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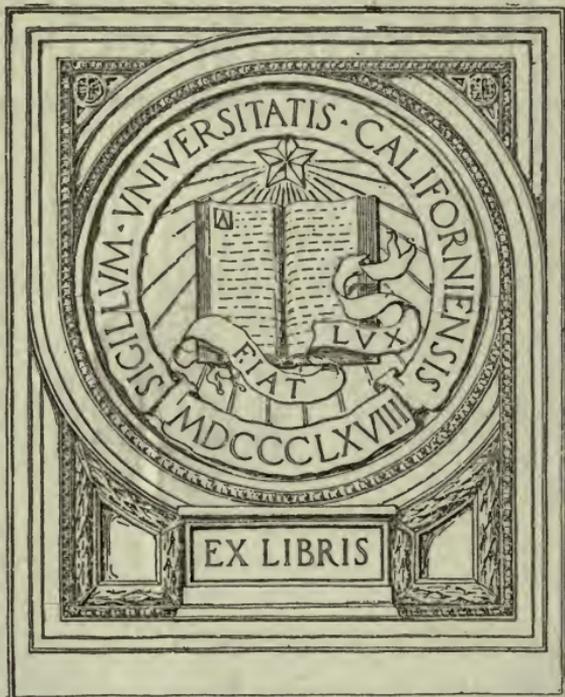
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# YOUR MEMORY!

A Delightful and Profitable  
Servant

BY

GEORGE WHARTON JAMES

*Author of "Living the Radiant Life," "Quit Your Worrying,"*

*"Swimming Through Life with God," "In and Around the  
Grand Canyon," "Arizona, the Wonderland,"*

*"Judith Bachelet," Etc., Etc.*

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THIS IS A CHAPTER FROM "DELIGHT AND POWER IN  
SEARCH," A UNIVERSAL DRAMATIC READER, BY  
LEONARD G. NATTEMPER AND GEORGE  
WHARTON JAMES. FULL ANNOUNCE-  
MENT ON INSIDE COVER.

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THE RADIANT LIFE PRESS  
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

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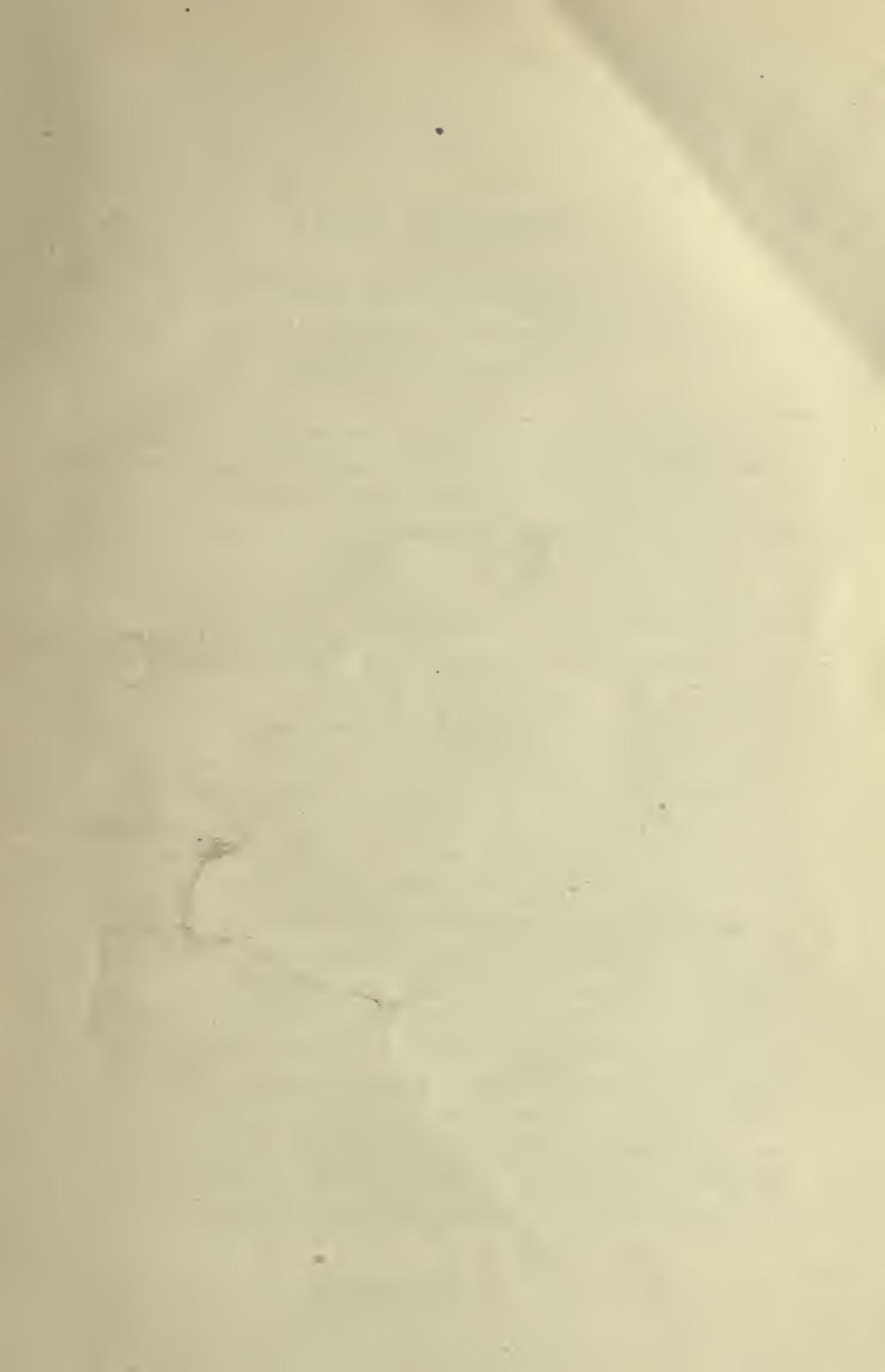
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1098 N. RAYMOND AVENUE,

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA



Class of 1887

# YOUR MEMORY!

## A Delightful and Profitable Servant

### A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE CULTIVATION OF THE MEMORY

NOTHING is of greater importance to the intelligent and thoughtful man or woman who would become a public speaker than the cultivation of the memory. Its pleasures and joys are no less than its importance and usefulness. Well might Richter exclaim: "Recollection is the only paradise from which we cannot be turned out." How it brings back to us joys of sights, sounds and emotions. One has been thrilled with a gorgeous landscape, a brilliant and vivid sunset, a majestic mountain, a vision of feminine beauty, or an inspiring exhibition of physical prowess. He has seen the proud march of armed men, or the gathering of gay and happy throngs in the public play-grounds and parks. A thousand memories of sights bring back joys and delights of other days. So is it with the memories of sounds—concerts, symphonies, stirring songs, martial music, and the sweet voices of loved ones passed away.

It can readily be seen that memory is the practical basis of all knowledge. Indeed there is no conscious knowledge without memory. No man can think without it; there is no business success; no writing, no poetry, no literature, no oratory, no conversation, no music, no art, no psychology, no *anything of mental life* without memory. Without memory there is no identity. If I cannot remember myself of an hour ago, of yesterday, of many yesterdays, I cannot be a personality. Life would be disconnected and therefore incoherent and useless.

A poor memory is ever a hindrance if not a positive curse.

It is as if one's legs should fail to bear him up when he starts to walk, run, leap, or as if his eyes should refuse to see, or saw but dimly when he wished to observe. It is a never-ending cause of confusion, embarrassment, irritation, and loss. No man in any walk of life ever yet succeeded without a good memory, and many a public speaker owes his success to his always ready power over this faculty. Abraham Lincoln is a striking example of this truth.

### STOKES'S GOLDEN RULE OF MEMORY

Psychologists have not yet determined what the memory is, but all are agreed that it can be cultivated. A few general propositions can be laid down, which, if faithfully followed, are certain to bring desired results. Stokes, the great memory teacher of the Royal Polytechnic Institution of London, formulated his golden rule of memory as follows: "Observe, reflect, link thought with thought, and think of the impressions."

### STRENGTHENING THE OBSERVATION

Careful observation is the basis of memory. To observe is to regard with attention, to note with interest, in other words *to see well*. How many people are there who see *well*? All persons who are not blind can see, but do they see *well*? It must be confessed that good observers are rare, and that is one reason why good memories are rare. The discipline of the observation is one of the most important ends of all mental education. Teach a child to observe and he can and will educate himself. Indeed he cannot help becoming educated. Without discipline of the observation one may pass through ten colleges and yet remain uneducated. What is the reason the Indian can follow a trail so much better than a white man? His life has depended upon his powers of observation. From the earliest days of his dawning intelligence his perceptive fac-

ulties were aroused and highly developed by the struggle for his very existence. He was compelled to watch the animals in order that he might avoid those that were dangerous, and catch those that were good for food; to follow the flying birds that he might know when to trap them. He watched the fishes as they spawned and hatched; the insects as they bored and burrowed; the plants and trees as they grew and budded, blossomed and seeded. The tracks of animals, whether upon the sand, the snow, the mud, or more solid earth, soon became familiar signs to him. All these and many other things in nature he learned to know thoroughly in his simple and primitive manner. This knowledge in his daily struggle for existence came by means of his attention to details. Hence to the untrained white man his powers of observation seem little short of marvelous.

Children from their earliest years should be taught with systematic persistence to cultivate this faculty. They should be urged to tell all they can see in pictures. A table spread with diverse articles covered with a cloth is also a good means of disciplining close attention and memory. Let the children stand around it and, after removing the cloth, give them a minute, or less, for observation, then re-cover. Then give each child a chance to tell how many articles there are; what they are; and what is their relative position to each other, etc. An intelligent teacher will invent a score of devices for cultivation of the powers of observation, and nothing will better repay her endeavors.

Henry Ward Beecher used to illustrate the difference between observers and non-observers by telling a tale of two city lads whom he once sent out into the country. One he called "Eyes" and the other "No Eyes." Each was to go to a certain place and report upon what he saw. The one on his return had seen little. The other—Eyes—was filled to overflowing with the things he had observed.

It is undoubtedly due to the development of this faculty that the hat-boys and hotel clerks are able to call the guests by name and return to them their own belongings.

Read the novels of Frank Norris, of Jack London, of Winston Churchill or any successful writer, the lines of any truly great poet, and the ordinary mind cannot fail to be impressed with the wonderful store of knowledge gleaned from a thousand and one sources possessed by their writers. Think of the wealth of observations poured forth by a Shakspeare, a Browning, a Goethe. Every page contains them by the score—observations of facts in nature, art, science, literature, human action, and indeed of everything under the sun. Hence, if you would be an educated man you *must* observe.

#### SUGGESTIVE METHODS TO PURSUE

To discipline the power of observation, begin consciously *to see* and then immediately to test your own remembrance of what you see. See slowly, see surely. Be sure you have seen correctly. There is so much uncertainty in all of our mental processes. If it is a pile of books you are seeing, be sure, positive, that there are eleven. Do not content yourself by saying there are about ten or twelve and let it go at that. Note their size, color of their bindings, and, if possible, note each title.

There are some librarians who seldom forget a book after once seeing it, and can tell not only its appearance, but its place on the book shelves, and the appearance of its neighbors on either side. This is one of the qualifications of an efficient library assistant. What is true of the librarian is likewise true of other people. What makes the difference between an efficient clerk in a book-store and one who is merely passable? It is this power of observation and memory which makes his knowledge of books held in stock reliable.

Let us continue our suggestions. In looking over a landscape be definite in your seeing. Be sure that the river is to the left, and not to the right; that a certain tree is a sycamore, and not a poplar; that the green on the hillside is the young, fresh green of the dawn of the spring, rather than the richer green of the summer. What is it that makes the landscape artist? His power to portray depends upon his ability to discern and observe. The poet and orator do the same, but they make their pictures with words and phrases instead of pigments and canvas.

In seeing anything, get hold of every fact possible—size, position, color, relative importance, and, then, before you conclude your observations, close your eyes and reconstruct the scene mentally. Do this over and over again, until you add and add to your mental picture things you had before failed to see. Do not merely catalogue mentally, but see everything in its own place, in full detail, and in its relation to every other thing. A comparatively short period of this kind of discipline will enable you to do things that will not only astound your friends, but will be a source of infinite pleasure and, if used intelligently in your business or profession, profit to yourself.

The same principle applies in reading. Read slowly. Be sure you understand. Grasp every idea thoroughly. To do this you must learn to picture mentally. You should compel yourself to make a mental picture of every scene described. You are reading Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables." You come to his incomparable description of the battle of Waterloo. He tells us at the very commencement that it was the rain that gained the victory at Waterloo. Observation and reflection on Hugo's part made it possible for him to make this declaration. Carefully observe this statement and what follows.

Picture that great plain, the undulating sweep of ground. Place the two armies, and then see the attack begin on Houg-

mont. Watch the changing scene with your mental eyes. Follow Hugo as he describes the general confusion from noon until four o'clock in the afternoon. Now prepare yourself for a great picture of a tremendous day. See Wellington's disposal of his troops on the farther side of a long hill, on the crest of which was a deep trench caused by a road whose ruts during the centuries had worn down into the earth ten, twenty or more feet. On the near side of this hill Napoleon's cavalry are ascending—three thousand five hundred of them, colossal men on colossal horses. On, up, they sweep. They seem as irresistible as the passing cyclone. Just as they reach the crest, to their horror they discover this trench between themselves and the English. Let Hugo's own words now complete the picture for you:

It was a terrible moment. The ravine was there, unexpected, yawning, directly under the horses' feet, two fathoms deep between its double slopes; the second file pushed the first into it, and the third pushed on the second; the horses reared and fell backward, landed on their haunches, slid down, all four feet in the air, crushing and overwhelming the riders; and there being no means of retreat,—the whole column being no longer anything more than a projectile,—the force which had been acquired to crush the English crushed the French; the inexorable ravine could only yield when filled; horses and riders rolled pell-mell, grinding each other, forming but one mass of flesh in this gulf: when this trench was full of living men, the rest marched over them and passed on. Almost a third of Dubois's brigade fell into that abyss.

Take an illustration from the American novel—"Ramona." Get a real picture in your mind of the appearance of the country. See the sheep with their lambs in the fields under the trees. Determine what size, shape, and color these trees are. Picture Juan Can, the foreman or *major-domo*, listen to his voice, so that you can definitely sense what kind of impression it makes upon your mental ear. Do the same with the Señora Moreno. Can you see that mustard-field described by the

author, where Ramona goes out to meet the good Father Salvierderra? Have you got a picture in your mind of Ramona, and the father, and how they met, and how they returned to Camulos together? Picture, *picture*, PICTURE, mentally, until every scene, every landscape, every character is vividly before you.

This was the method followed by Macaulay, whose memory was so phenomenal that Sydney Smith called him "an encyclopedia in breeches," and who used to say that he owed much of his memory power to the discipline he used to give himself in mental picturing. He never read in a hurry. He always allowed himself time enough vividly to bring the scene before his mental vision, and once done, with him, it was ready to be recalled at any time.

Joaquin Miller used to say that he even pictured abstract ideas. If, for instance, he was thinking of the abstract quality of coldness, he would make a picture of some one suffering from cold, or some wintry landscape.

#### IT IS DIFFICULT TO OBSERVE PROPERLY

By this time, if you have faithfully followed these instructions about observation, you will have discovered that the mere observation of unrelated facts amounts to very little. You will begin to see that no observation of the mind is simple. While you are observing, you are naturally doing something else, for you are classifying facts, seeing their relation one to another, recognizing similarities or differences, contrasts and harmonies. The mind works as a whole, not the memory separately, nor the judgment by itself. Each part is dependent upon each other part: they overlap one another; the operations of one faculty imply the operations of all the other faculties. It is for this reason that the student must seek to discipline each apparently isolated faculty of the mind.

In observing, it is not enough mentally to picture what you read. You must go even more into detail than that. You must observe *words*. Did you ever read "Martin Eden," that wonderful study in mental development and self-analysis, written by Jack London, revealing in retrospect his own mental processes? It will more than pay you for the trouble of reading. Follow and practice what he therein describes. Words are things but they are things only when you know them so intimately that they bring real concept to your mind the moment you see them. It is not enough that you can pronounce a word properly—that you *seem* to know it. Each word must *mean* something to you, and that something must be *definite*, so definite that no other can mean exactly the same thing.

One of the greatest dialecticians of our day was Monsignore Capel, the private confessor of Pope Leo XIII. Even in extemporaneous speech every word he used was the right word. No other word would have done just as well. He was once asked how he gained his power over words, and he replied to the effect that when he was a lad he had several tutors. One only, however, was a real and thorough teacher. He said: "My first day with him I shall never forget. He gave me a lesson in Cæsar, and then sent me away with six lines, which I was to translate and bring to him in the afternoon. That seemed easy. When I went to recite my lesson I followed my usual wont—gave a free and easy translation, which may have contained the sense of the original, or may not. He heard me through without a word. Then he began a dissection of my method of translation that made my hair stand on end, every drop of my blood tingle, every faculty of my brain respond, every power of my soul awaken to a sense of the hitherto untold, undreamed of, unbounded capacities of words. That man was a genius in quickening a lad's dormant faculties into living, driving, whipping forces for good. He took each word of the original and demanded that I find its equivalent in English, and

he showed me how to do it. I must never take to him an English word whose original parentage I could not trace. I must know all its mutations and their whys and wherefores. There could be no such thing as a *free* translation. It was either a strictly literal *translation* or *my version*, lazy or otherwise, in another language from that in which the author had written. From that day on, I began the study of words. I learned how to trace the history of words; the changes that had come into their meanings, and my teacher helped me to do it during the whole of the time I was in his hands. To him I owe whatever power I possess to-day."

Read Trench's book on words and then study John Ruskin's "Sesame and Lilies." Get hold of all the modern books on the subject. Read Shelley, Keats, George Sterling, Browning, Swinburne—any author who has great felicity of phrase, rare delicacy of expression, and seek to discover his secret, and you will be amazed at the potent force of words. For, of course, while words themselves are to be studied, it is in their relation one to another when put into sentences that their power, sweetness, beauty, charm, and music lie.

And here we come to the real work of observing. All else is preparatory to grasping the *idea* of the author. In his idea lies his inspiration. The words he uses may be good, medium, or indifferent, but if we grasp his idea, his high, intellectual and spiritual conception and aspirations, we have gained the chief thing. Words are a wonderful help in this. His power to arrange them, to give them new settings, new and richer cadences, will not fail to quicken our own intellect to readier and keener appreciation of his thought. Hence words should be deeply, attentively and earnestly studied by all authors and speakers in order that they may be able to arrange them in this masterly fashion. For this personal arrangement of words and phrases, this flow and rhythm, is that marvelous thing we call style. Several times in "Martin Eden" Jack London refers

to this. He has his rude hero who is brought out of the streets, influenced by the love he feels for the heroine, determine to educate himself. He studies and begins to write.

He read to her a story [one of his own compositions], one that he flattered himself was among his very best. He called it "The Wine of Life," and the wine of it, that had stolen into his brain when he wrote it, stole into his brain now as he read it. There was a certain magic in the original conception, and he adorned it with more magic and phrase and touch. All the old fire was reborn in him and he was swayed and swept away so that he was blind and deaf to the faults of it. But it was not so with Ruth. Her trained ear detected the weaknesses and exaggerations, the overemphasis of the tyro, and she was instantly aware each time the sentence-rhythm tripped and faltered. She scarcely noted the rhythm otherwise, except when it became too pompous, at which moments she was disagreeably impressed with its amateurishness.

Just before this he said to her: "I hope I am learning to talk, there seems to be so much in me I want to say. But it is all so big. I can't find ways to say what is really in me. Sometimes it seems to me that all the world, all life, everything, had taken up residence inside of me and was clamoring for me to be spokesman. I feel—oh, I can't describe it—I feel the bigness of it, but when I speak, I babble like a child. It is a great task to transmute feeling and sensation into speech, written or spoken, that will, in turn, in him who reads or listens, transmute itself back into the selfsame feeling and sensation. It is a lordly task. See, I bury my face in the grass, and the breath I draw in through my nostrils sets me quivering with a thousand thoughts and fancies. It is a breath of the Universe I have breathed. I know song and laughter, and success and pain, and struggle and death; and see visions that arise in my brain somehow out of the scent of the grass, and I would like to tell them to you, to the world. But how can I? My tongue is tied. I have tried, by the spoken word, just now, to describe to you the effect on me of the scent of the grass. But I have not succeeded. I have no more than hinted in awkward speech. My words seem gibberish to me, and yet I am stifled with desire to tell."

That was her final judgment on the story as a whole—amateurish, though she did not tell him so. Instead, when he had done, she pointed out the minor flaws and said that she liked the story.

But he was disappointed. Her criticism was just. He acknowledged that, but he had a feeling that he was not sharing his work with her for the purpose of schoolroom correction. The details did not matter. They could take care of themselves. He could mend them, he could learn to mend them. Out of life he had captured something big and attempted to imprison it in the story. It was the big thing out of life that he had read to her, not sentence structure and semicolons. He wanted her to feel with him this big thing that was his, that he had seen with his own eyes, grappled with his own brain, and placed there on the pages with his own hands in printed words. Well, he had failed, was his secret decision. Perhaps the editors were right. He had felt the big thing, but he had failed to transmute it. He concealed his disappointment, and joined so easily with her in her criticism that she did not realize that deep down in him was running a strong undercurrent of disagreement.

Later he enlarges upon this, and also relates how he gained his mastery:

On the looking-glass were lists of definitions and pronunciations; when shaving, or dressing, or combing his hair, he conned these lists over. Similar lists were on the wall over the oil-stove, and they were similarly conned while he was engaged in cooking or washing dishes. New lists continually displaced the old ones. Every strange or partly familiar word encountered in his reading was immediately jotted down, and later, when a sufficient number had been accumulated, were typed and pinned to the wall or looking-glass. He even carried them in his pockets, and reviewed them at odd moments on the street, or while waiting in butcher-shop or grocery to be served.

He went farther in the matter. Reading the works of men who had arrived, he noted every result achieved by them, and worked out the tricks by which they had been achieved—the tricks of narrative, of exposition, of style, the points of view, the contrasts, the epigrams; and of all these he made lists for study. He did not ape. He sought principles. He drew up lists of effective and fetching mannerisms, till out of many such, culled from many writers, he was able to induce the general principle of mannerism, and, thus equipped, to cast about for new and original ones of his own, and to weigh and measure and appraise them properly. In similar manner he collected lists of strong phrases, the phrases of living languages, phrases that bit like acid and scorched like flame, or that glowed and were mellow and luscious in

the midst of the arid desert of common speech. He sought always for the principle that lay behind and beneath. He wanted to know how the thing was done; after that he could do it for himself. He was not content with the fair face of the beauty. He dissected beauty in his crowded little bedroom laboratory, where cooking smells alternated with the outer bedlam of the Silva tribe; and, having dissected and learned the anatomy of beauty, he was nearer being able to create beauty itself.

This latter quotation shows us how Jack London mastered a knowledge of that subtle thing called "style." Every student of English literature knows there are vast differences between the writings of Johnson and Carlyle, De Quincey and Coleridge, Ruskin and Newman, Browning and Tennyson. Yet each uses the English language and possibly it might be found that the vocabulary of each was not very different from that of the other. Then wherein lies the difference? It is in that marvelous personal quality, that individuality expressed in its use of words, that we call style, that the difference lies.

To aid your memory, study and observe *styles*. Ever be on the alert to discover why an author appeals to you. In reading Bret Harte ask yourself why his appeal is so different from that of Sir Walter Scott, Browning from Longfellow, Whitman from Swinburne, Pope from Sterling.

Observation also applies to hearing as well as seeing. How do you hear? Carefully, definitely, specifically, or indifferently, generally? Have you ever sought to disentangle the roar of noises you can hear in the city's streets? At first it is a dull confusion of sound that comes as one great, indistinguishable roar. Listen! Observe, and you will soon be able to distinguish the clatter of hoofs from the creak of the car-wheels; the whistle of the traffic-officer from the cry of the newsboy, or the honking of automobile-horns from the clang of street-car gongs.

Most people think that only a highly trained musician should be able to distinguish the various instruments as they are played

in a band or an orchestra, but any well-trained observer should be able to differentiate between the instruments if he so desires. And this brings us to a very striking discovery that we should not overlook; namely, that the powers of observation should be under the personal control of the individual. For instance, if he desires to observe the effect of the music of an orchestra of a hundred pieces *as a whole*, he should be able to do so. He should likewise be able to hear the different instruments, either alone, or in their relation one to another. The power to do this is one of the qualifications of a great conductor. His faculties of observation are highly developed, or are naturally acute in this regard; hence, when combined with other leadership qualities, he becomes a great director.

As applied to hearing a speech, lecture, or sermon, how shall one observe? Exactly the same as one observes in reading—by concentration of attention, seeing details, visualizing or mentally picturing every scene; listening to the speaker's choice of words; his power to make euphonic grouping not only for the sweetness of sound, but for their potency as well.

Hard work, this observing, is it not? It is intensive and perpetual. The athlete must keep in training so long as he desires physically to excel; so with the student or scholar. He must not lag, must not cease in his efforts, or he will lose his place or power. The will must be evoked to aid in such concentration of effort. The desire must be more fully excited, aroused, enthused, or the will will not respond. How many people go to church, to hear a lecture, an address, with the determination strong within them to allow nothing to interfere with their observing to the full what is said by the speaker? Note the turning around as late-comers take their places. Watch how easily the major part of an audience's attention can be diverted. It is pitiable and even ludicrous were it not so lamentable, because it reveals that in the training of our youth strict attention has not been demanded.

## DEVELOP THE POWER OF REFLECTION

We now come to the second part of Professor Stokes's rule—*Reflect*. This word is made up of two Latin words *re*, back or again, and *flecto*, to bend or turn. The meaning is thus made clear. By observation through one or more of our senses we perceive things; mental impressions are secured; these are now to be bent or turned so that we can see them again, but the process is to be purely mental. Reflection in itself implies recognition or memory, for without memory there could be nothing upon which to reflect. Every normal human being has the power to bend again, to turn back, and over and over again the impressions he has received through observation. Hence reflect continuously upon that which you wish to remember. Go over it in every possible way. Dwell upon it, let it develop within you until you are as familiar with every possible phase, detail, change, enlargement in it, as a fond mother is with the face of her precious baby. As you reflect, be sure your mind is not playing you false. Refresh it by referring to the original again and again if possible. In this way you deepen the original impressions, make them more lasting, more secure. Then, too, as you look upon a subject again—reflect upon it—you get new angles of vision. This enlarges your conception and provokes original thought. For instance: Newton observed an apple fall. There we have a simple fact of observation. He began to reflect upon this fact. As he did so, fresh thought upon the fact leaped into his mind and in due time the theory of gravitation was born.

Centuries ago men observed the fact that when a string of any kind was pulled tight and struck upon it gave forth a musical sound. In due time a man or many men in succession reflected upon this fact, and the guitar, the banjo, the ukulele, the violin and the piano were invented, born of the processes

of observation and reflection. This is everywhere seen in fields where the inventive genius of man is at play. It was John Dolland who observed that glass made of different kinds, or different properties of sand and silica, etc., had a different color, and produced a different effect when used in a sidereal telescope. He reflected upon this fact. This led him to experiment, and by and by he discovered that when he placed lenses together, one concave and the other convex, and one of crown and the other of flint glass, a telescope was made that eliminated the extra and confusing images of the object gazed upon, hitherto found on the outer rim of all telescopes. In other words, the achromatic telescope was born—one of the greatest helps to astronomical science—born of many careful observations and long-continued reflections.

Another case in point is that of Franklin, who saw the lightning in the clouds—a simple act of observation. He began to reflect upon his observation. His reflections suggested something. He sent up a kite to find out if there was any possibility of tapping that inexhaustible reservoir of electricity in the heavens. Our use to-day of the telegraph, telephone, wireless, electric light, electric power in the thousand and one ways it is made to do service to mankind is the result of those acts of observation and reflection. The same is true with Luther Burbank, who looked more closely, more attentively, with greater concentration, upon flowers, vegetables, plants, trees, than most men, observed that extra fine potatoes resulted when the flowers of the largest and best potatoes were cross-pollinated. He reflected upon this fact. The results have astounded the world in the development of improved and even new varieties of useful and beautiful growths. Also Darwin's observations, confirmed by those of thousands of others, duly reflected upon, enabled him to write his "Origin of Species"; and when Herbert Spencer read (observed) that book and

reflected upon it, and others cognate with it, he formulated his "Synthetic Philosophy," which absolutely changed the current of the thought of the world.

So it is with all sciences, all theories, all working hypotheses, all steps toward complete knowledge. They, each and all, invariably and unalterably depend upon the two powers of observation and reflection. There are no discoveries, no inventions, without these two mental operations. Hence is it not apparent that no memory student can *over-estimate* their importance? For, here is a fact that observation has revealed and reflection and experience confirmed; namely, that he who has carefully observed the most facts is the best prepared to reflect profitably. Or to put it in still another way; no one can properly, completely and successfully reflect unless his mind is stored with many facts accurately and minutely observed. How could Carlyle have written his wonderful "Heroes and Hero Worship" unless he had carefully observed, through his reading, the effect of a great man's actions upon millions of his fellowmen? His "Cromwell" and "French Revolution" still more fully reflect the wealth of his stored facts (observations) and the result of his constantly turning them over again and again (reflection) in his powerful, logical and imaginative mind. Helen Hunt Jackson's "Ramona" is a similar result of powerful observation of the California Indians and sympathetic and clear-headed reflection, as was also Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Hence, *Observe, Reflect*, with greater and increasingly greater care.

#### THOUGHT-LINKING

We now come to Stokes's third requirement—"Link thought with thought." Few things are seen isolated from other things. Indeed, unless one deliberately shuts out—inhibits—his observing faculties, it is impossible for him to see one

thing alone. Even the solitary star is seen in relation to the sky, and the solitary vessel, as it moves, in relation to the ever-changing surface of the deep. And it is this natural relationship of one idea to another—and its conscious recognition at the time of observation, or later, during reflection, that one's memory is aided. This is what psychologists have always called "the law of the association of ideas." It is a natural law, which even a child unconsciously recognizes. The baby subconsciously or instinctively knows that food and its pleasant sensations of comfort are associated with its mother's breast. Star and sky, sea and ship, automobile and swift travel, gun and war, cyclone and disaster, are instances of natural and simple association that all people recognize.

In the cultivation, discipline, strengthening of the powers of the memory, this natural law can be made to render marvelous service. For not only can man avail himself of faculties of the mind unconsciously exercised, he has the additional power of consciously directing their exercise. Just as our domestic water systems are the result of the conscious direction of the self-flowing water in the course we wish it to flow, so is the enlarged power of our memories the result of the conscious and purposeful direction of our observation, reflection, and thought-linking to that end. Drawn from personal experience there are five methods of thought-linking which have proved themselves of great help. These are: First, *Incidental*. Second, *Accidental*. Third, *Scientific*. Fourth, *Pictorial*. Fifth, *Constructive*.

### THE INCIDENTAL METHOD

The events, the incidents, of the day occur in a natural order: one follows another. The days of the week with their respective incidents follow in natural sequence. A full recognition of this fact is of far greater help to the memory than

one would believe on first thought. Many a man has been able to recall a particularly important event by going back, step by step, incident by incident, over the occurrences of the day. It is related of Thurlow Weed, the eminent statesman, that, when he entered political life, he had so poor and wretched a memory that it was his bane. He determined to improve it, and, realizing the importance of observation and reflection, he decided upon the following method: As the incidents of the day followed each other, in natural sequence, he would consciously note *how* they followed. Then at the close of the day he sat down with his wife, and relating the incidents exactly in the order they occurred, he would review the events of the day, even to the most trivial and inconsequential act. At other times he would relate the incidental order backwards. It was not long before his memory so improved that he began to be noted for it. Before he died, he had the reputation of possessing a phenomenal memory. One will find this same method a great help in seeking to recall a sermon, a lecture or speech. There is a natural sequence in all well-thought-out addresses, and the listener, carefully noting the change from one thought to another—the progress of the address—will find it aid his memory development wonderfully to take the last thought given, say, and in reverse order, bring up the thoughts, the ideas given. Then let the address be “incidentally” gone over from the first thought to the second, the third, and so on to the end. Thus it can be recalled and put away in the memory securely for future use.

#### THE ACCIDENTAL METHOD

Another natural method is what may be termed accidental. It is purely accidental that Pike's Peak is 14,147 feet high, but see how this fact enables you to fix the figures in your mind. There are two fourteens and the last figure is half of fourteen,

namely, seven. It is a purely accidental fact that the two Emperors of Germany died in 1888, but the fact that they did die in that year, the one year in the whole century when the three eights occur, indelibly fixes the date in mind. Again the year 1666 might have passed by unnoticed were it not for the fact that that was the date of the Great Fire in London.

Now let us see how this accidental association may fix a relative date for many other important events. The Great Fire purged the city of London of the horrors caused by the Great Plague. This plague was made the basis for Eugene Sue's graphic novel, "The Wandering Jew." Wherever he went—so ran the legend—the plague followed as the result of Christ's curse. It was the Great Plague that brought into existence the peculiar custom of all the Latin, as well as the English, peoples exclaiming, "God bless you!" or its equivalent, upon hearing one sneeze. The reason for the custom is that sneezing was one of the first symptoms of the fearful plague, and one, hearing his friend sneeze, immediately felt afraid he was seized with the dread disease, and gave vent to this pious exclamation. The custom persists to this day, but few know its origin. This plague also brings to mind a noble example of heroism that is worthy of enshrinement in every heart. It was found by those who watched the progress of the plague that it went from place to place, dying out here as soon as it appeared elsewhere. It was this phenomenon that gave to Eugene Sue the dramatic element in his novel, for it appeared to the ignorant people of those days that the plague actually followed the cursed Jew. A country pastor, an humble but devoted and true servant of God, in a little Derbyshire village, had observed this fact. Although isolation for contagious diseases was not thought of by physicians at that time, this man seemed to grasp the idea. He determined that if ever the disease reached his village he would endeavor to isolate his people from all others so that it would stop there and no longer con-

tinue to slay its helpless victims. In due time the plague did appear in his village. He had already aroused in his simple-minded flock the spirit of true heroism, and they pledged themselves to second his endeavors. Food was brought from a near-by town and deposited near a watering-trough, in which a small stream was continually flowing. In this flowing water the villagers placed the money in payment for their food supplies. Thus there was no contact of peoples, no contamination. The villagers kept to themselves, no one going away and no one coming in. The result was that in a very short time the plague was stayed, and Europe breathed a great sigh of relief, attributing its cessation to the goodness of God, when we now know it was owing to the self-sacrificing wisdom of men.

But we are not yet through with our associations with the accidental date of 1666. The most remarkable account we have of the Great Plague is Daniel DeFoe's "Journal of the Plague," which for many years was regarded as the genuine diary of an eye-witness. As DeFoe, however, was not born until 1661, five years before the plague, he could have had but the faintest and most childish remembrances of that dread event. But it was he who wrote the world-famous, ever-enjoyable "Robinson Crusoe." This appeared in 1719, and, while the association of this date with that of 1666 is remote, it does approximately fix the date of the appearance of that masterpiece.

Another literary masterpiece appeared, however, much nearer the time of the plague. That was John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," which was written in Bedford Jail during the actual year of the plague and fire.

One of the greatest lawyers of England was Sir Matthew Hale, and it is a help to fix approximately the time he was on the bench when we recall that it was he who sentenced John Bunyan to the twelve years' confinement that gave to the world his "Pilgrim's Progress." On the other hand, Hale was a great

personal friend of Richard Baxter, who, at about the same time, wrote the well known "Saints' Everlasting Rest." Here, then, hung on to this accidental peg of the year 1666, we find the following facts: First, the Great Fire; second, the Great Plague; third, Eugene Sue's novel "The Wandering Jew;" fourth, the custom of saying "God bless you;" fifth, the heroism of the Derbyshire villagers that stopped the plague; sixth DeFoe's writing of the "Journal of the Plague" and "Robinson Crusoe;" seventh, Bunyan's writing of "Pilgrim's Progress;" eighth, Sir Matthew Hale on the English bench; ninth, Richard Baxter's writing of the "Saints' Everlasting Rest."

Every novelist uses this law of accidental association, for it is habitually used by every class of people. Who is there who does not recall certain events because they happened on days when other and perhaps more important events occurred which fixed the date in the mind? For instance, if an event occurred on the day of her first child's birth, and the mother was aware of it, you may rest fully assured she would have no trouble recalling the date of the event. Its accidental association will guarantee its remembrance.

Lawyers use this law constantly in seeking to extract evidences from their witnesses. The dates of certain events are surely fixed in the mind. Other events, less securely remembered, occurred at, or about, the same time. The association once clearly established, the memory invariably responds.

### THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

This method is merely a phase of reflection, for during that process one naturally classifies his ideas, received through observation. As David Pryde says in his "How to Read":

See every fact and group of facts as clearly and distinctly as you can; ascertain the fact in your past experience to which it bears a likeness or relation, and then associate it with that fact. And this

rule can be applied in almost every case. Take as an example that most difficult of all efforts, namely, the beginning of a new study, where all the details are strange. All that you have to do is to begin with those details that can be associated with your past experience. In science, begin with the specimens with which you are already familiar, and group around them as many other specimens as you can. In history and geography, commence with the facts relating to the places and scenes which you actually know. And in foreign languages, start with the words and phrases for the most familiar objects and incidents of every-day life. In this way you will give all your mind a clear and safe foundation in your own experience. . . . The mind cannot master many disconnected details. It becomes perplexed and then helpless. It must generalize these details. It must arrange them into groups, according to the three laws of association—resemblance, contiguity, and cause and effect. This, it will be granted at once, must be the method in all rigidly systematic studies, such as the sciences, history, biography, and politics. But it is valuable to ordinary people as well to know that the same plan can be used in all kinds of descriptions. Every collection of details can be arranged in groups in such a way that they can be clearly understood and remembered. The following is the manner in which this can be done: In studying any interesting scene, let your mind look carefully at all the details. You will then become conscious of one or more definite effects or strong impressions that have been made upon you. Discover what these impressions are. Then group and describe in order the details which tend to produce each of the impressions. You will then find that you have comprised in your description all the important details of the scene. As an instance, let us suppose a writer is out in the country on a morning toward the end of May, and wishes to describe the multitudinous objects which delight his senses. First of all, he ascertains that the general impressions as produced on his mind by the summer landscape are the ideas of *luxuriance*, *brightness* and *joy*. He then proceeds to describe in these groups the details which produce these impressions. He first takes up the *luxuriant* features, the springing crops of grain completely hiding the red soil; the rich, living carpet of grass and flowers covering the meadows; the hedge-rows on each side of the way, in their bright summer green; the trees bending gracefully under the full weight of their foliage; and the wild plants, those waifs of nature, flourishing everywhere, smothering the woodland brook, filling up each scar and crevice in the rock, and making a rich fringe along the side of every highway and footpath. He then descants upon the brightness of the *landscape*;

the golden sunshine; the pearly dew-drops hanging on the tips of every blade of grass, and sparkling in the morning rays; the clusters of daisies dappling the pasture-land; the dandelion glowing under the very foot of the traveler; the chestnut trees, like great candelabra, stuck all over with white lights, lighting up the woodlands; and lilacs, laburnums, and hawthorne in full flower, making the farmer's garden one mass of variegated blossom. And last of all, he can dwell upon the *joy* that is abroad on the face of the earth: the little birds so full of one feeling that they can only trill it forth in the same delicious monotone; the lark bounding into the air, as if eager and quivering to proclaim his joy to the whole world; the bee humming his satisfaction as he revels among the flowers; and the myriads of insects floating in the air and poising and darting with drowsy buzz through the floods of golden sunshine. Thus we see that, by this habit of generalizing, the mind can grasp the details of almost any scene.

This desire to unify knowledge, to see unity in variety, is one of the most noted characteristics of great men in all departures of learning. Scientific men in the present day are eager to resolve all the phenomena of nature into force or energy. The history of philosophy, too, is in a great measure taken up with attempts to prove that being and knowing are identical. Emerson can find no better definition of genius than that it is intellect constructive. Perhaps, he says, if we should meet Shakspeare, we should not be conscious of any great inferiority, but of a great equality, only that he possesses a great skill of using—of classifying—his facts, which we lacked.

Herbert Spencer was a master at the classification of facts. By the classification of all the known languages of the world, the scientists are seeking to find out accurately, as never before, the relationships of mankind. Men have been writing the different languages of widely diverse people for centuries, but never before has an attempt been made on so vast a scale to bring all this isolated knowledge to bear upon the solution of one great question—the origin of the human race. All scientific knowledge is based upon the association of isolated and detached facts. These are then reflected upon, and, finally, theories begin to form themselves in the mind of the student, the philosopher. He then brings his facts and theories into close relationship and sees whether they “fit.” If he is as-

sured that they do, he presents his thought to the world, and, according to its reasonableness, it is received or rejected.

#### THE PICTORIAL METHOD

Most children make mental pictures with great ease, but, unfortunately, as they grow older, they allow this faculty to lose its power by disuse. In the cultivation and use of the memory, however, it can be of the greatest possible help. All books of travel and description, all novels, all history, are made up of a series of word pictures. Do not be content merely to *read* the *words* of these pictures. Go further! Actually *picture each scene in your imagination* and you will thus materially aid your original power of observation. Let your pictures be definite, positive, explicit as to details, for the more careful you are in making a picture real to your mind, the easier it will be recalled.

Now, if you desire to recall the whole course of a book, you will find these vividly-made mental pictures have a natural order of sequence, and one will recall the next following, and so on. There is great joy in learning to make pictorial thought-links, and then in the ability they give to the memory to recall them.

#### METHODS OF CONSTRUCTIVE THOUGHT-LINKING

We now come to the active making of artificial links as aids to the memory where none naturally appear. A thought-link of this type is the generally known doggerel:

Thirty days hath September,  
 April, June and November,  
 All the rest have thirty-one  
 Save February which alone  
<sup>1</sup> Has twenty-eight, and one day more  
 We add to it one year in four.

<sup>1</sup> Here is a variant of the last two lines:

"Has twenty-eight and this in fine  
 One year in four has twenty-nine."

In like manner how do we remember the order of the prime colors? Few there are who do not know the coined word, made from the initial letters of Violet, Indigo, Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, Red—Vibgyor. Again, the student of geology, who forgets the order of his great epochs or eras, might recall them by formulating a sentence that presents the initial letters of the names of these epochs. Thus, "Careful men pay easily," suggests Cenozoic, Mesozoic, Paleozoic, Eozoic. Of course no one of common sense presumes to assert that these constructive thought-links are any other than crutches, foot-bridges over streams too wide to stride or jump unaided. They should frankly be recognized as such, and only reverted to in case of necessity, or as a last resort. But it is equally foolish in view of the testimony of their almost universal usage and helpfulness, to deny that they are an aid to most memories.

#### THINK OF THE IMPRESSIONS

To "think of the impressions." This is the final admonition of Stokes's golden rule of memory. One word conveys his idea—review. The things to be remembered must be thought over. They must be re-collected—again collected. You will thus re-observe them, re-reflect upon them, re-strengthen your original mental impressions and the ideas that have grown around them. Experience demonstrates that all memory impressions are lasting. One may have forgotten something for twenty, thirty, forty years, when suddenly a chance word, sound, sight, or even odor, will recall it with an intensity and reality that are startling. All works on mental philosophy give illustrations of this asserted fact. The practical need of all men, however, is to cultivate the ability to call up mental impressions at will.

Ready recollection is the great desideratum. Hidden knowledge is of slight use. It is as if one had a fortune stored away

in some hidden dungeon, carefully locked up, but he had lost the key. Availability, readiness, promptness are essentials to efficiency. The hat-boy at the hotel dining-room would be useless did his memory not act promptly, instantly. To-morrow will not do. Now is the accepted time.

This efficient, prompt, responsive memory is the one you need and desire. It is worth striving for. The prospector wanders over the mountains, canyons, deserts, for years, seeking the precious ore in most unlikely places. He is always buoyed up with the hope, some day, of striking it rich. Are you as earnest in your desire for memory development as he? If so, careful, systematic, daily exercise of the various faculties of the mind and memory will give to you this golden possession. Reread here what has been quoted earlier from David Pryde's "What Books to Read and How to Read." The hints therein contained are worth their weight in gold to the really earnest student. But rest assured of this: If you would have a good memory, you must work for it. Give your whole attention to whatever you read or hear. Concentrate. Compare the parts of the composition with the whole. Seek its excellencies, study its deficiencies. Reflect upon it from every angle. Write out in your own language the facts, or the ideas of what you have heard or read. Then use daily what you have gained. Knowledge stored away in the mind is not only useless, it is positively injurious. *Use is the law of life.* Give your knowledge, your ideas, your reflections away. Tell them to your intimates, your friends. Write them to your correspondents. For the more you give the more you will find you have. There is a giving that increases and a withholding that impoverishes, and in nothing is this more apparent than in the giving of the riches of the mind or memory. Each time one recites a well-liked poem for the benefit and blessing of others, the more firmly he fixes it in his own mind. "There is that which scattereth, and yet increaseth." In the scattering of

your gems of mind and heart, you are increasing your own store.

Not only give freely, but give often. The daily use of what you have gained is an advantage. Avail yourself of every reasonable opportunity to use your newly acquired powers, and your newly acquired knowledge. Let me repeat, *use is the law of life*. To learn something new daily is a good motto, but to use what you have learned is even better. You gain ease of recollection by daily exercising the faculty of recollection. And if your memory balks, refuses to act, compel it to obey you. If you make a demand upon it and it fails to respond—you cannot remember—do not let the matter go by. Demand of the memory that it bring back that which you require. Keep the need before you.

In this constant, persistent, cheerful, willing use of the memory lies great happiness and content. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The more, in reason, the athlete uses his muscles the stronger they become. And think of the radiant joy that is the natural accompaniment of a healthy, vigorous body. What constant pleasure is his who calls upon a physical body which readily and willingly responds! Equally so is it with the memory and all the mind. Activity keeps it in health. In this glorious condition it readily responds to all calls, it is radiantly alive, and I know of no joy greater that can be given to man than that in body, mind, and soul he is a radiating center of activity, receiving and giving on every hand.

In conclusion, here are a few practical words upon the other side of the question, on forgetting, for there is a forgetting that is of great help to the power of remembering. Fix these precepts firmly in your mind:

Forget evil imaginations.

Forget the slander you have heard.

Forget the meanness of small souls.

Forget the faults of your friends.

Forget the injuries done you by your enemies.

Forget the misunderstandings of yesterday.

Forget all malice, all fault-finding, all injuries, all hardness, all unlovely and distressing things.

Start out every day with a clean sheet. Remember only the sweet, beautiful and lovely things, and you will thus be as a human sun of righteousness, with healing in your rays.





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