

**WILLIAM
ATKINSON**

PRACTICAL
MIND-READING

William Atkinson
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Practical Mind-Reading A Course of Lessons on Thought-Transference,
Telepathy, Mental-Currents, Mental Rapport, &c.:*

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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 to-day. 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 appears to us altogether unreasonable to reject this conclusion if we accept the facts. There is nothing unscientific, nothing romantic, in admitting that an idea can influence the brain from a distance. The action of one human being upon another, from a distance is a scientific fact; it is as certain as the existence of Paris, of Napoleon, of Oxygen, or of Sirius." The same authority has also said "There can be no doubt that our psychical force creates a movement of the ether, which transmits itself afar like all movements of ether and becomes perceptible to brains in harmony with our own. The transformation of a psychic action into an ethereal movement, and the reverse, may be analogous to what takes place on a telephone, where the receptive plate, which is identical with the plate at the other end, reconstructs the sonorous movement transmitted, not by means of sound, but by electricity."

We have quoted at length from this eminent authority to show once and for all that this great science of MIND-READING is recognized, and approved of by the highest authorities on Modern Science, and also to give our students the benefit of the current scientific theories upon the subject. In this work we have but very little to say about theory, but shall confine ourselves to facts, and actual instruction.

Science knows and has proven that thoughts may be and have been transmitted from one mind to another, in some cases over thousands of miles of space, but it has not as yet solved the

mystery of the "Why" of the subject, and contents itself with explaining the "How." The nearest approach to a correct theory seems to be the one which compares the mind with the "wireless telegraph," and which supposes that the vibrations of thought travel through the ether, just as do the waves of this high order of electricity. The mind of one person acts like a "transmitter" of the wireless telegraph, while the mind of the other acts as a "receiver" of the same set of instruments.

There are undoubtedly vibrations set up in the brain when one thinks, and there are undoubtedly waves of thought just as there are waves of electricity. Science informs us that there is an increase of temperature in the human brain during periods of thought-activity, and also that there are constant chemical changes in the structure going on when the brain cells are active. This is akin to the generation of electricity in a battery, and undoubtedly acts in the same way in producing vibrations, and transmitting them to the brain of another. Sir William Crookes, in the address just quoted, points out the direction of the scientific theories concerning the matter. But, this is all that we shall have to say about the theory of Mind Reading. We shall now pass on to the actual practical instruction. The student is asked, however, to always carry in his mind the fact that Mind travels in waves from one brain to another just as electricity travels from the Transmitter to the Receiver. By holding this picture in your mind, you will have the whole practical theory, in condensed form, right before you, so that you may be able to act accordingly.

LESSON II.

THE PROOFS OF MIND READING

As we have said in the previous chapter, the general public is gradually awakening to the knowledge of the reality of Mental Transference, and it is scarcely necessary to devote the time and space to a proof of the reality of the phenomena in these days, although a few years ago a work on the subject would have had to be composed principally of evidences and proofs. But, nevertheless, it may be well for us to take a hasty look at the nature of the proof in this work.

Nearly everyone has had evidences of Mind Reading or Thought Transference in his or her own life. Nearly every one has had experiences of being in a person's company when one of the two would make a remark and the other, somewhat startled, would exclaim, "Why, that's just what I was going to say," or words to that effect. Nearly every one has had experiences of knowing what a second person was going to say before the person spoke. And, likewise common is the experience of thinking of a person a few moments before the person came into sight. Many of us have suddenly found ourselves thinking of a person who had been out of our minds for months, or years, when all of a sudden the person himself would appear. These instances are so common as to be generally recognized, without question. These

occurrences have given rise to the two common "sayings," viz., "Speak of the devil and his imps appear," or "Speak of angels and you hear the rustle of their wings."

Mark Twain, in an article printed several years ago, spoke of a plan that he had frequently practiced, i.e., that of writing a letter to a person upon some subject, then addressing the envelope and inserting the letter, and then tearing the whole thing into pieces instead of sending it. He stated that in a large percentage of such cases he would receive within a short time a letter from the person to whom the destroyed letter had been addressed, answering the questions asked, or else speaking along the same lines as those of the destroyed letter. We have known of this experiment being tried on people thousands of miles away from the writer, and also in cases in which the other person had not been heard of for many years. There is a field open for experiment along these lines which some of our students might investigate with profit and satisfaction.

Perhaps the best available evidence of Mind Reading at the disposal of the public to-day is that found in the records of the English Society for Psychical Research. The experiments of the members of this Society and other investigators have resulted in the piling up of a mass of facts more than sufficient to fully establish the correctness of the theory of Mind Reading. Series of carefully managed experiments have been conducted, the results of which have conclusively proven that the thought-waves set into motion by the mind of one person may be consciously

received by the mind of another. We shall quote here from the reports of those investigators, in order to show you the important results that have been obtained, and to set at rest forever any lurking doubts as to the reality of the phenomena which may still find lodgment in your mind. Remember, please, that these committees were composed of some of the leading scientific authorities of England – men whose standing and reliability, as well as whose judgment, was beyond question. These cases form a part of the scientific records of the English Society.

THE CREERY EXPERIMENTS

One of the interesting series of experiments conducted by members of the English Society was that of the family of the Rev. A.M. Creery, of Derbyshire, England. This investigation was made upon hearing the report of the Rev. Mr. Creery regarding a number of experiments he had conducted with his four children. He reported that he had begun by practicing a variation of what is generally known as the "willing game", in which one of the party leaves the room, and the company selects some object to be hidden, after which the person is recalled to the room when the company concentrates its mind upon the hidden object, and the seeker eventually finds it by means of Mind Reading. The reverend gentleman said in his report to the Society:

"We began by selecting the simplest objects in the room; then chose names of towns, people, dates, cards out of a pack, lines

from different poems, etc., any thing or series of ideas that those present could keep before the mind steadily. The children seldom made a mistake. I have seen seventeen cards chosen by myself, named right in succession without any mistake. We soon found that a great deal depended upon the steadiness with which the ideas were kept before the minds of the thinkers, and upon the energy with which they willed the ideas to pass. I may say that this faculty is not confined to the members of one family; it is much more general than we imagine. To verify this conclusion I invited two of a neighbor's children to join us in our experiment, and very excellent results we secured from them."

The Society then began a series of careful investigations extending over a period of one year. The utmost care was taken to obviate the chance of fraud, collusion, mistakes, or outside influences. The experiments were conducted partly in Mr. Creery's house and partly in rooms selected by the members of the investigating committee. Having selected at random one of the children, the child would be taken from the room and accompanied by a member of the committee would wait out of sight or hearing of the room. The remainder of the committee would then select a card from a pack, or else write down a name or number which occurred to them at the moment. The following verbatim report of what followed will give you an idea of the results generally obtained. The report goes on to say:

"On re-entering the room the little girl would usually stand with her face to the wall, placed thus by us. But sometimes she

would stand with her eyes directed toward the ground for a period of silence varying from a few seconds to a minute, till she called out to us some number, card or what it might be." The report states that in the case of giving the names of objects chosen, the child scored six cases out of fourteen. In the case of naming of small objects held in the hands of members of the committee, she scored five out of six. In the case of naming cards she scored six out of thirteen. In the case of stating fictitious names chosen by the committee she scored, at a first trial, five out of ten.

One of the experiments is reported as follows:

"One of the children was sent into an adjoining room, the door of which was closed. The committee then thought of some object in the house and wrote the name down on paper. The strictest silence was observed. We then all silently thought of the name of the thing selected. In a few seconds the door of the adjoining room opened, and the child would appear generally with the object selected. No one was allowed to leave the room after the object had been fixed upon; no communication with the child was conceivable, as her place was often changed. Further, the only instructions given to the child were to fetch some object in the house that we would fix upon and would keep in mind to the exclusion of all other ideas. In this way we wrote down, among other things, a hairbrush – it was brought; an orange – it was brought; a wine-glass – it was brought; an apple – it was brought," etc., etc.

The report to the Society sums up the following results: Three

hundred and eighty-two trials were made in the series. In the test of naming the chosen letters of the alphabet, cards, and numbers of two figures, the chances against the girl were 21 to 1, 51 to 1, and 89 to 1, respectively. In the case of stating chosen surnames the odds against her were very much in excess of the figures just named. In the cases of the experiments of naming chosen cards it was calculated that a mere "guesser," according to the law of probability, would be able to correctly name but seven and one-third out of a total of the three hundred and eighty-two trials. The actual results obtained by the child were as follows: On the first attempt, one hundred and twenty-seven; on the second attempt, fifty-six additional; and on the third attempt, nineteen additional – making a grand total of two hundred and two successes out of a possible three hundred and eighty-two! On one occasion five cards straight running were successfully named on a first trial. The mathematical chances of a mere "guess" doing this feat, under the Law of Average, or Probabilities, are estimated at over a million to one against the chance. And this was not merely an isolated, exceptional case, for there were other "long runs"; for instance, there were two cases in which runs of eight straight consecutive successes were scored, once with names, and once with cards. In the case of the eight consecutive cards it has been figured that the chances against the girl would figure up at least 140,000,000 to 1, according to the Law of Average and Probabilities. To understand just what this means it may help you if you will think that the feat was like picking out one

chosen man in a population of one hundred and forty millions, nearly double the population of the United States. And yet there are people who would dismiss matters like this with the remark, "mere coincidence"!

The interest in the Creery children attracted the notice of Prof. Balfour Stewart, LL.D., and Fellow of the Royal Society. This distinguished gentleman testifies as follows:

"In the first instance, when I was present, the thought-reader was outside a door. The object or thing thought of was written on paper and silently handed to the company in the room. The thought-reader was then called in, and in the course of perhaps a minute the answer was given. Definite objects in the room, for instance, were first thought of, and in the majority of cases the answers were correct. These numbers were thought of and the answers were generally right, but, of course, there were some cases of error. The names of towns were thought of, and a good many of these were right. Then fancy names were thought of. I was asked to think of certain fancy names and mark them down and hand them around to the company. I then thought of, and wrote on paper, 'Bluebeard,' 'Tom Thumb,' 'Cinderella,' and the answers were all correct."

Subsequent experiments with the Creery children, at the house of the well known investigator, Mr. F.W.H. Myers, at Cambridge, England, proved equally successful. The children, and their ages, were as follows: Mary, 17; Alice, 15; Maud, 13. The percentage of successes obtained at Mr. Myers' house tallied

very well with those obtained elsewhere. One remarkable result was obtained, though, that had not been obtained before. On one occasion the child was asked to name the "suit" of cards chosen one after another. That is, of course, the child was asked to name which suit, "hearts," "diamonds," "clubs" or "spades," were shown of the card drawn and seen by the committee, and then thought of. On this occasion the child scored a run of fourteen straight running, consecutive successes. The chances against this success were 4,782,969 to 1.

We will close by mentioning another remarkable series of experiments conducted by the same Society. The Mind Reader was M.G.A. Smith, of England. Among other startling feats successfully performed by Mr. Smith, that of the reproduction of Geometrical Figures was perhaps the most remarkable. In this feat Mr. Smith sat blindfolded, in a room belonging to the committee, with a pad of paper before him and a member of the committee on each side of him. A selected member of the committee then would go outside of the room, and behind a closed door would draw some geometrical figure at random. Returning to the room the figure would be shown to the committee, and also to Mr. Douglas Blackburn, who acted as the Transmitter for Mr. Smith, the latter being known as the Receiver. The Transmitter, with closed eyes, now took his position immediately back of Mr. Smith, but at a distance of two feet from him, no contact being allowed, this precaution being taken to obviate charges of confederacy, etc. The Transmitter

would then concentrate his mind intently for a few minutes, and in a short time Mr. Smith would receive the impression of the mental image in the mind of the Transmitter, and would begin to attempt to reproduce it on paper. In the series of experiments running over a period of four days thirty-seven drawings were made, of which only eight were considered unsuccessful. Twenty-nine successes out of a possible thirty-seven, remember.

The committee reports that it took all the precaution to guard against secret signals, etc., and that confederacy, fraud, collusion, or similar methods were out of the question. The eight cases of failure consisted of four cases in which Mr. Smith received no impression, and therefore could not reproduce the drawing; and four cases in which the drawing was so vague and imperfect as to be called a total failure. Some of the figures were grotesque, unusual, and complicated, but all were reproduced in a more or less perfect manner. The drawing was made deliberately and without hesitation, and as if Smith had actually seen the figure shown to the Transmitter a few moments before. On one occasion, in order to be doubly guarded against collusion, they closed Mr. Smith's ears with putty, tied a bandage around his eyes and ears, pulled a bolster-case over his head, and then covered him all over with a blanket which completely enveloped his body and head. And under these extraordinary conditions he reproduced the figures with his usual success.

We could proceed relating case after case, experiment after

experiment, conducted by these scientific bodies of learned and careful men. But the story would be no more convincing than that related above. And, after all, there is a method of satisfying yourself that is far more conclusive than the reading of any results of experiments of others – and that is to learn to perform the feats of Mind Reading yourself. By means of a very little practice you will be able to reproduce many of the demonstrations of the public performers, as well as the experiments of the scientific societies, and then when you have realized that you can do these things you will need no further proof of the reality of the science of Mind Reading.

LESSON III.

"CONTACT" MIND READING

Mind Reading is divided by the authorities into two general classes, viz., "Contact" Mind Reading and "Telepathic" Mind Reading.

The first of these classes, "Contact" Mind Reading, is demonstrated by physical contact between the Transmitter (or active agent) and the Receiver (or passive agent) in order to afford an easy channel for the passage of the vibrations, thought-waves, nerve-currents, or magnetism of the Transmitter (according to the several theories favored by scientists). The second class, "Telepathic" Mind Reading, is demonstrated by the transferral of the "waves," "vibrations," "currents," or "magnetism" of the Transmitter to the Receiver over the ether, through space (often for thousands of miles) without the more convenient "wires" of the nerves of the two agents.

You will readily see that two classes of phenomena closely resemble the two classes of telegraphic phenomena, i.e., the "wire" system and the "wireless" system. There is a striking analogy between electric phenomena and mental force phenomena all the way through the subject, and this subject of Mind Reading is simply one of the many forms of the resemblance.

We shall begin by giving you instructions in the first form – Contact Mind Reading, as it is the simplest and most easy of accomplishment and demonstration. And besides, the best Telepathists have been trained by means of the practice of Contact Mind Reading at the start. One leads to the other, just as the ordinary wire telegraph naturally led to the "wireless" system, which is even now but in its infancy.

At this point we wish to point out to you a most grievous error, and unjust judgment, that certain so-called scientists and investigators have fallen into regarding this matter of Contact Mind Reading. In order to give you a clearer idea of the nature of this error, we must call your attention to the fact that Contact Mind Reading has been given much publicity through the advertisements and performances of several celebrated public performers, and their lesser-light imitators.

These performers, like many others, have sought to give an attractive public entertainment rather than a scientific demonstration, and some of them have found it much easier to "fake" some of the demonstrations rather than to perform them according to scientific principles. And the careful investigators soon discovered that in certain cases there was no Mind Reading at all, but only a clever imitation which was styled "Muscle Reading." In other words, instead of the performer receiving his mental impressions from the mind of the Transmitter, over the nervous system of other persons, he would push up against him, and by a clever system of pushing, pulling, leading, and leaning

would detect the muscular movements of the Transmitter, and by careful practice would learn to interpret these movements so as to get an indication of the location of the hidden objects and practically be led or pushed toward the spot. But even in these cases, the performer would of necessity have to employ more or less genuine Contact Mind Reading to finish the feats. The only advantage the performer gained by resorting to these unfair methods was that it was less fatiguing to his mind and enabled him to "fake" through the performance with less mental wear and tear.

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