

**EINSTEIN, THE SEARCHER:
HIS WORK EXPLAINED
FROM DIALOGUES WITH
EINSTEIN**

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Einstein, the searcher: his work explained from dialogues with Einstein by Alexander Moszkowski & Henry L. Brose

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ALEXANDER MOSZKOWSKI & HENRY L. BROSE

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EXTRACT FROM THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE book which is herewith presented to the public has few contemporaries of a like nature; it deserves special attention inasmuch as it is illuminated by the name *Albert Einstein*, and deals with a personality whose achievements mark a turning-point in the development of science.

Every investigator, who enlarges our vision by some permanent discovery, becomes a milestone on the road to knowledge, and great would be the array of those who have defined the stages of the long avenue of research. One might endeavour, then, to decide to whom mankind owes the greater debt, to Euclid or to Archimedes, to Plato or to Aristotle, to Descartes or to Pascal, to Lagrange or to Gauss, to Kepler or to Copernicus. One would have to investigate—as far as this is possible—in how far each outstanding personality was in advance of his time, whether some contemporary might not have had the equal good fortune to stumble on the same discovery, and whether, indeed, the time had not come when it must inevitably have been revealed. If we then further selected only those who saw far beyond their own age into the illimitable future of knowledge, this great number of celebrities would be considerably diminished. We should glance away from the milestones, and fix our gaze on the larger signs that denote the lines of demarcation of the sciences, and among them we should find the name of Albert Einstein. We may find it necessary to proceed to a still more rigorous classifica-

tion ; Science, herself, may rearrange her chronological table later, and reckon the time at which Einstein's doctrine first appeared as the beginning of an important era.

This would in itself justify—nay, render imperative—the writing of a book *about* Einstein. But this need has already been satisfied on several occasions, and there is even now a considerable amount of literature about him. At the end of this generation we shall possess a voluminous library composed entirely of books about Einstein. The present book will differ from most of these, in that Einstein here occurs not only objectively but also subjectively. We shall, of course, speak of him here too, but we shall also hear him speak himself, and there can be no doubt that all who are devoted to the world thought can but gain by listening to him.

The title agrees with the circumstance to which this book owes its birth. And in undertaking to address itself to the circle of readers as to an audience, it promises much eloquence that came from Einstein's own lips, during hours of social intercourse, far removed from academic purposes and not based on any definite scheme intended for instruction. It will, therefore, be neither a course of lectures nor anything similar aiming at a systematic order and development. Nor is it a mere phonographic record, for this is made impossible if for no other reason than that whoever has the good fortune to converse with this man, finds every minute far too precious to waste it in snatching moments to take shorthand notes. What he has heard and discussed crystallizes itself in subsequent notes, and to some extent he relies on his memory, which would have to be extraordinarily lax if it managed to forget the essentials of such conversations.

But these essentials could not be attained by clinging closely to the exact terms of utterance. This would be a gain neither for the scheme of the book nor for the reader who wishes to follow a great thinker in all the ramifications of his ideas. It must be reiterated that this book is intended neither

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as a textbook nor as a guide leading to a complete system of thought ; nor, above all, is it in any way due to Einstein, nor desired by him. Any value and attraction of the book is rather to be sought in its kaleidoscopic nature, its loose connexion, which expresses a general meaning without being narrowed to pedantic limits by a restriction to literal repetition. It is just this absence of the method that is rightly demanded of a textbook, which may enable these conversations to pass on to the world a little of the pleasure which they originally gave me. Perhaps they will even be sufficient to furnish the reader with a picture of the eminent scientist, sufficient to give him a glimpse of his personality, without demanding a detailed study to secure this end. Even here I should like to state that the range of Einstein's genius extends much further than is generally surmised by those who have busied themselves only with the actual physical theory. It sends out rays in all directions, and brings into view wonderful cosmic features under his stimulus—features which are, of course, embedded in the very refractory mathematical shell of his physics which embraces the whole world. But only minds of the distant future, perhaps, will be in a position to realize that *all* our mental knowledge is illuminated by the light of his doctrine.

Einstein's mission is that of a king who is pursuing building operations on a large scale ; carters and workmen, each in their own line, receive employment for decades ahead. But apart from the technical work, there may still be room for non-technical account, which, without following a definite programme, yet pursues a definite object, to offer Einsteiniana in an easily intelligible and ever-changing form, to represent him, as it were, wandering over fields and meadows, and every now and then stooping to pluck some problem in the guise of a flower. Seeing that he granted me the pleasure of accompanying him on these excursions, it was not within my sphere to expect in addition that he would direct his steps according to

a preconceived plan. Often enough the goal vanished, and there remained nothing but the pleasure of the rambles themselves with the consciousness of their purpose. As Schopenhauer remarks, one who walks for leisure can never be said to be making detours; and this holds true independently of the nature of the country that happens to be traversed at the moment. If I just now mentioned walks on meadowy slopes, this is not to be understood literally. In Einstein's company one encounters from moment to moment quite suddenly some adventure which destroys our comparison with idyllic rambles. Abysmal depths appear, and one has to pass along dangerous pathways. It is at these moments that unexpected views present themselves, and many strips of landscape that, according to our previous estimate, appeared to be situated on higher slopes, are now discovered reposing far below. We are familiar with the "Wanderer Fantasie" of Schubert; its tonal disposition is realistic, conforming to Nature, yet its general expression is transcendental: so is a ramble with Einstein; he remains firmly implanted in reality, but the distant views that he points out stretch into transcendental regions. He seems to me to be essentially as much an artist as a discoverer, and if some sense of this heaven-sent combination of gifts should be inspired by this book, it alone would justify the publication of these talks.