A GENIUS WHO NEVER WALKED

Life Of Late C. Lee Cook, Of Louisville, Said To Be Without Parallel Throughout World.

In the recent death at his home in Louisville, Ky., of C. Lee Coon, the "genius who never walked," there came to an end of a life history that is probably without parallel in the history of the world.

Most of his body was helpless. His arms did not contain the strength of a child of 5 years. His family thought so little of the unfortunate member that he was taken from school at 7 years of age. He would not live, they reasoned, so why bother with his education.

Yet with the great handicaps of physical infirmity and lack of early mental training, when this man died he was an inventor, an authority on law, a painter, an architect, owner of a large manufacturing plant which he conducted, an authority on the history of languages, an authority on the great figures of history, an authority on the Constitution of the United States, an authority on art—a lover of fine things. But the list is so catholic that practically all of the higher things of life would have to be recorded if the list were made complete.

He worked and worked hard, for his schedule was seventeen hours a day. He was in every sense of the word a "self-educated" man; and when he died at the age of 57 years his accomplishments were accounted miraculous by those who knew him.

A year after his parents took him from school he built a steam engine that worked. For twelve years he toiled in the obscurity of his father's stable on an average of seventeen hours a day at a lathe of his own design and construction, turning out a product of his own invention which brought him the meager income of $5 a week, but laid the foundation of his life's work, which was to bring him fortune and fame and to make him a figure in America's list of mechanical wizards.

He was a normal child at birth. He developed into an unusually strong infant and when he passed his first birthday muscular stagnation set in. He was a handsome and physically perfect child although he never walked. When he was 14 a curvature of the spine set in because the body muscles had not developed sufficiently to bear his weight.

From the time he was 6 years old he made all his own toys. When he was 12 he constructed a minature of the famous Mississippi river towboat Ajax, amazing local rivermen with his knowledge of boats. The boat ran by steam and towed tiny barges made from cigar boxes. Another toy was a steam fire engine fashioned by his almost helpless hands. It was only eight inches high, but could throw a stream fifty feet. He fashioned it from a French harp, lamp burners, steel hair pins, knitting needles, and brass tubing from an old gas jet. His tools were two files, a hammer, saw and a watchmaker's die.

He was watching excavation on a railroad cut one day and noticed loss of steam from the piston. He inquired why. The engineer said no one had ever been able to prevent the waste. He made up his mind to solve it. He perfected a device and it was used on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. The locomotive on which it was placed ran 175,000 miles without repair. While developing it he would watch its performance all night on a switch engine.

He had his attendant to take him to the railroad roundhouse one night and with the permission of a friendly watchman he entered, disconencted a rod and slipped his packing on a locomotive at 2 o'clock in the morning. The locomotive ran for days before the engineer knew of it.

His first business was a crusade affair. He purchased a little engine lathe, designed and built a four-horsepower boiler and started production in his father's stable. He kept at it year after year—seventeen hours a day—with no help but that of a Negro attendant.

It took him twelve years to get his little business plant moved into a modest factory that later was to become known throughout the world. His metallic packing was used during the World War on many Emergency Fleet Corporation ships.

He was 24 years old when a humiliating experience caused him to turn his tremendous mental energies into broader fields. He was invited to give an address on steel—and, by the way, this paper contained amazing prophecies, but his audience tittered. He asked a friend the cause. His friend frankly said it was because of his ungrammatical and badly composed paper. He resolved never again to be guilty of that offense.

He began intensive study of grammar and rhetoric, of the history and vocabulary of the English language, of etymology and all subjects pertaining to speech. His labors included the compilation of distinctions between more than 15,000 synonyms and autnyms. He built up wide knowledge of roots and original meanings and derivatives and even learned to trace many words into Green, Latin, Hebrew and Sanskrit.

He designed an all-steel boat for river use as an answer to the question of multiplying the nation's traffic facilities. Using infinite pains, he constructed his boat according to scale. The design called for a power plant of 3,500 horsepower, a speed of more than twenty miles an hour, 3,000 net tons burden and a draft of seven feet when fully loaded. In addition he laid out the cabins and art decorations.

The industrial world was startled a few years ago when he built the most modern efficient cresoting plant. The site was a swamp which required more than 500 piles to make its foundations secure. It covered twenty acres, called for 165 carloads of machinery and material, was equipped with more than two miles of railroad track and switches and entailed the installation of upward of 50,000 valves and pipe joints for the connection and operation of steam and creosote pipes ranging from one-eighth to twenty inches in diameter.

The plant was built in less than a year, Mr. Cook acting as president, treasurer, engineer, architect, purchasing agent and business manager. He dictated more than 500 reports specifications and letters connected with the plant in one week. When the plant was tested not more than ten joints of the many thousands required resetting.

He was ill six weeks. Death came unexpectedly thirty-two years after the time said by Mr. Cook to be the average life of a cripple. Bronchial pneumonia was the cause.

"Success is service," he said a few years ago in an interview. His idea of life was to help make it more livable. His passion in life was to learn more to help others. With all of his other interests he was affiliated with several organizations, and in addition to being active in church work and giving away each year one-fifth of his income he was chairman of the board of patrons of the Louisville School of Art, a member of the Board of Trade and the board of trustees of the Warren Memorial Presbyterian Church. He also was a member of the South Park Fishing Club and an honorary member of the Rotary and Engineers' and Architects' clubs.

NEBRASKA HOGS WEIGHS 1225

What is believed to be the largest hog in existence today is owned by William Deichmann, of Nebrasna community. The animal stands 51 inches high, weighs 1,225 pounds and measures seven feet two inches from the root of his tail to the tip of his nose. Deichmann believes he can put several hundred more pounds on the animal in a short time.

"Dazzler," as the animal has been named, is a purebred Poland China. He was farrowed March 10th, 1925, there were nine pigs in his litter of which five boars and three sows were raised. His sire was "The Armistice Bay" and his mother was "Clan's Mayflower."

The relative size and height of the hog can best be judged as it stands by its owner, who is a man of average size—five feet, six inches tall. "Dazzler" stretches the tape line nine feet over his back from the root of his tail to the tip of his nose. The porker has a 12-inch bone at the narrowest place in his leg.

Trapped by Her Past!

RECENTLY an actress, who a few years ago was popular on broadway, submitted to True Story Magazine a most startling story. It told why she had left the stage at the height of her career never to be seen upon the boards again.

It was a tale of dread and terror as each night she swayed her thousands to smiles or tears, her eyes, masking the agony in her soul, were seeking, always seeking among the audience, the one man in the world who had the power to drag her down from the pinnacle of success to the ignominy of defeat. Deep in her heart she knew that some day he would come, and that when he did her career would end.

And so when one night she received a note from a man in the audience who was awaiting her reply, she realized the time had come to settle her account with fate.

Her story entitled "Trapped by My Past," appears in True Story for June. With nothing hidden, nothing omitted she has put into it all the fire that perhaps once held you spellbound across the footlights. Maybe as you read it you will recognize her. If so you will then know the answer to a question you have probably asked yourself many times.

Partial Contents

My Flapper Sister
The Devil's Promises
Was I An Infatuated Fool?
When Love Destroys
Pawn of Passion
The Road to Perdition
—and several other stories

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