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WHAT MIND READING IS

Nothing but Clever Trickery or Muscle Reading.

The credulity of the American people has often been imposed upon. The Locke "Moon Hoax" and the Cardiff giant have been followed by the modern "mind reader," who claims for himself powers of divination exceeding anything that has been known since the time of Christ. Mind reading, in the sense in which the word is used by those who pretend to possess the alleged power, may be defined as the transference of a thought—that is, a mental conception, or an idea—from the mind of one person to the mind of another, without the use of the known mediums of communication, which consist of the nerves of general sensation and those of special sense.

Mind readers claim that their feat is possible. In opposition to such claims, I submit that profane history contains no trustworthy account of its accomplishment. It never will be brought about as long as man remains constituted as he is at present. It is opposed to the principles of evolution and to all known facts of physiology. Notwithstanding all that may be adduced to the contrary, many believe that mind reading is one of the possibilities, even if it is not one of the actualities of life. But the belief, in every instance, is founded either on insufficient evidence or on faulty observation, or on a disposition to mistake the marvelous for the miraculous.

Many accounts of alleged mind reading are purely fictitious. Others are exaggerations of trivial incidents or misinterpretations of observed phenomena. Others still are accounts of muscle reading. Those cases that do not belong to the classes named are accomplished by trickery.

If there were any conditions under which thought transference might occur they would seem to be supplied by hypnotism. In the hypnotic state the mind of one person exerts over the mind of another an influence that surpasses anything with which we are acquainted under ordinary conditions. But the impossible cannot be accomplished even by the aid of hypnotism.

It must be born in mind that in the hypnotic state one's senses are intensely acute. That which ordinarily escapes the attention of the most careful observer is quickly detected by the sharpened senses of the hypnotist. It is impossible to make a motion that he does not see and interpret accurately. Thus, by virtue of his sharpened faculties, the hypnotist will sometimes divine, though he cannot "read" the thought of another.

Of modern mind readers the late Washington Irving Bishop was the best known in this country. Mr. Bishop was at the same time an expert muscle reader and a clever trickster. His most famous feat, the one from which he gained the greatest notoriety and eclat, was that of driving a team of horses, while he was ostensibly blindfolded, at break neck speed by a circuitous route through crowded streets and finding at a distant point an object or a name in a book, previously selected by a committee.

For the amusement of my friends I have several times performed this seemingly impossible feat, and in no instance have my methods been detected. Its successful accomplishment depends upon two things—the fact that one who is apparently blindfolded can see distinctly all the time, and the fact that the members of his committee are betrayed into becoming his unwitting accomplices.

The testimony of all muscle readers, especially during their first attempts, has been that they do not know what their methods are. Early success is a self surprise. It creates the impression that one is possessed of a weird power. This was my own experience. But after repeated experiment and close observation, I am convinced that the facts admit of rational explanation.

Primarily the results are all due to a single cause, but several different conditions enter into their execution. In making his way to the location of a hidden object the subject usually does not lead the muscle reader, but the muscle reader leads the subject. That is to say, so long as the muscle reader moves in the right direction the subject gives no indication, but passively moves with him. The muscle reader perceives nothing unusual. But, the subject's mind being intently fixed on a certain course, the instant that the muscle reader deviates from that course there is a slight, involuntary tremor, or muscular thrill, on the part of the subject, due to the sudden interruption of his previous state of mental tension.

The muscle reader almost unconsciously takes note of the delicate signal and alters his

course to the proper one, again leading his willing subject. In a word, he follows the lines of least resistance. In other cases the conditions are reversed—the subject unwittingly leads the principal. He becomes so much interested and his mind is so intently fixed upon the object of his search that he is oblivious of everything save the attempt to find it.

Subjects have led me in this manner, and I have seen professional mind readers enjoying a like benefit. Again I have had subjects who would give patent assistance at intervals and at other times leave me to my own resources. It must be said that this method of muscle reading is exceptional, the usual one is that first described.—Dr. Gatchell in Forum.

A BARBAROUS CIVILIZATION.

Popular Amusements in Roman London were Cruel and Inhuman.

Of the character of these entertainments we have frequent representations on the British cups and vases. They were too often frightful copies of the worst fashions of Rome. The bull fight, with its bestiarius or matador, is seen painted on the common pottery; it is still preserved in the national amusements of Spain. Cock fights were also popular everywhere, and game cocks with dangerous spurs have left their bones among the ruins. Athletic sports and chariot races were no doubt as well attended in Britain as at Rome or Constantinople. But the amphitheaters, with their hideous contests of men with wild beasts or with each other, seem to have followed the Roman colonist wherever he wandered.

They are found along the wall of Hadrian, in the cities of the West, at Gloucester and Chester, and no doubt the amphitheater of London will at some time be exhumed or some traces found of its ill omened site. The amusements of a nation indicate its character and its fate. The nation that sinks into cruel sensuality in its most popular recreations is certain to fall to decay. Progressive development toward humanity and refinement can alone give a lasting strength to political institutions, and Roman Britain perished by its own hand.

The barbarous thirst for inhuman spectacles is seen everywhere in the Roman remains. On the cups and vases that adorned the family table the favorite ornament seems to have been taken from the sports of the arena. The bestiarius or matador is seen engaged in a fearful struggle with the savage bull; the gladiator pursues his deadly aim. These designs, which must have educated the mind of childhood and been familiar to the masses of the people, could only have served to prepare them for revolution and merciless disorder. It is not the ballad so much as the amusements of a people that a wise legislator would care to direct.

The amphitheaters of Colchester, Silchester, Caerleon, Richborough and many other cities were of stone, like those of Rome, and were of considerable extent. A theatre of large size has been found at St. Albans, but as yet we know too little of the Roman cities to determine how many boasted their places of public amusement. We can only infer that no large town was without its amphitheater. The tale told on the Roman pottery seems conclusive. The Romano-British were accustomed from childhood to delight in scenes of cruelty and human woe.—Eugene Lawrence in Harper's.

Badly Rusted Coronets.

Disgraced and blackguard peers are now quite a strong body in England. One of the Irish earls, who was a corporal in the Life Guards before he succeeded to his title, did six months' hard labor for some breach of military discipline. Another peer, an English one, and the son of a lord high chancellor, can never show his face in the House of Lords again. He has dropped his title and is now clerk to a firm of auctioneers in Australia.

The Marquis of Aylesbury still affects his costermonger suit on odd occasions, and likes to make a bet that he will sell a barrow of greens as quickly as any hawker in Whitechapel. By the way, it is interesting to note in the peerage for 1891 that the marchioness once known as Dolly Tester now figures as "Dorothy Julia, daughter of T. Hasely, Esq." Tester's papa was about as unmitigated a ruffian of the tough tribe as England has ever produced.—Cor. Chicago Herald.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION NEAR.

A DISPASSIONATE PREDICTION.

Rev. Hugh O. Pentecost preached an eloquent sermon on the labor troubles throughout the world and the May Day demonstrations on a recent Sunday. His closing remarks were as follows:

Allow me at this point, if you please, to sum up what I have said:

First, the working people of Europe and America are more discontented with their lot than ever before, and more determined to better their condition by shortening their hours of labor and increasing their pay. In my opinion, every one who desires that life shall be happier than it is will rejoice at this discontent and the ambition which accompanies it.

Second, monopolists and rulers have apparently conspired to conceal the real state of affairs from the people at large. This attempt at concealment is a confession of fear and weakness, and will not be effectual in averting coming disaster.

Third, the signs of the times indicate that within a few years we shall be plunged into the horrors of a social war.

Fourth, this war will directly follow the aggressive brutality of the monopolists and rulers in attempting to keep the working people in their present condition of dependence, poverty and misery.

If what I have said is true, the present state of affairs is serious, for it portends the destruction of much property and the loss of many lives, without, as I believe, being directly followed by any happy subsequence.

It is clear to my mind that the monopolists' and rulers' method of dealing with working people—beating them down by force, withholding unoccupied land from them, limiting their supply of money, employing the printing press to blacken their characters by holding them up to the world as rioters—is a mistaken policy; an injurious policy, and, hence, mistaken; a policy as injurious to themselves as to the working people; and probably most of you would agree with me in this opinion.

It is also clear in my mind that the method of resisting this tyrannical force by retaliative force, a method that is growing more popular among working people, is also mistaken because it is injurious, injurious to the working people as well as to their enemies, the monopolists and rulers. I believe that the use of force is the weakest method of attack, and also the weakest method of defense that can be employed. The most unstable government in Europe is that of the Czar, for the reason that it is the one in which the most force is used. On the other hand one of the most unfortunate things that ever happened for the working people was the French revolution, which threw off a petty tyrant and loaded them with Napoleon; just as it has been a dire misfortune to them in this country that slavery was abolished throughout the South by force, instead of by public opinion, by which it was more completely overthrown in the North. The slaves, indeed, are free from literal chains, but every workingman in the nation is helping to carry a load of bondholders and pensioned soldiers, heavier by far than ever the slaves were. The women of Békes, Hungary, who, a few days ago, demanded the release of the workingmen arrested on May day, and who bared their breasts before the soldiers and cried: "Cut us down with your bayonets! We will not move without our brothers!" by that act made the strongest possible resistance to force.

All this is clear to me, but I know full well that few agree with me, and that even if my voice could be heard around the world instead of being as feeble as it is, it would be of little use for me to speak to monopolists, rulers, or working people. All are infatuated with the idea that they can make themselves happier by using clubs, knives, bullets and dynamite against each other. The world is yet in the fighting period, and there is little use to talk of peace. With my little, feeble voice I protest against the coming storm, but I believe the storm is coming, and I tell you so. The monopolists and rulers will continue to insanely provoke the working people by imprisoning and killing them for wishing and trying to better their condition, and the working people will foolishly and pitifully seek to avenge themselves by retaliation, and there will be smoke, and fire, and blood, and death.

I think nothing can possibly prevent the bursting of the storm that is brewing. Human ignorance is still so dense that men and women are swayed largely by injurious passions. Everywhere the frown of anger and the scowl of hate wrinkles the human brow. Could you take one comprehensive glance at humanity you would behold a picture in which women are being shot down through the jealousy, little children beaten by the parents who bore them, men and women languishing in prison cells, tortured by their keepers, hanging from gibbets. In such world men know not how to get what they want except to fight for it, either as aggressors or defenders.

In the battles that are going on between the monopolists and rulers on one side and the working people on the other, battles that will soon become so serious and frequent that it will be war, I shall take no part, but though I am but a drop in the ocean of life but one among millions, though whatever I say or do is of unappreciable importance, I wish it distinctly understood that all my nature revolts against the tyrannical monopolists and rulers, all my sympathies are with the cruelly treated, poverty stricken working people.

Overcome by Joy.

1839 Philip H. Gosse, afterwards so well-known as a writer upon natural history, and the father of Mr. Edmund Gosse, was in London in a state of downright poverty. He had just returned from America, and had but a few shillings in his pocket. His only immediate resource was the manuscript of a book which a cousin of his, Mr. Thomas Bell, who already achieved a reputation as a naturalist, had offered to read and pass judgment upon. The anecdote is related in Mr. Edmund Gosse's biography of his father.

The manuscript was "The Canadian Naturalist," and it pleased Mr. Bell so much that he recommended it strongly to Mr. Van Voorst, the distinguished publisher of scientific works.

Philip Gosse's pride made him conceal his real state from Thomas Bell, and though the latter knew his cousin to be in need of employment, he did not suspect that he was in such bitter straits.

Mr. Van Voorst appointed a day for the youth author to call on him. Meanwhile the shillings, nursed as they might be, were slipping, slipping away. The practice of going once a day to a small eating house had to be abandoned, and instead of it a herring was eaten as slowly as possible in the dingy attic in Farrington street.

At last the day broke on which Mr. Van Voorst's answer was to be given, and with as much of the gentleman about him as he could recover, the proud and starving author presented himself in Paternoster row. He was then ushered in to the cordial and courteous Mr. Van Voorst.

No longer had hope, and expected in a few moments to be out again in the street, with his miserable roll of manuscript in his hands. The publisher began slowly:

"I like your book; I shall be pleased to publish it; I will give you 100 guineas for it."

One hundred guineas! It was Peru and half the Indies!

The reaction was so violent that the demure and ministerial looking youth, closely buttoned up his worn broadcloth, broke down utterly into sob upon sob, while Mr. Van Voorst, murmuring, "My dear young man! my dear young man!" hastened out to fetch food and minister to wants which it was beyond the power of pride to conceal any longer.

An Editor's Startling Headlines.

The English editor is rarely given to the sensational "heading up" of news which his American confrere so much affects. But occasionally he crawls out of the mire of the commonplace, as witness a story recently told at the Sheffield Press club by Sir Algernon Borthwick, proprietor of the London Morning Post. Sir Algernon has a fine place in Aberdeenshire—Invercauld House, which is close to the Prince of Wales' Highland home. Seven days' fishing with his son, Mr. Oliver Borthwick, resulted in the big kill of fifty-five salmon. The information was sent to his paper, and a "live" sub-editor, in acknowledging the receipt of the news, wired to Sir Algernon that it was proposed to head it, "Miraculous Draught of Fishes! Peter's Record Broken!"