

LIARS WHO THINK THEY'RE NOT LIARS

A Cornell Contention That Memory is a Brief Possession.

INTERESTING STUDY IN PSYCHOLOGY

Experiments to Prove That After a Time We Remember Only Our Own Recollections of Events—Helpful Directions.

From the New York Sun.

The professors in the department of psychology in Cornell university are carrying on a series of experiments, which, in time, may come to change our conception of things material and otherwise. For instance, one of the board contends that memory, as we now consider it, is an illusion. In fact, it is held that a man does not remember his dead and gone relatives—his sisters, his cousins or his aunts. The contrary to the motto of "Aux Italos," one is not reminded of bygone events by the sense of smell; that music, however reminiscent it may sound, is largely a matter of habit, when it is used merely as a vehicle for memory. From what can be gathered from the findings of Professor Titchener and his assistants you are reminded of bygone events by other things, which you use as progressive helpers, so to speak, to aid your faded intellect. To put it plainly, your veteran of the late war does not remember the battles through which he passed. The memory of the battle stayed with him for a short period after they took place. But the details of the fight became indistinct after a very short lapse of time. At the end of a year he would have only a very general conception of an engagement. At the end of two years he would remember not the engagement itself, but his previous memory of it. At the end of three years his recollections would revert to what he had remembered at the end of two years, and so on until the habit of using his previous recollections became fixed. Then, as the years roll on, the new happenings of his life crowd out the old ones, until the latter become distorted, and, if he examines old records, he will find that his ideas of the original battles are very inaccurate.

EXPERIMENTS. This sounds like an imperfectly stated theory of some beginner in science who might thus wish to exploit a chance glimpse into a hitherto unexplored field, but the observations are borne out by experiments and the experiments are conducted with instruments the records of which are probably correct. The experiments have been extended over a period of years. The subject was first asked to remember an event which had occurred previous to the first test. A careful record of the account of the events was made. Later, the subject was placed in a room from which every object which might serve to distract his attention had been removed. Even the wall paper offered no glaring contrasts in its color scheme. His second account of the happening was different, even slightly, from the first. At the end of a seven period another account was recorded. Again there was a slight difference. And after a time it became evident that the subject was depending on his previous recollections of the event in question. The inference drawn was that if the intermediate tests had not been instituted the final test would have been more accurate than it was. In the meantime, while this test of memory of a more or less complicated event was being carried on, the subject was experimented upon in order to ascertain to what degree he could recollect colors. He was placed in a darkened room and a color—a shade of red flashed on a screen—was exhibited to him. After a time he was asked to pick out the shade which had been shown to him previously. He could do so when allowed to compare the shade with others. But again he was asked to look at a screen which could be automatically graduated, so that the very lightest tint of red could be almost imperceptibly changed to the deepest shade. Failure to detect the particular shade was in this case almost a foregone conclusion. And it was with a like result that a series of notes, struck upon the piano, were tried.

MEMORY AND ODORS. The experiments with odors are still being carried on. The idea is to show that the unconscious remembrance of anything when a certain odor is smelled is merely a habit of an intellectual order. Let us say that we always think of the opera "Faust" when the odor of violets is present. Doubtless in the first instance the odor actually was present while we listened to the opera. Now, immediately after this, it was simply a natural sequence that we

should think of the opera when we saw the flower. To see and to smell, and to smell was to connect the odor with the opera. The slightest intellectual effort would complete the chain. A few occasions of this nature would change the process into a habit. Often only one occasion is necessary, but the process is as much of the intellect as it is of the sense of smell; even more so, in fact. Referring again to Meredith's poem, the process might be called the jasmine flower habit. To show that this habit is intellectual, a singular experiment is now being carried on. Surrounded by the proper influences, the subject is first allowed to smell an odor which invariably reminds him of a certain event of the past. Latterly, however, this odor is being gradually lessened in intensity and another odor entirely different in character is being introduced. The subject is never allowed to smell the first without the second, and the first will finally be allowed to disappear altogether. If, with this new odor alone, the subject is finally reminded of the event above mentioned, it will show that this odor remembrance is merely a habit more or less mechanical in its action.

HONEST LYING. "There is not one person in a hundred," said Huxley, "who can describe the commonest occurrence with even an approach to accuracy." Later the psychologists go further than this and assert that almost any person, with suitable manipulation, can be made to believe that he has participated in events with which he is really not connected at the time of their happening. A case in point was recently reported. A would-be pensioner under the government applied to a man under whom he had served during the war for corroboration of the statement that he had been injured by a gun carriage while on the march. The second man denied any knowledge of the event. Months later the first man brought up the subject again, but could not convince his former officer of the truth of the statement. At intervals, covering some years, he repeated the experiment, until finally the mind of the officer began to waver in favor of the private; and it actually ended in the former signing an affidavit to the effect that he had witnessed the accident. Then, having considered the matter further, he wavered again, and finally he came to the conclusion that what he remembered was not the accident itself, but the would-be pensioner's former account of it. This, after all, would be an abstract corroboration of the old saying that a man needs only to tell a lie a sufficient number of times in order to be thoroughly convinced that it is true.

The point of the observations at Cornell is that no one really remembers an event itself. The capacity for so doing would be a real misfortune to the person so equipped, in view of all that must be crowded into the brain of the person so equipped. The capacity for so doing would be a real misfortune to the person so equipped, in view of all that must be crowded into the brain of the person so equipped. The capacity for so doing would be a real misfortune to the person so equipped, in view of all that must be crowded into the brain of the person so equipped.

VIOLETS. Another remarkable series of experiments now being carried on in Cornell is that of the odor of violets. Concentration of the human mind is being studied, and in the course of experiments the fact has been corroborated that human beings can be swayed definitely by odors as well as by sounds. This does not mean that odors of enthusiasm such as people are wrought up to in the theatre, but that in everyday life persons may be made to work fast or slow, accordingly as they are surrounded by various odors, or bright colors, or sounds. Mechanically it is found, for example, that some men will perform mechanical work much faster if an odor of violets pervades the workroom. Others will work much slower under the same influence. Prof. Titchener and it was with a like result that a series of notes, struck upon the piano, were tried.

DISTRACTION. "It is contended that you can sometimes do your work best under a slight abstraction. That is, if you have everything too comfortable, concentration is not as easy as though you were working under slight abstraction, as, for instance, if some one is playing a piano in the room, or if there is a mechanical sound, or if, possibly, what is the actual effect of a distraction is on the mind which is in a state of attention. We first got attention by making a long series of experiments in which the subject had to judge of two impressions given one after another. One test was made by dropping weights from different heights onto a scale and having the subject note by the sound whether the weight was falling a shorter or longer distance. Immense amount of attention is required. Another test was made with shades of color. By shifting the shades it is difficult to detect a slight change of color. The red and blue shades are somewhat easy, but to tell the changes in brown is very difficult. We practiced on weight and sounds up to the smallest limit of space, to find just the smallest difference that could be detected with a complete strain of attention. Then we proceeded to distract our subjects while they were dropping weights and making sounds. The object, of course, was to find if this distraction made them able to perceive a slighter difference than before, or whether the distraction would prevent their attention so well.

RESULTS. "The results differed very greatly with various cases, and the method of distraction. We found that with abstraction by smell (scents) that with abstraction could think better and have keener sense than before, while in other cases the result was the contrary. Every individual man is differently affected by these associations, and some are very easily abstracted by sound and smell both. While we did not find it to be a regular rule, we got a complete series of results, and in the maxi-

Sunday School Lesson for March 20.

John the Baptist Beheaded.

Matt. XIV; 1-12.

By J. E. GILBERT, D. D., LL. D.,

Secretary of American Society of Religious Education.

CHANGED ORDER.—This lesson is incidental and retrospective. It is introduced in the Gospel narrative out of its order to account for the suspicions of Herod on hearing the prophecy of the Baptist (Mark vi, 16). But for the troubled conscience of that licentious king, awakening his fears that the murdered John had returned to life clothed with even greater power (John xv, 4), the world might never have known the manner of his death. The greatest of the prophets, who has been fulfilled (Matt. iii, 3), might have sunk into obscurity before Him whom he introduced (John iii, 29), as the stars disappear when the great luminary mounts the heavens. 2. Herod had two palaces, one for the winter in the south, east of the Jordan; the other for the spring and summer at Tiberias, on the western shore of the sea of Galilee. His removal from the former to the latter transferred him from the field of John's ministry to that of Jesus. Hence the knowledge of Jesus. 3. Rearranging the facts chronologically and accepting some from the Jewish Talmud, which is Antiq. lib. xviii, chap. 7), the passage may be studied under the following heads:

SINFUL WEDLOCK.—The Herod of the lesson, descendant of both Jacob and Esau, the death of his father, Herod the Great, became tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (Lev. iii, 2). Educated at Rome and married to the beautiful daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, he began his career with brilliant prospects. While on a visit to Jerusalem he became enamored of Herodias, granddaughter of Herod, the great, his niece, the wife of Herod Philip. Herodias, a woman of great wealth, overtures of marriage were accepted. One put away his wife, and the other abandoned her husband. An eloquent orator, a philosopher, Herodias, accompanied her mother and the incestuous twin celebrated their nuptials in the palace. This scandalous proceeding violated the law (Lev. xx, 17), trampled upon man's honor and woman's virtue, and outraged domestic purity. Herodias, however, was crowned the throne and a menace to public morality. And yet the courtiers cowered about, condoned the offense, and joined in the banquet. Herodias, with her pride and gratuity the ambition of a social monster.

FAITHFUL PREACHING.—Then came the Baptist into Herod's dominions (John i, 28), preaching repentance. Crowds gathered to hear him, and the king became an interested auditor. Greatly pleased with the preacher Herod did many things, enjoined in the sermons of the Baptist. He gave him a banquet table, and he was great opportunity for the reformer. If he can win the ruler's popularity and fortune await him. Shall he speak gently, dealing in abstractions, or will he speak during his lifetime. The thing simmers down to a general impression, and even the edge of this becomes blunted very soon if we do not recharge our mind with new images of the event. The image of the event itself, but of our previous memories of it. Mechanically it is found, for example, that some men will perform mechanical work much faster if an odor of violets pervades the workroom. Others will work much slower under the same influence. Prof. Titchener and it was with a like result that a series of notes, struck upon the piano, were tried.

NUM THREE were able to judge better under slight abstraction. We also experimented with abstraction while students were working in arithmetic, division, addition, etc. And we tried it while they translated sentences in different languages. "We made tests with the piano, and in some cases the music prevented their thinking at all. The effect of the piano depends upon the octave in which you are playing. Played in a treble and bass together it might annihilate the performer's own thinking. After playing on an organ a man often finishes up with one prolonged note. It is low down in the scale, and it is a great deal worse; the impression it makes is often enough to drive one silly. You know that deep D in "Gottedammerung," the lowest note known in modern music? You get shivering in your seat long before it stops. It is all done to enhance the effect of music which follows. "Taking all in all that has been found in psychology to be true, the traditional "girl next door," with her incessant piano playing, may be of some use to the community after all.

NOT THEIR EXACT WORDS. From the Youth's Companion. The general tendency to look at the actions of others through one's own peculiar spectacles is frequently observed. Perhaps not so often noticed, however, is the habit of unconsciously rendering another's speech language's own language. A Boston girl who had been taking her first lesson in bicycle riding expressed her satisfaction at home at the result of the experiment. "The man said," she repeated, "that I had made most satisfactory progress to-day." "Why, did he really say that?" was the surprised query. "Well, no," answered the Boston young woman, after a moment's reflection. "What he did say was, 'You did fast-rat for a new beginner!'" A friend of the poet Bryant chanced to be alone in his study when a cabinet-maker brought home a chair that had been altered. When Mr. Bryant returned, he asked: "Miss Robbins, what did the man say about my chair?" "He said," answered the visitor, "that the equilibrium is now admirably adjusted."

A Wise Young Man. He—Well, I must bid you good night. She—Why, it's only 10 o'clock. He—I know, but your father might kick if I stay longer.—Chicago News.

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them. But how can John benefit Herod unless he penetrates into the heart and touches the sore spots? (Jer. xxii, 17). And how can he prepare for Messiah unless Herod be struck at sin in the heart? (10). And, what is more important, how shall he answer to God if he let the sinner escape? (Isaek. li, 18). The preacher of the wilderness did his duty, plainly, fearlessly. There was no doubt of his meaning when he declared, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife" (verse 4). As a court preacher John placed himself beside Nathan (II Sam. xii, 7), and Elijah (I Kings xxi, 20).

RESTRAINED HATRED.—There is reason to believe that Herod was convicted, for he acknowledged John to be a holy man (Mark vi, 20). Possibly if left to himself, he would have put away Herodias, and she may have feared such a result. At any rate the words of the ministry to that effect, "Henceforth thy name shall be called Jesus," she hated him and would have killed him had she the power and guidance to do so. Herodias, in an attempt to rid himself of such a bold accuser, perhaps to prevent a popular demonstration, because he was so promptly and the Lord permitted (Psalm lxxvi, 10), Herod shut up John in prison (verse 5). The place selected for the confinement was not according to custom (Matt. ii, 2), desiring to be assured that He was the Messiah.

BLOODY REVENGE.—Woman's heart may be pure as an angel's, or it may contain the poison of a serpent (Prov. xxiii, 22-23). Restrained by her murderous design Herodias did not abandon it. The opportunity came on Herod's birthday, perhaps eighteen months after. Contrary to Jewish law, but according to custom (Gen. x, 29), Herodias, in the banquet room, proposed to make her estate equal to his own. After consultation with Herodias, the king filed this blank check on the royal treasury by filling in "the head of John." Regret came too late. False policy obliged the king to keep his word. Reckless with blood the present was brought in a charger (Numb. vii, 13), and delivered to the voluptuous daimon (verse 6 to 9). The banquet was removed. The voice is silent that dines convalesces. Henceforth but may rule in Herod's palace. Satan has triumphed for a time.

LOVING SERVICE.—Draw the curtain upon the scene of blood. Leave Herod

and Herodias and Salome and the drunken courtiers to their consciences and "earn God. Emerging from the fortress is a slowly moving procession (verse 12). The head of John is borne upon a bier by brotherly affection. The precious dust is laid away, no one knowing the spot where was deposited the earthly part of the last of the Jewish prophets. This sad office being performed these disciples hastened away to the north to tell Jesus and find sympathy and instruction, and to devote their lives and fortune to His cause. And He, the Master, calling His followers more closely to Him, withdrew from the possessions of Herod northward (verse 13), there to strengthen His hold upon them that loved Him, far removed from the scenes of opposition and blood.

DIVINE JUDGMENT.—It is said that Salome broke through the ice and was decapitated; that the Arctos, to avenge his daughter's wrongs, made war against Herod and destroyed his army; that many Jews turned against him and would gladly have overthrown him; that at last deprived of his government, he was banished by the emperor; that his wife had died in sorrow and disgrace. These temporal judgments, if they came, were but trifles compared with the spiritual torments. For, as Jesus came into Herod's dominions in the north some time after, the king heard of Him, and, conscience-stricken, trembling, thinking that John the Baptist had been restored to life (verse 14 and 15). And even that as less to be dreaded than final retribution (Isaek. li, 19; Prov. xxi, 5; Heb. x, 29). But that day of the prophet's martyrdom was the day of Herod's and John's glorification (Psalm cxvi, 15). Nothing more was needed to give him immortality among men (Heb. xi, 25-26), and an abundant entrance into the "general assembly" above (Hev. xii, 14). It was God's way, mysterious indeed, and to human view an afflictive (John xii, 31) method of atoning, honoring and rewarding His faithful servant (Rev. ii, 10), as the advocate of righteousness.

CLOSING THOUGHTS.—Here is a and not a figure of words (I Cor. ii, 2); James iv, 4). They who fill places of power and fare sumptuously are liable to reject God and pollute their hearts and lives (Isa. lv, 16; I John ii, 16). 2. Thousands of men have been sacrificed to the revenge of ambitious and licentious women, who become agents of Satan (Prov. ii, 15). Herodias' "above thee" are convenient tires for evil designs. When the heart is merry one is easily ensnared (Prov. vii, 13). 3. A devout Christian will order his steps according to the word of God (I John, 4), and leave dancing to goats and calves and children and vain revelry. 4. The Holy Spirit declares all the counsel of God (Ezek. xl, 15), regardless of consequences. 5. There can be no higher honor than to stand for truth and righteousness to be upheld, and if need be, to sacrifice life for the cause of God (Heb. xi, 9).

Dr. E. Grewer (The Philadelphia Specialist)

Has just returned from his St. Louis, Chicago and Western offices and will now remain at his permanent office in the Old Postoffice Building, corner Spruce street and Penn avenue, where he may be consulted from 10 a. m. to 8.30 p. m. The doctor, while in Chicago, had several honors conferred upon him by Medical Colleges there, namely, the titles of Doctor of Philosophy and Bac. of Science in addition to his many other degrees and honorary emblems which he holds. No specialist in this or any other country is able to show the credentials that Dr. Grewer holds today.

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