Reminiscences of a stammerer / B. Beasley.

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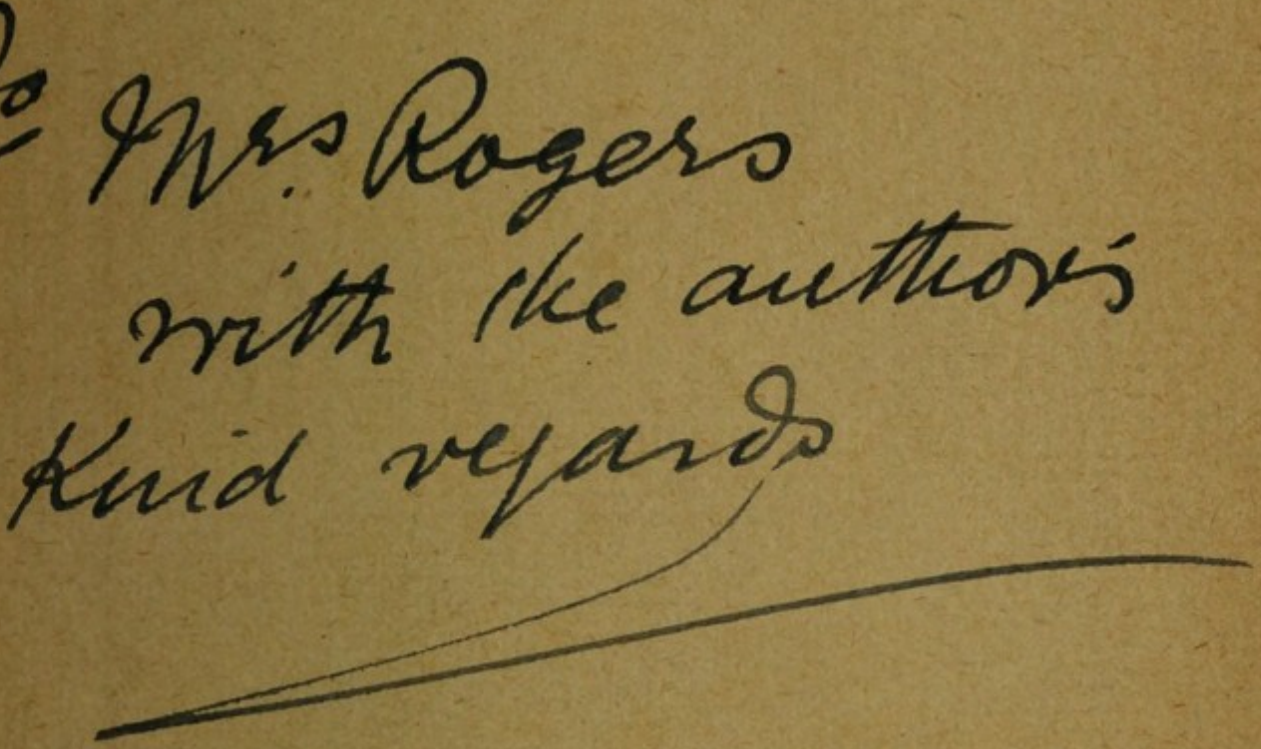

Faithfully yrs
B. Beasley

REMINISCENCES
OF
A STAMMERER

BY

B. BEASLEY

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PREFACE

TO MY FRIENDS AND PUPILS

IN presenting my reminiscences, I do not for one moment entertain the faintest idea that they will be of any interest to the general public. They are not written with that intention, but meant for those who may be directly or indirectly associated with the subject therein treated.

The examples which occasionally appear, are not isolated nor taken specially, but are only types of a *few* of the phases of stammering which have come under my observation, as, if I had chosen, I might

have given many more, were it not thought that by dwelling too long on an infirmity I might weary.

But I do not doubt but that, should the account of my personal experiences fall into the hands of some of my pupils, scattered as many of them are over all parts of the globe, they will recognize old friends, and be reminded of many pleasant associations.

In my statements of simple facts I have not in any way pretended to literary excellence, and shall be satisfied if they meet with the approval of my friends and pupils.

THE AUTHOR.

BRAMPTON PARK,
NEAR HUNTINGDON.

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INTRODUCTION

IT is very difficult to explain what stammering is. It certainly cannot be classified as a disease, nor can it be correctly called a malady. It is frequently found present in the most perfect specimens of physical humanity, and accompanying the highest forms of mental power, thus presenting itself, neither more nor less than, as a paradoxical phenomenon, frequently illustrating itself in constantly varying forms, contradictions, and intensities, altogether unaccountable and irreconcilable. For although the numbers of books which have been written about it may be called legion, I do not know of any which do more than describe the phenomena, without arriving at any satisfactory conclusion as to their cause.

A more than fifty years' intimate acquaintance with, and study of, this puzzling question still confirms me in the opinion I have held for a long period, that it is a *habit*, more or less influenced by nervousness, but sometimes altogether unaccompanied by nervousness, which will succumb to no treatment that does not recognize habit as a basis for operation.

I make these few preliminary remarks because, knowing the extraordinary, the fallacious, the ridiculous, and sometimes the silly notions entertained on this question, I am desirous to combat these absurdities, and the folly of them.

It is not uncommon for a stammerer to get a fixed idea that the state of the weather, the heat or the cold, the drought or the rain, is the main cause of his infirmity; or he will have it that he is worse or better at the changes of the seasons, or that the phases of the moon have a great deal to do with his difficulty. He will often get a notion that

he is worse in the morning than in the evening, and many other imaginations which are altogether without foundation.

There is, however, this to be said, that his fancies are not without result, inasmuch as they have the effect of helping him—if I may use the expression—to stammer, just in the same way that nervousness operates. Although nervousness is not the cause, it operates as a reflective agent. A stammerer has learned by experience that he cannot talk, and has thus become nervous about speaking, and this nervousness helps to make him worse than he otherwise would be; and, in like manner, the fancy that certain conditions or circumstances cause the difficulty, has the same relation to what I say as to nervousness being a reflective agent.

As long as a stammerer allows himself to fancy that influences, which in no way interfere with the *ordinary* speaker, are detrimental to him, he will find his enemy difficult to conquer. But if he will "throw to the winds"

all these fancies, which are nothing more than supposed influences, and bring his mind to recognize the fact that his difficulty is only a habit, he will then be on the right road to commence battling with his enemy.

I know that a great many stammerers hold the belief that their impediment is incurable; but if they would for awhile consider, they would find that their beliefs were groundless.

I can tell them that during all the years I have daily considered this subject, I have never in one single instance met with a case in which imperfect organization has been the cause. On the contrary, I have frequently seen it in its greatest intensity where the articulative organs have been unusually good, such as perfect larynx, fine voice, well developed jaws, finely-formed arch, free and active tongue, and perfectly regular teeth, thus unquestionably proving that the difficulty is not organic, but simply functional.

This then shows that to have a perfect

organ, and not obtain from it what could be expected, implies improper use. Thus I contend that stammering is neither more nor less than an attempt to speak in an impossible way.

It would be well, if it were possible, to convey instruction by writing; but I have said many times I am convinced it is impossible to do so in a manner thoroughly satisfactory to myself, or so as to afford sufferers the utmost benefit. I might and could write a volume on its treatment; but as regards its real use, I am afraid it would prove no more efficacious in the cure of stammering than a treatise on anatomy, without practical dissection, would be in teaching operative surgery.

If a stammerer could but "see himself as others see him" it would be less difficult to treat him; but it is a remarkable fact that when he is first told of his most palpable bad habits he is slow to realize their existence: this constitutes the difficulty for anyone

trying to cure himself by written instructions. He cannot at first understand, that the total absence of a laborious endeavour to speak must be cultivated, before freedom of utterance can be obtained. Another of the great difficulties he has to contend with is, that no written instructions can properly convey to him a knowledge of the exercise or exercises he most needs; thus he may be losing time in applying himself to one while he would be better employed with another.

The best thing he can do is to try his utmost to find out the right way to speak, practise at it, and drive out the old bad habit by establishing a new one—that of speaking in the way our best speakers do, in the way nature intended us to speak.

Some people entertain the most erroneous ideas with regard to stammerers, whom they regard not only as not possessing an ordinary amount of intelligence, but even go farther, and look upon them—to use a common expression—as "not quite right."

This impression is positively and absolutely groundless and cruel, though really of no value, as those who hold such opinions are generally of themselves not overburdened with sense, so that what they do, or do not, believe, is altogether unworthy of a moment's consideration.

As a rule, stammerers are more intelligent than those not so afflicted. This is easily accounted for, as it is natural that those who are, as it were, in a measure cut off from society, will be more likely to cultivate the habit of thinking, and thus strengthen their minds while finding a solace in reading and contemplation, than those not so debarred from communion with their fellow-creatures. And thus it is no surprise to me to meet with the great amount of knowledge and intelligence I frequently come across in those who stammer. I have known many boys from twelve to fifteen years of age who, after having gained the power of speech, have been able to give addresses

in a manner which would do credit to much older people who aspire to speak in public.

If it were necessary to prove my assertions, I could go back to our very early ages for examples, where we find great men who were stammerers.

Demosthenes was a stammerer, and he, by diligent practice, not only conquered his difficulty, but made himself the greatest orator of his time. St. Paul is said to have been a stammerer. To come to the present century, Charles Kingsley was a stammerer, and wrote a great deal on the subject. His opinions are full of sound sense, such as we should expect from a man possessing a giant mind like his.

Martin Tupper was also a stammerer, and has given, what to me seems, the most exhaustive description of the affliction which could be told in as few words. In another little book which I have written I have quoted them, but as they strike me as being so powerful I give them again :—

"Come, I will show thee an affliction unnumbered among the world's sorrows,
Yet real and wearisome and constant, embittering the cup of life.
There be who can think within themselves, and the fire burneth at their heart
And eloquence waiteth at their lips, yet they speak not with their tongue:
There be whom zeal quickeneth, or slander stirreth to reply,
Or need constraineth to ask, or pity sendeth as her messengers,
But nervous dread and sensitive shame freeze the current of their speech:
The mouth is sealed as with lead, a cold weight presseth on the heart,
The mocking promise of power is once more broken in performance,
And they stand impotent of words, travailing with unborn thoughts.
Courage is cowed at the portal, wisdom is widowed of utterance:
He that went to comfort is pitied, he that should rebuke is silent,
And fools, who might listen and learn, stand by to look and laugh:
While friends, with kinder eyes, wound deeper by compassion:
And thought, finding not a vent, smouldereth, gnawing at the heart,

And the man sinketh in his sphere for lack of
empty sounds.
There may be cares and sorrows thou hast not
yet considered,
And well may thy soul rejoice in the fair privilege
of speech:
For at every turn to want a word—thou canst
not guess that want:
It is as lack of breath or bread, life hath no grief
more galling."

M. F. TUPPER.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.

I DO not recollect when first I began to stammer, but I believe it was when about five years of age, and after some child-ailment; but I remember perfectly the first time I became painfully conscious of my defect. When about eight or nine years of age I went with my sisters to a children's party. Before we returned home, I was requested by our hostess to call with some boarding-school young ladies with a message to the mistress, apologising for having kept them rather late. No doubt I was immensely gratified at being made so important a cavalier, but my vanity soon received a very severe shock. During our short walk

I kept saying the message over again and again to myself, not however without some misgivings as to being able to deliver it without difficulty. My misgivings were certainly not without foundation, for I shall never forget so long as I live the utter misery that simple message cost me. I was unable to say a single word for a considerable time, and when I found utterance, what I said was almost unintelligible, by reason of my nervous confusion. I was simply as bad as though I were dumb. I don't think I should have felt it so much had it not been for the presence of the young ladies, who I could see were giggling at what seemed to them so funny. It was no fun for me, for the misery I experienced during those few minutes has so impressed itself on my mind, that at a distance of fifty years it is as vivid to me as it was at that moment.

After that, whenever I saw in the distance either the lady who kept the school or any of her pupils, I would turn back or go a mile

out of my way to avoid them; nothing could induce me to face them again.

Ever afterwards I was conscious of my infirmity, and it would not be difficult for me to fill a volume with the bitter mortifications which from that time I have since suffered. Whether others feel the same amount of shame and painful emotions I cannot say, but to me, even in my early life, it was sometimes absolute torture.

Many have been the pangs suffered through the thoughtless and ignorant, who never know the pain their remarks occasion when alluding to my, or to others', difficulties of a like nature.

My brothers and sisters were all most kind to me, but they could not always refrain from having a joke at my expense. I know it was sheer thoughtlessness, and not intentional unkindness; but although I can smile at it now, at the time I could not see the fun. I remember an elder brother saying to me once, "Why, they tell me that the

other day you asked Tom Jones if his magpie could talk, and he said, 'Yes, better than you can, or I'd cut his head off.'" I was very angry; it was not true, and I knew he was poking fun at me. All allusion to stammering was distasteful to me; I could never bear to hear it spoken about, and to have it imitated caused me great annoyance.

I shall never forget the mortal dislike I took to the man who used to supply us with bread. I fancy I see him now, with his fat, round body, his moon-like face, and his German-peaked cap, driving round, in his covered cart with its grey pony, to the back of the house. How I hated that man; for one morning when I was coming out of the orchard with my father, this baker, who, child as I was, I knew to be ignorant, said to my father, "Pardon me, sir, but I could cure that boy of your'n of his stuttering."

Now if there is one word in relation to my impediment that offended me more than another, it was the word "stutter." I could

stand "stammer," but "stutter" always raised my ire, so I at once conceived a dislike that I had never before felt for him; indeed, I had always been rather otherwise disposed to him, due to a ride or two I had had on his pony, I suppose. My dislike rose like mercury into absolute hatred when he described his way of cure.

"Yes, sir, I only cured one a day or two ago. You see, sir, the lad's father is a neighbour of mine, and he sent the lad to borrow a basket of me. He stuttered and spluttered, and tried to say basket, but couldn't, so I gave him a whack which sent him reeling, and said, 'You young beggar, say basket!' He ran away crying, 'Basket! basket! basket!' and he's never stuttered since."

My father said, "Thank you very much for your advice, Stoneley" (that was the man's name; I shall always remember it), "but however efficacious your treatment may be, I have no thought of trying it."

Didn't I hate that baker. I wished I was

a man, that I could challenge him to mortal combat. I don't know that I did not resolve that when I grew old enough I would have his blood. However, the poor man died not long after, and my anger died also. He probably meant well, although doubtless the lad whom he operated upon was of a different way of thinking.

Although I think I may say I was not at all a bad-tempered lad, I was sometimes driven into uncontrollable anger when chaffed about my infirmity; indeed, when at school I on several occasions fought with bigger and older lads than myself, in consequence of their allusion or imitation of my defect.

Lads are prone to make game of an infirmity out of sheer thoughtlessness, but on the whole I did not suffer much on that account while at school, as, fortunately, I was very robust, and much stronger than the generality of boys of my own age, and this no doubt in a measure lightened the burden it would otherwise have been.

CHAPTER II.

SCHOOL DAYS.

MY parents did all they could to get me cured, but unfortunately many of their plans were not only unsuccessful but injurious. I was sent to different schools where the masters had an idea they could cure me, but in several of these trials I was made worse. I was sent to schools where there were only a few boys, as it was thought that being with a great number I should not be so well looked after; but, whether I went to a large or a small school, the result was the same.

Most, if not all, of my masters, after trying to aid me, found that it took up too much of their time and interfered too much with

the work of the whole class; and besides, having but a vague notion as to what to do or advise, they generally abandoned the attempt after a few weeks' trial.

A stammering boy is very heavily handicapped at school, and I found it so. I was most heavily handicapped in two ways. I was naturally so, and I also handicapped myself for any future success in the way of learning. In construing I found the utmost difficulty, and the long time that the class was kept waiting for me, caused my tutors to pass me over, and give me credit for knowing what I often did not know.

I soon found that I need not be over-careful in preparing my work, as I knew that if I only showed signs of knowing some little, it was presumed that I knew more. The other way in which I was sorely tried was when I knew my lessons thoroughly but was unable to say them, and was called dunce, or blockhead, or other polite names, which I felt were unjust; for although

I generally met with kindness and consideration from my tutors, I have met with those who showed neither.

The dull, lazy boy who stammers, will usually find an easy escape from work, while the quick, industrious lad, will sometimes find difficulty, and frequently be misunderstood. Had I not been strong and full of life, my school-days would not have been so happy as they were.

The happiest were those I spent at my last school. It was at a grammar school in a small country town, where the master took only a few boarders, and having sons of his own, and also some of his nephews, we formed a very happy little party. There were a good many day boys, so we had plenty of games; and as there were several good families in the neighbourhood whose boys attended, we had good times. The head master, an Oxford M.A., was a splendid old fellow, kind and genial, who would do anything in reason in the way of relaxation

provided we worked well; but woe betide the lazy lad, the cane and he were sure to become intimately acquainted, and for him extra holidays were few and far between.

He was a fine old gentleman, with a magnificent baritone voice, whom it was a treat to hear read, his deep-toned inflections sounding like music. I often think had it not been for his influence, what little taste I ever had for reading would never have been cultivated, but I believe hearing him read, and the free admission to his valuable library, awakened in me a desire to be able to do the same. But, alas! many years passed before I was able to be even a feeble imitator of that good old man.

But even here, with everything pleasant around me, my stammering caused me much pain. The son of the head master, though a capital fellow generally and very kind to me, could not always refrain from reminding me, not in the pleasantest way possible, of my difficulty; and if he *did*

help me in my work, I used to think it would have been more pleasant if he had been less inclined to humour, and sometimes slight sarcasm, at my expense.

He once greatly offended me. He was many years older than I, and of course, being in the position of a second master, the boys were always willing to do anything for him. He sent me to get some article for him from the ironmonger's, and gave me half-a-crown to pay costs. Now going on errands was most distasteful to me on account of my impediment, but as I could get no one else to go for me, I was compelled to go myself. With fear and trembling I went into the shop, and managed to stammer out what I had to say.

Whether the shopman had ever heard a stammerer before I do not know, but I felt he was looking at me, and fancying he was smiling at my ineffectual attempts to speak I became so extremely uneasy and nervous, that, as soon as I got the article I wanted,

I rushed out of the shop without waiting for the change, or even thinking at all about it. I heard the young man running after me and calling me back; but shame and confusion lent speed to my legs, and although he was bigger than I, he was soon outstripped. On taking the thing I had bought to my tutor he asked me for the change, which should have been two shillings. I stammered out that they had not given me any.

When a day or two afterwards he learned what had happened, he was anything but complimentary, and told me before a lot of boys that he had been asked if I was not daft, and that I was a great fool, and only fit to be taken out by a nurse. I could not brook this, and retaliated by calling him a bully and anything but a gentleman, at which he threatened to box my ears. I told him that if he did I should take my ears' part, and openly defied him. Had not the head master put in an appearance I do not know what might have happened,

most likely I should have been dismissed for turning on my tutor.

Happily the master was a man of very sound sense, and thinking it strange that there should be a rupture between myself and his son, as we had always been such friends, took me into his study, where he elicited from me the whole of the story as well as I could tell it. He was very kind, and evidently understood me, and while at the same time he gave me a lecture on proper behaviour to tutors, I have no doubt he had something to say to his son, for not long after we were good friends again, and I never from that time had occasion to feel hurt on account of my infirmity, for I believe he always took care in every way to smooth matters.

Poor Tom, not many years afterwards he came to grief. I never think of him without a feeling of tenderness coming over me. He did not like teaching, although an excellent classical scholar, and left home to undertake

mercantile pursuits, for which he was not at all qualified. He began too late in life, and lacked the early training which is so necessary for such occupation.

Besides, he had become estranged from his father through foolishly marrying before he was in a position to do so, and, worse than all, a girl poorer than himself. At this time he was employed by a relative of mine who manufactured largely in the hardware trade, and Tom, not being a success, took it to heart, and this, with family difficulties and a very low purse, was too much for his sensitive nature. He had an illness which, had his mind been less troubled, he might have battled with, but to which, poor fellow, he succumbed.

I was with him the night before he died, but I had no thought that he was in such a critical state; and when I had given him his medicine, he wished me a cheerful good-night, and said he should look for me on the morrow, but that morrow never came to

him. Poor Tom, his troubles were at an end long before morning.

I never think of him but I wish he had not sent me on that errand to the ironmonger's. We should then have never quarrelled.

When about twelve years of age, I was taken away from school to be treated for my stammering by a gentleman who professed to cure the impediment. I have but a slight recollection of it, but I think I was at home for some weeks, and I am told I seemed perfectly cured, and was sent back to school. A rather droll circumstance points to the fact that I must have been speaking pretty freely.

One of the boys, I suppose, became curious to know how I had got cured, asked me to tell him, and as I had been bound to secrecy, of course I could not; but, with the spirit of mischief, I told him I had something in my mouth, and asked him to put in his finger and feel. He did so, and I gave it rather a sharp bite, at which he roared out most

lustily. This called the attention of the master, who came to inquire the reason.

"Please, sir, he bit my finger." "What brought your finger there?" "I wanted to feel what he had in his mouth, sir."

I think he guessed the reason, and being rather a joker himself, said, "Serve you right. Restrain your curiosity."

After I had been at school a little while, I stammered as badly as ever. Possibly had I remained with the gentleman long enough I should have been cured, but of that I cannot judge. I remember scarcely anything of it, and certainly had no rules to guide me, or I think I should have remembered them, as I was so very anxious to speak freely.

This was the only instruction I ever received, and after that I was looked on as incurable.

CHAPTER III.

PRACTICAL JOKING.

AS I have often found with other stammerers that their impediment will sometimes leave them when they assume the character of somebody else, so I found that I was often perfectly free in imitating the peculiarities of others. If I were dressed in disguise I could generally speak without the slightest difficulty.

One of the amusements of my brothers and sisters was disguising themselves and playing tricks on our friends. One of my elder brothers was rather clever at this, and very often caused a great deal of amusement.

When about sixteen or seventeen years of age I took a fancy to this kind of amusement,

and I believe became rather good at it. I once succeeded in disguising myself as a domestic servant, and engaged myself to my mother as housemaid.

Once I got a sovereign out of my father by representing myself as a hard-up cousin of one of his old friends.

But the best joke I ever had of the kind was with an old aunt. She was an extremely good business woman, and conducted a very good manufacturing concern, whilst her husband spent all his time fishing, shooting, and smoking long churchwarden pipes. They had no children, so naturally enough their nephews and nieces became almost children to them.

The good old soul was rather fond of me, but I was very nearly getting for ever out of her books through my love of playing pranks in disguise. I dressed myself up as a German, put on an enormous beard, and a pair of spectacles, called on the old lady one evening just as her office was closed, excused myself

for being late, and told her I had been recommended to her to buy some of the articles she made.

I used the name of one of her best customers as having given me her address, and also allowed me to use their name. As the office was closed and all her people gone, I was asked into her house, which was close by.

I then told her how highly she had been spoken of by her business friends, and as I was opening an immense store in Berlin, I intended doing very largely in articles of her manufacture, and felt sure from her reputation she could advise me best what to purchase. The old lady was highly flattered, and besides, seeing, as she thought, a good opening for a new market, became very hospitable, which indeed she always was, asked me if I would take a glass of wine, and what sort of wine, to which I replied, "Oh, madame, I do generally drink the vines of mine own country; but I have,

since being in England, tasted of some very grand vine vich I do tink they do call sherry."

I knew that the old lady had some remarkably fine old sherry, which had been in bottle many years, and which she prized most highly, and of which it was very difficult to get a taste, in fact, only on very special occasions.

She told the servant to bring in some of this *bonne bouche*, which was done, and placed before me. I was not long in pronouncing it as magnificent, and, though at the same time I praised the "vines of mine own country," said that I had never tasted such before. I did not spare it—she asked me not to—and soon I became very confidential, told her of my *frau* and the little ones, what a splendid business I had, kept adding to the order I was making out, and with every glass of wine kept on adding still more.

My aunt was delighted, asked me if I was a sportsman, was sure her husband

would be delighted to give me a day or two's shooting, and showered compliments on me until I was fairly obliged to take my departure, fearing I might spoil all by an explosion of laughter.

I very soon, however, had occasion to repent, for it brought me into disgrace.

The following morning the old lady was in high glee, talking to my father about her new German acquaintance, and of the immense order he had given her, and reckoning up I don't know how much profit that would arise from it, when my father, to prevent the order being put in hand, as it certainly would have been, told her that the foreigner was only joking and that it must be a hoax.

She was very angry at such a suggestion; but when he enlightened her she was dreadfully cross, in fact, for nearly a week I dared not go near her. "The impudent, disgraceful young rascal; and that bottle of wine—nearly the last of the best I had in my cellar. To

think he should serve his old aunt such a trick; that wine which cost me above ten shillings a bottle, and he wasn't satisfied with a glass, but drank nearly the whole bottle; I 'll—I 'll—I 'll cut him out of my will, the young scapegrace; and he shall get no more bottles of wine out of me."

She was more annoyed really over the wine than the loss of the supposed large order, and for a long time it was dangerous for the word "wine" to be mentioned in her presence.

She was a "good old soul," rather choleric, but she did not cut me out of her will. I shared equally with the rest of her nieces and nephews, and at her funeral I tasted some more of the old wine; but it hadn't the same flavour as before. Poor old soul! she was a wonderful woman—weighed nearly twenty stone.

CHAPTER IV.

IN BUSINESS.

UNTIL I was seventeen my stammering did not give me the constant trouble and vexation it subsequently did. It was only on occasions when I had to speak to strangers, or when having to do anything out of the ordinary way, such as calling on anyone, delivering a message, joining in any indoor games that required talking, that my difficulty caused me very great annoyance.

My occupation was such that I could do pretty well as I liked. Being in my father's works, I was not so trammelled as I might have been in those of a stranger. My duties called me both into the office and the mills, but I always chose to do that which did not

bring me into contact with strangers or required any talking.

Sometimes I was compelled to talk, as in the absence of clerks or other officials, I had to do so; but, as a rule, I generally found a way out of it by getting someone else to talk for me.

Although this was often a great trouble to me, I never let my relatives know how much I felt it, as I was always very sensitive on the subject; so they never knew to how great an extent I was incapable of conducting business properly.

When at the age of about three or four-and-twenty, a circumstance occurred which was afterwards destined to bring before me in its true light the immense difficulty I had to contend with. Our firm, besides carrying on large iron and steel works, supplied a great number of gun-makers with gun-barrels, and sword-makers with steel.

One of our customers, a gun-maker, had got very heavily into our debt, and being also

otherwise largely involved, laid his affairs before us. The result was that our firm took his affairs in hand, paid off his debts, and gave him a good salary as foreman. The management of the whole business was given to me, and in this position I soon began to find how heavily handicapped I was through my infirmity.

Constantly having to talk to workpeople and strangers, instead of giving me confidence, made me infinitely worse; and, although I argued with myself, and strove to conquer my difficulty by force of will, I at last gave in. I avoided all business matters which needed talking, leaving that to be done by others.

There were some people to whom I could scarcely utter a word, and many times have I gone out of my way to avoid meeting them. I would frequently go out when I knew certain persons were going to call, so greatly did I dread exposing my infirmity, and although much business was lost in conse-

quence, I could not summon up the courage to conquer my extreme shame and nervousness.

All this may seem very strange to those who do not know what it is to suffer thus, but I know there will be many who will entirely endorse all I say. The feeling of shame, the sense of demoralisation, will be thoroughly understood by those who do so suffer.

This condition of things continued for about five years, when a great change occurred in the military gun trade. The Government was anxious to break up a ring, formed by a combination of gun-makers, and the obstructions of their men, which militated to a considerable extent against the satisfactory execution of orders. They therefore invited tenders from the whole of the trade.

I was successful in obtaining an immense contract, though much against the wish of our old firm (whose interests were altogether

bound up in the ring), and they refused to enter into the matter or find capital for me to do so.

Requiring a very large amount of money to carry out my plans, I mentioned the matter to a friend, who was a partner in a very large mercantile and finance company.

My friend, knowing my qualifications as a manufacturer, was very willing and anxious to go into the matter and find the required capital; but before anything definite could be arranged his partners had to be consulted, and an appointment with them was made that I might explain my views.

In the week before the interview I unconsciously worked myself up to a pitch of intense excitement, knowing the difficulties I should have to contend with through my impediment.

On the appointed day I was introduced by my friend to his partners, but I might as well have been dumb, for my inability to speak was so great that it caused them absolute

pain, I could see, even to listen to my abortive attempts to make myself understood.

The gentlemen did not know me intimately, and naturally considered me incapable of managing an affair of such great moment. Of course they did not tell me so, but I afterwards learned that my stammering was the sole cause of their abandoning the idea.

This was the most terrible blow that I had ever experienced, as, had I been able to carry the matter through, I should have made a very substantial fortune out of that one transaction.

For some weeks I was in a state of utter despondency. But it had one good effect, that of arousing within me a determination to conquer my enemy; but it was many, many years before I accomplished my desire.

CHAPTER V.

SOMEWHAT IRRELEVANT.

PHILOSOPHERS say that there is a law of compensation for all evils, and to some extent I am inclined to take that view of life. I was blest with health and a robust frame. I possessed the faculty of liking and entering into all athletic sports. I could ride, shoot, row, fence, box, and swim with most fellows. I thoroughly enjoyed music, and could take part in it. I liked my business of gun-making, and took great interest, particularly, in the development of the rifle.

I must here apologize for a little digression, but possibly what I am now about to

write may be of interest to some of my readers who use the rifle.

From the battle of Blenheim to just before the Crimean War, our battles were fought with the old "Brown Bess" musket — an unwieldy weapon of large bore, with a range not much to be relied on beyond 100 yards.

The French then invented a smaller bore rifle, and used a conical bullet, hollow at the base, and with an iron plug for the purpose of forcing the bullet into the grooves. This rifle was called the "Minie," taking its name from Captain Minie, the inventor of the bullet. A few of these were made by and for the British Government, but not to any great extent, and this weapon was supplanted by the "Enfield," or, as afterwards called by the crack shots in the volunteers, "gas-pipe."

About this time Mr. Whitworth, the celebrated machinist and toolmaker, conducted some very scientific experiments on a very large scale, resulting, at last, in the pro-

duction of a rifle which far exceeded in its range and accuracy anything before invented. The Enfield rifle was a most excellent weapon, but better results could be obtained from the Whitworth at 1000 yards than from the Enfield at 500 yards.

Other makers in the wake of Whitworth adopted as nearly as possible his weapon, so far as regards calibre, length of barrel, and pitch of rifling. A great deal of jealousy existed among his competitors, but there is no denying the fact that Whitworth was the pioneer in the immense improvements which have taken place during the last thirty years. He worked on strictly scientific principles brought to bear on the most minute care in experiments.

The Martini-Henry rifle, so far as the barrel is concerned, is nothing more than an evasion of the true Whitworth; possibly that evasion made it more adaptable as a breech-loader than it was as a muzzle-loader; but certainly Whitworth could,

without doubt, lay claim to having been the father of the improved state of rifled small arms which now exists.

During the time of the sitting of a Commission to inquire into the best breech-loading rifle, to be adopted by the British Army, ending with the adoption of the Martini-Henry, a very large number of the Enfield rifles were converted into Snider breech-loaders and new ones made. This, of course, was an immense advantage so far as rapidity of firing.

At the same time an improvement in the projectile rendered the Snider more complete than the Enfield, giving some superiority in the shooting qualities.

Still greater strides were made by the adoption of the Martini-Henry, which for accuracy of shooting supersedes the Snider, roughly speaking, to double its qualities, being capable of making better shooting at 1000 or 1200 yards than the Snider at 500 or 600 yards.

As far as my personal knowledge tells me, it is far the best military rifle I have known Of late years I have taken little or no interest in rifles, but am led to understand that the Magazine rifle vastly supersedes it, both as regards rapidity of firing, increased range, lower trajectory, and consequently more accurate shooting.

I have spoken before of the law of compensation, but it is seldom without an alloy. When I became a volunteer, as I did in the early days of the movement, I was very successful in winning prizes for shooting. It being a novelty then, everyone who so distinguished himself was sure of being lionized.

Had I been free of speech this would have been a source of great gratification, but after a while it became anything but that. Being fêted at dinners, receiving presentations, and having to return thanks would have been very nice had my tongue been loosened, but, as it was, it became a positive pain to have to face such ordeals.

The worst I recollect was when I won Lord Leigh's Cup, which he gave to the battalion. It was shot for in the park at Stoneleigh, thirty years ago. There was a review afterwards, and a great number of county people and others of note were present, and I was individually congratulated by many, and naturally became much excited. At the end of the shooting we had luncheon in a large tent. The Cup was presented to me by Lord Leigh, my health proposed and drunk with great applause. I rose to speak, having thought of what I would say, and determined this time not to be beaten.

But, ah! it was of no use. My tongue refused to utter, and for many seconds (it seemed ages to me), I essayed to speak. At last in desperation, scarcely knowing what I said, I blundered out, "My Lord Leigh, ladies and gentlemen"—then came another long stop and a struggle—"I wish I could speak as well as I can shoot, then I would

tell you how much I thank you," and with this I sat down.

There were roars of applause and laughter, but *I* did not join in the mirth, though since I have thought that it was rather a good speech, at least under the conditions; and I don't think I can be accused of egotism if I call it a very sensible one.

There were some few friends with whom I got on tolerably, but even they never knew to how great an extent I suffered. I was many times offered a commission in the volunteers, but I always declined—not on account of giving the word of command—that I should have found little difficulty in, as it would have been at the best a kind of acting; but fearful of the attendant talking which it necessarily would entail.

CHAPTER VI.

WIMBLEDON—JENNY LIND.

FOR more than fifteen years, with occasional interruptions, I studiously worked to overcome my difficulty. I had for years before been trying to do so by sheer force of will, but I came to the conclusion that something more than determination was required. I recognized the fact that it is possible that determination and perseverance may be wrongly guided.

I then had recourse to the best authorities on impediments of speech, made myself acquainted with most that had been said on the subject, and tried some of the remedies advised, but all ended in disappointment.

I found in books various speculations and

theories, some of them very learned and scientific, but few of them practical. They taught me nothing, and only told me in scientific method and terms that which I already knew. I gained little or no help from books.

My next experiment was to observe carefully those who spoke well, and note if I could see the difference between them and myself. If there were any well-known speakers or readers to be heard, I made it a rule to go and hear them. I endeavoured to carry in my mind anything that struck me which might be of help to me. I practised speaking and reading before a looking-glass, endeavouring to find out the difference which caused them to speak with freedom and myself otherwise, but I found no aid in that.

During this time I was studying elocution, but that study I found was only for those who *had* freedom of speech. Before one can study elocution with profit, he should

acquire perfect articulation and freedom of speech.

Among my intimate acquaintances were two actors, who I think were the finest readers and speakers I ever knew; they belonged to the old school of Shakespearean actors, and in their day were among the celebrated.

I never talked with them without feeling their influence on my own speech—their full, round, deep voices, their perfect articulation, and their musical inflections always left an impression on me. I used to practise reading as much in imitation of them as possible, and I always fancied that I spoke better after such drill, but although I could read fairly, almost perfectly when alone, I could not do so in the presence of others.

This I did not find the case with singing. I could always sing. I rather flattered myself I could sing, at least I may say I was certainly highly flattered once by one of the greatest singers the world ever knew.

In 1862, the first year the Elcho Challenge Shield was shot for at Wimbledon, I was chosen by Lord Bury as one of the eight to shoot on the English side. I will not say with what result, but give the following lines from *Punch* of July 19th, 1862, to show:—

"THE BATTLE OF WIMBLEDON.

"THE SECOND DAY.

"Too strong in shooting and in sight
Was Scotland yet to yield the field,
Her noblest shots were here.
Men who to miss were seldom known,
Brave Ross, the far famed champion,
And deathsman of the deer.
There Muir and Moir their rifles raised,
E. Ross the trigger pressed and blazed,
And Anderson, who ne'er look'd dazed,
A hundred made or near.
With Fergusson, of marksmen best,
Where Tom na Heurich rears his crest
And Lovat's master stood confessed,
His rival's worthy peer.
And Peterkin to victory pressed—
A graceful soldier neatly dressed,
Although his name is queer.

But calmly England stood and shot,
And sternly snuffed out every Scot
Who tried the desperate game.
For Halford sent the fatal lead,
And Heaton puts his foes to bed,
And Halliday increasing sped
His balls with matchless aim.
Lord Ducie shot, by all admired,
Lord Bury raised his arm untired,
And Beasley's eye was true.
Brave Smith upon the target broke
Ball after ball with lightning stroke,
And Wimbledon's old echoes woke
As Row's swift missiles flew.
And when the umpires reckoned o'er
Scotland's and England's well-made score,
Hurrah for England then.
The North had but seven twenty-four,
The South upon her banner bore
Nine hundred all but ten.
Woe to the foe who dares our shore,
When side by side these rivals pour
On horses, guns, and men
Such bolts of fire as those that tore
The air in Surrey's glen."

It was customary in the early Wimbledon days to have a huge bonfire every evening in one of the hollows on the Common. These

bonfire evenings were very popular, and Londoners thronged to them to see their friends and enjoy the fun. Songs, recitations, chaff, and good humour prevailed. Grog was served out in abundance, and the leading men were always present, and contributed their share in a highly meritorious way.

The English Eight were called on, and just after Lord Bury had in a most artistic fashion given us a rendering of "Vilikins and his Dinah," the cry of Beasley was raised.

Now I have a strong suspicion that those who raised the cry were actuated rather by a spirit of chaff than an inclination to hear me "warble," for, as I afterwards heard, I created no small surprise in those who knew me as such an inveterate stammerer.

I responded to the call, not without a great deal of nervousness; for, although I had the vanity to think my singing would pass muster in the family circle and among friends, I rather doubted my powers being sufficient to do so before so many thousands.

However, I began, pitched my song about a third above my range, shouted with all the power of my voice, thinking I must do so to make myself heard in the open air, and "yelled" "The Englishman" in a way that certainly, if it did not please, must have astonished the audience.

When I got to the top notes I thought I should burst something, but still I kept on like grim death to the finish. There was a great deal of applause.

Just as I turned to go away I saw Jenny Lind clapping her hands and heard her cry, "Bravo! bravo!"

She evidently had never seen such effort in singing before, and no doubt admired my perseverance in yelling.

Speaking of Jenny Lind, the last time I heard her sing was in a large tent on Wimbledon Common, I think it was the same year. She kindly consented to come and sing for us; the same evening Captain Drake gave a reading of Hood's *Eugene Aram.*

There was a large number of Scotchmen in camp, and a great many of them came to the performance; I well remember how they nearly all of them sat together.

The first thing she sang was from the "Creation"—"On mighty pens"—which she rendered with wondrous voice, and like the perfect artist which she certainly was, and as I have never heard it given by any other vocalist. Everyone was enraptured.

She afterwards sang something else, and then gave for an encore, "John Anderson my Jo," with such marvellous pathos and wonderful art, that I don't think there were many dry eyes in the audience.

The Scotchmen were a study to look at. The great brawny, brown-bearded fellows tried all they could to hide their emotions, but the quivering lips and the big tears that rolled down their tanned faces showed how deeply she touched their hearts. I shall never forget it. She was a marvellous

woman. Her voice when she felt was full of tears.

I could always sing; what I mean is that I never stammered in singing—in fact, I never knew anyone who did. This often puzzled me, but since I have obtained freedom in speech I am puzzled no longer.

There are many conflicting opinions between teachers of singing and elocution as to the right way of producing voice; but for my part these arts seem to be so nearly allied that, so far as voice production, the method used for the one should be the same as for the other.

One of the differences between singing and speaking is, that in the former a note is prolonged in a monotone from beginning to end without any inflection, while in speaking the whole register, or whole tones of the voice, may be used in the slightest word or ejaculation.

An exclamation of surprise, as Ah! or Indeed! may compass every note in the

voice, from the lowest to the highest. In fact, in every word or vocal impulse, no matter of how short duration, the voice in speech is inflected, that is, it is carried higher or lower than it was pitched at the commencement.

CHAPTER VII.

A DISCOVERY.

DURING the time I was endeavouring to obtain freedom of speech, I visited some of the churches which were said to have good preachers and a good rendering of the service, but I found, with very few exceptions, that there was not much to be learned in that quarter.

On the contrary, becoming, as I suppose I must have done, critical, I was even more disposed to pick out faults than to recognize that which was good. I came to the conclusion that, although we have some bright examples to the contrary, it must be admitted that we have thousands of highly-cultured gentlemen in the Church who cannot be called even clear or good speakers, much less aspire to being considered even third-rate orators.

It is not through lack of ability, but simply because good speaking and reading are not made compulsory in the Church. If the bishops would refuse to ordain anyone wishing to enter holy orders, who could not pass a certain standard in elocution, they would do good service, and banish the reproach that good reading and preaching in the Church of England is the exception instead of the rule.

It is not at all uncommon to hear a clergyman of superior intelligence, possessing an excellent voice, fail to touch his hearers either by his reading or preaching, although the matter of his discourse be excellent. And why? Simply because he has never been taught to make use of one of the great gifts Providence has bestowed on him—the gift of speech.

This is not confined to the professions, but is very general. How very few people we hear speak well. Even some of those who have no impediment whatever, are

careless and slovenly in their speech. I am sure if many could see, or rather hear, themselves, they would be surprised.

Why should not good speaking be cultivated as well as singing? Most people have a voice good enough to make good speakers, and could become so in much less time and with less labour than it takes to learn to strum a tune on the piano, and which would enable them to give greater pleasure to their friends by reading well from an interesting book, or in the relating of a good story, than wearying them by indifferent playing and discordant singing.

I have said that for many years I had been seeking relief from my difficulty, when, strange as it may seem, it dawned upon me suddenly.

Walking through one of our lovely Worcestershire lanes, and, as was my custom, talking aloud to myself and carefully watching every trip of tongue, I suddenly became conscious of one action in speech which is

imperative before freedom of utterance can be obtained.

This of itself opened to me a wide field of thought, and became the basis upon which I have built my system — a system from which I have never deviated nor gone back. In fact, I may say from that time all has been plain sailing.

When I returned home I talked to my people, I read to them, I recited poetry; indeed, I scarcely knew what I did, I was so overjoyed. I was like a child with a new toy, and I felt like a new being. So great was the pleasure of being able to speak with freedom, that I never missed an opportunity of holding conversation with anyone I could enlist, and I fear I must often have been a great nuisance; certainly no one could then complain of my silence, nor accuse me of being uncommunicative.

Soon, however, I had to guard myself against a danger—that of becoming careless. My freedom was so great that I almost

forgot I was a stammerer, and I thought little of the warning an occasional trip sometimes gave me. After a time these warnings were so frequent that I became alarmed, but when I found that by strictly adhering to rule, I could under all circumstances and in the presence of anyone—relatives, friends, or strangers—speak perfectly, I made a resolve that I would try my hardest to always observe strict rule.

By this course in a few months I had so perfected my system that I became unconscious of using any system, and my old habit of stammering had been changed for a new one, neither more nor less than the natural method of speaking.

My friends and intimates were much surprised, and could not help expressing their pleasure at so great a change, while many of them strongly advised me to make my system known for the benefit of others.

But before doing so I thought it wise to try it further on someone else. I was

not long in finding a subject, that of a bright little lad, about twelve years of age, employed as errand boy by a chemist living near me. The poor little fellow was very bad, in fact his employer told me that he should be obliged to discharge him as he was getting much worse, and altogether unable to follow his occupation.

I took the boy in hand, had him for an hour in the evening, and in the course of a few months he was free of speech. My next case was that of a working-man, a relative of an old man-servant of mine, and although he was middle-aged I found no more difficulty with him than with the boy.

My reputation soon began to spread, and I had many applications, with all of which I was more or less successful. At last I thought it wise to undertake cases professionally, and the hundreds of grateful letters from pupils and their friends, that I now possess, are of themselves sufficient testimony as to the wisdom of my course.

CHAPTER VIII.

MAKING A BEGINNING.

THE first pupil I treated professionally was a young lawyer, only just admitted. He was very fortunate, some people would consider, as he was brought by his *fiancée* (I beg the lady's pardon; I mean, *he* brought her), who naturally took a great interest in his welfare.

I gave him the best advice I could in so short a time as an hour or two would allow, which, no doubt, he profited by; at least, I am sure he would if he allowed himself to be guided by the lady, who appeared to have good sense, and to be the stronger minded of the two.

I never heard but once from them after

they were married—which was shortly after their visit to me—when I learned that he was doing well as regards his speech.

One of my early pupils was a boy of about twelve or thirteen—the son of a gentleman well known in my locality. He had been placed with a man for some considerable time to be treated, but instead of obtaining relief he was made much worse, and no wonder considering the treatment he received.

He and one or two other boys were set to work in a dull room by themselves, and sometimes alone in their bedrooms, after having had only a few minutes' instruction from the gentleman, with orders to read or do some kind of exercise during his absence, which often extended to the whole of the day, while they played and did pretty well as they liked until his return home.

If he did not find them improved, he was not very choice in his expressions of anger,

and frequently shook them in a most brutal manner.

When the boy learned that he had to be placed with someone else he cried bitterly, declaring that he would sooner stammer all his life than go to such another place. When first I took the little fellow in hand, directly he began to stammer he would shrink away from me as though expecting chastisement; but when assured by me that however much he stammered I should never be angry, he gained confidence, and in a very short time we were staunch friends.

The boy was exceedingly clever, though a woefully bad stammerer; but after some months he became an excellent speaker. He has since written some very excellent boys' books, of healthy and manly tone, and has for a long time been an officer in one of our volunteer regiments, and he and his family, I am pleased to say, are numbered among my most ardent supporters.

At the same time I had another bright

lad of eleven or twelve, who was most sensitive about his infirmity; indeed, when unable to speak, the tears would run down the poor boy's cheeks most pitifully. And yet he was not a milksop—anything but that—for he was full of fun and frolic in everything where his speech was not concerned.

After three or four months with me he gained complete confidence, and spoke perfectly, and would have continued to do so but for the injudicious, but kindly meant, treatment of a lady to whose school he was sent. Unfortunately, by her over-anxiety, she caused the boy to become nervous, and his stammering began to return. His father wisely sent him to me again for a year, during which time he was educated in my house. When he left he was a most perfect speaker.

The last time I saw him—a few years ago—he had grown into a fine handsome fellow about six feet high, and his speech was excellent.

About the same time I had a boy who was born in India. His father, who had occupied a high official position, had died, and the boy's sister, a most charming young lady, brought him to be placed with me.

The evening of their arrival we had a children's party, in which they joined, but I soon found it was torture to the poor lad owing to his infirmity and excessive nervousness. He took every opportunity of escaping from the others into any quiet corner, so that at last I thought it best to leave him alone, and quietly told the others to do the same. I had never before met with such a bad case, and it seemed as though his physical defect had affected his mental powers.

For the first day or two I was not quite sure whether or no I should be successful, but after a few days I gained his confidence, when I found him to be very intelligent.

It subsequently turned out that he was the possessor of a very good voice, for though I believe he had seldom or never sung a

song in his life, he had a taste for music, and before three months had elapsed he had learned several songs, which he rendered in very fair amateur style with a good round, light baritone voice.

I certainly was very gratified with results, especially after the unfavourable impression his first appearance had created. He was under my charge, I think, about six months, at the end of which time he went to Sandhurst, where he passed his examination and obtained his commission. Some years after he paid me a visit; he was then the youngest captain in the British army, and belonged to a regiment in which—the fact is very remarkable—there were four officers who had been my pupils, and who were facetiously called "Beasley's Own."

One of these officers on his return from Burmah came and made an exceedingly droll speech at one of my annual speech days.

CHAPTER IX.

NOT SO DULL.

NO doubt many people have a notion that in a community of stammerers there cannot be much pleasant life—there they are wholly in the wrong. The experience of many years proves to me the opposite. As a rule they are above the average in intelligence, and generally more amiable than those not so afflicted; this may arise from the fact that they may be more self-contained, or that they have to seek for pleasure and satisfaction more within themselves than from outside circumstances and surroundings.

The home-life I have for many years witnessed goes to prove this, for as soon as the tongue is loosed the natural disposition

and mental qualities begin to appear. All enter into indoor games and amusements with a zest never shown unless surrounded, as they are, by others alike situated, and they could never, as they do, attempt to tell tales, give recitations, make speeches, or give what may be called "little lectures," unless they felt that everyone there understood any difficulty which might arise, and was ready to sympathize and help.

It must not be supposed that they have no fun; they have a good deal of fun even in their class work, where a good joke or a funny tale is often heard. I will tell one which I think is droll.

One of my pupils was a Scotch boy about eleven years of age—a very clever boy; for instance, he had learned shorthand, almost wholly by himself, so that he could take down fairly any dictation if not too rapidly given. He was one of the slow but thoughtful type, and naturally slow and methodical in speech.

One morning, in class, another pupil, who was studying for the medical profession, rose to give a short discourse on anatomy with relation to bone structure. "There are" (I think he said) "246 bones in the human body, and if one of the smallest of them were removed, it might create a great amount of inconvenience and pain." He went on for some considerable time, and then others followed with different subjects.

After about a couple of hours it came to my young Scotch friend's turn to speak, and he, in his usual solemn way, began, "Mr. —— some little while ago made a remark that there were 246 bones in the human body, and that if the smallest of them were removed it might cause a great deal of inconvenience and pain. I have been pondering ever since that if a bone were added to the human body it also might create a great deal of inconvenience and pain, particularly if it were a fish-bone in the throat."

This was greeted with a roar of laughter from all but the boy, *he* did not see the joke until it was pointed out to him, when he laughed as much as the rest. After one of our speech evenings, when the little boys had been regaled by my wife with some fruit, the question was asked, "Are there to be any more speeches?" when this same boy said, "Are there any more oranges?" On being told "No," he replied, "Then there will be no more speeches."

He was quite a character, and used to go down to the fields and sit by the side of the stream and talk, as he said, "to the rippling brook and waving trees." One day he fell into the brook and got well drenched. My son meeting him in this plight asked him what he had been doing; "Tumbling into the burn, and now I'm going to get a braw tool (a clean towel), and change of raiment."

CHAPTER X.

DRAWBACKS.

ALTHOUGH it is very pleasant and gratifying to be the means of relieving distress or removing infirmities, yet it is not always that one's efforts meet with success; there is the other side. When one has been most patient and given more than ordinary attention to a case, it sometimes happens that there has not been the response there should have been on the part of the one seeking relief. Nothing is much more annoying and wearying than dealing with those who can, but will not, and it is equally vexatious with others who, through carelessness and indifference, or lack of earnestness, or through want of that faculty which enables

us "to see ourselves as others see us," defy one's best efforts for their relief.

I have had pupils who on first coming to me have been so entirely unable to speak that they might just as well have been dumb. One would naturally think that they would do their utmost to get rid of so terrible an infirmity; but not so, and sometimes after obtaining only partial relief they have been satisfied and thought themselves cured.

There is a wide difference between perfect and partial cure, but I cannot understand anyone being satisfied with himself when only partially cured, or unconscious of his still constant stumbling.

To make my meaning clearer, I give an instance of a pupil. I had one particular stammerer, as I have said, so bad that he might have been dumb. After great pains I made him speak well, but he required constantly reminding even when he *could* speak perfectly. He always "got on" after a fashion, although tripping at nearly every

word, but never seemed conscious of his failing unless he came to utter grief.

Some months after he left me he called to pay me a visit, when after a little while I said, "Come, L——, how badly you are talking." "Am I?" said he, "why I really thought I was speaking splendidly."

I mention this as an example of what I term unconscious stammering.

I don't know which is worse, the unconscious stammerer or the one who can speak perfectly at any time he likes, but will not take the slightest care, only when obliged.

I have had many curious experiences with some of this class, one or two of which I will relate. One was a young doctor, the one who gave the lecture on anatomy, and who lived near me.

I had offices in town, but my son-in-law had charge of my business there. A gentleman called with respect to sending his son to me to be treated for stammering, and at the same moment my young doctor pupil

came into the ante-room. My son-in-law was nearly in a fit, fearing if he went in he might show himself as an apparently hopeless case; but to his surprise he boldly walked in, saying, "Pardon me, but I am sure you will excuse me breaking in on your conversation, I am a pupil of Mr. Beasley," and then went on to speak of the system in the highest terms for ten minutes at least, in the most perfect manner possible.

The gentleman sent his son to me, whom I am happy to say I treated with the best results.

Directly the gentleman had gone the —— I don't know what to call him—began to stammer in the vilest manner possible.

On another occasion, on my way home I called at my daughter's and there found my young doctor with his *fiancée* at afternoon tea. He was speaking perfectly. After he had gone I learned that before I went in he had been stammering atrociously, but on hearing me coming he said, "Oh my! here's

the governor. I must pull myself together," and he did. However, he has now a good practice in the north of England, and I am glad to say he has permanently "pulled himself together" and can talk well.

Another curious experience I have is the case of an old pupil, a well-known and celebrated officer, and a scientific man of very great ability. He occasionally, as he says, "feels the need of a brushing up," and pays me a visit every two or three years; but I must say that although he assures me he has been tripping, yet I find nothing the matter with him. But he will insist upon it that my presence, the atmosphere of my house, its surroundings, and the reminder of rule, puts him right the instant he gets under my roof.

CHAPTER XI.

RETROSPECTIVE.

LOOKING back on my life—nearly forty years of bondage, I can call my old infirmity nothing less; and since, twenty years of freedom with all its consequent circumstances—I cannot even myself call it otherwise than a remarkable career.

When I think of my utter inability, during all those years, to give free expression to my thoughts and feelings like the generality of mankind, and how satisfied I should have been with the power of simply joining in ordinary conversation with comfort, I cannot but feel that the work I have done is, to say the least, more than satisfactory. It proves

to me how everything great is built up by degrees.

I started with the object of being able to say yes or no, good morning, good evening, to be able to ask for anything I wanted, to make an inquiry, or give an answer in the same way that any other ordinary person would do, never dreaming that the results that have been brought about would ensue.

In contemplating all this, I cannot but feel great surprise at the indifference which evidently exists with a great many stammerers. Surely they cannot feel for themselves, and must be callous to the feelings of others, or they could never tolerate such a sorry condition which, to say the least, causes pain and annoyance to others, if not misery to themselves.

A great deal of pain and trouble would be avoided if parents would do their utmost to prevent their children acquiring, or, if they have acquired, in endeavouring to cure them of this mortifying and injurious defect, for it

is injurious in many ways. There are few habits so demoralizing in causing distrust in oneself, want of will, weakness of character, and many other faults, the development of which utterly mar the making of a man.

This need not be. My experience teaches me that the chances of cure are very great. No matter in whatever state of society a man may be—whether prince or peasant—if he have a laudable ambition he is sure to succeed. I have never yet had a pupil from any class who failed, if he possessed that faculty—it is the keynote to success in everything—and granted that a man has a laudable ambition and an ordinary amount of will, he will generally achieve his object. No stammerer need despair; if he have an earnest desire—which will take the form of earnest work—of being cured, it is a certainty that he will succeed, that is if he knows what to do.

CHAPTER XII.

TO PARENTS.

IF mothers knew the importance of having only those to attend upon their children who set an example of good speaking, there would not be so many children who either stammer or speak badly. It is of paramount importance that nurses should speak well. Some mothers are most particular with regard to this, and they are generally well rewarded for their care by their children acquiring the habit of speaking properly.

It frequently happens that hurry is one of the causes of stammering. Does it not, then, stand to sense that an example of deliberate, clear, and perfect enunciation should be set before children? As a rule,

healthy, intelligent children are sufficiently lively naturally, without being made unduly so in their early training.

And yet how often we see a bright, intelligent child drawn out and excited, in a manner which cannot but be prejudicial to its mental and physical condition, merely to gratify the pardonable fondness, but unfortunately foolish vanity, of a young mother desiring to show off her clever child.

Some mothers will not have their children taught anything in the way of lessons until at least eight years of age; they argue that children at that age, who have not been pressed, learn with far greater rapidity, and have a greater liking for learning, than those who have begun earlier.

The majority of children will begin quite soon enough to wish to understand things, and when they know they can be amused by books, will have a wish to understand books; and so that which is necessary for a child to possess—the desire to be taught—will be

there, and the progress of that child will be greater than that of the one who has had, from a very early age, to look upon learning as a task, and he will take to it as a recreation, whereas otherwise out of natural perverseness he will feel dislike to it.

The first five or six years of a child's life will be best employed in healthy play, in observation, and exercising his thoughts in ordinary simple everyday matters; the mind then will be strong for education.

Some of our bad habits are commenced in childhood, and amongst them stammering is not the least. It is difficult to trace its earliest commencement, as it may be due to a variety of causes. It may be mental, it may be physical, or it may be both combined. At first it may be brought about by some physical disarrangement, and afterwards be determined only by mental causes or circumstances.

Say that a child has measles or scarlatina, and afterwards commences to slightly stam-

mer, or is left with temporary weakness in the eyes or slight deafness, the possibility is that when the child regains health the eyes may become strong and the hearing perfect. But it is very seldom that the stammering discontinues. Why is this? Simply because although the weakness which caused imperfect articulation has gone, yet the habit which the speech-organs acquired has remained.

The nature of the temporary ailments to the eyes and the ears was not such that an *active* habit could be formed, or in other words the ailments were—one might say—of an *involuntary* nature, while the indisposition of the speech was accompanied by a *voluntary* effort of the organs of speech.

Whooping-cough or low fever will frequently leave a child in a very prostrate state, and if these ailments last long, may have a serious effect on the respiratory organs, during which time the child may have acquired a habit of not breathing properly during articulation, and this is sure

to create some form of imperfection in speech, very frequently stammering.

It would give me great pleasure and satisfaction if I could cure stammering by written instructions, but it cannot be done. So many contingencies are involved. Want of personal knowledge of a case, the temperament, the surroundings, the character, and of the many circumstances attendant thereon, offer insurmountable difficulties. But so far as I can I will. I can only give advice more as a preventative than a cure. It may be of service to mothers.

When a child of tender years begins to stammer the wisest course to pursue is to apparently take no notice of the impediment, but listen quietly and patiently, and yourself set an example of speaking slowly and thoughtfully; the probability is that the child will cease to stammer. Kindness and gentleness, and an apparent unconsciousness of their impediment, is the only treatment in the case of very young children.

Try to keep them unconscious of their difficulty, and endeavour to cure them without their knowing it. Should this treatment not succeed, then by all means lose no time in obtaining the best advice possible.

But before placing your children with anyone for cure of their impediment, be well assured that the system has no nostrums, no tricks, no extraneous aid, but is simply one which shall help them to acquire self-control, concentration of thought, and confidence in themselves, and in the end make them better speakers than the majority of those who have never suffered from stammering.

The question of "What must we do with our boys?" which has been the cry for so many years, is now as great a problem as ever. If it then be so difficult to determine what shall be done for the ordinary boy, how much more difficult must it be to arrange for a stammering boy's future. There can be but one answer. Try every possible means to get him cured; if you do not, his life

most likely will be full of mortifications and bitterness. Probably his early life will be full of thorns, and his school days anything but a bed of roses.

To give some idea of what a stammering boy's school life may be, I will quote from a previous work of mine relating to this question:

"Boys at a large school who stammer are most heavily handicapped, and their lives often made unbearable through the thoughtless or wanton behaviour of their companions. In every school boys will be found who take delight in laughing at the afflictions of others, and stammering seems to afford them special opportunity for ridicule and imitation. I have seen lads worked into ungovernable passion through such heartless behaviour, while others of a different temperament have been so hurt as to appear almost broken-hearted. It cannot be surprising that boys so treated should have a distaste for school; nor can it be wondered at that many an amiable lad has had his temper spoiled, and his disposition ruined, under such conditions. Parents are often utterly ignorant of the existence of such a state of things, and boys

of the right metal are unwilling to 'peach' or complain.

"Not only is the stammering boy's social life made miserable, but his scholastic career is impeded, for at every turn his difficulty blocks the way. He is often at the bottom of his class because of his inability to say his lessons, although he may know them far better than the others in his class. This, after a time, becomes to a sensitive lad very galling, and frequently has the effect of making him careless, and causes him to lose all feeling of emulation or interest in his work. If he be of an indolent nature he can easily shirk his work, well knowing that his hesitation will cause him to be ignored. Many a stammering boy has been passed over when his tutor has given him credit for knowing his work, when he has not; and many another has been considered a dullard, although perfect in every line. Tutors cannot be blamed for passing such boys, as the time of the whole class cannot be wasted in waiting for one boy. The only tutors I blame are those who show impatience or lose their temper, which, unfortunately, they often do with stammering boys.

"'The pen is mightier than the sword,' but the

art of speech is beyond all doubt the greatest human power. Is it not, then, a most remarkable and unaccountable fact that not only is this great power absolutely uncultivated at schools, but that in most of them bad habits of speech are positively induced by the present system of cramming and high pressure? Those children who show more than average intelligence and aptitude are pushed forward and overworked in order that they may be made samples of the proficiency of this or that scholastic establishment, to the lifelong injury of the little pupil. Legislation, which forbids the bodily overworking of children, might well interfere to save this abuse of their mental powers. The theory of many eminent physicians, that the great increase in stammering at the present day is due to these causes, is no doubt correct, since it is invariably the quick, intelligent boy, and not the slow or dull subject, who falls the readiest victim.

"How, then, can the extraordinary apathy of parents be accounted for? They have probably consulted the family doctor, and are only too ready to accept his comforting formula that the 'boy will grow out of it.' I do not say that all medical men treat the matter in this easy way, many of them are fully alive to the vast growth

and increasing importance of the malady; but, unfortunately, there are still those to be found who do not like to admit their ignorance on the subject (which in truth does not come within the province of their profession), and therefore dismiss it in this comforting but reprehensible manner. If any proof of the fallacy of their theory be needed, we have only to look at the thousands of stammerers of mature age who have lived, and live now, to reproach their parents for their neglect, but for which, their trouble might have been eradicated during their education."

The following are a few of the many Lectures given by me in various towns of Great Britain. They may be interesting and profitable to some of my readers.

LECTURE I.

A LECTURE on Stammering, delivered by Mr. Beasley at the Alexandra Hall, Clifton. Mr. J. M. Chute, an old pupil of Mr. Beasley, presided, and there was a good attendance. Mr. Beasley said :—

"The subject I have to bring before your notice is one which I am afraid does not interest the public generally, not because it is undeserving of their attention, but because, although of a painful nature to some, it unfortunately presents to others the ludicrous side, and is not of a nature to create any great amount of sympathy in those not immediately interested.

"Although there are many who think they can understand the feelings of those who are denied the power of perfect speech, and realise the drawbacks and hindrances which are thereby entailed,

yet they have not the remotest idea to how great an extent they may be developed. It is no exaggeration to say that the state of the dumb man is far less productive of misery than that of the inveterate stammerer. The former at once accepts his position, and discovers or obtains means whereby he can communicate his thoughts without hindrance and without feeling ridiculous or the fear of arousing objectionable notice; while the latter never attempts to speak without exciting ridicule, or that which is often quite as bad, pity, or which is still more galling, imitation.

"Those who only occasionally listen to imperfect utterance can have no idea of the misery and agony that stammerers feel in their wretched attempts to give utterance to their thoughts. What can be more galling to a highly intelligent young man of refined culture and extensive knowledge, than to find himself unable to enter into conversation without causing pain both to himself and to those who listen to him; for nothing is more embarrassing or gives more pain than to witness the spasmodic contortions and painful efforts of a stammerer.

"Besides, should he have to make his way in the world, what occupation can he follow? He is

debarred from all the professions requiring fluency of speech, and has to make choice of some calling for which he is possibly unfitted, and for which he has no taste. Thus his prospects are blighted, and he who might have been an ornament to a profession finds himself in a few years a sensitively-morbid, melancholy, disappointed, and poor man.

"Nor is this all. Some natures are highly sensitive, and become so morbid about this infirmity that their health and nervous system are upset, causing them to take refuge in any excitement which will make them for awhile forget their trouble; and there are thousands possessing resolution, perseverance, energy, and other qualities of a superior order, whose efforts have been rendered abortive, and tens of thousands totally unable to earn even a decent living, through their inability to speak freely.

"What is stammering? In considering this subject I shall endeavour to avoid any theories or speculations, and will confine myself strictly to facts that have come under my immediate notice, speaking only of cases with which I have been intimately acquainted.

"Stammering is an inability to make articulate sounds, either of syllables or words, or to utter

sentences or parts of sentences, although the organs of speech be quite perfect.

"It is frequently thought to arise from imperfections in the organs of speech, but during the whole of my experience I have never yet met with a stammerer whose impediment was so caused.

"On the other hand, I have witnessed it in its greatest intensity where there has been the most perfect organization, mental vigour, and capacity, strength of will, force of character, and abundance of health, in fact, with every qualification necessary to make a perfect outward man.

"Stammerers as a rule are very sensitive about their infirmity; indeed, so much so, that their feeling often amounts to absolute misery. Sometimes, but very rarely, a stammerer has no sense of shame or feeling of pain at his difficulty, but this only goes to prove the rule.

"The phenomena of stammering are very peculiar, and to outward observers unaccountable.

"Some stammerers are a very long time, when attempting to speak, before they can make any vocal sound, and when they do succeed, a tremendously rapid inarticulate utterance takes place, making it almost impossible to understand their meaning: this rapidity is brought about by

their anxiety to say as much as possible as long as their breath will last. They will frequently be so long in answering a question that the questioner will have forgotten what he asked. I have known stammerers who, in their endeavours to speak, frequently gave themselves violent kicks, and would very often kick themselves off their legs. Such efforts as these are not at all uncommon. I have seen many who, before they could say a sentence of only two or three words, would step backwards and roll about as though seized with a fit, or as if about to receive a blow. Others beat their sides with their elbows, and scrape the ground with their feet in their endeavours to speak. Some have most objectionable movements of their heads, and facial distortions very distressing to behold. Many find immense difficulty in travelling, the aperture at the top of a hansom being an almost insurmountable difficulty to give directions through, and the little window in the booking-office at a railway station, a terrible ordeal, often causing a stammerer to lose his train through inability to ask for a ticket. I knew one gentleman who seldom travelled unless accompanied by his wife, or someone else, to undertake his conversation for him. It is very usual for boys who stammer to

get their companions to execute commissions for them when conversation is necessary.

"Stammering presents many anomalies. Many who are able to speak fairly to equals and superiors, utterly fail to make themselves intelligible when speaking to servants. This is not usually the case, as it is generally more difficult to speak to superiors than to inferiors. There are also speakers perfectly free on the platform who are terribly afflicted with stammering in ordinary conversation. I have known a gentleman who could never speak without the aid of his pocket-handkerchief, which he always carried in his hand, and, when he found difficulty with a word, used it like a whip to bring the word out.

"It is very astonishing how stammerers are affected by opposite circumstances. Some can speak with comparative fluency when conversing with strangers, but amongst their own friends experience considerable difficulty, while others find their troubles begin immediately they talk to anyone with whom they are unacquainted. They may also be greatly influenced by the manner of the persons to whom they are speaking. If they enter into conversation with anyone who shows impatience, or watches them very acutely,

the result is they get more confused, and ultimately come to utter grief. Sometimes sympathy by way of kindness, words of help or encouragement, has the opposite effect to that for which it is meant, and makes the stammerer worse than he would be if no notice were taken of him. It would take a very long time to enumerate the many different forms that stammering assumes. It is very common for a stammerer to speak and read perfectly when alone, but to break down immediately anyone comes into his presence, or he may be talking to one person with little or no hesitation, and be rendered completely dumb by the appearance of another. It is no easy matter for a stammerer to speak down a tube, as the knowledge that someone is listening at the other end is quite sufficient to upset him. And now the telephone has become more universal he finds another great obstacle. It is often very trying for him to give his own name, or to be called upon to repeat anything he may have said, even though he has spoken it just before with perfect freedom.

"Boys sometimes lose their impediment while at play, in their excitement altogether forgetting their infirmity, but immediately they are summoned to quiet work again, or simply accosted by

anyone out of their play, will at once begin stammering.

"Stammering is not confined to any nation or to any class of society. Those nations whose language is said to be hard, or guttural, stammer more than those whose language is soft and musical. The Germans are more liable to it than the Italians. In England, stammering prevails more in the northern counties, where different dialects meet, such as Yorkshire, Lancashire, and the borders of England and Scotland. Prince and peasant, educated and ignorant, are alike subject to it, but the higher we go in the social scale, and where we meet with greater intelligence and more sensitive natures, it is found more frequently to abound. My experience teaches me that stammerers as a rule are more intelligent, and often more amiable, than those who are not so afflicted.

"What, then, is the cause of this extraordinary affection? That is a question not easily answered. It would be mere waste of time to consider the many abstruse theories which have been suggested, as they throw little or no useful light on the subject, or help in any way towards solving a method of treatment. We can however take, what I will

call, a practical, common-sense view of the question, and speak of that which all will understand.

"Stammering may be divided into two heads, namely, 'mechanical' and 'nervous.'

"*Mechanical stammering* is the action which the organs of speech make without relation to sensitive feelings, commonly called nervousness. *Nervous stammering* is when those sensations, brought about by a consciousness of difficulty in utterance, detract for the time from the nerve power which is necessary for muscular movement in the action of speech.

"With respect to what I have called mechanical stammering, I have little to say, only that it is more difficult to cure, inasmuch as those who stammer with no feeling of nervousness, and who are as callous to themselves as they are to the feelings of others, are not likely to give themselves any trouble about their impediment, or second anyone in their endeavours to afford them relief.

"I am more than ever convinced that the first ideas I entertained with respect to this malady are right.

"My theory that stammering is not caused by nervousness, but that nervousness is the result of stammering, has received repeated confirmation

in practice. When stammering is removed the nervousness accompanying it disappears. I do not say that nervousness has nothing to do with stammering; what I mean to convey is that some people can and do stammer without the slightest nervousness, in fact they care little or nothing about it. Nervousness has a great deal to do with stammering, for in the very great majority of cases there is considerable nervousness, but that feeling is caused by the knowledge that directly the stammerer essays to speak he will stammer. Stammerers as a rule are extremely nervous, but immediately they are made to speak with freedom their timidity subsides, and the conviction that they can speak gives them courage. Nervousness plays a very important part, and conduces to a worse state in accordance with its intensity.

"Stammering usually commences between the ages of four and eleven, rarely after that age. I have known only a few instances where it has begun after the age of puberty. Measles, scarlatina, whooping-cough, or low fever will sometimes leave in a child weakness in the eyes or slight deafness, which in course of time as the body regains health disappear. Should the disease attack and weaken the organs of speech and the

nerve power, retarded action of those powers must ensue and imperfect speech result; and taking different forms in the ineffectual efforts made to overcome it, would, if long practised, become habit, and so continue after the organs have regained perfect health. On these premises I base my opinion that stammering may be the result of causes which have long disappeared.

"Another fruitful source arises from the injudicious management of children of certain temperaments. Highly sensitive children who may have powers of mind far beyond their knowledge of language, are liable to become stammerers through having to learn and to speak from memory that which would tax the brains of much older people, or being given books to read containing words they neither comprehend nor know how to pronounce, thereby causing hesitation, repetition, and confusion of thought. Others acquire the habit through imitation.

"It is said that Sothern through imitating stammering in his character of Lord Dundreary, found that after a time when not acting he had great difficulty in overcoming his constant inclination to stammer, and it was only by great perseverance in ridding himself of the habit that

he was able to take dramatic parts requiring perfect freedom of speech.

"Some cases have been known to come on suddenly through fright or great emotion, which has been a shock to the system, but such instances are, I believe, very rare.

"Another question arises as to whether in some instances it is hereditary. There are temperaments which predispose to stammering. Children may inherit from their parents delicate organization, want of nerve power, weakness of character, and hesitancy in speech. Children so constituted would be liable to stammer from such causes.

"In opposition to the theory that it is hereditary may be mentioned the fact that a very great number of stammerers cannot trace their infirmity to any relative, as it frequently occurs that no member of their family near or remote has ever been known to stammer. I am inclined to think that some cases may, and others may not be, hereditary.

"Does it not then seem strange that, although education and science have made such rapid strides during the last half century, so little has been discovered or done for stammerers. All other kinds of suffering have been studied, and

means discovered for their amelioration and cure, but little has been done for one of the most painful maladies that humanity is subject to.

"If we suffer from a fit of spleen, a disordered liver, or any other ailment to which our poor bodies are liable, there is the family doctor or physician to consult. If we get a limb broken or a joint dislocated we can obtain the aid of a surgeon. And not only have we the general practitioner, the physician, and the surgeon, but from these bodies we have men who have devoted their lives to the study of special diseases, both mental and physical.

"The stammerer is not so fortunate, for not only is he generally led to consider his affliction incurable, but when by chance he has either thought, or been made to believe, he can be cured, he has been at a loss to know where to go for advice and help; and when someone has been found to treat him, the result has almost always been disappointing.

"This arises from the fact that there are so few who understand the subject sufficiently to be able to give beneficial advice. Where it is necessary for the feelings and emotions to be understood, it cannot be surprising that those who have only a superficial knowledge of the outward form of

the effects produced by these feelings and emotions, and who have themselves never experienced them, I say it is not surprising they should often display utter ignorance as to the right way of treating such cases.

"There is a prevailing opinion that stammering is incurable, and it is not surprising that such should be the case. There have been numbers of would-be curers of the impediment who have done great harm through their entire want of knowledge of the simplest laws relating to voice and speech, advising means which have not only been futile, but positively injurious. Stammering can be cured. Where there is a desire which will take the form of work it is easy, that is when the stammerer is properly instructed. I wish I could point out a royal road for its cure, but that is impossible.

"If a stammerer could see himself, and form a correct idea of the errors he has fallen into—errors both of omission and commission—it would be well; but it is extraordinary that he is often slow to realize some of his most palpable faults, even when told of them.

"In order that a stammerer may cure himself it is necessary that he should know thoroughly his

principal fault. He may be unconscious of it himself, but there is generally one leading feature in every stammerer's infirmity. This must be the first point to attack, as in dealing with it, minor faults, hitherto but partially developed, are either swept away or made to stand out more clearly, when they in turn can be the more readily eradicated.

"It is impossible to give general directions to benefit all cases, as a careful examination and inquiry into every particular is absolutely necessary to ensure successful treatment. If, however, what I may say to you should prove useful to anyone here I shall be more than pleased.

"It would serve no useful purpose to enter into the various ridiculous methods as advocated by different persons who have attempted the cure of stammering. Suffice it to say, that all extraneous aid must be avoided, and nothing done which is not entirely necessary in the action of speech.

"For the information of those who are unacquainted with the action of the organs of speech, I will, in as brief a manner as possible, describe them. The organs are: the diaphragm, the lungs, the glottis, soft palate, tongue, hard palate, lower jaw, and the lips. The diaphragm is a large

muscular fibre lying between the chest and the abdomen. Before the lungs are inflated with air, the diaphragm is archlike, or higher in the middle, and descends with ingress of air, which is drawn into the lungs by the action of the muscles of the sides of the breast. It rises during expiration, and so assists in forcing out the inspired breath. I may mention that all exercises that will strengthen this muscle will be of benefit to a speaker. The lungs are the reservoirs of air, and beside supporting vitality, may be said to be the fundamental organs of speech, as without them speech would be utterly impossible. The air which is drawn into the lungs by means of the muscles of the thorax, or side of the breast, is emitted by help of the diaphragm, passed through the glottis, in which are situated the vocal chords, or the immediate organs of sound, and forced through the chords, which may be compared to a reed instrument, causing them to vibrate and produce sound. The sound strikes against the vellum, or soft palate, by which the quality, and to a great extent the volume of voice, is determined. The sound then strikes the roof of the mouth or hard palate, which also is a most important organ in the production of sound, and thence out of the mouth.

In its passage through the mouth the sound is moulded into words by the action of the tongue, lips, palate, teeth, and jaw.

"There are nearly forty different formations of vocal sound which may be called elementary, and out of the combination of these sounds our language is formed. It will only be necessary to speak of four, belonging to the consonants. I do not mean that these four formations are exactly alike in the consonants which I shall group together, but for all practical purposes they may be considered the same. *B*, *p*, and *m* are formed by contact of the lips and abrupt separation, the instant voice is made. There will be a shade of difference in these formations caused by the vowels which are used with them. This same remark will apply to other consonantal formations. *D*, *t*, *s*, *z*, and *n*, in beginning words, require the tip of the tongue to come in contact with the upper teeth, where the teeth and gum meet, and simultaneously with vocal sound there must be a cessation of contact. *C*, *g*, *j*, *k*, *l*, *sh*, and *q* at the beginning of a word require the tongue to be placed against the hard palate, and separation as before mentioned. *F* and *v* require the lower lip to

come in contact with the upper teeth, and also separated.

"The easiest letters to articulate are the vowels, as they present little or no impediment with the tongue, requiring much less pressure of the organs than the consonants. The reason why consonants are more difficult than vowels is because the organs requiring to come in contact with each other are liable to so much pressure as to impede sound. Consonants may be divided into three classes: first, those which have no initiatory sound whatever; second, those which have but a slight initiatory sound; and, third, those which have a very clear initiatory sound. *C*, *k*, *p*, *q*, and *t* come under the first head, and, as a rule, present greater difficulties to stammerers than any other. *B*, *d*, *f*, *g*, *j*, *s*, and *z* belong to the second class, and by reason of there being a slight initiatory sound they are more easy than the foregoing. *L*, *m*, and *n*, which are of the third class, are far the easiest consonants to be sounded, as they really may almost be called vowels.

"When the organs are placed in the position for articulating *c*, *k*, *p*, *q*, and *t* at the beginning of a word, no possible sound can be made of those consonants until the organs are separated, while

the initiatory sounds of *b*, *d*, *f*, *g*, *j*, *s*, *v*, *z* are varied, and may be understood by placing the organs in the right position for the letter, and endeavouring to articulate without allowing them to move. In *b*, *d*, *g*, *j* a stifled sound will be produced, and in *f*, *s*, *v*, *z* a kind of hissing sound will be made. *L*, *m*, *n* have sounds almost as plain as the vowels. The initiatory sound of *l* is produced by the tip of the tongue being placed in contact with the palate close to the upper teeth, while the sound is allowed to pass over the tongue, and out laterally by the teeth. This sound can be made with the nostrils closed. *M* and *n* cannot be articulated with the nostrils closed; thus they are called nasals.

"I have only just been able to give you a crude outline of the way in which speech is made; to explain more fully would take too much time, and would not serve any useful purpose.

CONCLUSION.

"I have now finished my lecture, and beg to thank you for your kind attention to what must have been a dull subject to you.

"Everything I have told you has been gleaned

by me from observation, and I think I may speak with some authority, having been myself a stammerer of the worst type.

"In my remarks to-night I have only been able to take a general view of the subject; had time permitted I might have said much more. If, however, anything I have said should be of service to anyone here, I shall be pleased, and my lecture has not been given in vain."

LECTURE II.

MR. B. BEASLEY, of Brampton Park, delivered a lecture to a large audience at the Literary and Scientific Institution, Huntingdon, on the subject of "The Human Voice and Elocution." The Mayor (Mr. A. C. Sweeting) presided, and was supported by the Earl of Sandwich.

Mr. B. Beasley, in the course of his lecture, said:

"I am afraid there has been some little error in the way in which my subject for this evening has been announced. It was my own fault in not more explicitly stating upon what my lecture would be. I do not intend speaking on the subject of oratory, and I shall only very lightly touch on elocution in its most elementary form. I shall only give you a few ideas which have occasionally crossed my mind, causing me to think that a few hints to young men may be of service to them. It is very surprising how one

of the greatest, if not *the* greatest gift we have—the power of speech—is almost entirely uncultivated. People take great pains to acquire other accomplishments; they spend a great amount of time, attention, and devotion to learning music or singing, to the utter neglect of that which is certainly the more useful, and which is often the most graceful. I am exceedingly fond of music myself, but I cannot help thinking that it is far more pleasant to listen to a good reader, reading an interesting book or telling a good story, than to suffer the pain of listening to discordant playing or untuneful singing. The only people who seem to cultivate the art of speaking are those who have to obtain a living by it, or who have ambition to make other uses of it. An extraordinary thing also is that the power of speech is more easily acquired than other accomplishments. Nature has given men the instrument generally perfect, whereas to learn any other accomplishment an intimate acquaintance with something outside must be acquired. If any of us took the trouble to observe the manner in which the generality of people speak, we should be astonished to see that, as a rule, talking is very bad. We should see phrases slurred over, we

should hear bad intonations, faulty inflections, and wrong emphasis. We should hear that the voice, instead of being smooth and pleasant, often grates upon the ear, and is anything but euphonious. Some people you would observe talk with their mouth closed, or partially so, others you would find trying to talk, as it were, through their teeth, others would direct the sounds into the head, thereby causing a kind of falsetto, others would in their way of directing the voice give a raspy utterance, with many other faults unnecessary to mention. I am not now speaking of those who have any difficulty in utterance, those who have a so-called impediment, but I am speaking of those who have perfect freedom of speech in every way. The voice is perfect, and the other organs are equally so, but they make an improper use of them. Neither do I confine myself to any class of society.

"Bad talking permeates the whole of society, and from the prince to the peasant we hear imperfect utterances. The most surprising fact, however, is that where we should look for the most perfect orator and highest elocution, we find the least. It is very rarely we listen to a perfect sermon, for the clergy, as a rule, are very bad talkers and very bad

orators. How often do we go into a church to hear our very beautiful liturgy rendered in a way which is not only unpleasant, but raises the opposite to a feeling of reverence. We hear the prayers mumbled or muttered, words running one over the other, so that nobody can understand them unless they know them. We hear the Exhortation given in a meaningless manner, without the slightest regard to feeling or sense. We hear the Lessons read in a manner which gives little or no idea of the sense, and often through wrong emphasis conveying entirely the wrong meanings. The sing-song, or the nasal twang, is often predominant, and passages which are simply descriptive are read in a manner which would convey to a person the idea that the gentleman is ill. Of course, there are very high examples to the contrary. There are orators in the Church, and men who set a bright example if their smaller brethren would only try to copy them. I have no doubt many of you will agree with me, that you have often heard a sermon given and it has not touched you in the slightest, when, if it were analyzed, or had appeared in print, it would have been a very fine and sensible discourse, but by reason of the bad delivery it has failed either to awaken the

reason or to touch the heart. A committee formed of a dozen gentlemen of average intelligence will only have perhaps one or two amongst them who will be able to thoroughly conduct the business or put into shape the ideas of that committee. Generally the speaking is confined to one or two, the other members of the committee simply being voters. This is not because they do not understand their business, but through not having been in the habit of putting their thoughts into words at any length. How often at a public dinner, say where there may be a hundred persons present, you will hear a gentleman of great intelligence, great knowledge, and good business capabilities, get up to make a speech, and through his bad way of delivering it will, after his ten minutes' talk, cause a feeling to go through his audience of, "Thank goodness that 's over." Not because what he has said has not been right and true, but because his hesitating, his humming and ah-ing have made it impossible for those who are listening to him to follow out what he is saying, or get a clear notion of what he means. I have seen this very often where a most excellent speech, so far as matter goes, has been given, but during the whole time of its delivery people have been

fidgeting; and when that same speech has appeared in the papers—having been accurately taken down by the reporters—it has proved to be a most excellent discourse. Where the power of oratory is combined with great intelligence, great business capacity, and a thorough knowledge of things in general, the possessor of that power is sure to rise to eminence. Of such we have our great senators and politicians. Where only the power of speech, or vulgarly speaking, "the gift of the gab," is present, the owner of it will always make himself superior to those around him of his own class. Take the labouring man, for instance. Should there be one amongst them who has this gift, he, if he has any ambition, will rise above them, become their mouthpiece, and will often earn a living out of them.

"We have only to look at the House of Commons to see there, men possessing neither a great amount of knowledge nor a great amount of brains, but who have made themselves acquainted with a few set phrases, bring themselves forward, and are looked upon amongst their own class as marvellous men. Of course, if they were absolutely great they would rise beyond that, but of the men of whom I speak very few are heard of, only in

working out one single idea. Their success so far is mainly attributable to the power they have of speaking plainly, and making themselves understood, thus showing what the gift of speech will do. I need not mention the absolute necessity for professional men, if they are to make any headway in their profession, acquiring the perfect power of speech. Those who possess this in the highest degree, combined with knowledge, are those who rise to the highest in every calling. This gift cannot be too well cultivated, for it will stand everyone in good stead, whether he belong to mercantile or manufacturing pursuits, and particularly if he is a traveller soliciting orders. Take two young men seeking the same situation. They shall both be equal in every respect but one. The one shall be a good speaker, and the other shall be otherwise. The good speaker is sure to obtain the employment. All the authorities are becoming alive to the necessity of choosing their representatives, their servants, or their managers, from those who can talk well. It would not be fair of me after having found such fault, not to offer some remedy. In doing this there will be no necessity to give any description of the organs of speech, any more than

it would be for a drill-sergeant to instruct a recruit in the anatomy of the body, explaining to him the action of the different muscles brought into use in his drill. I will endeavour to give a few simple rules, and they shall be very elementary (but certainly such as the thoughtful student may make good use of), without going fully into the matter. To go straight to the point. In order to correct one's imperfect speech the student must read, and the first thing to acquire is perfect articulation. He must learn to articulate every word clearly and perfectly. The process which he will first have to go through will be a slow one, but the slower it is and the more painstaking, and the greater watch he can keep over himself, will prove the shortest in the end. In learning to articulate, he must take a book, and read quietly and slowly word by word, articulating every syllable as perfectly as he can, keeping his ears open to the slightest defect, and endeavouring to articulate every consonant as perfectly as possible. This he must practise for a considerable time, until he feels he has no difficulty in uttering the longest and most difficult words perfectly. When this has been acquired, he will then only, so far as articulation goes, have to watch, par-

ticularly, the final consonant in every word. I would impress upon my hearers the impossibility of overdoing this, because by enunciating the final consonant most perfectly they will find it far easier to proceed to their next word, and it will help their articulation of the word that follows.

"Now I will give you a little illustration of what I consider articulation will do and what it will not do.

"If articulation be perfect, you will not run the risk of giving a different meaning to a sentence. I give you this familiar phrase (but *not* with perfect articulation): 'Can the Ethiopian change his (s)kin or the leopard his (s)pots?' No doubt you understand what I mean, but there may be some who do not. If I heard anyone say that myself, in the way I have said it, I might be quizzical, and say, 'It would be very difficult for an Ethiopian to change his relationship, and I don't think that the leopard is in the habit of using culinary instruments. As a rule, I believe he eats his food uncooked.' That question would not arise if it had been said, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?' The next thing to observe is punctuation. There are two kinds of punctuation. The ordinary punctuation is that which points out to the eye the meaning of a

sentence. We often find it very meagre in newspapers, and some writers punctuate very infrequently. Now there are very few people who can take in clearly a sentence that is uttered without punctuation. Sometimes you will find sentences will go 20, 30, or even 40 words without a mark of punctuation. Now, as a rule, you may punctuate with advantage, seldom using more than 10 to 15 words without a mark of punctuation. The other kind of punctuation is rhetorical punctuation, which divides and sub-divides for the ear, and for effect. The greatest speakers, the most emphatic speakers, are those who are understood the best, or who, in other words, punctuate most frequently, because it gives the hearer time to take in and understand what is being said. It also makes reading and speaking ornamental, where it is judiciously used. I will give you a little illustration which may point out what I mean. The sentence is as follows: 'Nations like men fail in nothing which they boldly and virtuously attempt.' Now if that sentence were given in the following way I think it would be better understood, and certainly I think more euphonious: 'Nations, like men, fail in nothing which they boldly, and virtuously attempt.' Another rather

humorous illustration is this. A droll barber wrote outside his house, over the window, the following: 'What do you think I will shave you for nothing and give you a drink.' Well, of course, he had plenty of customers, and when he had performed the operation, they started going out without paying, but the barber, looking at them very keenly, would say, 'What! do you think I shave you for nothing, and give you a drink?' The next important point to be observed is emphasis, and that means a great deal more than I have time to enter into. Emphasis means so many things, and it can be used in so many ways and in so many degrees, that for the purpose in question I need only say that it means the stress that is placed upon one word more than another. It can be explained by taking a sentence of so many words, and repeating that sentence as many times as there are words, putting stress on a different word each time. For instance, I give you the following sentence, which is repeated six times: *Can* you ride to Richmond to-day?—No, I can't. Can *you* ride to Richmond to-day?—No, but my brother can. Can you *ride* to Richmond to-day?—No, I can walk. Can you ride *to* Richmond to-day?—No, but I can ride from there.

Can you ride to *Richmond* to-day?—No, but I can ride to London. Can you ride to Richmond *to-day?*—No, but I can ride to-morrow. This shows how people may make errors by false emphasis. False emphasis has been the cause of many and grave mistakes. A rather familiar one we find in the following: 'And Balaam said, Saddle *me* an ass, and they saddled *him*.'

"When you have mastered articulation and emphasis you must then read aloud. If you have a judicious friend, who is able to correct your reading, and tell you whether you read distinctly and are giving the real meaning of what you are reading, it will be well; but before beginning to read you must bear one thing in mind. You must not read simply with the idea of learning something yourself, but you must fix in your mind that you are going to *tell* someone something, and that you are going to *teach* them something, and in order to do that you must thoroughly understand what you are reading. You must do your utmost to make it clear and distinct, both the words and their meaning, and you must read in such a way that if any person were outside the door, and did not see you had a book in front of you, he would have the idea

that you were talking. This, of course, at first must be very slow, because, not having been in the habit of reading in this way, it will take you some little time before you can acquire the faculty to read exactly as though you were speaking, but after a time it will become perfectly natural to you. When you have practised this, and feel that you are reading exactly as though you were talking, you may proceed in the same way in your own quiet room practising over a little speech. But you must not expect to gain this power all at once. Labour and patience will do a great deal, and there are few things really worth having that are not obtained in that way. Money will purchase a great deal, but money cannot purchase character; it cannot purchase devotion, force of character, strength, zeal, or determination, but you may educate yourself to these, and you will find in your walk in life that these faculties will stand you in good stead; and in drilling yourself to learn how to speak well, you will go through a course of instruction or training which will bring out other faculties in you, besides that of perfect speech. This advice I can give you with confidence. What I have said to you this evening has not been learnt from books.

I do not appear before you, or profess to appear before you, as a perfect illustration of what may be done by perseverance. I may only tell you that not many years ago it was almost utterly impossible for me to enter into conversation; and now, although I do not flatter myself that I am either an orator or a great elocutionist, yet I have so far succeeded as to be able to enter into ordinary conversation, and, I hope, generally make myself understood. But you, who have no difficulty whatever, but that which is the result of carelessness, may achieve far more than I have achieved, if you cultivate by strength of will and determination of purpose."

Mr. Beasley was loudly applauded at the conclusion of his lecture, which was listened to with great interest. At the request of some friends, Mr. Beasley next gave two readings of entirely different characters, the first of which was a poem by Campbell, entitled "The Exile of Erin," in which he pointed out the easy way in which one might fall into a sing-song style, or use a tone of wailing instead of a discreet marking of rhyme and rhythm, and appropriate tones. He also gave part of Act III. of *Henry VIII.*

The Chairman, in proposing a vote of thanks

to Mr. Beasley, said he could not entirely agree with what had been said, because he thought that the matter one had to say was of far more importance than the way in which we said it.

Mr. T. Clark seconded the motion, and said that although he too could not altogether agree with the lecturer, he much appreciated what had been said by him, and thought his remarks would be very useful to the rising generation.

The motion was carried, and Mr. Beasley, in reply, said he quite agreed with Mr. Sweeting, but that he considered that if a thing was worth saying at all, it made it far better if it was said well, for people would understand it more clearly and appreciate it better.

LECTURE III.

A LECTURE on Stammering and its Cure, delivered at the Church House, Salisbury, by Mr. Beasley, who at one time was a very bad stammerer himself, but who has completely overcome that defect in his speech.

Mr. Beasley is the author of a book entitled *Stammering: its Treatment.* The chair was taken by Canon Hutchings, who, in opening the proceedings, said he could from his own knowledge answer for it that there was no person better qualified to speak upon the subject of stammering than Mr. Beasley. All were indebted to those gentlemen who made a special study of some particular infirmity, that they might remedy the ills to which poor human nature was subject, and certainly there was hardly anything that could be mentioned more painful both to the hearer and those who were subject to it, than stammering.

It was also a great hindrance to persons entering

certain professions, often causing them to take up something for which they were not fitted.

Mr. Beasley had himself been a very bad stammerer, and had cured himself; and this gave him the ability to speak to other people, and to enter into their difficulties, in a way in which persons who did not stammer themselves could not, perhaps, appreciate very well. From his own knowledge of Mr. Beasley, he could say that his system was not only exceedingly successful, but was free from the defects of many systems which professed to cure stammering. There were many persons who professed to cure this defect, and the way they did it was by eradicating one fault and teaching another. His (the speaker's) own son had gone to Mr. Beasley a very bad stammerer, daily getting worse, and in ten days he had been almost entirely cured. Indeed, he believed it was a misfortune for his son that the cure had not taken longer. His son, when he collected himself, could now keep himself from stammering; he could read aloud, or even act, without the least suspicion of the defect. Therefore he believed Mr. Beasley's plan would be found to cure people whose cases were very bad.

Mr. Beasley then proceeded to deliver his

lecture. Speaking deliberately, with very distinct enunciation, and without any hesitation, he gave a brief description of the various causes of stammering, which he said generally originated in children between the ages of four and eleven. Stammering could be cured if only the stammerers had a desire for a cure, and that desire would take the form of work. It was necessary, if a stammerer wished to cure himself, that he should know of his chief fault, for each stammerer had some leading failing, and in curing that first, he would eradicate, or render more easy of cure, many other minor faults. After describing the organs of speech and their action, the lecturer proceeded to divide the vocal sounds into classes, and explain their character. He pointed out the letters which were most difficult of articulation, and also those which could be easily enunciated, and he explained that by slightly opening the mouth, raising the head, and allowing the tongue to rest at the bottom of the mouth, a continuous flow of air would be obtained, and by this means, with continuous practice, the habit of the breath ceasing in the middle of a sentence would be overcome.

Stammerers who were musical never had any

difficulty in singing, at least he never knew one who had.

The lecturer then dwelt at considerable length on the elementary principles of his system, after which the proceedings ended with the usual votes of thanks.

LECTURE IV.

AT the Public Hall, Worcester, Mr. B. Beasley gave a lecture on the subject of Stammering. The audience was presided over by the Rev. E. V. Hall, in the absence of the Rev. S. S. Forster. The lecturer said he had not only seen stammering in its worst forms, but had suffered in a terrible degree himself. Until he was five or six years old he spoke with more fluency than most people. A low fever, from which he suffered at that age, left him with an impediment in his speech, which grew worse and worse until he was fourteen. He became a manufacturer of military weapons, and at the age of about thirty, having lost an important contract solely on account of his infirmity, he turned his attention seriously to the study of stammering and the possibility of its cure. During the whole of his experience he had never met with one stammerer whose infirmity proceeded from defective organs of speech. The

causes of stammering were mechanical and nervous, though in many cases nervousness was not so much the cause of stammering as the result of stammering. Stammering usually began between the ages of four and eleven, seldom later, and might be produced by various forms of illness, by imitation, or by impatient treatment towards a sensitive child with more ideas than he could readily find words to express.

It was a mistake to try to frighten or ridicule a child out of stammering, or to try to hurry their speech. Stammering could be cured, and in order to effect this it was necessary the sufferer should know his principal fault. When this was attacked, the lesser ones could be gradually eradicated. The lecturer then described the organs of speech, pointed out that the first thing to be considered in the treatment of stammering was the breath, and the next question was as to the voice. He concluded by explaining in detail the management of the breath, the teeth, the tongue, the lips, and the jaws in producing distinct and easy articulation. The Chairman, in responding to a vote of thanks, said Mr. Beasley received pupils at his house, and was able, after a short course of instruction, to send them away sometimes entirely

cured, and always very much better for their stay under his roof. It was almost marvellous that Mr. Beasley, after having been himself a terrible sufferer for many years, should now be able to speak with so much freedom and oratorical power. He was a living instance of the success of his own system.

LECTURE V.

STAMMERING AND ITS CURE.

AT the Rodney Hall, Rodney Street, Liverpool, Mr. B. Beasley delivered a lecture on Stammering and its Cure. The Rev. S. C. Armour presided, and there was a large attendance. The Chairman said that the subject on which Mr. Beasley would speak was one which touched the whole circle of humanity, for there was scarcely anyone present in the hall that night who could not reckon among their friends or acquaintances one who was suffering from this terrible infirmity —impediment of speech. If statistics were obtainable, he feared it would be found that more people had suffered, and were still suffering, in this way than they suspected. He felt acutely for any such. Stammerers were at an enormous disadvantage in the battle of life, and were subjected to brutal ridicule. However high their faculties might be,

all the noble gifts with which they were endowed were rendered almost entirely useless by this sad infirmity. Of its cause it was unnecessary for him to speak, but on one thing he was decided, and that was that stammering was an ailment which yielded when skill and experience were brought to bear in its treatment. Mr. B. Beasley then proceeded with his lecture. For more than thirty years, he said, he had been a most inveterate stammerer. He discovered a method of curing himself, which he had since perfected into a system, by which numbers of others likewise afflicted had been cured. Mr. Beasley explained the causes of stammering and its treatment. It was erroneous, he said, to suppose that cases of long standing could not be cured, for many pupils of mature age, who, before consulting him, had thought that their malady was almost hopeless, had in an incredibly short time obtained relief. These eminently satisfactory results could only be traced to the extreme simplicity of his system, which in itself compelled perfect action of speech, and made a pupil a better speaker than the majority of those who had never stammered. The daily opportunities afforded of speaking before a number of listeners formed a great feature in

the treatment, as by this course pupils learned their powers, and the nervousness which generally accompanied stammering gradually subsided, and those who before could scarcely articulate were thus able to speak perfectly before a large audience. At the conclusion of the lecture a vote of thanks was awarded to Mr. Beasley for having brought his cure under the notice of that meeting. *Stammering: its Treatment* is the title of a book written by Mr. Beasley, and this valuable little work was repeatedly quoted by the author last night. A vote of thanks to the Rev. C. Armour for presiding, terminated the proceedings.

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