

MARVELLOUS MEMORIES

STORIES OF PRODIGIES WHO LEARNED BY ROTE.

Five Books of Confucius Could Be Reconstructed Many Times Over by Men Who Have Learned Them Word by Word—Macaulay's Boast—Memorizing From the Bible—Feats of Musicians and Artists.

The art of remembering is to-day a lost one. Books that the modern man cherishes he can easily possess, and facts that he wishes to preserve for future use he finds in books of reference or in his own card catalogues. Only in China, and among the devotees of esoteric religions in memory above par. Every Chinese scholar worthy of the name for two thousand years at least has known the Five Books of Confucius so nearly by rote that if every copy was destroyed a thousand could be taken immediately from memory, and the difference in text would be negligible.

The Five Books are printed in many volumes, and with the commentaries of Mencius make a library in themselves; yet so well are they textually known among the literati that it is an insult—which well-meaning foreigners affix to display their learning frequently commit—to refer to a passage anywhere in any of them except by the mention of a word or two. The text of all is as well-known to the scholars as is the passage, "To be or not to be," to Shakespeareans.

Macaulay once boasted that if Milton and Virgil and Homer were destroyed, the poets could be taken down verbatim again from his dictation. About a thousand years ago such a necessity arose in China. A great Emperor ordered the classics and commentaries burnt and destroyed. Those who clung to their books more than to their lives were executed and their books burned. The catastrophe was well-nigh completed. The next Emperor, however, favored the learning of the literati and himself ordered the texts restored from the memories of the learned. The catalogue of classic books includes more than thirty-two hundred titles in many thousands of volumes, and of these a very great many have been preserved to posterity solely by the memories of those old men.

To-day the Bible is the best memorized book in the world, and no doubt it could be entirely reconstructed from the minds of its students. One young woman alone could dictate the New Testament. She is Miss Leste May Williams of North Carolina, now 20 years old. Early in March, 1905, Rev. J. A. Brendell, pastor of the local Baptist church, offered two Bibles as prizes for memorizing verses of Scripture. The first was for those over 12 years of age, and the second for those under that age.

On the day of the award Miss Williams had committed and recited to the committee 12,236 verses of Scripture, covering the entire New Testament except the two genealogies of Jesus in the first chapter of Matthew and the third chapter of Luke, and including liberal selections from Genesis, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and other parts of the Old Testament. The New Testament itself contains 7,995 verses and 190,000 words.

The most frequent cases of wonderful memories are found among mathematical prodigies. These usually develop their remarkable faculty quite young, and in later life sink into very ordinary individuals. The phenomenon has never been explained; but there are several well-documented instances of genuine marvels of this kind.

Zerah Colburn was one such. At the age of six he could neither write nor cipher, and yet could answer apparently by mere intuition, all sorts of arithmetical questions correctly and instantly. At eight he left the United States to show in London, and there, in a moment, answered this question correctly, "How many minutes are there in eighty-four years?" He added the number of seconds in the period immediately on request. He could not explain the mental process he used, and it may have been simply a queer instinct. Young Colburn raised eight to the sixteenth power mentally, and gave the answer as 281,474,357,110,121,411,311,516,182,225,031,229,857,576,880,570,013,016.

of which I extracted the square root in twenty-seven places—157,103,016,871,423,806,817,152,711; which numbers I did not commit to paper till he gave me another visit. March following, when I did from memory dictate them to him."

Mozart memorized the music of the Misere after hearing it twice only; and it is among musicians to-day that memory is most used as an every-day accomplishment. Hundreds of pianists and others can play for hours, or even days, from memory. Many orchestra conductors can dispense with memory while under twenty-one.

A Young Captain.—William Brewster, a Grimsby (Eng.) fishing apprentice, was notified recently by the Board of Trade that he had gained his extra master's certificate qualifying him to act as shipmaster in any part of the world. Brewster was apprenticed from an Essex workhouse, and though he is not yet out of his time he has by dint of study at the Fisherlads' Institute and practical experience at sea gained the highest honors of his calling while yet under twenty-one.

The Crown of Wisdom.—Pervez Willie, my father used to whisper when I behaved as badly as you are doing. Willie—Well, I hope I'll never have to tell my little boy that.

A Reproof.—A bishop was once led into a controversy with a learned man as to the mental superiority of the east over the west, and his opponent, as a parting shot, said: "Well, at any rate, you can't dispute the fact that the wise men came from the east." Surely it was the wisest thing they could do.

The painters Horace Vernet and Gustave Doré could paint portraits from memory, and the retentiveness of artists' minds for colors is also remarkable.

DISTRUSTFUL AT NIGHT.

Elephants In a Circus Always Stand Watch Over Each Other.

When it's time for the circus to go to bed most of the animals are willing; even anxious, to turn in and leave it to the humans who look after their comfort in the daytime to see that things are all right for the night. Not so with the elephant. They trust their safety during the long quiet hours of darkness and uncanny noises with no mere keeper.

"There isn't any bunch of elephants that will go to sleep and let their keeper see that everything is all right any more than a bunch of sailors would all turn in at the same time and let a ship sail herself. Yet they have watches just like the sailors, so any man knows what he has to watch elephants when they go to bed. Take our elephants, for instance. Out of these 23 there are at least three that'll keep on their feet, when the others turn in? Never seen an elephant turn in? Well, sir, they do it just as nice as children. There ain't no one of 'em don't know when it's time to go to bed and set the watch. There'll be one near each end of the line and one about in the middle, and they stand there with their eyes looking around for trouble just as if they were all in the jungle not knowing what to expect instead of with men that's here to see that the come to no harm."

"Now, these tellers that stand guard keep right on their feet merrily and it's a caution to watch 'em. There'll be one near each end of the line and one about in the middle, and they stand there with their eyes looking around for trouble just as if they were all in the jungle not knowing what to expect instead of with men that's here to see that the come to no harm."

"The funniest part of it is the way they change the watch. Don't believe it? Well, it's as sure as I'm standin' here. These two or three elephants that will have the first watch will keep awake a few hours and then they'll give the elephants nearest to 'em a poke with their trunks. That means it's their turn, and sure enough you'll see them get up, kind of sleepy, of course but showin' they know it's up to them all right. Then the first watch will turn in. I've seen it done night after night and it's one of the things that makes you have a lot of respect for an elephant even if it makes you a bit sore to think that they're that suspicious of their friends."

TREES THAT WHISTLE AND WEEP.

In Nubia there is a curiosity in tree life. It is called the Sofar or Whistling tree. When the soft winds blow through its branches it gives forth delightful melodies after the manner of the old-time Aeolian harp. For hours at a time this strange weird music stretches out across the wilderness, thrilling the listener with a mad fantasy of pleasure. The Nubians claim that it is the spirits of the dead, singing to those who are about to join them. Scientists say that the music is caused by millions of small holes bored by an insect in the spines of the leaves. Another tree, that interests botanists, is the Weeping tree of the Canary Islands. This tree, during the driest weather, will rain down regular showers from its leaves. The natives during a drought gather under the banches and fill their buckets. The water is clear and pure.

Why Do Seals Swallow Stones? No nature student seems yet to have discovered for what reason seals swallow stones, though the fact is a well-established one. Certainly the stones are not taken in for ballast, for the empty seals keep down as easily as the others. They are not swallowed for the purpose of grinding up food, for they are found in the stomachs of nursing pups. They are not taken in with the food, because they are found in the stomachs of both young seals and in those that live in the open sea and feed on squid. Yet it is evident that these things are not swallowed haphazard, but are selected with considerable care from the articles strewn along the shore, and that a preference is exhibited for rounded objects. This is shown by the fact that, as a rule, only articles of one kind are found in any one seal's stomach.

What An Earthquake Is. "An earthquake," writes Frank A. Perret, formerly honorary assistant at the Royal Vesuvian observatory, in Century, "is an undulating vibration of the ground resulting from some sudden movement of the underlying strata. This may be produced by a volcanic explosion, the breaking of a stratum of rock under strain or the sudden intrusion of lava into the crust or into a fracture, the types respectively known as volcanic, tectonic and intervolcanic." My own impression in experiencing these shocks was that of a rubbing together of masses under pressure, which throws the adjoining material into vibration. If you put a little water into a thin, bell-mouthed crystal goblet, wet the finger tip and rub it around the rim, a sound will be produced and the water will be set in vibration like the ground waves of an earthquake."

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The Post's Woe. "I have always been a reader of your poetry," began Mrs. Gushe. "I am glad," replied Algernon Charles Mystic, "that some one understands me."

"Oh, but that is what I have been hoping to meet you for. I wanted you to explain."

The Day of Rest. "And now," said Mr. Fishwick of Brinsford, "let us be thankful for one day of rest and get ready for church." "Yes," said his wife, "run out and chop some wood and milk the cows and light the fire and make the coffee and wash the children while I hang my hair."

A Reproof. Pervez Willie, my father used to whisper when I behaved as badly as you are doing. Willie—Well, I hope I'll never have to tell my little boy that.

The habit of looking at the best side of any event is worth far more than a thousand pounds a year.—Johnson.

DIMINUTIVE FARMS.

The Way Real Estate is Divided Up In Portugal.

The Portuguese are an extremely conservative people. Every man follows rigidly the methods employed by his father and forefathers. In very many parts of the country the old wooden plows are still used.

When a man dies, instead of one of the heirs taking the whole property and paying the remaining heirs for their parts the whole property is divided into as many parts as there are heirs. More than this, each separate part of the property is thus divided. Thus, if the property consists of ten acres of pasture land, eighty of vineyard and ten of grain land and there are ten heirs, each heir will receive one acre each of grain and pasture land and eight acres of vineyard. This process has been going on for a very long time, so that now in the most fertile part of Portugal the land is divided into incredibly small portions.

The immediate result of this, according to the United States consular reports, is that the product of the land is barely sufficient at best to sustain its owners. South of the river Tagus, on the other hand, there are enormous tracts of excellent land lying unused, but it has been found impossible to induce the farmers of the north to move into this region and take up large holdings.

WHITEWASHING COAL.

Not Done For the Sake of Neatness but to Prevent Thefts.

Persons who have been somewhat astonished by having "whitewashed coal delivered to them will be interested to know that the whitewashing is not done to improve the appearance or to increase the burning qualities. The treatment neither improves nor harms the fuel.

It is a detective scheme on the part of the railroads to locate and to prevent theft of the coal as it is hauled from the mines to the consumer. These degradations amount to thousands of tons annually, and the railroads are the sufferers, as it is up to them to deliver as many tons at their destination, often a thousand miles away, as were weighed in when the car was turned over for transportation.

Two or three tons may be removed from a carload containing forty tons without attracting attention to its decreased quantity until the car is again placed on the scales. To locate the thief will turn in. I've seen it done night after night and it's one of the things that makes you have a lot of respect for an elephant even if it makes you a bit sore to think that they're that suspicious of their friends."

A Nation of Borrowers. Zanzibar appears, from a consular report, to be a place of universal borrowing. "Neither the Arabs nor the Swahili," says the report, "has the slightest idea of thrift. The former, when he has sold his cloves, immediately spends the proceeds in entertaining, or in the purchase of European articles for which he has little or no use. He then mortgages his property at a ruinous rate of interest or sells his next year's crop in advance at a price which would hardly pay for its harvesting, with the inevitable result that he is always up to his eyes in debt. The Swahili, if he happens to be out of debt at the beginning of the month, spends all his pay within a few days in food or native dances and has to beg, borrow or steal sufficient to maintain himself for the rest of the month. The money lender is in both cases the Indian, and the interest which he charges varies from 30 up to 300 per cent."

Managing a Servant. One housewife declares that at last she has solved the servant problem. Formerly I had a noted trouble with my maid, she said. "They'd do well for awhile, and then they'd deteriorate so that I simply couldn't keep them. So I hit on this plan: When I noticed falling off in the last maid's work I went into the kitchen and told her that, in addition to her fixed wages, she should have 50 cents extra every week that she did well. When she was only fairly good I'd give her a quarter, but on the weeks when she displeased me she'd get nothing. Nine weeks out of ten she gets her half dollar. It pleases her immensely, and I find the plan well worth while in the better service it secures me."

ANNUAL MEETING. The annual meeting of the Walters Falls Agricultural Society will be held in Walters Falls on Friday, Jan. 21, at 1 o'clock, for the purpose of receiving the annual report, election of officers for the ensuing year, and other business in connection with the Society. A large attendance is urged. S. Marshall, President. F. E. Wickham, Sec.

It is not what you eat, but what you assimilate that nourishes.

Miller's Compound Iron Pills cure faulty assimilation. Sold by W. Turner & Co.

Recovering.

GIVING HOME IN A WEEK. Upon his return home the child who lived in the shadow of his wills in Toronto, Canada, was given a new home in a week. The new home was a Club Room, festooned with pictures of the hospital's patients.

MASSAGING A PATIENT. Last year and 67 had perfect

BEFORE. Just think of it—Your money can help the Hospital to do the good work of straightening the crooked limbs and clubs of little children. Please help us.

Please Send Contributions to J. Ross Robertson, Chairman, or to Douglas Davidson, Sec-Treas., The Hospital for Sick Children, College St., Toronto.

Horses in Literature. In sacred writ it was deemed worthy of record that Solomon imported horses from Egypt, while the description of the war steed in Job is accounted one of the best parts of that piece of literature. In Greek myth and English satire the qualities ascribed to Centaur and the Houyhnhnms testify sufficiently to the high regard in which the horse has ever been held. The name of Bucephalus is inseparably coupled with that of Alexander. At least one Roman emperor had divine honors paid to his charger. Who can picture Don Quixote sleeping on his armor without seeing the princely Rosalinda tethered under the dewy night? And the stirring incidents of John Giphin's ride through the desert proved that the racing blood of far removed equine ancestors was not entirely wanting in the degenerate descendant.

Got All He Asked For. Another "meanest man" has been found. He lives in the city and conducts a thriving business. The other day a seedy individual approached him and said: "Say, mister, I'm hungry and would like to get a nickel to get a cup of coffee and a roll. I have four pennies and only need one more. Please give me a penny."

The man after searching himself said: "I haven't got a penny. All I have is a nickel. Give me your four cents' change, and I will give you the nickel."

"Dad wouldn't let me. When he goes fishin' he doesn't want anybody to disturb him while he's thinkin' up the things he's goin' to tell when he gets home."—Washington Star.

A Question of Quietude. "Where's your father?" asked the dinner boarder.

"Gone fishin'." answered the boy with one suspender.

"He's some of the queerest luck you ever heard of."

"Why didn't you go with him?"

"Dad wouldn't let me. When he goes fishin' he doesn't want anybody to disturb him while he's thinkin' up the things he's goin' to tell when he gets home."—Washington Star.

R. J. BROWN DISAPPEARS

No Trace of Former Markdale Young Man Who Disappeared in British Columbia.

Mr. Robert J. Brown, a public school Principal of Ottawa, left that city a few months ago upon the advice of a physician for the Okanagan Valley, in British Columbia, where he purchased a fruit farm. He got comfortably settled at a small place, called Oyama, and on October 29 left there for Okanagan Centre, a village five miles away, to transact some business. In the afternoon he started on his return journey, and since then nothing has been seen or heard of him. Search parties composed of as many as seventy men, have scoured the country without finding any trace of Brown dead or alive. Monday his broken-hearted wife, who is a native of Caintown, near Brockville, with her five small children, arrived there and proceeded to the residence of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Tewantin. It is supposed that Brown, while in a temporary state of mental aberration, disappeared into a woods and kept wandering until he was beyond the reach of the searching parties.

Robt. J. Brown was a native of Markdale, only son of the late Isaac Brown and cousin to James Brown, of the suburbs, and Fred Brown near Flesherton.

The Hospital for Sick Children

COLLEGE ST., TORONTO.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In Matter of the Estate of Robert John Sturgeon, late of Township of Euphrasia in County of Grey, Farmer.

For the digging and grubbing of well at school house No. 7 in the township of Holland. Plans and specifications may be obtained from the undersigned at Holland, Carson Price, Sec-Treas.

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