

AIDS MENTAL PROCESS.

The Habit of Snapping the Fingers May Have That Effect in Some Cases.

Did you ever notice the peculiar habit some men have of snapping their fingers while trying to recall something which has escaped their minds for the moment? asked a man who keeps a keen lookout for the curious in human nature, according to the New Orleans Times-Democrat. "Now, here is a curious study, and one which, if pursued, may throw much light on a very interesting subject. Anything relating to memory, the retentiveness of the human mind, is always of interest to me, and I have noted with much concern these curious physical manifestations when the mind picture becomes so obscure that its lines are lost. Why should a man snap his fingers when he temporarily forgets a thing? Does this physical movement aid the mental processes? Does the fact prove the material basis of the mind? It must show a very intimate connection between the two. After all, the intimacy existing between the mind and the body is very close, and personally, I have always believed in the theory which teaches us that psychology has a psychological basis and can have no other basis. The simple habit of snapping the fingers when one's memory fails for the moment would seem to offer proof of the fact. Curiously enough this same condition, a psychological movement, will manifest itself in many ways under similar circumstances. All men do not snap their fingers when there is a mental lapse which they are seeking to overcome. They find other ways of bridging the gap. One man will pat his foot when he forgets temporarily. Another will bite his lip, or place his finger against his temple, or rub one hand across his forehead, or resort to some other effort to stimulate his lagging memory. Why is this? Is one's memory really aided by these physical movements? It must be. Else humanity would have dropped them long ago. Almost every man, when he forgets something, a name, for instance, which is right on the end of his tongue, will make some kind of physical effort to conjure the proper image from its hiding place in the brain cells. Why it is so I do not know. I know merely that it happens, and I suppose it answers some good purpose."

ITALIAN MARIONETTES.

Cleverly Fashioned Figures Used in the Entertainment of Playgoers in That Country.

It remained for the Italians, however, to bring marionettes to their highest state of development, and wonderful indeed is the ingenuity of their shows. We saw a remarkable clever performance given by fantoccini last year under the colonnades of the Municipio at Orta. On carefully examining the dolls, we found them to be not entirely made of wood. The head was of papier mache—light and capable of feeling the slightest impulse, and provided with a hinged lower jaw arranged to imitate the movements of talking. The body and limbs were wooden; the arms, legs and neck of lead, or leaded so as to readily obey the laws of gravity. All the strings destined to move the arms and legs united inside the body and issued together from the head. A metal rod connected this latter with the operator in his "castello," and by it the marionette could be moved about the stage, writes Ernest B. Peixotto, in Scribner's Magazine. The play dealt with peasant life, relating the trite story of a country lass who, despite the allurements of the city and the attentions of a great gentleman, remains true to her rustic swain; of Rosalia, her mother, and Pietro, her father—a cobbler with just enough work to keep his family from starvation; and the voices of their hungry children calling from behind the scenes for "polenta, polenta!" At another show I saw a shepherd in his goat skins do a drunken scene upon his stilts, that for a low comedy was absolutely inimitable, and well do I remember a dancing giant who dropped first his arms, then his legs, and finally his head, each of which, with the body, became separately waltzing figures. Some years ago, for now the vogue has almost died away, the Italian nobles gave fantoccini shows in their private palaces—plays reeking with escapades of the Roman magnificence and political satire that dared not show its face on public boards.

Artificial Pearls.

The artificial production of pearls in large quantities is a simple problem. In the view of Dr. H. Lyster Jameson, the cause of pearl formation proves to be a worm, which has its origin in the cockle or "tapestry-shell," from which the larvae pass to the mussel. If the larvae remain in the mussel long enough, pearls are formed. With full knowledge of the life histories of these parasites it is believed that pearl oysters or pearl mussels may be infected to any desired extent by placing them in infected company, and the infected mollusks can then be left to themselves in suitable beds until the pearls are sufficiently developed.—Chicago Post.

The American Face.

In no sense of the word is the American face distinctive, and there is nothing that will call it up in the mind from the world's group of Caucasian faces. The answer to this is that the American face is a composite, necessarily.—London Health.

WILD FOWLS IN MEXICO.

A Corner of Our Hemisphere Little Known to Hunters Who Thrive in Much Game.

There is a part of the American continent seldom visited by sportsmen, which is a hive of winter game. It offers extraordinary inducements to the amateur shooter and a wide field for the market hunter. The chances are that it will remain for years a vast natural reserve and a place from which will come the birds to replenish annually the decimated flocks that winter on waters more easily reached, says the New York Sun. The territory embraces the far-extending marshes of northeastern Mexico. It is a country of lagunas, or sluggish rivulets, scarce lower than the lands through which they flow. The soil is permeated with water which seeps and trickles for miles. It grows an endless variety of food and in enormous quantities. Its ponds are in thousands. Cover is everywhere. With every advantage of climate, water and food the ducks have sought it in millions, particularly as there they are comparatively undisturbed, and the same leaders visit it year after year, taking their fresh offspring. It is known as the Lagunas district. Railways have dodged it as far as possible, as building through it is costly in the extreme. It lies partly in the state of Coahuila and partly in Nuevo Leon at a distance of from 100 to 200 miles beyond the Rio Grande. The Mexicans have no game laws to speak of, because they have never needed them. They are not sportsmen as Gringos understand the term. Occasionally one of them takes a single barreled fowling piece which came from Spain a century ago, or a musket which has drifted down from the States, goes out and murders a duck or two for dinner, but that is about the limit of the national shooting. Americans who have heard of the region go down in small parties, stay for a week or ten days and make enormous bags, from which they feed themselves and as many of the natives as happen to be about, but it is not likely that the Lagunas country will be invaded in force for the next quarter of a century. Getting into the neighborhood costs money and then there is a long and toilsome trip to the grounds. The heart of the Lagunas is not to be reached under 50 miles from any railway, and the adventurer will be apt to go by ox cart with wooden wheels as any other way. Walking is a good deal faster and easier. Once there, however, a man may wear out his gun shooting from daylight to dark if his shoes will not wear out first and there is no migratory northern bird which he will find, not to mention several varieties of ducks and many varieties of birds which never come north at all. Snipe are there, woodcock, every kind of American wild duck, geese of many kinds, pelicans, bronze ibises, flamingoes and what not and in such quantities that killing them, unless a man picks out difficult shots, becomes a monotonous. There is seldom frost and never ice of more than a window pane's thickness, and in the winter the climate is excellent; in spring and summer it is deadly. There is, of course, no way in which the game can be shipped out, but market hunters who went down there and established a line of transportation to the railways would make fortunes. It is a region where a boat with a swivel gun would stock a city with game in a week.

SILK HATS IN JAPAN.

Some Queer Specimens Are Worn by Men Who Affect European Fashions.

The Japan Weekly Advertiser has a few words to say about the aping of western customs by the Japanese, and takes for its text the foreign clothes seen on citizens of the flowery empire. It says: "Men of fair status are frequently to be seen wearing silk hats of antediluvian pattern, with ordinary native costume down to gaiters and zori. "As for the hats, where the blocks come from is a mystery, but the fact remains that a Bowery or White-chapel tough would be ashamed to go abroad in some of the abortions, masquerading as 'bowlders' and 'toppers,' which are as common as per-simmons in Japan. "Here is a case where the natives cannot excuse themselves on the ground that they have no model to go by. A glance at the first foreigner should be sufficient to teach them that a hard hat worn over the ears, and measuring scarcely more than two inches in height from the brim to the crown, is not a fashionable adjunct of European costume in the twentieth century, though it might have been so 30 years ago. "The wearing of a silk hat with a kimono is, says the Advertiser, 'the outward and visible sign of a certain intellectual inaptitude.'"

POSTURES OF THE FEET.

Well-Bred Girls of To-Day Seem to Lack Training in This Important Particular.

"Why is it that the girls of the present are the girls of to-day not better trained in regard to the disposition of their feet?" said a masculine critic recently, reports the New York Tribune. "Especially," he continued, "as it seems quite permissible nowadays to show foot and ankle with perfect freedom. In olden days young women were taught to sit with their pretty feet daintily crossed before them—a position which can never be awkward—but now the postures assumed by our society maidens are ungainly in the extreme. 'Well bred, charming girls to the knees,' I heard some one comment last summer, at a function where short skirts were worn; but below the knees—rough peasants. Did you ever see such positions? And I looked and marvelled. Feet widely separated and planted flatly and heavily on the floor was one favorite position, another was tucking each foot around the legs of the chair. Several girls I saw sitting with feet turned in—what is called pigeon-toed fashion—and feet apart, also giving the widespread awkward look to the knees. Taking them one and all, everyone's posture was liable to criticism, and I cannot understand why such conspicuous faults should go uncorrected and uncorrected."

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AMERICAN SHOE INDUSTRY.

The Output of Footwear in This Country Is Something Enormous.

The books, shoes and slippers made by machinery in the United States every year would provide a pair of some kind for more than one-seventh of the inhabitants of the earth. If they were arranged by pairs, heels and toes touching, they would make a belt that would encircle the globe with enough to spare to stretch across the North American continent from New York to San Francisco. Placed singly, heel and toe, they would go around the world two and a half times. If placed on the tracks of our great trunk railroads, the rights on one rail and the lefts on the other, they would cover the irons from the Atlantic to the Pacific of all the continental lines that now cross our country, says a shoe journal. The hides and skins used to form this immense quantity of shoes come from all over the world, but chiefly from the East Indies, South America and Europe, and if they were sewed together in one sheet they would make a tent large enough to cover Manhattan island.

TALL MEN ARE PREAKS.

Learned Authority Upon Giants Says They Have Small Brains Cavities.

Prof. Cunningham, who has been appointed to succeed and serve under his old teacher, Sir William Turner, in the chair of anatomy in the University of Edinburgh, is the greatest authority upon giants, says a London paper. He is at present occupied in elaborating the proofs of his belief that a giant is a morbid phenomenon. A man or woman who is more than six feet five inches, or, at the outside, six feet six inches, cannot be regarded as merely abnormal, the professor thinks. He has shown that the mental characteristics of giants—easy good nature, sloth and poor intelligence—are those shown by victims of a rare disease of overgrowth called acromegaly. This is due to enlargement of an appendage of the brain, and Prof. Cunningham has personally examined every giant skeleton in the British and continental museums, and found that the little cavity in the skull corresponding to this part of the brain is enlarged in all of them. First Ox-Tail Soup. Ox-tail soup, now regarded as a national English dish, was first made by the very poor of Huguenot refugees from France, after the revocation of the edict of Nantes, because ox tails then had no market value.

FELINE FRIEND OF CONVICTS.

Big Gray Cat Is the Pet of Prisoners in the Michigan State Penitentiary.

The pet of the prisoners at the Indiana state prison at Michigan City is a gray cat, said to be the largest animal of the kind in the state. It weighs 22 pounds, is nine years old and has been inside the big walls since it was a kitten. All over the big institution it is known as Tige, says a local report. Warden Reid, who values the animal very highly, says that Tige has a queer fondness for the prisoners, one of whom claims to be its master and from whom it receives all kinds of attention. The cat makes up with a very few of the officers, allows no familiarities on the part of strangers or visitors, but in every case expects the caress of the prisoner, and gets it. In its early days it was the cat's custom to visit the cellhouse and to make friendly calls along the ranges, rubbing its fur at each grated door and singing its little song as if it wished to purr out its sympathy for the confined. But there came a time when its place was usurped by another of its kind and this resulted in the old haunts being abandoned. This was brought about by the cellhouse keeper bringing to his abode a kitten and the dislike occasioned by the newcomer has been unrelenting. Tige may now be seen about the yard, coming and going without hindrance. Most of the time it stays about the pump-house, where its master holds sway and where no other feline may intrude and get away without a fight.

PASSION AND THE HEALTH.

Some Emotions Tend to Prolong Life While Others Have the Opposite Effect.

"The passions' effect on the health is not sufficiently regarded," said a physician, according to the Philadelphia Record. "The passion which is best for the health is avarice. It keeps one cool, encourages regular and industrious habits, leads to abstemiousness and makes against all excess. And hence the avaricious, the misers, live to a great age. The misers of history were all noted for their longevity. Rage is very bad for one. This passion causes an irregular, intermittent beating of the heart and the intermittency in time may become chronic. Hatred creates fever. If we hate we grow lean. This hot passion eats us like a flame. Fear is bad for the nerves, the heart and the brain, and, therefore, we should never permit ourselves to be afraid. But the strangest effects of all have been caused by the passion of grief. The medical books record cases where, coming suddenly, in a violent shock, it has caused a loss of blood from the lungs in one person, paralysis of the tongue in another and a failure of sight or temporary blindness in a third."

SANTIAGO, SPANISH STYLE.

The Great Sea Battle Faithfully Described by a Historian of the Heralds.

An American who was touring Europe last summer came across a new version of the naval battle of Santiago when he reached Madrid. It was written by a Spanish historian, who said: "When our fleet steamed out, the enemy at once sought to run away, as a matter of course, but our ships dashed among them firing right and left. "Some 20 of the Yankee vessels had been sent to the bottom, and the rest of the fleet were flying in terror from the awful missiles flung from our guns, when Providence willed it that every Spanish officer and man should be overcome with exhaustion. "In this awful emergency there was nothing left for our brave admiral but to signal to each of his ships to run ashore. They accordingly sought the beach, and being very sleepy and discouraged our gallant men waded ashore and concluded to stay there. "Spanish honor was saved again, and the queen regent ordered the bells rung in every town in Spain for three successive days. It is rumored that three of Senor Sampson's ships got away, but this cannot be verified."

Odd Animals.

A Morley, Meconga county, cat has an appetite so fastidious that she refuses beefsteak for diet and milk as a washdown, and will eat only coconut butter and boiled mince-meat and drink nothing but grape wine, says the Detroit Tribune. The most singular thing about tabby's refusal of beefsteak is that she is not a hotel cat, but an inmate of a private family. For a contrast, we note a Deerfield dog that devours a greedy meal of raw potatoes and looks around cheerful and refreshed. His case recalls an advertisement where-in the owner offers for sale a white bulldog, with the assurance that he "will eat anything; very fond of children."

Ministers Ineligible.

The constitution of Tennessee provides that whereas ministers of the Gospel are by their profession dedicated to God and the care of souls and ought not to be diverted from the great duties of their functions, therefore no minister of the Gospel, or priest of any denomination whatever, shall be eligible to a seat in either house of the legislature.

Our Growing Navy.

When the recent act of congress becomes effective the navy will have almost 30,000 officers and men.

MISSED GREAT FORTUNE.

South African Colonel Was Five Minutes Too Late to Acquire Share of De Beers Mine.

Mr. W. Salzman, the eldest South African colonist, missed by about five minutes the acquisition of a fortune of \$35,000,000—the great De Beers diamond fields, now one of the richest mines in the world, says Stray Stories. He was surveying Griqualand when the original owner of the famous farm, W. De Beers, held it. It was then about as barren and hopeless-looking a tract as any in Africa, and De Beers, with endless hard work from morning till night, and very little help, had all he could do to scrape a living out of the place. There was hardly any water, and grass was scarce and poor; the total profits only amounted to a pound or two per month. When Mr. Salzman had completed his survey De Beers, tired of profitless toil on his patch of sunburnt desert, offered to let him have the farm in exchange for a waikatoat. Mr. Salzman refused at first, and then said he would think about it. He went to Cape Town later on, where he heard strange rumors of lucky finds in the district he had left. The next time he trekked that way he went 60 miles out of his road to see De Beers and clinch the bargain offered. He found a stranger's wagon and oxen "outsprayed" at the farm when he arrived. Its owner had come only a few minutes before and had already made an offer for the farm which was accepted.

PLUTOCRACY OF PITTSBURG.

Poor-Proud Younger Generation Forgot What Their Fathers Might Have Been.

Pride is a feature of the younger generation of Pittsburghers of wealth. Things of which some of them think they cannot be proud—such as the way in which their hard-working fathers got their start in life—they try to forget. That the fathers are sometimes proud of this same lowly start is responsible for this incident: "Do you know, young man, that I once was very envious of your father?" said one of the steel kings to the son of a man whose wealth, while great, could be written with one less figure, says a writer in the New York Tribune. "And when was that?" asked the young man, pleased to think that there had ever been a time when the "king" envied his father. "It was this way," returned the old man. "I was working in a ditch for \$1.50 a day—" "I didn't know you started that way," interrupted the youth. "That's the way. I was working in this ditch for \$1.50 a day, and your father was working in the same ditch. He got \$1.75 because he was stronger, and I envied him the extra quarter."

LIGHTNING STRIKES UP.

The Earth Becomes Charged with Negative Current Which Rushes Upward.

The cause of death by lightning is the sudden absorption of the electric current. When a thundercloud, which is highly charged with positive electricity, hangs over any certain place, the earth beneath it becomes abnormally charged with the negative electric current, and a man, animal or other object standing or lying directly beneath also partakes of the last mentioned influence, says a scientific authority. If, while the man, animal or other object is in this condition, a discharge takes place from the cloud above, the restoration of the equilibrium will be sudden and violent, or, in language that we can all understand, the negative current from the earth will rush up to join the positive cloud current, and in passing through the object which separates the two currents, if it be an animate thing, will do so with such force as to almost invariably produce instant death. A person is really "struck" by the ground current, and not by the forked fury from above.

Earnings of College Students.

By a variety of employments, ranging from teaching and technical work to sweeping rooms and washing dishes, 164 Columbia university students earned in three months last year \$15,000—an average of about \$90 for each man. One student earned more than \$100 a week during the three months by advanced tutoring, and another gained \$1,050 during the 12 weeks. Several of the students earned \$300 each. Of the women students 17 gained \$2,434.68, an average of \$143, or \$50 above the men's average.

Facts from Birth Statistics.

Recently compiled statistics show that the proportion of twins born as compared with other infants is one in eighty births. Of triplets there is only one instance in 6,400, and quadruplets are as one to 512,000; while the chances of a quintet are even more remote, the ratio being one in 40,980,000 births. A case is known of a woman who presented her husband with seven successive triplets.

Voluntary Crop Observers.

The agricultural department has 107,000 voluntary crop observers. Cotton is reported on seven times a year, wheat eight times, corn and oats each six times.

PARIS BEHIND THE TIMES.

First Building with American Construction Methods and Comforts Only Recently Erected.

It is only of late years that even the more pretentious homes in Paris would create any enthusiasm in the minds of Americans, accustomed as they are to many conveniences which are considered great luxuries in France, says the Architectural Record. It is no unusual thing to see a cart with a yellow-painted bathtub and a tank of hot water stop before houses in fashionable quarters. Elevators have just come into general use, and, with the exception of those of American manufacture, are usually slow, uncertain and complicated in mechanism. Wax candles are to be seen in the chandeliers as often as electric lights. Things are, however, changing, and last year in the avenue du Bois de Boulogne a model building was erected, which combines French elegance with all the American comforts. It is of white sandstone, in the Louis XV. style, with the entrance at the side through heavy iron and glass gates. The building consists of two "hotels" or private residences, and one apartment. The first "hotel" occupies the first two floors, the apartment the third, and the second "hotel" the fourth and fifth. The rooms for the servants are on the sixth floor. The "conciergerie" or gatekeeper has his lodge just inside the entrance. He opens the gates and has the supervision of the general halls and staircases, and also of the heating of the entire house in winter. AN EFFECTIVE ALARM CLOCK. Not Only Awakes the Sleeper, But Gives Him a Jawing at the Same Time. "Ring-a-ding-a-ding-a-ding! Get up, you lazy loafer! It's seven o'clock!" Those strenuous words, preceded by the tinkle of a brisk little bell, caused a visitor in a West Philadelphia home to hop out of bed the other morning with immense suddenness, says the Philadelphia Record. The words were so authoritative that he had the same feeling of submission he had when a schoolboy and his father called him. So he jumped up now without question. What had awakened him was a phonographic clock, an ingenious arrangement devised by his host, which was so set that the same spring which started the alarm started, a moment later, a phonographic attachment. The maker of the phonographic clock said he thought of patenting it. "You see," he said, "the phonograph, speaking to you after the alarm wakes you, can be made to say different things, can be made, for instance, if you have an important engagement, to tell you of it—can be made to state emphatically to you, don't you know, the reason why you should arise. Usually my phonograph says to me: 'Get up, it's seven o'clock. Get up, or the boss will dock you for being late.'"

LUXURY AND GOOD HEALTH.

One May Enjoy Both in These Days of Sanitary Foods and Drinks.

There never was a time, perhaps, in the history of the world when there was such a determined effort to find and keep good health as at present. Young and old are beginning to realize, apparently, that something must be done to preserve bodily vigor. Foods almost by the hundred are offered as sure promoters of vitality and attractive advertisements contain more or less learned discussions upon the value of strong nerves, pure blood and a clear brain, says the Cleveland Leader.

Those who do not live upon health foods are devoting much of their time to physical culture and nearly every house in which there are young people contains its quota of gymnasium apparatus. Outdoor and indoor sports have more devotees than ever before. Golf, baseball, football, tennis, basketball, bowling and other forms of amusement which induce perspiration and increase the action of the heart are depended upon to supplement more physical culture, so-called, in building up strong bodies and laying the foundation for good health and long life.

Rattles of the Rattlesnake.

The rattlesnake's rattle consists of a number of hollow, horny rings, somewhat like quill in substance, and interlocked with one another, while they are so elastic as to permit of a considerable amount of motion between them. These rings are not indicative of age, as has been supposed, since in some years several appear, while in others only one ring may be developed.

Allied Senses.

The sense of smell is most nearly allied to that of taste. Hearing and seeing depend upon nerve responses to vibrations in the air in the ether. In order to taste a subject it has to be wholly or partially dissolved; in order to smell a substance it must encounter the olfactory organs as a vapor, an emanation, a cloud of particles arising from odoriferous matter.

Savage Wild Creatures.

Speaking generally, wild creatures inhabiting hot countries are more savage than those of cold or temperate countries.