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*Elmer Gates
and the
Art of Mind-Using*

*Whoso gazes, even for a moment of clear vision, upon the
Torch of Psychurgy, will never again see any other light.*

*To get more mind, and utilize it as a machine, is to take
advantage of the greatest force in nature—Consciousness—the
cosmic force by which all other forces are known and
harnessed.—Elmer Gates*

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**ELMER GATES
AND THE
ART OF MIND-USING**

by Donald Edson Gates

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Preface

This account of my father and his works tries to depict that “greatest of all observable phenomena—a Person,” to show the attitudes and points of view and methods and aims and accomplishments of a genius in a new and unique line, to view the workings of the mind of a man who was naturally a psychologist. His was the study of an individual mind and the methods it found natural in learning and teaching, in discovering and inventing, so he studied his whole life and recorded it as mental growth, as an actual experience. His work was his life.

The name of Elmer Gates is practically forgotten. Yet he pioneered in an improved scientific method and an art of research to discover a new world of mind and Consciousness. He published no books, wrote no papers for scientific journals, sought neither personal wealth nor reputation. His successful experiments were made only to convince himself, as he planned later to demonstrate his new methods. Two dozen public lectures in six years were augmented by a few interviews and articles, hurriedly dictated, and a flood of press notices, mostly appreciative, many inaccurate, others pure fiction or fancy; yet the impress on his times was immediate and far-reaching. His work attracted the sympathetic interest and moral support of many persons scattered over the world.

Eminent contemporaries endorsed his work and genius: “As a discoverer and practical demonstrator of the subtle laws of nature no man has achieved more and in so many departments of knowledge” (Elizabeth Bryant Johnston, author); “He has gotten nearer to the fundamental purposes of life than anyone

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else” (F. Parke Lewis, M. D.); “His educational ideas and experimental originality, fertility, and clearness are destined to produce far-reaching results” (Professor Patrick Geddes, Edinburgh, Scotland; biologist, sociologist, educator); “I cannot sufficiently express my admiration of the simplicity, the common sense, and yet also the startling originality of his scientific

methods” (Professor C. H. Hinton, mathematician and physicist); “A man of decided genius, destined to important achievements” (John W. Hoyt, former governor of Wyoming Territory and founder and first president of the Wisconsin Academy of Science); “He is opening a new world of marvelous interest, new paths for the attainment of knowledge” (F. Guernsey, editor, *Mexican Herald*); “One of the great mental leaders upon whose periodic appearance the advancement of thought depends” (Theodore Dreiser, novelist).

The name of Elmer Gates became a household word—“an Edison of the mind,” the “Wizard of Chevy Chase,” and was even used in breakfast food commercials. Grateful beneficiaries wrote calling him “master of compassion,” and “choice and master spirit of the age.”

Then an international figure, Elmer Gates, at the height of his acclaim and prestige, changed his plans and withdrew from public view back into the hidden depths of thought and research. What compelling duty did some new insight into his mission bring? What were his culminating discoveries that caused him to exclaim late in his career: “If these discoveries are what they seem to be, their promise glows like an aurora on the dawn of the world’s hopes!”

There is an overwhelming wealth of material in twenty-five thousand pages of his manuscripts, records, and letters. This book is largely an editorial selection from them, and hopes to show the significant difference between his scientific approach and that of speculative thinkers, although language is often wanting in the communication of new insights and methods. However, a start must be made, perhaps in the manner of the artist, Thomas Hovenden, for whom my father named his firstborn.

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Hovenden was a close friend, and once wrote about his working methods to my father: “My large picture is under way—so far as thinking it out more clearly, and that is a good part of the work in

my case. But I have not touched a brush to the canvas yet . . . and have only drawn with charcoal one figure from life.” Likewise, this account may serve for the charcoal sketch from which a more finished portrait may appear on the canvas of progress as the teachings of Elmer Gates become better known and practiced.

In preparing this book I was first indebted to my father himself for early inspiration and for a wholesome respect for scientific method, and especially for my having been heir to a natural world-image unperverted by myth and superstition. My debt to my aunt, Alma Pearl Edson, is also large for much help and encouragement, and for preserving the manuscripts as well as for typing most of them. Grateful remembrance goes to my wife, Eleanor, for her sympathetic interest, patience, and optimistic confidence during forty wonderful years together. Finally, my thanks must go to Nancy V. Teeple for her valuable and expert editorial assistance, conscientiously and painstakingly accurate. Her ability to spot error, clarify expression, and improve balance is responsible for much improvement in this book.

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