



**Miracle Mongers and Their Methods; A Complete
Expose of the Modus Operandi of Fire Eaters,
Heat Resisters, Poison Eaters, Venomous Reptile
Defiers, SW**

Harry Houdini

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This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can usually download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1920 edition. Excerpt: ... CHAPTER ONE FIRE WORSHIP. FIRE EATING AND HEAT RESISTANCE. IN THE MIDDLE AGES. AMONG THE NAVAJO INDIANS. FIRE-WALKERS OF JAPAN. THE FIERY ORDEAL OF FIJI. FIRE has always been and, seemingly, will always remain, the most terrible of the elements. To the early tribes it must also have been the most mysterious; for, while earth and air and water were always in evidence, fire came and went in a manner which must have been quite unaccountable to them. Thus it naturally followed that the custom of deifying all things which the primitive mind was unable to grasp, led in direct line to the fireworship of later days. That fire could be produced through friction finally came into the knowledge of man, but the early methods entailed much labor. Consequently our ease-loving forebears cast about for a method to "keep the home fires burning" and hit upon the plan of appointing a person in each community who should at all times carry a burning brand. This arrangement had many faults, however, and after a while it was superseded by the expedient of a fire kept continually burning in a building erected for the purpose. The Greeks worshiped at an altar of this kind which they called the Altar of Hestia and which the Romans called the Altar of Vesta. The sacred fire itself was known as Vesta, and its burning was considered a proof of the presence of the goddess. The Persians had such a building in each town and village; and the Egyptians, such a fire in every temple; while the Mexicans, Natches, Peruvians and Mayas kept their "national fires" burning upon great pyramids. Eventually the keeping of such fires became a sacred rite, and the "Eternal Lamps" kept burning in synagogues and in Byzantine and Catholic churches may be a survival of these customs....

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