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Nobody Can Remember Everything

WHEN a booklet titled "Instant Memory" arrived in the mail it was immediately added to the stack on our reading table. A few days later we remembered it was there and read it.

The writers claimed that "every impression you ever experienced, consciously or unconsciously, is today filed away permanently in your conscious mind." We failed to comprehend the clue that might have enabled us to recall these experiences instantly, at will.

Habits of forgetfulness are widespread. Most of us at one time or another have been unable to speak the name of a well-known acquaintance, recall needed data from our memory or have overlooked some important errand or duty.

The booklet, copyrighted by the Institute of Advanced Thinking in California, discounted devices such as "multiple association technique" and "mental hook method." It advocated "The Master Relaxation Technique," which involves a series of physical motions to release memories a person might have stored in

his brain.

Its use could be embarrassing if you were recognized by an acquaintance and wanted to recall when and where you had met him.

The procedure, in brief, called for lying on your back, sitting or standing, while very gradually tensing toes, arms, chest, back, neck, etc., counting to five on each, and gradually releasing the tension. In your relaxed condition your memory would respond to commands for recall of your friend's name. You might draw a crowd but by then your friend probably would be gone.

Everybody needs memory. Man's capabilities for remembering and reasoning makes the human mind superior to that of any other creature. Yet experts admit that it is hardly understood at all.

A feature in Newsweek headlined "How the Brain Works" reported that scientists "are poking sea slugs to see how the memory of touch becomes etched on its primitive brain" as a step in mapping the human brain.

If it is true that difficulties of re-

calling increase with age, then as people live longer we may expect more forgetfulness. However, some scientists insist that biologically there is much less memory loss accompanying advancing age than is believed.

Probably nobody remembers everything. People usually can recall what seems important to them, whether that may be figures on a financial statement, gossip heard at a party, a disaster reported in the news or a joke told while they were supposed to be working. They tend to forget other matters because of lack of concentration.

The memories of computers imitate a brain's memory in that stored information may be recalled by punching the right buttons. "Literacy soon may mean being able to access, manipulate and store information in a computer," said an article in Science Digest this month.

If that should occur, thinking will have become regimented and memory only a mechanical function. We would prefer to keep our memories, if we could just remember where we put things in them.