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SCIENCE AND SCIOSOPHY¹

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“Quand la vérité est fantaisiste la fantaisie n'a qu'être vraie.”—Ferdinand Brunetière.

SCIOSOPHY is systematized ignorance. Its nature was indicated more than three hundred years ago by Giordano Bruno in Florence, who for this and other heresies, for example, wanton denial of the concentric crystalline spheres of heaven, insistence on the infinite extension of the universe and in the plurality of worlds, was later appropriately punished. “Ignorance is the most delightful science in the world because it is acquired without labor or pains and keeps the mind from melancholy.”

The word *sciosophy* (shadow-wisdom) was coined by me in 1899 to meet a long-felt want. Sciosophy in action is called *magic*; latent magic is *mystery*. It differs from ordinary science in its basis. It is not derived from tested and verified human experience, because life is short and humanity demands quick returns. It recognizes no relation of cause and effect, for these are mere human devices. Instruments of precision, logic, mathematics, the telescope, the microscope and the scalpel, are not needed in sciosophy. Its processes are instantaneous and intuitional while all scientific testing is slow and laborious. It is indeed folly to wait for this, when tradition, memory, impulse, imagination are all at hand pointing straight to truth or at least indicating that one conception is as good as another, if not better. My interest in sciosophy, or more exactly in creating a word by which to define it, was provoked by a volume called, in English translation, “Posthumous Humanity, a Study of Phantoms,” by Dr. Adolphe D'Assier, a member of the Academy of Sciences at Bordeaux. In this remarkable work are given many illustrations of the spontaneous activity of astral doubles and even of ordinary shadows. It is, in fact, a complete “fauna of the shades,” in which are included all manner of wraiths, shadows and phantoms, some of them lycanthropic (wolf-manly), some of them derived from astral doubles, and still others due to the expulsive force of the sun.

The nature of such organisms is easily understood without use of the tools of precision, in fact, here as elsewhere in sciosophic truth instruments are quite unnecessary, except for the purpose of impressing the spectator. It is now well known that all animals

¹ Address of the President, Pacific Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at Stanford University, June 26, 1924.

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