
LYING AND TRICKERY

The man given to lying, to trickery and deception, dwindles as time passes. He seems to be in the process of slow annihilation. He goes down not only morally, but mentally, physically, and financially. The reactionary effect of his own conduct destroys him. The liar is destroyed by his own lies, and the trickster is destroyed by his own tricks,—not in the way of punishment administered by an offended God, but as a result of the disintegrating and destructive influence of his own conduct.

In the cases of the murderer, the highwayman, the swindler, and the sneak-thief, if there are no counteracting or life-giving elements, or no redeeming virtues, we see the operation of Nature's law. We see how the bacilli of injustice proceed with their work of dissolution and destruction. We see here a law that is universal, a principle that is eternal,—the principle of equilibrium, running through

The Cost of Something for Nothing

nature and the affairs of men. In morals this is called justice, equity. Getting something for nothing is a violation of this principle, and sets in motion the forces of dissolution. |

The above are the extreme cases. They show us the law, they demonstrate the principle. However, in the great bulk of human affairs there are redeeming qualities which, while they do not entirely arrest the operation of this law, may yet retard its progress to such an extent that the disastrous end is not visible to every mind, and therefore the truth of these assertions will be denied by many.

Now, let us trace the operation of this law in different fields, keeping in mind always that the basic principle is everywhere the same, whether seen in large or small matters, in the affairs of an hour or of a lifetime. Taking something for nothing, or wronging a fellow-being in any other way, will recoil on the actor with deadly results.