

MIND READING IN THEORY
AND PRACTICE

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*Marvelous feat
in Mind Reading*

Mind Reading in Theory and Practice

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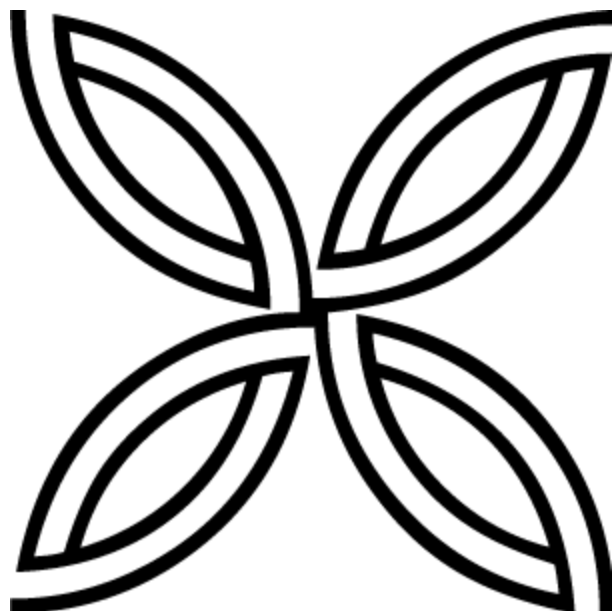
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William Walker Atkinson



LESSON I. THE NATURE OF MIND READING.

Only a few years ago the general public was in almost total ignorance of the great truth of Thought Transference, Thought Projection, Telepathy, or Mind Reading. It is true that here and there were to be found a few scientists earnestly investigating and eagerly uncovering the hidden truths concerning the subjects. But the mass of the people were either entirely ignorant of the subject, or else were intensely skeptical of any thing concerning the matter, laughing to scorn the daring thinker who ventured to express his interest or belief in this great scientific phenomena.

But how different today. On all hands we hear of the wonders of Thought Transference, or Telepathy, as it is called. Scientific men write and teach of its fascinating manifestations, and even the general public has heard much of the new science and believes more or less in it, according to the degree of intelligence and knowledge concerning the subject possessed by the individual. Listen to these words from the lips of some of the greatest scientists of the day.

Prof. William James, the eminent instructor at Harvard University, says: "When from our present advanced standpoint we look back upon the past stages of human thought, whether it be scientific thought or theological thought, we are amazed that a universe which appears to us of so vast and mysterious a complication should ever have seemed to anyone so little and plain a thing. Whether it be Descartes' world or Newton's; whether it be that of

the Materialists of the last century, or that of the Bridgewater treatises of our own, it is always the same to us—incredibly perspectiveless and short. Even Lyell's, Faraday's, Mill's and Darwin's consciousness of their respective subjects are already beginning to put on an infantile and innocent look." These remarks are doubly significant by reason of their having been made by Prof. James as the president of the "Society for Psychical Research."

The eminent English scientist, Sir William Crookes, in his address as president of the Royal Society, at Bristol, England, a few years ago, said: "Were I now introducing for the first time these inquiries to the world of science, I should choose a starting point different from that of old, where we formerly began. It would be well to begin with telepathy; with the fundamental law, as I believe it to be, that thoughts and images may be transferred from one mind to another without the agency of the recognized organs of sense—that knowledge may enter the human mind without being communicated in any hitherto known or recognized ways. Although the inquiry has elicited important facts with reference to the mind, it has not yet reached the scientific stage of certainty which would enable it to be usefully brought before one of our sections. I will therefore confine myself to pointing out the direction in which scientific investigation can legitimately advance. If telepathy take place, we have two physical facts—the physical change in the brain of A. the suggestor, and the analogous physical change in the brain of B. the recipient of the suggestion. Between these two physical events there must exist a train of physical causes. Whenever the connecting sequence of intermediate causes begins to be revealed, the inquiry will then come within the range of one of the sections of the British Association. Such a sequence

can only occur through an intervening medium. All the phenomena of the Universe are presumably in some way continuous, and it is unscientific to call in the aid of mysterious agencies when with every fresh advance in knowledge, it is shown that ether vibrations have powers and attributes abundantly equal to any demand—even the transmission of thought."

Prof. Crookes then went on to say: "It is supposed by some physiologists that the essential cells of nerves do not actually touch, but are separated by a narrow gap which widens in sleep while it narrows almost to extinction during mental activity. This condition is so singularly like that of a Branly or Lodge coherer (a device which has led Marconi to the discovery of wireless telegraphy) as to suggest a further analogy. The structure of brain and nerve being similar, it is conceivable that there may be present masses of such nerve coherers in the brain whose special function it may be to receive impulses brought from without through the connecting sequence of ether waves of appropriate order of magnitude. Roentgen has familiarized us with an order of vibrations of extreme minuteness compared with the smallest waves of which we have hitherto been acquainted, and of dimensions comparable with the distances between the centers of the atoms of which the material universe is built up; and there is no reason for believing that we have here reached the limit of frequency. It is known that the action of thought is accompanied by certain molecular movements in the brain, and here we have physical vibrations capable from their extreme minuteness of acting direct upon individual molecules, while their rapidity approaches that of the internal and external movements of the atoms themselves."

A formidable range of phenomena must be scientifically sifted before we effectually grasp a faculty so strange, so bewildering, and for ages so inscrutable, as the direct action of mind on mind. It has been said that nothing worth the proving can be proved, nor yet disproved. True this may have been in the past, it is true no longer. The science of our century has forged weapons of observation and analysis by which the veriest tyro may profit. Science has trained and fashioned the average mind into habits of exactitude and disciplined perception, and in so doing has fortified itself for tasks higher, wider and incomparably more wonderful than even the wisest among our ancestors imagined. Like the souls in Plato's myth that follow the chariot of Zeus, it has ascended to a point of vision far above the earth. It is henceforth open to science to transcend all we now think we know of matter, and to gain new glimpses of a profounder scheme of Cosmic Law. In old Egyptian days a well-known inscription was carved over the portal of the Temple of Isis: 'I am whatever has been, is, or ever will be; and my veil no man hath yet lifted.' Not thus do modern seekers after truth confront Nature—the word that stands for the baffling mysteries of the Universe. Steadily, unflinchingly, we strive to pierce the inmost heart of Nature, from what she is, to reconstruct what she has been, and to prophesy what she yet shall be. Veil after veil we have lifted, and her face grows more beautiful, august and wonderful with every barrier that is withdrawn.

Camille Flamarrion, the eminent French astronomer, is a believer in Thought Transference and Mind Reading, and has written the following expression of his convictions on this subject: "We sum up, therefore, our preceding observations by the conclusion that one mind can act at a distance upon another, without the habitual medium of words, or any other visible means of communication. It