

MYSTERY OF THOUGHT.

Try to Concentrate Your Mind on One Theme For Five Minutes.

A St. Louis physician who has given much attention to the study of mental disease in its various phases, though, as he says himself, not enough to qualify as an alienist, has a curious theory with regard to concentration of thought on any particular subject.

His idea is that no human can so fix his mind on any special topic as to avoid even for a moment the errant thoughts that come and go, not only without our volition, but in spite of our most earnest efforts at mental application.

He goes so far as to maintain that nobody but a monomaniac can think of one subject continuously for five minutes and even believes that the ability to do so is one evidence of something wrong in the upper story.

"I once heard the subject discussed by a party of intelligent men, and one of the number was so confident of his ability to think of one subject an indefinite length of time that he crossed his opponents to the point of making a test.

"If you can repeat the Lord's Prayer and then declare upon your word of honor that you have not thought of anything else while doing it, I'll make you a present of a horse and saddle and bridle."

"The confident one took up the challenge and in order to fix his mind requested the company to keep still until he got through. Then, with frowning brows and tightly drawn face, he began aloud and went slowly and apparently with the most determined attention straight through the prayer.

"After he said 'amen' and opened his eyes he was asked how he had got along with his task.

"It's a failure, gentlemen. I didn't get to the end of 'hallowed be thy name' before I wondered what kind of a horse it was going to be, and before I reached 'thy will be done' I thought about black saddles and white saddles and about the horse again; then of the bridle and the rein, whether they would be of light or dark leather; then of old Pete, a horse my father had and how he threw me over his head when I switched him with a locust thorn branch; then of a mare that kicked old Pete in the ribs while they were in the pasture together and left the imprint of both shoes on his side and before I reached 'amen' I thought of a drove of wild horses that used to be out on the plains and what a pile of money a man would make by rounding them all up and selling them for farm horses.

"I did think I could fix my mind on one thing for awhile, but when I tried my brains seemed to scatter like an old fashioned shotgun."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

An Eccentric Will.

In the year 1726 a gentleman living in England named Samuel Baldwin died after a somewhat unhappy married life. By his will Mr. Baldwin left his property to his young wife on the condition that she should from time to time dance upon his grave.

The motive for this strange request was evident when the instructions for his interment were read. Mr. Baldwin desired that his remains should be taken by boat to the Needles and then cast in the sea. This singular wish enabled him to revenge himself on his wife for past disgracements, and the widow lost the property, as she could not fulfill the conditions of her husband's bequest.

The Word "Ogre."

Old fashioned etymologists used to say that the word "ogre" commemorated the sufferings of Europe during the ninth and tenth centuries at the hands of the ravaging "Olgours," or Huns. This derivation, however, is now abandoned. "Ogre," which reached the French language by way of Italian and Spanish, is really Orcus, the Latin hell, afterward the god of the underworld. In Romanesque folklore this god became a shaggy, black, man devouring monster, with a particular taste for lost babes in the wood.

One View of the Kiss.

The obligatory kiss is Mongolian. The nutritive affair is European. The Mongolian kiss is with the nose. The European kiss is with the mouth.

The Mongolian kiss indicates that the party sniffed would be an agreeable prey. The European variety indicates that the party embraced would make a delectable meal.

They are but the different forms of the same instinct of preservation—the give and take of wild beasts.—Exchange.

Art of the Superior Smile.

The superior smile is a useful accomplishment for any young man. It is much in vogue at the universities, where it may be studied at its best on young Don. Many men who learn nothing else at the universities learn this art and find it uncommonly useful in after life. It is an excellent cover for a naked mind and should be sought after by parliamentary candidates.—Oxford Varsity.

Flooring Papa.

Five-year-old Tommy was being put through a test in numbers before the admiring family one day at dinner. Finally papa asked him the question that had proved the Waterloo of the older children in past years.

"Now, Tommy," said papa, "how many are two apples and three pears?" "Five fruits!" promptly answered Tommy.—Delineator.

We exaggerate misfortune and happiness alike. We are never either so wretched or so happy as we say we are.—Balzac.

FISH SUPERSTITIONS.

Queer Old Time Notions, Some of Which Still Survive.

The one fish medicine of which modern science thoroughly approves is cod liver oil, and this, though in far less nauseous form than formerly, is swallowed in tons every year.

In old days a much wider use was made of fish as cures for various evils, and some of these practices have survived to the present day. Some little time ago a boy died of epilepsy in a north Wales parish. The doctor, called in too late, inquired if the deceased had been given any medicine. "Oh, yes," was the answer. "We caught a trout, drowned it in new milk and gave it to the boy."

Eels are supposed to possess all kinds of virtues. In the dark ages of medicine a powder made of eels' liver was considered an absolute specific for deafness and was also employed in cases of ague or fever. A decoction of eels' fat is still used by Dutch peasants as a remedy for falling hair.

But the most valuable part of the eel, according to popular superstition, is its skin. Many an old farmer wears a belt of eelskin as a preventive against rheumatism, and some believe that a garter made of the skin of this snake-like fish worn next to the human skin as a preventive not only against rheumatism, but also against sprains or similar injuries.

Another cure for rheumatism, which finds favor with salt water fishermen, is a red herring. The herring being the most plentiful of all the sea fish, a number of superstitions have attached themselves to it. For luck through the ensuing year one must be sure to eat a herring on New Year's day.

Fishermen believe that each shoal is headed by a king herring, which is more than double as large as any of its followers. They believe that when one of the "kings" comes up in the net it should be thrown overboard; otherwise the next day's fishing will be a failure.—Pittsburg Gazette-Times.

THE HEADSMAN.

He Used the Sword and Not the Ax Prior to 1483.

I am inclined to think that prior to 1483 the sword and not the ax was usually employed as the weapon for judicial decapitation and that a block was dispensed with, the victims receiving their doom "meekly kneeling upon their knees," and in this opinion I am fortified by the concurrence of an eminent clerical historian. This learned writer agreed with me that the ax did not become the "regulation" lethal implement until after the rough and ready "heading" of Lord Hastings on the Tower green, when he was summarily dispatched by order of the protector, Gloucester.

In this instance, according to the chroniclers, the victim's neck was stretched upon a piece of timber then in use for the repair of the adjacent church of St. Peter ad Vincula, probably a "putlog," part of the scaffolding which, we read, "conveniently lay in the way." Contemporary accounts seem to indicate that the executioner straddled over the prone body, and from this position I infer that the decapitation was effected by the tool known as an adz, the cutting edge of which is at a right angle to and not in a plane with the haft.

I may add that the only contemporary reference I have come across of the use or proposed use of an ax and block for inflicting capital punishment prior to this tragedy is in one of the Paston series of letters describing the peril of an unfortunate captive of Jack Cade's rebels (A. D. 1450), a generation before Lord Hastings was so clumsily hacked to death.—London Notes and Queries.

The Hair.

A single hair, which can support a weight of two ounces, is so elastic that it may be stretched to one-third of its entire length and then regain its former size and condition. Dr. Pincus has measured the growth of hair by cutting off circles about one inch in diameter from the heads of healthy men and so comparing the growth of the patches with that of the rest of the hair. He found that the growth rate generally became slower after cutting; that in some cases the hair on the patches grew at the same rate as the rest, but that it never grew any faster. The ordinary length of the hair on the head ranges between twenty-two inches and about forty-five inches, the latter being considered unusually long.—London Standard.

Beetles.

The Rev. Theodore Wood, a well known English authority on beetles, makes an interesting observation on a little beetle found frequently in the flowers of the primrose, but nowhere else, which is quite a mystery. It is small, brown and flat, and Mr. Wood remarks of it: "How its life is lived nobody knows. Where its eggs are laid, what the grubs feed upon, where the chrysalis be hidden, nobody knows. Nobody knows even why the perfect beetle gets into the primrose blossom."

An Easy Way.

"In order to succeed in life," said the experienced person, "you must not be afraid to make enemies."

"Then," answered the tractable youth, "you would probably advise me to put in some time as a baseball umpire."—Washington Star.

When the Admress Moves.

Mrs. K., while telling her children about Adam and Eve and the beauties of the garden of Eden, was interrupted by one of the tiny tots saying, "Oh, mamma, when those Admress move away let us get that place to live in."—Delineator.

The Other Great Man.

Dr. Russell Cool of California happened to suppress an epidemic of measles while on a vacation trip to Tahiti, and Chief Oreori gratefully invited him to a banquet in his primitive palace. The south sea potentate and his white guest sat amiably on the floor and dined of roast pig and other native delicacies served on broad leaves and eaten with the fingers. After dinner host and guest adjourned to seats outside the palace, lit long, fat, black cigars and gazed out over the moonlit Pacific. In the eyes of Chief Oreori, Robert Louis Stevenson, who did so much to improve the condition of the south sea islanders, was the greatest white man that ever lived. The chief related to Dr. Cool many incidents to illustrate Stevenson's kindness, then asked a score of questions about the health of Stevenson's widow and his stepchildren. When the last question had been answered there followed a long period of silence. The two friends puffed slowly at their cigars and luxuriously regarded the radiant tropic moonlight glowing upon rustling palm fronds and the silvery ocean. Then Oreori turned to the doctor and demanded, "Now tell me about John L. Sullivan?"—Harper's Weekly.

Freezing Flesh.

It is a curious fact that, although dwellers in northern climes must have known for ages that a low temperature preserves flesh from putrefaction, it never seems to have struck any one that this natural fact could be turned to artificial advantage until Lord Bacon stuffed the historic chicken with snow and thereby caught a chill which killed him. It is perhaps even more curious that an experiment resulting in the death of one of the most eminent men in the world should not have called any attention to an already well known principle which might have been readily turned to great advantage. As a matter of fact, it was not until the year 1875, 249 years after Lord Bacon's fatal experiment, that freezing was practically employed as a method of preserving flesh. This was the commencement of the frozen meat trade between America and England. Four years later a dry air refrigerator was perfected.

Thought He Had Died.

A prominent member of a German-American society told a story about a German friend of his who was taken ill. For many days the German was close to death, but after a time he showed improvement in condition. The doctor told the German's wife that her husband might have anything to eat that he liked.

The German expressed a desire for Limburger cheese, and the wife, being a generous woman and pleased at the improvement and in order that her husband might have a nibble at any time he had a taste for it, put some cheese in every room in the house. It is easy to imagine the aroma.

The next morning the doctor called at the house, and as soon as he opened the door he asked: "When did he die?"—Hartford Post.

How It Works Out.

"I never tell funny stories in my speeches," remarked Senator Sorghum.

"The audience always enjoys them." "Yes, a man hears you tell a funny story, and he thinks it is so good he tries to remember it. He regards you as a first rate fellow and feels thankful to you for giving him a new one. Then he tells it to the first friend he meets, and as he isn't a good story teller the friend doesn't laugh. Then he tries it on the blunt hotel clerk and the stolid drug store man and several others, and by the time he gets home he concludes you have passed him a gold brick. He not only refuses to vote for you, but tells all his friends he doesn't think it's dignified to keep in office a man who tells funny stories."—Washington Star.

Spelled In Full.

"We had an editor in chief on our paper years ago who was a stickler for no abbreviations," said a veteran newspaper man. "He didn't believe in abbreviating anything but the word mister. The names of states had to be spelled out. One time one of the boys wrote a news story which contained this clause: 'And Mozart's mass was played.' The proofreader who got the story had been under the exacting direction of that editor for years, too many years to allow any proper name to get by him without being spelled out, so when he came to this 'mass' he 'rung' the word, and it came out 'Mozart's Massachusetts.'"—Omaha Bee.

Radical.

"I hear that your new school superintendent is rather radical." "He is that," responded Farmer Haw. "He's cut out the higher headwork and the perforated tattling, and he's advising teachers to handle the children according to the rules of common sense. Oh, yes! Our new superintendent is radical, all right."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Ambiguous.

Parishioner (a little worse for liquor)—I hears you preach las' night. Minister—You didn't hear much, I fancy. "That's what I thought myself."—London Pick-Me-Up.

Inquisitive.

"One half of the world doesn't know how the other half lives," observed the moralizer. "How provoking!" exclaimed Mrs. Gossyp.—Lippincott's.

Mind no business but your own.—Dr. Johnson.

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Condensed Knowledge.

Recent experiments have proved that the sea water of the Coast of Ireland is exceedingly rich in radium, as is the water of the Arabian Sea.

Astronomers figure that the famous Halley's comet, last seen in 1835, will again be visible to telescopes next fall, and that it will approach the earth until April, 1910, being apparent to the naked eye for several months before that time.

Over 2000 operations without a single accident have been performed by Paris surgeons with the use of a new anesthetic known as novocaine.

Sulphuric acid allowed to drip slowly into a patent bearing until it cools, then removed and oil applied, is said to work a permanent cure.

The smallest healthy adult human brain ever recorded was that of a New York coachman, who died recently at the age of 46. It weighed but 24 ounces.

In New Zealand there is an island almost constantly enveloped in steam. Its waters appear green to the eye, but anything dipped into them is coated red.

The energy stored up in a gram of radium is said to be sufficient to drive a fifty horse power automobile around the world at the rate of thirty miles an hour.

Of value to tailors and seamstresses is a pin cushion invented by a Tennesseean, which has a spring clamp for holding it on the arm of a sewing machine.

The "rolling stones" of Australia placed on a fairly smooth surface will soon roll together in a group. They contain a magnetic ore.

An Illinois man has invented a machine, something like the wireless telegraph apparatus, which, he claims, will permit a person to influence the weather in a given locality in any way that he may wish.

A Paying Investment.

Mr. John White, of 38 Highland Ave., Houlton, Maine, says: "Have been troubled with a cough every winter and spring. Last winter I tried many advertised remedies, but the cough continued until I bought a 50c. bottle of Dr. King's New Discovery; before that was half gone, the cough was all gone. This winter the same happy result has followed; a few doses once more banished the annual cough. I am now convinced that Dr. King's New Discovery is the best of all cough and lung remedies." Sold under guarantee at Chas. I. Clough's drug store, 50c. and \$1.00. Trial bottle free.

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"I have used Dr. King's New Life Pills for many years, with increasing satisfaction. They take the kinks out of stomach, liver and bowels, without fuss or friction," says N. H. Brown, of Pittsfield, Vt. Guaranteed satisfactory at Chas. I. Clough's drug store, 25c.

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