

Frederick Matthias Alexander, Memory Expert “Professor Alphonse Loiset,” and Former Politician Charles Edwin Jones

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Retired Dr. mult. Jeroen Staring taught mathematics at secondary schools in The Netherlands. His 2005 Medical Sciences dissertation describes the life, work and technique of F. Matthias Alexander. In 2013 he successfully defended a second dissertation, on the early history of the NYC Bureau of Educational Experiments.

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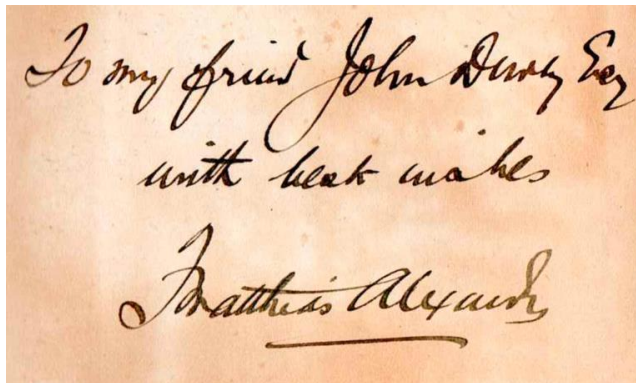
Abstract:

This case study discusses relationships between actor and voice and breathing teacher F. Matthias Alexander, theatre entrepreneur Percy Reginald Dix, memory artist Alphonse Loiset, and former politician, lecturer, and memory teacher Charles Edwin Jones.

Key Words: *Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955); John Dewey (1859-1952); Percy Reginald Dix (1866-1917); Samuel Jackson Holmes (1868-1964); Charles Edwin Jones (1828-1903); Marcus Dwight Larrowe (1820-1896) — aka “Professor” Alphonse Loiset.*

Introduction

Let me be specific. John Dewey seems to me one of the wisest and keenest men in the field of ethics. I have the greatest admiration for his work. It was a most disturbing experience to find him sanctioning a medical quack. He gave the endorsement of a foreword to a book, “Man’s Supreme Inheritance,” which conveys the impression that cancer, tuberculosis and other major diseases can be cured by a system of correct posture and calisthenics. If that is the best education can do for an exceptional man like Dewey, Lord help the rest of us. (Haskell, 1923).



To my friend John Dewey Esq
with best wishes
Matthias Alexander



Figure 1: F. M. Alexander’s dedication in the 1918 American edition of *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* to philosopher and educationalist John Dewey. (Jeroen Staring Collection). **Figure 2:** American zoologist/eugenicist Samuel Jackson Holmes. (Jeroen Staring Collection).

This quote (above) outlines a positivist view of American philosopher and educationalist John Dewey’s support for the work and writings of his Tasmanian friend Frederick Matthias Alexander (compare *Figure 1*), founder of the so-called Alexander Technique during the 1920s. The quote also provides a stark warning of the basic nonsense in *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, as well as an indication of the book’s author — who much later, on April 19, 1948, was officially declared a quack in a South-African court by Mr. Justice Clayden, and whose methods were labelled dangerous quackery in the case of Alexander’s claims for a cure (*British Medical Journal*, 1948a-b). According to Richard Travers and Bryan Gandevia, two Australian researchers, the main features of quackery are:

1. Self-aggrandisement. This may take the form of false or misleading qualifications or experience, or testimonials from grateful patients [...]. 2. Paid advertising in the lay press, when it is extravagant...indiscriminate...or calculated to make people anxious [...]. 3. Presence of a multiplier effect. The income generated is far above the cost of labour and materials [...]. 4. Professional isolation. There is no evidence of collegiate activity, a code of ethics...teaching other practitioners or of professional study. Any so-called improvements to knowledge or practice are related solely to marketability. (Travers & Gandevia, 1999, pp. *viii-ix*).

A sign of the times may be the fact that, like Dewey (1918) in his introduction to Alexander's 1918 book, Haskell has failed to address Alexander's implausible eugenics and despicable racism (compare Staring 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995). Note, on the other hand, that in 1924 zoologist and eugenicist Samuel J. Holmes (1924, p. 11; see *Figure 2*) — then a member of the *American Eugenics Society* advisory board and later its president, as well as a member of the board of trustees of the *Human Betterment Foundation*, and a member of the *National Society for the Legality of Euthanasia* advisory board — undeniably categorized Alexander's 1918 book as a publication "dealing specifically with eugenics." At the time, Holmes probably knew better than anyone else in the US how to trace eugenics in writings!

Alexander never gave up his naive ideas about human evolution and remained a eugenicist and racist until his death in 1955. The last edition of his *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, acclaimed by John Dewey but still with its eugenics and racism, dates from 1946. In one of his last writings, Alexander justified his eugenic views (unmistakably articulated in elliptical gobbledegook):

If I am guided in my experience in my efforts to change the reactions of my pupils, the trend through evolution alone has been too often in the wrong direction and certainly too slow to keep pace with mankind's increasing needs in this connection. On the other hand, in my case, I was advocating a technique by means of which mankind may go on evolving [...]. (Alexander, 1949).

Where, when and how did Alexander's urge arise to express himself as a fulbright quack with distorted ideas about human evolution, eventually culminating in his deluded eugenic views of "mankind"?

New Zealand: F. Matthias Alexander, Percy R. Dix, and "Professor" Alphonse Loiset

Alexander is like one who has learned to run the rapids and so believes that he knows about the ocean, too, which is also made of water. Or we might compare him to one who, having devised a new and more efficient method of bricklaying, sets up as an architect. (MacCurdy, 1920, p. 707).

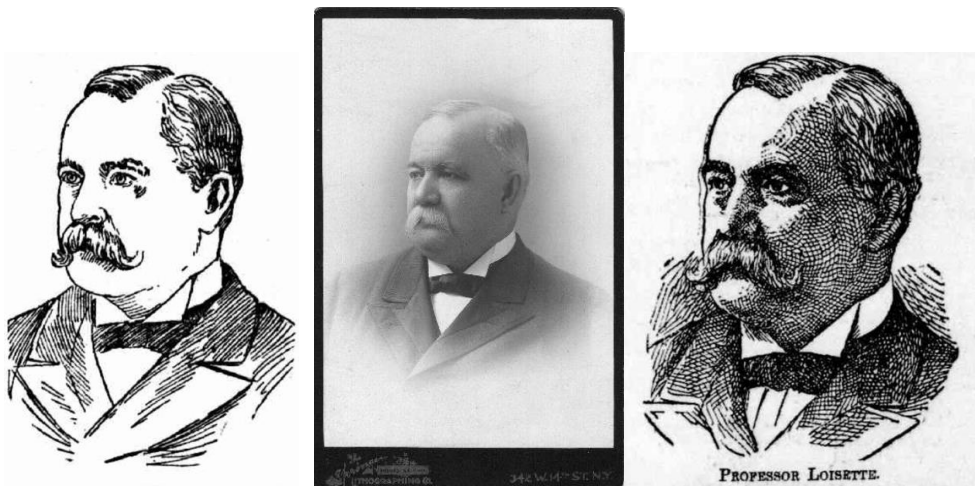


Figure 3: Portrait of Loiset in the August 13, 1895, *Daily Telegraph* (1895d). Figure 4: Cabinet card of Marcus Dwight Larrowe, alias Professor Alphonse Loiset. (Jeroen Staring Collection). Figure 5: Portrait of Loiset in the September 15, 1895, *Express and Telegraph* (1895).

In 1869, Frederick Matthias Alexander was born on the island of Tasmania. In 1889 he moved to Melbourne, Victoria, Australia where, after several unsuccessful attempts to keep a job in Melbourne and Geelong, he started working for the Melbourne tea company W. H. Sinclair & Co. In his spare time, he was a member of *The Olympians* — an amateur theatre club led by his speech teacher Fred. Wyndham Hill —

and acted as their stage manager. Together with fellow participant Miss C. Malmgren, he won the Dialogue Award at the 1892 Victorian Amateur Competitions Association Public Competition (Staring, 2015; *Wellington Times and Agricultural and Mining Gazette*, 1892) — albeit after a fierce dispute (Staring, 2020). The same year he published a poem, *The Dream of Matthias the Burgomaster* (Alexander, 1892). It became a part of his repertoire wherever he performed (e.g., *Herald*, 1892); and it is very likely that he sold copies then. The following year, he won second prize in the Gentleman’s Recital section of the Victorian Amateur Competitions Association Public Competition (Hill, 1896a-d; *Melbourne Punch*, 1893, p. 338) and gave several theatrical performances, reported by local newspapers in Adelaide and Melbourne (Staring, 2015). In 1894, Alexander and his partners William Christie Sinclair and William Henry Sinclair, who were then the Melbourne W. H. Sinclair & Co. tea company, dissolved their partnership by mutual consent (Sinclair, 1894). Next, Alexander toured Tasmania with theatrical performances, where he eventually settled in Hobart as a “natural elocution” teacher.

Then, beginning in March 1895, he toured New Zealand for three months and after arriving in Auckland in June, he stayed there for six months, sometimes performing on stage, but mostly teaching as a voice and breathing teacher. Alexander’s early performances were well received (e.g., *Auckland Star*, 1895d; Staring, 2009). Also, for example, an editorial in the *New Zealand Herald* (1895j) drew attention to Alexander’s advertisement for his teaching and organizing a Shakespearean class in the newspaper. While in Auckland — the final episode of his 1895 New Zealand tour — Alexander was given a testimonial by J. Taylor, one of his Auckland students. The testimonial appeared in the *Auckland Star* of July 13, most likely placed by Alexander, under the headline “A Brilliant Triumph in Voice Culture. Stuttering Cured in 25 Lessons:”

To Mr. F. M. Alexander. — Dear Sir, — I have the greatest pleasure in testifying to your great skill in curing defects of the voice. All my life I have stuttered, but I am delighted to state that after twenty-five lessons all my difficulties have disappeared. Three weeks ago it was impossible for me to read aloud; to-day I can do so with the greatest ease. You have also increased the strength of my voice in a remarkable degree. Please accept my deepest thanks for the great benefits I have derived from your careful and skilful [*sic*; J.S.] training.

Your ever grateful pupil,

(Signed) J. Taylor, Manukau Road, Parnell. (Taylor, 1895).

Note that Alexander first published a customer testimonial from a client (named L. Simmons), with the headline “A Triumph in Voice Culture,” while he was still in Hobart, Tasmania — on Feb. 16, 1895, in the *Hobart Mercury* (Staring, 2009, pp. 16, 111). The *Hobart Mercury* (1895) wrote about Alexander’s advertisement in the same edition:

[...], and in this edition appears a testimonial which *proves* the benefits to be derived from [Alexander’s] system of voice culture. *A pupil states that he has been cured of an hereditary impediment in 15 lessons.* This should be welcome news to those who suffer from defects of the voice, and should induce them to avail themselves of his tuition. (Italics added; J.S.).

Taylor’s testimonial in the *Auckland Star*, however, seems to hint at even greater ‘success,’ as it bears the headline “A *Brilliant Triumph in Voice Culture*” (Italics added; J.S.) — even though it took Alexander ten lessons more than in the attempt of so-called curing L. Simmons’ “hereditary impediment” (see *Note 10*).

Immediately beneath Taylor’s testimonial, General Secretary of the Auckland Literary Societies’ Union and aspiring theatre entrepreneur Percy Reginald Dix advertised a “Grand Musical and Elocutionary Entertainment” at the Y.M.C.A. Lecture Hall on July 17. Alexander, “The Talented Elocutionist,” was named by Dix to participate (Dix, 1895b; see also Dix, 1895a). A few decades later, Alexander (MS, p. 20) would note in an undated autobiographical manuscript that he gave several performances immediately after his arrival in Auckland and that he was “then engaged by a syndicate to give several more.” Alexander was referring to Dix’s “syndicate.”

Is it perhaps more than a coincidence that both Alexander and Dix were born in Tasmania — Alexander in Wynyard in 1869, Dix three years earlier in Launceston — and that both men had moved to Melbourne at a young age to end up there as tea merchants? Maybe they knew each other before 1895, from

their time together in Melbourne? Dix had moved to New Zealand in 1891, setting up a new tea merchandise in Auckland. In 1892, he became also involved in politics, and around 1893 he was additionally active in the theatre world as secretary of the Auckland Amateur Opera Club and of the Auckland Literary Societies' Union (*Auckland Star*, 1895a). He also became secretary of the Sir George Grey Statue Fund (Dix, 1895k) and vice president of both the St. John's Boys' Club (*Auckland Star*, 1895c) and the St. John's Mutual Improvement Society. He was the founder of the No. 1 Terminating Investment Society of Auckland (Dix, 1895h). Dix was a tenor and sometimes appeared on stage himself (*Auckland Star*, 1895g). In 1895, about the time Alexander arrived in Auckland, Dix had left the tea business and had reinvented himself as a full-time theatre manager staging entertainments at the Opera House, City Hall, and Y.M.C.A. Lecture Hall (Dix, 1895defgijlm; see *Note 1*).

Most likely by the end in July 1895, Alexander met Marcus Dwight Larrowe, *aka* Professor Alphonse Loiset (see *Figures 3, 4, and 5*) — an American memory teacher who qualified himself in advertising as a world-renowned memory psychologist.

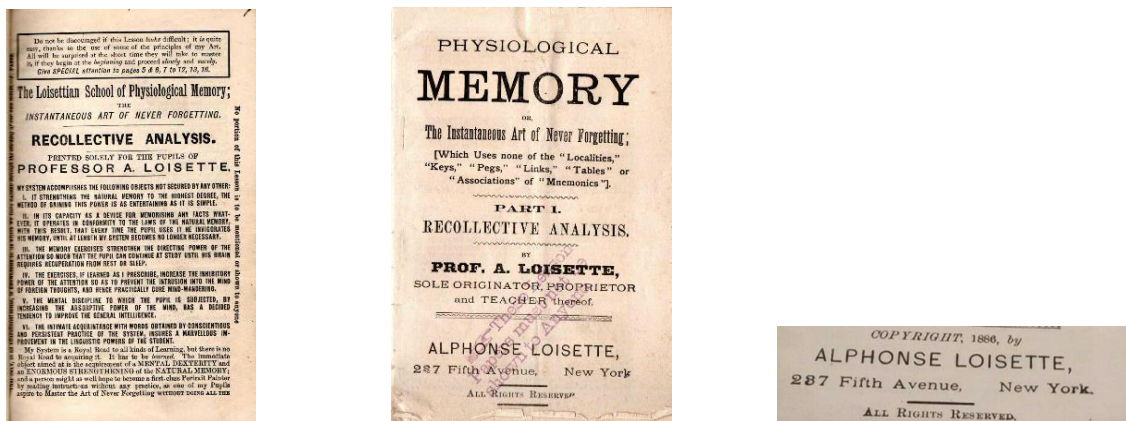


Figure 6: First page of first “Lesson” of *The Loisetian School of Physiological Memory; The Instantaneous Art of Never Forgetting*, published in London, about 1882 (Loisette, n.d. A, p. 1). **Figure 7:** First page of first “Part” of *Physiological Memory, Or, The Instantaneous Art of Never Forgetting*, published in New York, about 1886 (Loisette, n.d. 2, p. 1). **Figure 8:** Bottom of first page of sixth “Part” of *Physiological Memory, Or, The Instantaneous Art of Never Forgetting*, published in New York in 1886 (Loisette, 1886).

Marcus Dwight Larrowe, born in 1828 in Cohocton, New York, was the son of Elizabeth (*née* Holmes) Larrowe and John Larrowe. It is said that he studied at Yale and obtained a law degree; that he was later an officer of the Order of Freemasons in Nevada. Not many facts are known (see *Note 2*). In 1874, he left America for London, England. It seems he took the name “Professor Alphonse Loiset” not long after, when he was teaching French. Probably from 1882, he advertised classes in the “Instantaneous Art of Never Forgetting” in his “Loisetian School of Physiological Memory” and published a series of undated advisory instruction booklets (Loisette, n.d. A-F; see *Figure 6*). By 1886, Loiset had returned to the United States, where his booklets were reprinted, first undated (Loisette, n.d. 2; see *Figure 7*) and later dated — when “Copyright, 1886, by” was added to the original address text “Alphonse Loiset, 237 Fifth Avenue, New York” on the first page of the individual booklets that made up the series (Loisette, 1886; see *Figure 8*). Then Loiset (n.d. 1), probably in 1887 or 1888, had the text of the series of booklets adapted and published in book form by Wilmore-Andrews in New York (see *Figure 9* and *Figure 10*; see *Note 2*).

It is possible that Loiset had moved back to England in 1895. That year he made a stopover in Auckland during a lecture and teaching journey from London, England to New Zealand, Australia, Japan, to the United States. Loiset and his (third) wife Ida M. Loiset arrived in New Zealand on June 19, 1895 (*New Zealand Mail*, 1895). Before visiting Auckland at the end of July, Loiset and his wife had already visited Dunedin, Christchurch, and Wellington.

In Dunedin Loiset gave a so-called ‘introductory lecture’ in the City Hall on June 27 (*Evening Star*, 1895b; *Otago Daily Times*, 1895c) — reviewed in a long article in the *Otago Daily Times* (1895b) of June 28. On June 26, the *Otago Daily Times* (1895a) ran an interview with Loiset. Fascinatingly, the *Evening Star* (1895c) published “Memory’s Chance At Last!” on the same day — a column-long text about Loiset’s memory system, most likely an advertorial by Loiset himself. And on June 27, the *Evening Star*

(1895a) published a short article, “Facts on Memory;” perhaps also a Loisetto advertorial? Loisetto gave a series of three so-called ‘instruction lectures’ in the Choral Hall on June 28 and July 1 and 2 (*Otago Witness*, 1895a).

In early July, Loisetto visited Christchurch and gave his ‘introductory lecture’ in the Oddfellows’ Hall on July 5. Two days earlier, the *Lyttleton Times* (1895a) had placed an advertisement, already announcing Loisetto’s arrival. It says “Loisetto is Coming” four times. A striking, attention-grabbing marketing trick? The *Star* (1895b) published an article on the same day announcing Loisetto’s lectures in Christchurch. The next day, the *Lyttleton Times* (1895b) published “Memory’s Chance At Last!” — an advertisement announcing Loisetto’s lectures. On July 4, both the *Lyttleton Times* (1895c) and the *Star* (1895a) published “Memory’s Chance At Last!” — both column-sized ads, almost identical to the ad appearing on June 26 in the *Dunedin Evening Star* (1895c), showing that it is indeed an advertorial by Loisetto himself. In it Loisetto promised “the cure absolute and final of mind-wandering.” On July 6, the *Lyttleton Times* (1895e) published a review of Loisetto’s introductory lecture the day before, and the *Press* (1895b) had an advertisement stating that Loisetto’s three ‘instruction lectures’ would be given in Oddfellows’ Chambers, opposite the Oddfellows’ Hall, on July 6, 8 and 9. Intriguingly, the review of Loisetto’s lecture in the City Hall in the *Otago Witness* (1895a) of July 4 indicated how Loisetto taught his students to abolish (= to cure?) mind-wandering:

[...] a third way of creating memory power is to abolish mind-wandering by creating a new habit of intellect staying with the sense of hearing.

This seems to foreshadow parts of Alexander’s later themes about habit formation and change, attention, and mind-wandering.

On July 15, in Wellington, Loisetto gave the ‘introductory lecture’ in the Thomas Hall and then gave his series of three ‘instruction lectures’ in the Exchange Hall on July 16, 17 and 18 (*New Zealand Times*, 1895b). On July 16, the *Evening Post* (1895b) reported on the night before’s ‘introductory Lecture.’

Loisetto also organized classes in his memory system during his time in Dunedin, Christchurch, and Wellington (e.g., *Press*, 1895a). Later, in Auckland, in July, Loisetto would lecture in the City Hall, and in the Sowerby’s Hall in early August. In Auckland he again organized classes in his memory system. On July 27, the *Auckland Star* (1895f) published a rather long interview with Loisetto. On July 29 and 30, the *New Zealand Herald* and the *Auckland Star* on July 29, advertised a lecture by Loisetto, stating “Prof. A. Loisetto’s Wondrous Lecture on Assimilative Memory. An opportunity you must not lose on any account” (Loisetto, 1895a-c). Note that Loisetto’s advertisement in the *Auckland Star* was placed under an advertisement from the Opera House (1895a), and in the *New Zealand Herald* immediately below a similar advertisement from the Opera House (1895bc) in which a “charming Comedietta, ‘Scenes From Life’s Drama,’ produced by Mr. F. M. Alexander and Miss Jessie Glover” was announced. Another (extremely large) Loisetto ad states “Mind-Wandering Cured” (Loisetto, 1895d).

You might wonder, since Loisetto used the phrase “Mind-Wandering Cured” in more than one newspaper ad; as he had previously used the phrase “cure absolute and final of mind-wandering” (*Evening Star*, 1895c); and since he in yet another paper (*Otago Witness*, 1895a) spoke about abolishing mind-wandering, he probably equated abolishing of mind-wandering with curing mind-wandering.

Loisetto’s column-sized advertisement in the *Auckland Star* of July 27 states: “Prof. A. Loisetto, Of London and New York, Who is admitted to be the Greatest Living Memory Psychologist.” In addition, the advertisement contains a highly suggestive claim under the headline “Prof. Loisetto Named With Darwin and Spencer” (Loisetto, 1895d):

Professor S. S. Stratton, President of Portland University, Oregon, U.S., introduced Prof. Loisetto to a large audience in that city at his introductory Lecture in these words:—“We have all heard of Charles Darwin on “Natural Selection,” Herbert Spencer on the “Philosophy of Evolution,” and Professor Loisetto on “Memory.”

The advertisement lists the opinions about Loisetto that had appeared in newspapers in America, Canada, India, and South Africa, and cites the opinion about Loisetto of several well-known individuals, such as William Waldorf Astor, George Herschell, Charles Mercier, and Richard A. Proctor. It even has a paragraph about “a Cynic” becoming “a Convert” (Loisetto, 1895d). Note the religious intonation.

Loisette clearly was an accomplished lecturer who had learned the skill to grab the attention of his audience. It seems that wherever he went he widely marketed his ‘Assimilative Memory.’ In fact, he was a master at marketing not only his memory system, but himself, his skills, his ‘craftmanship.’ He glorified himself immensely, making clever use of the opinion of others about him, of famous persons — who even put him on the level of Darwin and Spencer. Given the circumstances at the time, Loisette’s ads and advertorials were provocative; he placed extremely large advertisements and advertorials in numerous newspapers of the cities where he stayed. He allowed himself to be interviewed by the press. Wherever he came, he would launch a barrage of (sizable) advertisements at his intended audience. He was a smart thoughtful marketing strategist.

Loisette was a marketing expert, but he was also a con artist. Because he advertised that he could “cure” people without medical training, he qualifies as a quack.

Both Loisette and Alexander performed in Auckland’s City Hall theatre (Staring, 2009) and both men took advantage of Percy R. Dix’s service to stage their entertainments there. Dix was impresario for both Alexander and Loisette. He may have been the intermediate between them. It is not known when, how or why Alexander and Larowe/Loisette met, but it seems they soon got to know each other rather well. Alexander (MS, p. 20) later noted, “During this time I met Professor Loisette (Memory System Expert),” and, “a close and helpful friendship resulted.” Alexander also claimed that Loisette tried to persuade him “to return with him to the United States of America where he told me he could arrange for me to do the Leyland Recital Tour.”

Loisette in July and/or August 1895 received three lessons in Alexander’s voice and breathing methods. At least, that’s what Loisette said in a eulogy he wrote for Alexander on August 6 — to be used in newspaper advertisements. Two days later — when Loisette had already left New Zealand for Australia on August 7 (*Auckland Star*, 1895a) — Alexander included Loisette’s eulogy in a sizable advertisement in the *Auckland Star* (Alexander, 1895b):

A Magnificent Eulogy from Professor Loisette.

Auckland, August 6, 1895.

This is to say that I find myself under many obligations to Mr. F. M. Alexander, the Natural Elocutionist. I read his article which appeared in the *Auckland Star*, and soon applied to him. I had increased in weight some fifty pounds during the past few years, and found as a consequence that I would sometimes get out of breath in public speaking. I had tried the remedies of two distinguished elocutionists elsewhere, but with no benefit. In *three* lessons Mr. Alexander set me right. As a test, I will add that when I went on to the stage in the City Hall, July 30th, I really feared I could not get through with my address, I was so ill and fatigued with giving private lectures; but, thanks to the exercises prescribed by Mr. Alexander, I encountered no difficulty, and in fact I found at the close of my remarks I was less exhausted than I had ever before been *in my life*. Having heard Mr., I am satisfied that all who wish to acquire the noble art of attractive and effective reading and speaking cannot do better than place themselves under Mr. Alexander’s instructions. I feel confident that if Mr. Alexander were in London or New York, he would soon be recognized as a first-rate artist in his profession, and that he would soon command the highest terms paid to voice-builders and genuine trainers for public reading and speaking.

(Signed). A. Loisette.

Mr. Alexander wishes to announce that he has promised to meet the Professor in New York in April next, when he will make public appearances in that city, and as he will only be here for a short time, intending students should begin immediately.

Correct Breathing for Speakers and Singers taught in from three to six lessons. Fee 1£ 1s. Natural Elocution. Voice Production, etc. Stuttering (the cure of) a specialty. Testimonials of one absolute cure of an Auckland gentleman can be seen at the Studio. Two other pupils with defective voices progressing admirably. Shakspearean [*sic*; J.S.] and Elocution Classes meet each week. Members invited. Terms 1£ 10s per quarter. Further particulars may be obtained at the Studio Room 314, Victoria Arcade.

Alexander’s reference to testimonials “of one absolute cure of an Auckland gentleman” probably refers to J. Taylor’s (1895) in the *Auckland Star* of July 13, cited above. It is also interesting that Alexander

indicated that curing stuttering was a specialty of his. The sliding scale from teaching elocution, voice and breathing lessons to claiming to cure diseases and ailments without medical qualifications is thus apparent early in his career.

Had Loisetette taught Alexander the secrets of marketing yourself? If so, he certainly taught Alexander another valuable lesson in ‘never forgetting,’ even after he left New Zealand. He made sure that his name was not soon forgotten by New Zealanders. Under the reprint of Loisetette’s eulogy in the *Auckland Star* followed by Alexander’s warning that students should hurry, larded with several claims that he could “cure” people, an advertisement by Loisetette (1895g) was printed stating that he would arrange texts he had written to appear in a ‘single book system’ and that interested persons could purchase the book at the price of 1£ 4s. from Mr. P. R. Dix, of Coombes’ Arcade, Auckland (see *Note 3*). A similar advertisement had appeared in the same newspaper the day before (Loisetette, 1895f), and would appear regularly in many newspapers — from the *Ashburton Guardian*, *Bay of Plenty Times*, *Inangahua Times*, *New Zealand Times*, *Otago Daily News* to *Te Oroha News* — to year-end (e.g., Loisetette, 1895e-k). The advertisement was most likely placed by “Mr. P. R. Dix” referenced in the text — that is, Loisetette’s Auckland impresario: theatre business manager Percy R. Dix who had hosted Loisetette’s lectures at the City Hall as well as Alexander’s entertainments:

Professor Loisetette’s Memory System.

In response to numerous requests from all sections of New Zealand that I should at once afford facilities to acquire my art of Assimilative memory by Correspondence on the single book System, and at the price of 1£ 4s each pupil, I have to state that all persons wishing to learn my system should put themselves into communication with Mr. P. R. Dix, of Coombes’ Arcade, Auckland, who will provide them with the required single book of instruction and any information necessary with the greatest possible dispatch.

A. Loisetette.

Another advertisement of the same title appeared in other newspapers at the same time in 1895, for example in the *Otago Daily Times* (Loisetette, 1895l). The ad was heavily targeted at the greed of its readers, and again it was most likely placed by Percy R. Dix, referenced:

Professor Loisetette’s Memory System.

A good Memory is the Greatest Money-saving and Money-making Agent, and is Easily Acquired by the Study of Professor Loisetette’s Art of Assimilative Memory.

Professor Loisetette on leaving the colony, Granted Special Facilities for the Formation of Correspondence Classes to P. R. DIX, Coombes’s Arcade, Auckland. Applications should be accompanied by the fee of 1£ 4s each person. Please mention this Paper.

Later that year, even other advertisements and reports regarding Loisetette’s memory system were published in diverse newspapers, then referring to a Sydney, Australia address (e.g., *Lyttleton Times*, 1895df; *Otago Witness*, 1895b).

Suddenly, from mid to late August 1895, the Auckland newspapers were publishing more large advertisements placed by Alexander. Major advertisements in the *Daily Telegraph* of August 14, the *Auckland Star* of August 17 and the *New Zealand Herald* of August 24 refer to and quote from Loisetette’s eulogy, first used in Alexander’s (1895b) advertisement in the *New Zealand Herald* of August 10 (see above). Note that Alexander’s (1895a) ad in the *New Zealand Herald* of August 24 also states that he had promised to meet Loisetette in New York in April of 1896. The advertisement went on to state that Alexander had “a testimonial from an Auckland gentleman, who certified to his *absolute cure* in 2 lessons” (Italics added; J.S.). Such claims of “absolute” healing by Alexander — especially within a handful of lessons, like the case of L. Simmons (15 lessons; see above), Loisetette (3 lessons; see above) or J. Taylor (25 lessons; see above) — are a clear feature of claims that one can be healed by someone *without* medical training, knowledge and qualifications. They represent the first manifestations of Alexander’s quackery. Alexander would later in life suggest and claim that he was able to cure a wide range of diseases and ailments (see for example Alexander 1903abc, 1904b, 1906, 1918).

A pattern seems to emerge around the time Loisetette left New Zealand to go to Australia: Alexander began placing very large advertisements in various newspapers referring to the famous memory expert

Loisette, even using his eulogy and later in 1895 also eulogies and testimonials from other clients, for example from British war correspondent and war artist Frederic Villiers (Staring, 2009), claiming to cure diseases (see *Note 4*). By the way, Alexander never wrote a eulogy for Loisette.

Loisette arrived in Sydney, Australia on August 12, 1895. His New Zealand tour had been very successful and *extremely* lucrative (*Champion*, 1895; *Daily Telegraph*, 1895a; *Port Augusta and Quorn Dispatch. Newcastle and Flinders Chronicle* (1895); *Quiz and the Latern*, 1895b; Staring, 2009, p. 170; *Sunday Times*, 1895).

Alexander remained in Auckland until almost mid-December, 1895 after being honoured with a grand farewell organized by his students in late November (Staring, 2005, 2009; see *Note 5*). He left Auckland, New Zealand on December 11 on the *SS Tarawera*, and arrived in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia on December 16, 1895 (*Daily Telegraph*, 1895c; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1895a).

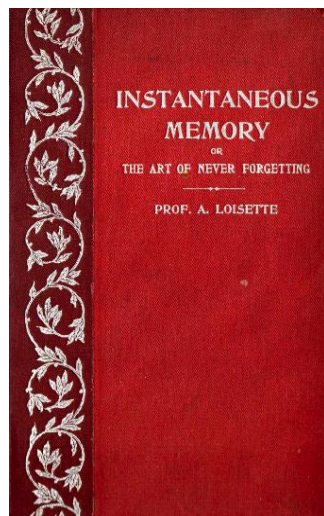


Figure 9: Front cover of Loisette's book *Memory* (Loisette, n.d. 1).

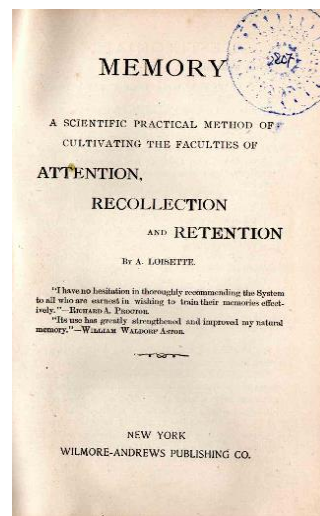


Figure 10: Title page of Loisette's book *Memory* (Loisette, n.d. 1, title page).

Australia: F. Matthias Alexander and Charles Edwin Jones

On August 13, 1895, the Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, newspaper *Evening News* (1895a) reported:

Professor Loisette, the memory psychologist, who arrived from New Zealand yesterday, will shortly deliver a series of lectures on mnemonics [*sic*; J.S.], and from accounts to hand his assistance should prove invaluable to men whose memories are not reliable. The professor's advance agent is Mr. C. E. Jones, once prominent among Victorian politicians, and in his time a successful lecturer. His memory, however, has always been phenomenal, and he has needed no personal treatment. Nevertheless, Mr. Jones says that he knows the system is a wonderful one, and the lectures will probably be popular. (*Evening News*, 1895a).

During his 1895 stay in Australia, many newspapers published Loisette's ads and advertorials (see *Note 6*). Newspapers also published their own interviews with Loisette, reviews of his lectures, commentaries, *etc.* (see *Note 7*).

Loisette's visit to Australia is not discussed here. He lived and taught for a while in New South Wales, but then travelled back to the US, where he died of dysentery on February 5, 1896, at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco (*San Francisco Call*, 1896). Alexander and Loisette never met again after their brief acquaintance in New Zealand in mid-1895. Later in 1896, Loisette's widow Ida published Loisette's texts as *Assimilative Memory, Or, How to Attend and Never Forget* (Loisette, 1896). The title page reads "Prof. A. Loisette" as the author. In the years that followed, the book was reprinted several times.

Note that the August 13 *Evening News* report, cited above, not only refers to Loisette, but also to his "advance agent" Charles Edwin Jones (see also *Evening News*, 1895c) — who, like Loisette, had set out

from Auckland on August 7 for Sydney aboard the *SS Tarawera* (*Auckland Star*, 1895a; *New Zealand Herald*, 1895a). Jones, a former politician turned lecturer, had arrived in New Zealand almost half a year earlier. On February 15, the *New Zealand Herald* (1895b) announced, “There is a probability of Mr. C. E. Jones, of Melbourne, Victoria, making a lecturing tour of New Zealand.” Jones did indeed tour New Zealand between March and August 1895, where he lectured on subjects as diverse as “Mormonism” (*Auckland Star*, 1895e), “Parliamentary Side-shows” (*New Zealand Times*, 1895), “Claims of Abstinence” (*New Zealand Herald*, 1895c), or “Spookology: The Science of Ghost Seeing” (*Evening Post*, 1895a). For example, in early April 1895, Jones performed at the Te Aroha Town Hall on the Northern Island, where he lectured on “The Mormons” on April 4; on “Parliamentary Sketches” on April 5; and on “American Humor” on April 6 (Jones, 1895i). Newspapers qualified Jones as an eminent lecturer, humorist, and platform orator. Several times — for example when a topic on which he had lectured was discussed in a newspaper — he sent a letter to the editor; see for example his letters in *Te Aroha News* (Jones, 1895a), *Lyttleton Times* (Jones, 1895b) and *Thames Advertiser* (Jones, 1895c-e). Jones’s stay in New Zealand did not go unnoticed.

That Jones did indeed have a formidable memory, as reported by the *Evening News* (1895a), quoted above, may be inferred from the following quote from an article in the *Thames Advertiser* (1895) of May 7: “Mr. C. E. Jones, who gave us such an oratorical treat here a short time ago...has issued a list of upwards of 126 lectures, which he can deliver from memory! We heartily wish him the success he so richly deserves”. Was it an editorial, or an advertorial text — a clever marketing ploy? It may well be that the particular list matches the list of 125 lectures in a booklet Jones published several months later (Jones, n.d. 1, pp. 58-60; compare also *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897).

Before they both sailed to Sydney on the same steamer, the *SS Tarawera*, Jones may have met Loisetete while they were both in Wellington in mid-July 1895: Loisetete (1895l) gave his introductory lecture on “Assimilative Memory” in the Thomas’ Hall on 15 July, while Jones (1895j) gave a talk on “Parliamentary Side-Shows” at the Thomas’ Hall on July 20. Their newspaper ads appeared on the same page in the same column in the July 15 *Evening Post*. Another, more plausible, possibility that both men met before boarding for Australia on August 7, 1895, resides in the fact that both men shared the same manager of business and that that person may have introduced them to each other before they left Auckland. It won’t be a surprise to know that it was Percy Reginald Dix! When Jones gave lectures in Auckland in May 1895, Dix was his impresario. Dix either advertised Jones’s City Hall entertainment in newspapers by stating it was operated by “P. R. Dix” (e.g., Dix, 1895g), or by stating that he was Jones’s New Zealand Tour manager: “P. R. Dix. Manager N.Z. Tour” (e.g., Dix, 1895e).

Still, it’s possible that Jones and Loisetete first met aboard the *SS Tarawera*.

Both men were experienced lecturers as well as accomplished scammers (Fellows, 1888; *Rockland County Journal*, 1888; *Quiz and the Latern*, 1895a; see *Note 2* and *Note 8*). While Loisetete’s adventurous life began after he left the United States in 1874, Jones’s adventurous life began after he in 1851 emigrated from his native England to Victoria, Australia where he started his career as sub-editor of the *Herald*; he also worked as a tailor; became a politician around 1862 and eventually rose to the position of Minister of Railways and Roads, Commissioner of Public Works, and Vice-President of the Board of Land and Works in 1868 (see *Figure 11* and *Figure 12*; see *Note 8*). It appears that he was involved in corruption and bribery cases. In 1871 he changed from politician to lecturer, but in 1872 he left Australia for America, where he lectured and occasionally did journalistic work. He is said to have lived with the Mormons in Utah and Wisconsin for a while and even went to work as a showman for the Phineas Taylor Barnum circus firm. However, Barnum, did not mention Jones in his autobiographical works (e.g., Barnum, 1855, 1870, 1888). After his return to Victoria, Australia from America in 1881, Jones once again earned his living making lecture tours, among other things. He also was the editor of the *People’s Tribune* between 1883 and 1886, and a land agent. Later he moved to Western Australia, but was back in Victoria in 1894 (e.g., *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express*, 1894).

Between March and mid-August 1895, Jones toured New Zealand.

Next, the *Evening News* (1895b) of August 26, reported:

The Jones of many experiences—the genuine and only C. E. Jones—has severed his connection with Professor Loisetete, and gone south. He is apparently tired of acting in the secondary position of agent while so well qualified to lecture himself, and intends opening in Melbourne with a series of

discourses on the blessings of memory or something of the kind. He is pretty well posted in all the various memory systems, and ought to do well in his old hunting ground across the Murray.

It seems that in conversations with Loisette, the “Jones of many experiences” had recognized the ins and outs of Loisette’s memory system; discovered Loisette’s best kept secrets; analyzed Loisette’s marketing and business plan and, as a result, rushed to lecture himself “on the blessings of memory or something of the kind.” As early as August 31, 1895, the *Melbourne Age* ran an ad, most likely placed by Jones (1895g) himself, stating that Jones was to deliver “his celebrated lecture” in Melbourne on September 5, adding: “All Sufferers from Bad Memory should Attend, System infallible.” The *Herald* (1895) of the same day also covered Jones’s forthcoming lecture. Admission was one shilling. On September 2, the *Echuca, Victoria Riverine Herald* (1895) stated that “Mr. C. E. Jones...is now lecturing on memory culture.” The *Melbourne Herald* (1895d) of September 4 announced that Jones would give his lecture the following day at Temperance Hall in Russell Street “on that highly interesting topic, ‘memory culture’” and that the lecture would be “supplemented by illustrations.”

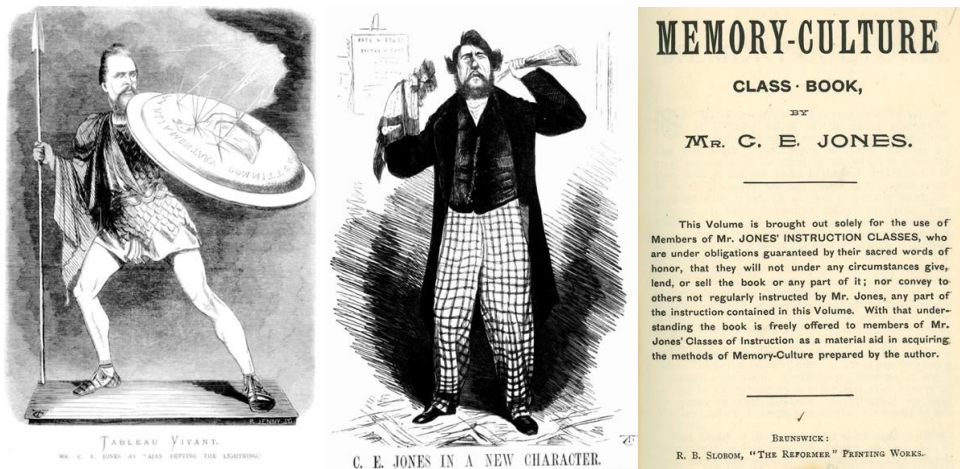


Figure 11: Cartoon of politician C. E. Jones in the September 3, 1868, *Melbourne Punch*.

Figure 12: Cartoon of politician C. E. Jones in the November 19, 1868, *Melbourne Punch*.

Figure 13: Title page of *Memory Culture: class book* (Jones, n.d. 2, p. 1).

(Courtesy of Special Collections, Deakin University Library, Geelong, Victoria, Australia.)

Jones had well understood that a book of secrets was an essential part of the marketing plan. And Jones was right. He must have been writing frantically because on October 4 he already advertised the publication of his *Memory Culture: class book* in the *Melbourne Fitzroy City Press* (Jones, 1895h):

Mr. C. E. Jones has pleasure in announcing that his Class-book, on Memory Culture is now ready for delivery to Students, upon the completion of their course of instruction in his classes. The fee for full instruction and book is £3 3s.; but persons desirous to join without taking the lecture course, may become members of a Correspondence Class of five or more members, each paying £1 5s., and receiving the Class Book, with instructions by letter.

The newspaper also had an article entitled “Natural Memory Culture” on the same page, most probably an advertorial by Jones himself, stating, “When the class book now prepared by Mr. Jones comes into general use, there will be few failures to pass in the subjects set for students in the universities and in Public Service examinations, in which at present the average of failures is utterly appalling and very costly” (*Fitzroy City Press*, 1895b).

A day later, on October 5, Jones (1895f) announced in the *Melbourne Age*: “Jones’s Lectures, Memory Culture: classes forming, Temperance Hall, Melb.; students’ books ready; correspondence classes. Fee, 25s.” And the October 9 *Geelong Advertiser* (1895) reported that Jones, “at one time a leading Victorian politician, has once more taken to the platform, as a public lecturer.” In addition, Jones had “in the press a work on ‘Memory Culture’ which should command a ready sale.”

The title page of Jones’s *Memory Culture: class book* (Jones, n.d. 2, p. 1; see *Figure 13*) carries the following warning:

This Volume is brought out solely for the use of Members of Mr. JONES' INSTRUCTION CLASSES, who are under obligations guaranteed by their sacred words of honor, that they will not under any circumstances give, lend, or sell the book or any part of it; nor convey to others not regularly instructed by Mr. Jones, any part of the instruction contained in this Volume. With that understanding the book is freely offered to members of Mr. Jones' Classes of Instruction as a material aid in acquiring the methods of Memory-Culture prepared by the author.

This is a strong example of the fact that Jones had uncovered many calculated marketing tricks in a short period of time from Loisetette (and earlier from Dix for that matter), who for his own booklets had also instructed his students not to reveal anything from the booklets to anyone at any time in any way (Fellows, 1888). But do not underestimate Jones! Despite what he demanded of his students, he sent copies of his book to the press for review. On November 11, the *Herald* (1895a) and on November 22, the *Warragul Guardian and News* (1895) announced with a good dose of humor:

Mr. C. E. Jones sends us his "Memory Culture," published solely for the use of those who join his classes. Concerning this book of mystery, the system disclosed in which may not in fairness be discussed, it is sufficient to say that it sets out in a practical way a practical if not quite unknown method of memory culture.

Interestingly in this regard, only one copy of the book has survived in a library to this day.

Jones's *Memory Culture: class book* has several passages in common with Loisetette's booklets and book, for example, a list of names and dates related to English kings and queens, but attention is also paid to historical facts and their dates, planetary distances; the book even lists the titles of 125 lectures given by Jones himself (Jones, n.d. 1, pp. 58-60; compare 'Amigo,' 1895; *Thames Advertiser*, 1895). The book does not contain much theory; half contains some sort of high school history of various Australian states and of New Zealand. Interesting perhaps, but what was its purpose (see Note 9)?

On May 30, the *Ballarat Star* (1896) reported that C. E. Jones had "made up his mind to establish memory culture classes on [sic; J.S.] Ballarat, coming up from Melbourne for the purpose one day in every week." The newspaper announced on the same page that F. M. Alexander ("who has made a great reputation in New Zealand and subsequently in Melbourne by his ability and success in the cure of stammering [...]") was considering weekly visits to Ballarat for teaching his methods. The newspaper pointed to their next issue, which would contain an advertisement from Alexander and promised that relatively few lessons from Alexander would suffice in even the most difficult cases.

Did Alexander and Jones know each other? They may have met while they were both performing in Auckland in June 1895. For example, at the time, the names of Alexander and Jones appeared in several issues of the *New Zealand Herald* simultaneously. More than once their names appeared on the same page. On June 10, Alexander (1895c-e) advertised in three advertisements, one on page 1, the other two on page 8. His name was also mentioned in two articles (*New Zealand Herald*, 1895hi) on page 5. That same day, *New Zealand Herald* (1895k) published on page 5 an account of Jones' lecture at the Choral Hall entitled "The Mystery of Longevity," and on page 3 a letter to the editor, written by one Charles Hardy (1895) in which he discussed Jones' ideas. On June 15, the *New Zealand Herald* (1895e) wrote in an untitled article that Jones was announced to be lecturing on "Spiritist Phenomena," the third of his Sunday lectures at Choral Hall. Alexander (1895gh) had one advertisement on page 1 and another on page 8, while the newspaper itself (*New Zealand Herald*, 1895ef) mentioned Alexander in two untitled articles. The June 22, 1895, *New Zealand Herald* contains two articles related to Alexander (*New Zealand Herald*, 1895bl), an advertisement mentioning Jones (Dix, 1895), and an article mentioning Jones (*New Zealand Herald*, 1895g).

At least Alexander and Jones were in the position to know about each other when they were in New Zealand in 1895. Recall that both men shared the same impresario in Auckland: Percy Reginald Dix, who, by the way, was also Loisetette's agent in Auckland. However, there is no indication that the two men actually met in New Zealand. Unlike Loisetette, Alexander (MS) did not mention Jones in his autobiographical notes!

As already announced in the *Ballarat Star* (1896) of May 30 (see above), Alexander (1896a) explained in a (sizeable) advertisement in the *Ballarat Star* issue of June 2 why he intended to teach his methods one day a week in Ballarat:

Mr. Alexander's attention has been directed to Ballarat by a pupil of one of the recognized leading teachers there, who has visited him for instruction. An attempt had been made by this teacher to cultivate the orotund tone, when it was an utter impossibility, as the production and breathing were absolutely wrong, and not a single range of the voice had been even moderately developed. It seems impossible that the greatest tyro would cause a pupil to pursue such a course. Much money and valuable time is wasted with incompetent teachers. Do not be attracted by small fees, an invariable sign of incompetence.

Alexander gave no clarity about the Ballarat teacher who had been taught by him but gave a clear hint that paying a lot per lesson from him guarantees the quality of the lesson. Does this constitute a lesson Alexander had learned from Loisettes? The advertisement referenced eulogies from Frederic Villiers, Loisettes and others: "Mr. F. M. Alexander. So broadly eulogized as a performer and teacher by gentlemen of world-wide repute." It also mentions that Alexander's methods of breathing can be learned in six lessons, strictly cautioning against other, competing, breathing methods. Then, of course, there are claims of cures and hints that Alexander's teaching can avoid surgery or other medical therapies: "Prevention and Cure of Clergymen's Sore Throat, huskiness, nasal tone, failure of voice...Why use injurious drugs and undergo surgical operations...proper production and correct breathing alone can cure...The cause immediately discovered, and the cure is then effected with ease and rapidity."

Of course, this is just one of the dangers of quackery: Alexander with no medical degrees advertised that he knew patients' needs better than physicians; questioned the therapies doctors prescribed; and could simply determine what patients didn't need. His reference to so-called 'natural' methods constitutes another tool for quacks to mislead potential customers: "Defects of Voice, Stammering, Stuttering, Lipping, &c., absolutely removed by natural methods." The last lines of the advertisement end with a blast by mentioning the profession of his clients, and how to get more information:

Mr. Alexander's Melbourne students include leading clergymen, university professors, theological students, university conservatorium students, singers, reciters, and public speakers...Mr. Alexander will visit Ballarat once each week, and full particulars may be obtained by communicating to the Studio, Australian Buildings, 49 Elizabeth street, Melbourne.

Frederic Matthias Alexander had arrived in Sydney on 16 December 1895 aboard the *SS Tarawera* (*Daily Telegraph*, 1895c; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1895a). Due to family circumstances (his sister had had a serious riding accident; Staring, 2009) he immediately travelled on to Melbourne. He started working again in early 1896. The *Melbourne Punch* (1896) of February 6 states that Alexander was to "appear shortly in Melbourne" and that he had "just completed a successful tour through Maoriland."

Alexander (1896h) placed a small advertisement in the *Melbourne Age* of March 14, announcing he had published his treatise *Speech Culture by New Methods*. The ad also stated, "Defective voices and hoarseness, &c., cured by natural methods...Testimonials from Melbourne pupils re. breathing and cure of defective voices at studio, 49 Elizabeth-street." The *Melbourne Reporter* (1896) reported on April 10 that Alexander had published a treatise on the voice with eulogies by Frederic Villiers, Robert Brough, Professor Loisettes and others. The small *Reporter* article was very similar to an advertorial in listing Alexander's skills and ending with "The Cure of Defective Voices, Stuttering, &c." Also, early in 1896 well into 1897, the *Church of England Messenger for Victoria and Ecclesiastical Gazette for the Diocese of Melbourne* published an Alexander advertisement on the first of each month (e.g., Alexander, 1896cd, 1897a). Parts of the text of these advertisements are identical to parts of the text Alexander (1896a) would later use in the *Ballarat Star* of June 2. Alexander's references to testimonials from so-called world-famous people as well as his claims of cures are certainly present. Some sort of summary of these advertisements, including, of course, his reference to "gentlemen of world-wide repute" and the claims of cures would appear regularly for a few months in the *Melbourne Free Lance* (e.g., Alexander, 1896fg) since early June.

"Damned With Small Voices," the title of those small *Free Lance* ads was earlier, on May 16, subject of a *Herald* (1896) editorial:

We have received from Mr. F. M. Alexander, of 9 Australian Buildings, corner of Elizabeth street and Flinders lane, a little pamphlet on natural elocution and voice production, in the teaching of which Mr. Alexander is a skilled professor. When the Chief Justice of the colony is prompted to say that there is a danger of Australia being "damned with small voices," when it is quite a rare thing to find a witness

in a Court of law who can speak up and make himself heard, when one's ears are offended by barristers who have voices which creak and grate like rusty saws, when our public platforms are largely occupied by men who have not the smallest conception of speaking—we are inclined to think that the services of a man like Mr. Alexander ought to be in constant and eager demand. It is an entirely wrong idea that it is only singers who need their voices trained. There are probably not a dozen men in Parliament who know how to use their voices; yet members of Parliament are constantly addressing public meetings and using their voices. And, in sheer ignorance of how to speak, they either bawl or mutter—suggesting either the bellowing of the bull of Bashan, or the feeble bleating of a consumptive sheep. And then again, how few persons know how to read. To all those people a man like Mr. F. M. Alexander should be regarded as a friend and counsellor. He makes an announcement in our business columns this evening.

Did the *Herald* use information Alexander had given them, or did Alexander — later — use the joking editorial of the *Herald* of May 16? It is very likely that Alexander used the *Herald's* editorial to formulate a striking headline for his advertisements — in the *Free Lance*, that is, in another newspaper than the *Herald*. These ads opened by a stern warning: “The opinion of the Chief Justice of the Colony is that there is danger of Australia being damned with small voices.” No explanation follows, merely “Mr. F. M. Alexander Cultivates the Speaking and Singing Voice by New and Rational Methods” (e.g., Alexander, 1896fg). Note that ads in the *Church of England Messenger for Victoria and Ecclesiastical Gazette for the Diocese of Melbourne* in their headlines speak of a new and rational method (singular), and that ads in the *Free Lance* speak of new and rational methods (plural). If this was not planned, then it would certainly have been corrected.

On the same page in the *Herald* of May 16 was an advertisement placed by Alexander (1896e), his first major advertisement in an Australian newspaper from 1896. Large parts of this advertisement would be used by Alexander (1896a) in his advertisement in the *Ballarat Star* of June 2, and in later *Ballarat Star* advertisements. But what is interesting here is that the *Herald* ad opened by the following statement: “Mr. F. M. Alexander announces that after the end of this month *fees will be increased*, and but few vacancies can be available” (Italics added; J.S.). Here the core of a lesson learned from Loisettes can be detected once more; paying a lot per lesson from Alexander guarantees the quality of the lesson.

A sizable ad by Jones about lessons in his Memory Culture training was printed just below Alexander's (1896a) ad in the June 2 *Ballarat Star*. In it, Jones (1896a) quoted six testimonials and gave details about how to contact him and how to pay him. Prospective students could reach him at two addresses: 47 Richmond Terrace in Richmond, and “The Studio,” Australian Buildings, Elizabeth Street, corner L. Flinders Street, Room 9, 4th Floor, Melbourne. This latter address is in the same building as Alexander's studio, indicated in his June 2 *Ballarat Star* advertisement: the Studio, Australian Buildings, 49 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne (see above). Could it be that Jones's address was the same as Alexander's?

Did Alexander and Jones know each other? They both referred to a teaching space in the Australian Building in Melbourne. They even seem to have planned trips together to teach in Ballarat, the city where Jones began his political career in 1864 (see Note 8). Their ads in the *Ballarat Star* outshined other ads; these were super big. And until August 1896 they were regularly placed in the *Ballarat Star* (e.g., Alexander, 1896bnopq; Jones, 1896bcijk). Jones even sent a long letter to the editor explaining his motives for teaching in Ballarat; the letter appeared in the June 18 issue of the *Ballarat Star* (Jones, 1896h). From it appears that Jones mainly followed Pick's method of memory training (c.f., Pick, 1862, 1899).

Alexander and Jones also placed large ads in the *Reporter* of the time (Alexander, 1896rs; Jones, 1896fg). Interestingly, so did Alexander's former Melbourne voice teacher Fred. Wyndham Hill on the same pages (e.g., Hill, 1896a-d)! Yet, in 1897, only Alexander (1897c-e) and Hill (1897a-c) would place huge advertisements in the *Reporter* together; Jones no longer joined them.

It is now clear: Alexander had learned various marketing tricks from Loisettes, probably also from Jones. And while in his Australian advertisements of 1896 he had already claimed cures of more diseases and ailments than he claimed in his Tasmania and New Zealand ads of 1895 combined, he now became so bold that he claimed in advertisements in the *Melbourne Punch* during the second half of 1896: “Throat Trouble with voice-users quickly cured,” and, “Breathing Gymnastics, which prevent gasping, raising shoulders and taking air through mouth. Adopted and recommended by members of Medical Profession as a

health giver and for cure of Chest Troubles, Consumption [= pulmonary tuberculosis; J.S.], &c.” (Alexander, 1896jk). Towards the end of 1896, Alexander, announcing his imminent visit to Beechworth, Victoria in December 1896 and January 1897 (where he would also climb the stage together with his later wife Edith Tasca-Page; *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896a-d, 1897a-c), stated in the Beechworth newspaper *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*: “In Melbourne Mr. Alexander has cured numerous cases of Stuttering, Defects of Voice, and Throat Troubles arising from errors in vocalization. As he leaves for America early next year, this will be the only opportunity of acquiring these splendid methods, which will be imparted by means of a series of Lectures and Class Instruction... Full Course, £2 2s” (Alexander, 1896i; compare *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896b). This way of promoting lectures followed by classroom teaching, indicating prospective students do not have much time left to receive instruction, is very reminiscent of Loiset’s self-marketing strategy (see above).

In 1897, Jones visited Beechworth, but not at the same time as Alexander was there. Alexander was in Beechworth in from December 1896 to sometime in January 1897; Jones was in there in January and February (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897de). Their visits did not overlap completely.

Now, did Alexander and Jones really know each other? Or are the above facts only coincidences?

In his 1896 advertisements, Jones more than once referred to a treatise he had published (e.g., Jones, 1896f). It was available at Glen’s Music Warehouse, Collins Street, Melbourne. And indeed, an 8-page pamphlet titled *Memory Culture: Mnemonics and Mnemotechney* (Jones, n.d. 2) survived in an Australian library until today. However, it does not carry a publication date. Yet, references to dates of testimonials in the pamphlet state either “January 1896;” “20th instant;” “15th inst.,” or “27th of February, 1896;” “latter part of February, 1896; or “February this year;” “about the same date;” “27th February this year” and “just as we are going in press.” Since Jones referred to such a “treatise” in his 1896 advertisements, it is highly probable that the undated 8-page pamphlet of testimonials and explanatory text is the treatise to which Jones referred in his advertisements.

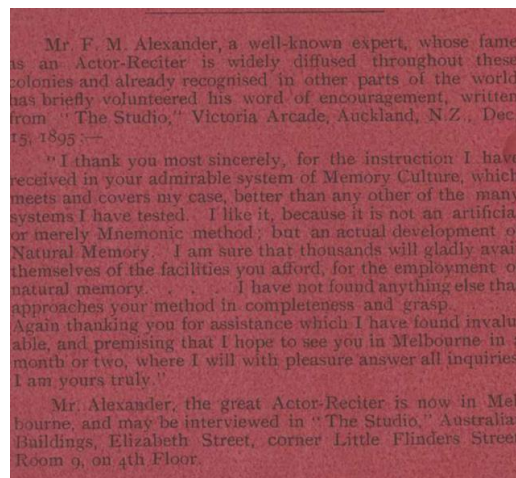
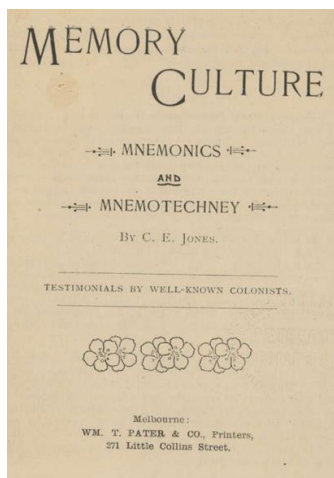


Figure 14: Title page in Charles Edwin Jones’s *Memory Culture* (Jones, n.d. 2, p. 1).

Figure 15: Testimonial of F. M. Alexander; inside front cover of *Memory Culture* (Jones, n.d. 2).

Surprisingly, the inner side of the front cover of Jones’s treatise carries the following testimonial:

Mr. F. M. Alexander, a well-known expert, whose fame as an Actor-Reciter is widely diffused throughout these colonies and already recognised in other parts of the world has briefly volunteered his word of encouragement, written from “The Studio,” Victoria Arcade, Auckland, N.Z., Dec. 15, 1895: —

“I thank you most sincerely, for the instruction I have received in your admirable system of Memory Culture, which meets and covers my case, better than any other of the many systems I have tested. I like it, because it is not an artificial or merely Mnemonic method; but an actual development of Natural Memory. I am sure that thousands will gladly avail themselves of the facilities you afford, for the employment of natural memory . . . I have not found anything else that approaches your method in completeness and grasp.

Again thanking you for assistance which I have found invaluable, and premising that I hope to see you in Melbourne in a month or two, where I will with pleasure answer all inquiries. I am yours truly.”

Mr. Alexander, the great Actor-Reciter is now in Melbourne, and may be interviewed in “The Studio,” Australian Buildings, Elizabeth Street, corner Little Flinders Street, Room 9, on 4th Floor.

The back cover of the pamphlet states where Jones may be “communicated with” at: ““The Studio,” Australian Buildings, Elizabeth Street, Corner of Lit. Flinders St., Room 9, 4th Floor.”

Ergo, Alexander and Jones knew each other well in 1896.

Jones’s address in Melbourne *is* Alexander’s address!

Did Alexander and Jones know each other in New Zealand in 1895, as the testimonial’s date ““The Studio,’ Victoria Arcade, Auckland, N.Z., *Dec. 15, 1895*” (Italics added; J.S.) suggests?

The testimonial was incorrectly backdated. Well, who would doubt a date?

Conclusion

Sycophantic Alexander hagiographies — like those of Jaqueline Evans (2001), Louise Morgan (1954), Lulie Westfeldt (1964), Edward Maisel (1969), Frank Pierce Jones (1976) and many others — glorify Alexander and only discuss him and his alleged great achievements, but do not describe him as a member of networks of like-minded people forming small mini societies with their own *mores*. When the connections between Alexander and the like-minded people he mainly socialized and interfered with are examined, a very different view of him and his glorious results emerges. This case study shows that Alexander learned self-aggrandizing and misleading marketing tricks from Alphonse Loiset and Charles Edwin Jones, two veteran charlatans. Alexander already showed all the ingredients (as listed by Travers and Gandevia, 1999, pp. *viii-ix*; see above) to become a full-blooded quack long before he left Australia in 1904 for London, England.

Alexander never returned to his native Tasmania, or to Australia, or New Zealand.

Yet, since 1988, he has been known as one of the 200 individuals who made Australia great (Butel (Ed.), 1988). How that happened is a whole different story.

Notes

1. For more details on the life of Percy Reginald Dix, see:

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3d8/dix-percy-reginald>;

<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc02Cycl-t1-body1-d1-d25-d2.html#t1-body1-d1-d25-d2-d5>.

2. For more details on the life of Marcus Dwight Larrowe, *aka* Alphonse Loiset, see:

<https://www.marypie.net/histories/loisette/marcus.php>.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Frederick_Foster.

3. Interestingly, Loiset had already appointed another person to oversee his business in Otago and other places in New Zealand’s South Island. On July 18, 19, 20 and 23, 1895, T. Montresor Baldwin (*e.g.*, Baldwin, 1895c) advertised in the *Otago Daily Times*:

Professor Loiset’s Memory System.

I have been APPOINTED by the Professor SOLE INSTRUCTOR and AGENT for Otago and Southland for his Memory System, and am now prepared to take PUPILS either Privately or in Classes. Arrangements have been made with the Professor to supply a Limited Number of Books, before he leaves the colony next week, to those who join under my tuition.

Terms on application to T. MONTRESOR BALDWIN,

Care E. Parker, 27 Princes Street.

Please apply between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Later in 1895, Baldwin placed small ads in various newspapers, for example the Evening Star: “Loisette’s Memory System.—T. Montresor Baldwin, instructor and agent. Apply care of E. Parker, violist, George street” (Baldwin, 1895a), or in Otago Daily Times: “Loisette’s Memory System.—T. Montresor Baldwin, instructor and agent. £2 2s per quarter.—Care of E. Parker, 149 George street” (Baldwin, 1895b).

4. For the texts of Alexander’s advertisements placed in New Zealand newspapers and newspaper reviews and editorials about his performances and other activities during his time in New Zealand between mid-March 1895 and December 11, 1895, see Staring, 2009.

5. Did Alexander lose a lawsuit early in December? The December 5, 1895, *Evening Post* (1895c) reported, “Judgement for plaintiffs was given as follows by the Stipendiary Magistrate today...New Zealand Times Company v. F.M. Alexander, £4 11s.”
6. *The Age; Auckland Star; Australian Star; Australian Town and Country Journal; Clarence and Richmond Examiner; Daily Telegraph; Evening Journal; Evening News; Express and Telegraph; Freeman’s Journal; New Zealand Herald; Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate; Porte Augusta and Quorn Dispatch. Newcastle and Flinders Chronicle; Quiz and the Latern; South Australian Register; Singleton Argus; Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advocate; and Sydney Morning Herald.*
7. Interviews with Loisetete, reviews of his lectures, and articles about his methods appeared in, for instance the *Age* (1895); *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* (1895); *Daily Telegraph* (1895bd); *Express and Telegraph* (1895); *Herald* (1895b); *Sydney Morning Herald* (1895bc).
8. For more details on the life of Charles Edwin Jones, see *Illustrated Adelaide Post*, 1868; *Illustrated Australian News*, 1868. See also:
<https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/jones-charles-edwin-3868>
<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/about/people-in-parliament/re-member/details/24/606>.
9. Several passages in *Memory Culture: class book* may have impressed Alexander, who would later address these subjects in his writings (Staring, 1995), culminating in the eugenics in his *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*:
- i. “Instinct is inherited memory,’ said the philosopher; and certainly the weaver’s son inherits from the paternal digit an instinct which is part of the fitness by which fibres are woven into films of beauty, to which even the poet’s genius can do no more than justice at his best” (Jones, n.d. 1, p.23).
 - ii. “The law of obliteration has also to apply to the abandonment of erroneous ideas and customs connected therewith, which may have been happily outgrown by communities. It is unnecessary to go into detail as to such customs, as they have had to be left behind at every forward movement of the race from the days when the first family discovered a cave in which it was possible for the group to be housed. Every error which has betrayed the race into wrong or impolitic action has brought with it the necessity for retracing steps as far as possible, and the abandonment of the unwise method which has involved an act of obliteration, for which nature has made due provision by enabling the brain occasionally to leave its old record entirely in the past. Every progressive step has been taken at the cost of an act of obliteration more or less complete, as there always remains a possibility that some members of the family may inherit the ancient practice by the processes of atavism. Idolaters who have been converted cannot help leaving to their descendants a possibility of reversion to the old fetish worship. Vices which have been repented of, with all becoming sorrow, and which the one-time sinner believes have been left behind for ever, may still prove an unhappy inheritance with which future generations must wrestle until the law of obliteration has completed its work and utterly effaced the *fons et origo mali*” (Jones, n.d. 1, p. 33).
10. There is one study on the effectiveness of 30 Alexander Technique lessons in the treatment of stuttering: Schulte & Wallach, 2006. The study does not show at all the triumphs Alexander allegedly achieved.

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