

Torch of Reason

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Mind Reading and Magic Healing.

Many things which have been called frauds have afterwards become sciences. In fact, there is no science which has not been tested by the fire of ignorance, prejudice and religious fanaticism.

On the other hand, there have been many—very many—things which were thought to be true, but which afterwards proved to be false and were obliged, after doing much injury to our race, to give place to the truth. This being the case, one is very foolish to oppose without reason or to accept any theory as true on the mere say-so of those whose interest it is to have people "believe" or from the weak testimony of what might be tricks of a faker.

Our only guide should be our reason, backed by the established sciences, and our minds should never accept a thing as being true until reason has had a chance to do its work.

From a thought comes our every action, and thus at the end of every line of action is the true index of the corresponding thought; and if one is skilled in reading this index he can know something of the thought, and thus know the general character of those with whom he comes in contact. But remembering that the mind is not an entity but the manifestation of the matter of which the brain is composed, we must not be led into thinking that one person, no matter how "strong-minded," can with blinded eyes look with his mind

into another and know of his victim's thoughts.

It is fully time this superstition gave way to our established science of psychology, and people poor in the faculty of reasoning ceased to be humbugged.

There is a true science of mind-reading, of which it is a great pity that parents and teachers know so little. This true science is neglected for, and because of, the superstitious nonsense popularly called mind-reading, and it is the duty of every one who has a torch or a "touch" of reason to let its light shine upon these subjects until the beneficent effects of the true science may be enjoyed by all.

The mind, according to our best modern students of psychology, consists of knowing, feeling and willing. Can knowing travel? What an absurdity it would be to say that one's feelings can go about from place to place or that some of his knowing faculties, such as memory, classification, judgment or reason can separate themselves from his brain and enter the head of a friend. The wink of one's eye is not an entity that can leave its organ, and neither is the knowing, feeling or willing of the brain which was involved in producing the wink.

"How, then," says our credulous friend, who has seen wonderful things done by the fake mind-readers of our time, "do you account for such and such things I saw on such and such an occasion?" Well, we haven't time to explain every trick every trickster ever played along this line, and probably couldn't if we tried; suffice it to say, that we are fully "persuaded in our minds" that they can ALL be easily explained in such a way as to make the "believers" wonder how they could have been so foolishly deceived by these money-making tricks. Men of science, and the good they do, suffer very much from these pretenders.

What can doctors, who are careful and conscientious students, do for mankind as long as the people will run wild over the wonderful tomfoolery of some great mind-reader or some great Herman the Healer? If one has talent, is a little inclined to be lazy and don't care much how he makes money as long as he gets it, he can let his hair grow long, mortgage the little home the old folks earned for him and invest the proceeds as follows: Get four or five men who can be bought cheap these times; send them into a city where they will limp around with rheumatism, white swellings, general debility, etc., etc., for several weeks. Some of them must have crutches and all of them must be in a very bad way. Now, after they have been seen of all men, it is time for the great healer to come. The newspapers

can easily be hired to play the star-in-the-east act and herald the wonder. The forerunners on crutches can easily get fabulous stories of healing started, and then, ho, for the harvest! The healer comes. His rooms are crowded and good prices charged for examinations. The forerunners, who, of course, are no longer strangers to the people, are healed, and, throwing away their crutches, go on their way rejoicing. This sets the converts wild, and the money pours in. Of course there are a few found who are incurable, but this only makes the dupes more eager to have their cases tested.

Not long ago thousands and thousands of dollars were taken from the cities of the Western Slope in just this way, and still the good work goes on all over the world. Why is it so many people are so fast to patronize these humbugs and so slow to recognize and patronize the efforts to cure the world of the dread diseases known as ignorance and superstition from which spring most of our mental and physical disorders? In Christ's time it was very easy to deceive the people, for the nature of disease, the circulation of the blood, the cause of nervous disorders and even the composition and nature of the most common foods were not known.

But it seems as though the world ought to wake up soon, and we believe it will. The stories about Jesus' wonderful mind-reading and magic healing have been so persistently pounded into the minds of children, who are now adults, that it is easy for such who have never had the opportunity to read a Freethought paper nor hear a Liberal lecture to still be misled. But the followers of the ancient and modern "great physicians" are losing their power fast, for our modern literature, our modern ways of travel and communication, and our modern Freethought, which has been brought about since the adoption of the first amendment to the constitution of this great republic, making it possible for the "still small voice" of truth to be heard, is fast developing the faculty of reason, and this golden crown will soon be—ah, is now being—placed on the brow of triumphant humanity. Science, the savior whose praises we sing, needs no crown, but will crown us. It will "bring forth the royal diadem (of reason) and crown us lords of all."

War.

War is bad. Its effects are very bad, and the use of it for purposes of greed, like priestcraft, is damnable. We do not say it to flatter or fool those who have fought or those who are fighting, but we really do have the kindest feelings toward those who have been forced

by circumstances to ply the trade of wholesale murder.

War is never a good thing. To be sure it may, like the surgeon's knife, prevent the further growth of some cancerous condition like slavery, but higher civilization now demands preventative treatment instead of neglect, inflammation, amputation and the resulting crippled conditions. There are but few who can realize the evil results of war. Compared with what we might be physically, mentally and morally, we are mere pigmies; and how much of our degeneracy is on account of the wars of our forefathers? These wars may have been necessary concomitants of our past growth, but as we come nearer to a perfect civilization the incentives for labor will not be greed, and the objects which are used to cultivate our spirit of independence and the necessary power which comes to those who conquer will not be gained by the murder of our fellow men.

In regard to the settling of disputes and the punishment of crime, what is true of small communities is true of nations. Now, in the pioneer days of a country lynch law may, under some conditions, be necessary, but as soon as courts can be established lynch law disappears, and finally, when schools increase and knowledge of justice and right is disseminated, even courts are but little used. War is the lynch law of uncivilized nations. It is time courts of arbitration be established among the Anglo-Saxon races, that the world may the sooner learn the lessons of peace and become civilized. With our great country filled with peaceful, industrious, inventive people, we need not fear invasion from any country, even if we had not a single warship or murderous gun. And even if some nation was foolish enough to bombard and even capture a few of our coast cities before we could prepare for defense, the loss would be much less than the enormous cost of life, labor and wealth of the continual preparation, and its results, for that which would probably never come.

It is easy for lawyers, who feel so disposed, to encourage quarrels that they may reap a rich harvest of fees, and so it is for those who have the millions and the political power to sit in their mansions and send the poor boys to the front to fight, kill and murder their neighboring nation's boys. There is no good coming from war or no excuse that can be offered in its defense that could not be equally given by banditti. Pirates could argue that the people whom they rob are ignorant and making wrong use of their property; they could say that by capturing a vessel and compelling the owners to serve them that the captured ones need to be educated. But might does