

# PAPERS BY THE PEOPLE

## MYSTERY OF THE HUMAN BRAIN.

By A. F. O'Connor, M. P.

The many cases reported recently in the papers of men and women wandering mechanically through the streets like wound-up automata, recall to my mind an experience of my brother. In a Madras hospital, with which he was connected, lay a gigantic negro, who was supposed to be a congenital idiot. An idiot he was certainly, and of an unusually mindless type—a mere vegetable who seemed even to eat and drink mechanically. A surgeon who had only just joined the staff at the hospital, and who therefore saw its patients with a new eye, after looking long at the negro, said: "I don't think the fellow is a congenital idiot at all. Here, lay him on this bed, and let me examine his skull." A brief examination of the black's skull showed the mark of an old and deep wound. "Just as I thought," cried the surgeon, triumphantly. "I shall trephine his skull, and you'll see." When he had sawed the scarred piece of skull away he found, as he expected, a bit of bone pressing upon the brain. He raised and removed it, with the result that the patient, the moment he recovered consciousness, asked, eagerly: "Where's the army to-day?" "Where was it yesterday?" asked the surgeon. "Yesterday" turned out to be nine years before, when this negro had been wounded in a battle on the Indian frontier.

It is noteworthy that in clairvoyant cases the body is, through overwork, or ill health, or fasting, or congenitally, in the subdued state to which the Indian mystic and miracle monger reduces his own by maceration. It was so with Scott and Rousseau, and with William Hone when he had the following experience recorded in his memoir: When worn out with overwork he was shown into a certain room in a certain part of London where he had never been before. "On looking round everything appeared perfectly familiar to me; I seemed to recognize every object. I said to myself, 'What is this? I was never here before, and yet I have seen all this; and, if so, there is a peculiar knot in the shutter.' I opened the shutter and found the knot. Now, then, I thought, here is something I cannot explain on principles; there must be some power beyond matter." And from being a pronounced materialist he became a believer in spirits, and, indeed, eventually a profoundly religious soul.

## BE SURE THAT HE IS LISTENING.

By John A. Howland.

Never talk business unless you are sure you have the attention of your listener. You only cheapen yourself if you do, cheapen the idea you represent, and you accomplish nothing. You are ushered into Mr. Brown's office, for instance, and after listening a moment, Mr. Brown drops his eyes and begins to finger his mail. Stop talking, even in the midst of a sentence, and wait till Mr. Brown looks up. He will probably say something like this: "I can listen just as well, Mr. Jones. I've got this mail to look over. Go right on talking." Do nothing of the kind. Tell Mr. Brown politely that if he is busy you will call again, when he has time to listen to you. If he says he is ready to give you his full attention and then begins to jot down a few figures on an envelope or to read letters, stop talking. He may say: "Oh, I'm listening, I'm hearing. Go right on." You may now be more explicit and say: "I have no doubt, Mr. Brown, that you can listen just as well, but I cannot talk just as well." He cannot possibly get angry at this, and you should withdraw if you are not assured of his full attention.

It pays to have a proper regard for your own dignity. If you allow a man to treat you with disrespect or inattention, your arguments, no matter how good they are, lose their power to convince because what you are always stands back of what you say, either to enforce or to weaken

your words. The teacher who addresses a crowd of whispering, giggling, or otherwise preoccupied students cheapens both himself and his subject. No matter how excellent his instruction, even that which the students hear has little effect because really he speaks on sufferance; at their pleasure they cease to listen. But a teacher has more or less authority over his pupils; his position gives him a tremendous advantage. On the other hand, the man who solicits business of any kind has the inferior position because he is asking something, and he needs to be always on the watch lest he be put off, cut short in his talk, or listened to with only half attention.

## STRIKING PECULIARITIES OF MEN OF GENIUS.

By Cesare Lombroso.

If we study the brain of the man of genius and its cubic contents we find that the majority of geniuses surpass the ordinary man in this direction. For example, Petrarch, Kant, Leibou, who examined the brains of twenty-six French geniuses, found that their brain, on the average, contained about 200 cubic centimeters more than that of the average man. This result was the more striking, since some of the twenty-six geniuses had only an ordinary cubic capacity of brain, such as Descartes, Tisot and Hoffman. Among the brains of twelve famous Germans, which included Wagner and Bischoff, investigated, it was found there were brains of either an exceptionally large cubic capacity or an exceptionally small capacity.

Many great thinkers in the realms of literature, philosophy and history felt a real horror of music. Johnson, Victor Hugo, Katherine II., Zola and Napoleon loved best and simplest music. According to Gautier, music is the most horrible of all forms of sound. In contradistinction to these outspoken enemies of music we have the honor paid it by others, such as Aristotle, who held music as one of the finest inspirations to good work. Among modern writers are Daudet, Darwin, Goethe, Carlyle, who called music the language of the angels, and Moore, who conceived his poems first in music. Ruskin called music the finest and most developed pleasure that can benefit any age.

## COLLEGE ATTENDANCE IS INCREASING.

By Nicholas Murray Butler.

There are no signs of the development in the United States of a class of over-educated dependents. The vast increase in the attendance upon the institutions of higher education is due to an increasing appreciation on the part of the people of the value of a training which makes life really worth living by filling it with resources that are both pleasant and profitable, apart from their possible practical application.

Another reason for the great increase in the attendance at the colleges and universities is that the people at large have caught sight of the fact that the chances of practical success in life are multiplied enormously if a boy has a sound college training. The statistics by President Thwing of Western Reserve University, published several years ago, proved this conclusively.

An adjustment of the courses of study and curricula that will bring the bachelor's degree down to a point where it can be had by a normal student at about twenty years of age is an absolute necessity. At present there is waste, almost incredible waste, all along the line. The elementary school is the most wasteful of all, taking, as it does, eight years to do what thousands of children do in six and very many can do in four or five. The secondary school is wasteful, but to a less degree, and as matters are at present the college is the least wasteful of all. Therefore, to shorten the college course is at the moment to give up an element of the greatest relative value.

## RUSSIA AT PANAMA.

How Near that Nation Came to Building the Isthmian Waterway.

The work at Panama which the United States government has just undertaken narrowly escaped being finished under the auspices of the Czar of Russia, as a sort of complement to the Trans-Siberian Railway. Mons. Philippe Bunau-Varilla, in a history of the canal project which he contributes to La Nouvelle Revue, narrates the circumstances, which are certainly not generally known.

In 1894, not long after Russia began the Trans-Siberian, he says, it occurred to me that the Panama canal was in some way a complement to that undertaking, as the Suez had been to the American transcontinental railways. It seemed to me that then was a proper time for Russia to manifest her friendship for France in a tangi-

ble way by helping to re-establish the work at the isthmus. So I applied to Monsieur De Witte with that in view.

"What is the opinion of the French government in the matter?" he asked. Then, in a way to suggest that he conveyed the wishes of Czar Alexander, he added:

"If it conforms to yours, without engaging the word of the Czar, I can say to you that any solution which will aid the interests of France in that question will be received in a most favorable manner by the government of his majesty."

I then returned to France and consulted Monsieur Casimir-Perier, who was then president of the council and minister of foreign affairs, and Monsieur Burdeau, minister of finance.

Monsieur Burdeau soon called me to the ministry of finance. "I have studied the question with Monsieur Casimir Perier," he said, "who will

call you in a few days to tell you that the French government is favorable to joint action with Russia, and that consequently there is a basis on which to re-establish the Panama work. To-day it is the friend who speaks. In a few days you will be officially informed."

Unfortunately for Monsieur Bunau-Varilla's plans, however, the ministry fell before Monsieur Casimir-Perier had called him to receive his reply. By a singular fatality, within a year Czar Alexander was dead, President Carnot was dead, Burdeau was dead, and Casimir-Perier was out of politics.

Very Helpful.

Clark—Mamma, that young man says he loves me so much he will even get down on his knees after we are married.

Mother—Gracious! I guess he means he is going to do the scrubbing. You better have him!

Rhymed All Right.

A school teacher was trying to impress upon a scholar's mind that Columbus discovered America in 1492. "Now, John," he said, "I will tell you the date in rhyme so that you won't forget it. 'In fourteen hundred and ninety-two Columbus sailed the ocean blue.' Now, can you remember that, John?"

"Yes, sir," replied John.

Next day the teacher said, "John, when did Columbus discover America?"

"In fourteen hundred and ninety-three Columbus sailed the dark-blue sea!"

Justice is the first virtue of those who command, and stops the complaints of those who obey.—Diderot.

The secret of happiness is never to allow your energies to stagnate.—Adam Clarke.

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