew larger one of them one day fell out of the nest, and, being too weak to run and unable to fly, lay helpless on the grass. The cat saw the accident and ran rapidly to seize the bird, but, seeming to remember the lesson taught her, when she reached the helpless little thing she only touched it daintily with her paw and then lay down and watched it. Presently there came a black and yellow garden snake toward the fluttering birdling. The cat was dozing and was awakened by the fluttering of the bird. Instantly she arose and struck at the reptile with her paw. This was an enemy the snake did not appreciate, but was hungry, so it darted forward and attempted to seize the bird under the very shelter of the cat's head. Like a flash the cat seized the snake just back of the head and killed it with one bite. When the farmer happened along in the afternoon he found the cat crouching in the grass sheltering the bird, and ten feet away was the dead snake.

This made it clear that the cat had carried the bird away from the snake, and the young adventurer was soon restored to its anxious parents.—[Brandon Bucksaw.

THE BODY AND ITS HEALTH.

Fads in Diet.—Perhaps popular medical literature is partly to blame, says the London *Hospital*, for the growing habit of over-nursing organs which are quite able to stand ordinary work. Health articles are written by doctors, and these, seeing people only when they are ill, forget that the papers they write for—the "Family Journals"—are read by men and women, especially women, who are perfectly well. "Avoid pastry," writes the doctor, thinking of the confirmed dyspeptic who left his consulting room half an hour ago, and thereupon a hundred folks who were never a whit the worse for their tarts avoid pastry conscientiously and take to unending sago puddings, whose monotony their weary palate loathes. If we were to renounce all that we see or hear condemned as overstraining or misusing our digestive apparatus, we should probably take nothing but pepsin, with perhaps a little milk to exercise it on. There are times when after a too rigid dieting, the most mature of us longs for the green apples and raspberry tarts of youth, and such a longing is an honest rebellion of the digestion against a regimen which keeps it weak for lack of proper exercise. To give a fair and reasonable consideration to the food we eat, is a matter of common sense, but to make ourselves mentally the parallels of the monks of Mount Athos, and concentrate our attention on all that we should avoid, is to lay ourselves open to the chance of indigestion as much as if we indulged every day in the banquets of a Lucullus.

Nervous Exhaustion, Its Symptoms and Some of Its Causes.—Nervous exhaustion is a term which carries with it a multitude of derangements of a nature not describable. It means exhaustion of the very centres of life, an exhaustion which may be more or less complete. It marks a failing vitality or an overstrain of some part or the whole of the nervous system. Nervous exhaustion may be the beginning of the end, or it may be the end of the beginning. At the same time it is simply an indication of a weakened nerve force. A human being has, at best, but a certain lease of life, and this lease is dependent upon the nervous system. When the ordinary wear and tear of life is not replaced by nutritious foods it must, of necessity, degenerate in one degree or another. 'Tis simply a question of waste and repair. When external surroundings are so forcible that they wear away more energy than can be supplied, the nervous system begins to suffer, and though it may have a resisting power born of a strong constitution, cannot but suffer in the long run. Well defined cases of nervous exhaustion have a distinct line of symptoms, prominent among which are a general feeling of goneness, dilated pupils, clammy hand and cold feet, bluish nails, a lack of color in the cheeks or a feverish flushing, restlessness, inability to concentrate one's thoughts and sleeplessness and mental depression. Loss of weight and appetite and a general bodily decline are accompaniments. Nervous exhaustion comes from mental strain, from long exposure to wind and weather, from worry of all sorts, from diseases affecting a mental depression or a waste of vitality and from excesses. It is more likely to develop in middle life than at any other period, although it does affect both the young and the old to some extent. The time of life when the system is most hardy being selected seems to be attributable to the extra activity which this period carries with it. A strong woman or a strong man may break down under circumstances which one of less vigorous constitution could withstand with impunity. Those who are born with a nervous temperament, which is expending its energy on every possible occasion, are the victims, and their quieter brothers and sisters the fortunates.

Bashfulness and Its Causes.—Bashfulness, says "A Family Doctor," in Cassell's Magazine, is what is known medically as a functionary disorder—that is to say, it does not depend upon any actual disease, but is due to some temporary interference with the natural action of the brain. When the natural action of the brain is thus interfered with, we say it is inhibited. The first chief cause of bashfulness consists in a man's attention being directed to himself. The man who is quite at ease in his office—bashfulness is most often an attribute of the male sex—becomes self-conscious in the drawing-room, and very shy. Although capable of joining in the conversation, his witty remark is forestalled because he is too slow in giving utterance to it, or too timid to hear his own voice. The ordinary action of his brain is inhibited by his self-consciousness. The second cause is emotion. The extreme bashfulness of many men when they are in love is proverbial, and the surprisingly few married men who suffer from bashfulness is noteworthy. These causes are, however, usually insufficient to produce bashfulness, but there must be some further necessary condition. Many conditions predispose to it: *e. g.*, a highly nervous temperament, deficient moral courage, with which is associated lack of self-assertion. These may be regarded as constitutional causes. Another predisposing cause is defective education. The general education may have been neglected, or the want of opportunities of acquiring self-confidence in society may have been experienced. Bashfulness is natural to youth. "Modesty is the graceful, calm virtue of maturity; bashfulness the charm of vivacious youth;" and unless a young man takes advantage of opportunities of entering society, he will retain "An air of bashfulness which is in reality the want of habitual intercourse with the world" (Waverley). As long ago as 1570 Ascham wrote that "If a young gentleman be bashful and soon blush, they call him a babishe and ill brought up thyng." Deficient social education is therefore a cause of bashfulness. Habit also predisposes to it. A mere indisposition to exert one's self, if indulged for too long a time, may eventually result in confirmed bashfulness. This indifference may be due to a want of sympathy with the surroundings, or may have its origin in unalloyed selfishness—for many bashful men are extremely selfish—or may be due to vanity. The man who enjoys the life of the taproom, because there he can do no wrong, is painfully ill at ease in the society of his equals, and the behavior of Hastings, in "She Stoops to Conquer," is an example of this. Lastly, excessive smoking or excessive drinking and immoral or unhealthy pursuits of all kinds, are sometimes the cause of bashfulness.

Artificial Granite.

Many costly experiments (as at Chicago in October, 1871) having proved that granite is a poor stone to resist great heat, an artificial granite is now proposed. The natural stone is heated to disintegration, then pulverized and mixed with the materials needed to toughen it. After being molded to the various forms desired—bricks, tiles, etc.—the latter are carefully dried, then placed in a kiln and heated to 4,000 degrees Fahrenheit, by which process the particles are fused together, the result being a stone of much more durability. It is claimed, than marble. It is also of uniform texture, strong, not susceptible to the action of fire or heat, may be readily cut and fitted, and caused to resemble either light or dark granite or other colors if desired.