

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 17 IS THE SUMMER DAY

'Dickens to Pay' Among Planets of Solar System.

'TIS WISE MAN WHO SAYS IT

'World is Coming to End' Is Free Hand Translation of Astronomer's Prognostication.

BY BEN HUR LAMPMAN. Are you in a hurry to know? Does the high bar of the infinite, of which the planets are but celestial keys, vibrate in unison with the cosmic melody in your soul?

On Wednesday, the 17th day of December, in the year of our Lord 1919, the earth will shudder through the province of the solar system, will rattle and bang away and the clouds of heaven will swirl tempestuously through the billion acres of interstellar dust, as may well give pause to the most self-satisfied citizen who ever made a payment on a bungalow.

At least, that is what Professor Albert P. Portia, an American astronomer, cheerfully avers to predict some time ago, and did predict, and still maintains to such purpose that many a rusty marrow-bone has croaked in unaccustomed prayer, and many a fervid fanatical religionist has hailed the occasion with manifestations of gloomy delight.

Opinions Do Not Agree. "The world is coming to an end about the middle of the month," is the free-hand translation that has been given in Professor Portia's sidious divinations.

But it isn't every day that there arises an established scientist to pronounce final for that fine old bubble, the world, and while the curtains are down, in the prelude as it were, folk ought to make the most and the best of it. For even if the end of the world would come not unaccompanied by obvious advantage, where, asks the man of science, would it fill the troublesome cost of coal and whither the shortage of sugar or the dearth of iron, the forest? In the same cataclysmic glory that would abolish magnates and mortals, would it not also flame into the ashes of the moribund planet.

Planets to Group. Professor Portia bases his prediction on the fact that December 17, just a trifle more than a week distant, will see a conjunction of the mighty planets in conjunction, a solar league that will tug with irresistible force at the fabric of the universe, and these conspirators of the heavens will be Neptune, Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Venus and Earth. In spite of their intrigue the hapless earth, not in any sense a party to the plot, will be surrounded with such weather as will transcribe the days of cosmic birth.

"The most terrific weather cataclysm ever recorded in human history began," predicts Professor Portia, "it will be caused by the hugest sun spot on record—a sun spot that will be visible to the naked eye. It will be a gigantic explosion of flaming gases ionizing the atmosphere, thousands of miles into space. It will have a crater large enough to engulf the earth, as Vesuvius might engulf a football."

Not content with this foreboding, Professor Portia indicates that at the same time, the planet Uranus, a burly big fellow, will be on the off side of the sun, and in opposition to the league of six. The magnetic currents so established will go through the sun like a knitting needle through a ball of yarn.

Earth in Direct Line. With the six conspiring planets grouped in the narrow limit of 26 degrees on the same side of the sun, the earth will be outside the league, at an angle of 90 degrees, says Professor Portia, and in the position of the innocent bystander the world will rock with the impact of the solar discharge, he declares.

Scientists Give Views. And the world is to be told the world already weary of overmuch excitement and asking nothing better than the boon of a quiet Christmas?

OLD EARTH STILL IS SAFE SAYS PORTLAND ASTRONOMER

Conjunction of Planets Referred to as Portending Disaster Has Occurred Many Times Before and Without Disturbing Universe at All.

BY PROFESSOR J. W. DANIELS. IN VARIOUS daily papers an article by Professor Portia, an astronomer, appeared, wherein he predicted a world catastrophe to occur on or soon after the 17th of this month. At that time seven of the eight planets of the solar system will be in a nearly a straight line on one side of the sun at the same time as it is possible for them to be, and so, according to Professor Portia, their combined gravitational pull upon the sun will cause such a violent and awful disturbance of its gaseous body, producing tremendous sun spots, and these spots violently expanding and blowing the source of our light, heat and life into fragments, that our earth will, by inference, be overwhelmed and necessarily struck by some of the great solar fragments hurled earthward by the sun, and itself burned to a broken, scattered in the abyss of space.

No more admirable answer to that article could be made than that by Miss Lewis of the Naval Observatory at Washington; but her argument was so completely demolished by a slightly different viewpoint, although the conclusion will be identical with that of Professor Portia, that it is not likely to happen.

If the combined forces of the planets in conjunction, as Professor Portia says, will be so great, all that effect will not be produced suddenly, but very gradually, and it is not likely that any such conjunction more or less for several months past, and any influence such conjunction could have upon the sun would have been discernible some time ago. Yet no such effect has been either felt or seen, either upon the earth or upon the planets.

Moreover, the article referred to is accompanied by a cut representing the solar body in the activity of explosion, and the effect of such an explosion upon the sun is based upon premises scientifically illogical. For the pull of the planets in conjunction, as composed wholly of gases, would tend to elongate that sphere long before producing any explosion. Any such elongation would be necessary to anyone viewing the disk of the sun.

Witnesses to be Freed. MEXICO CITY PRESS ANNOUNCES JENKINS CASE STEP.

Excelsior Declares 40 Mexicans Held in Connection With Trial Will be Released. LAREDO, Tex., Dec. 7.—Forty Mexicans of Santa Maria and San Bernabe, held as witnesses in connection with the abduction of William O. Jenkins, American consular agent at Puebla, Mex., will be released at once, "as there is no proof against them of wrongdoing," according to the Mexico City newspaper Excelsior.

That the vast wound, predicted by Professor Portia, in the side of the sun, caused by the electric forces of the planets are to draw flaming catastrophe into space, is nothing particularly new, as similar solar wounds have frequently been observed while all was serene on earth.

Other Spots Recalled. That not less than six sunspots large enough to be seen with the naked eye have been observed in recent years, and that Professor Portia's prediction of a sunspot of the size of the one that is to be mislaid.

And, anyway, that sunspots are low, not high—that they are depressions in the surface of the sun, not torches leaping open-mouthed and eagerly at the earth or other unwary planets.

Reclamation Association to Assemble in Capital January 14. SALEM, Or., Dec. 6.—(Special.)—The meeting of the executive committee of the Western States Reclamation association, which was scheduled to be held in Washington on December 11, has been postponed until January 14, according to a telegram received today at the office of the state engineer from Governor Davis of Idaho.

South Bend, Wash., Dec. 7.—(Special.)—Heart-broken through grief over the death of her son, Thomas, Mrs. Greger, yesterday afternoon, accompanied the remains of the son, and was taken ill following her arrival.

LADY ASTOR TIRES OF HOUSE HOMAGE

'Queen of Arena' Averse to Patronizing Attitude.

'PAIRING' OFFERS MANY Way to Leave Hall Before Debate Ends Quickly Found Despite Ministerial Whip.

Copyright by the New York World. Published by Arrangement. LONDON, Dec. 6.—(Special wireless.)—Lady Astor is in her element in the house of commons. She is queen of the arena. The members are falling over each other all of the time, not merely to fulfill, but to anticipate her slightest wish. She has had more information volunteered to her as to what she ought and ought not to do by members of all parties than she could possibly absorb.

Having listened to the extremely dull Scottish land debate until 10:30 o'clock on Thursday night, Lady Astor thought to go home to her own room, but the ministerial whip barred her exit, saying she should remain to vote for the government. She pleaded fatigue, but the whip was inexorable. P. O'Connor, father of the house, standing by her assistance with the rescue and offered to pair with her so she could leave. But half a dozen other members hanging about were already rushing to her assistance with the same proposition. They all explained that any time she ever needed to pair on a vote they each and all would be delighted to oblige her. She smiled her thanks and went home.

First Vote Is Against Bonds. It is claimed that she fulfilled, in a way, the prediction that she would make a speech on the night of her introduction to the house. The debate was on the issue of the proposed scheme said workmen would substitute for the government bonds only by taking it out of their wives' house-keeping money, Lady Astor pointedly said: "Hear, hear."

Entry in House Protected. If it is true, and not misreported, Lady Astor's sensational entry into the house of commons would have been spoiled by a dreadful anti-climax. It happened that on the day she took the oath Countess Markievicz, the Sinn Fein member for the college division of Dublin, was in London and certain of her friends went in search of her to get her to present herself at the bar of the house and take her seat on that same day. Having been returned a year ahead of her time, she had to wait for a year before she could take her seat on that same day.

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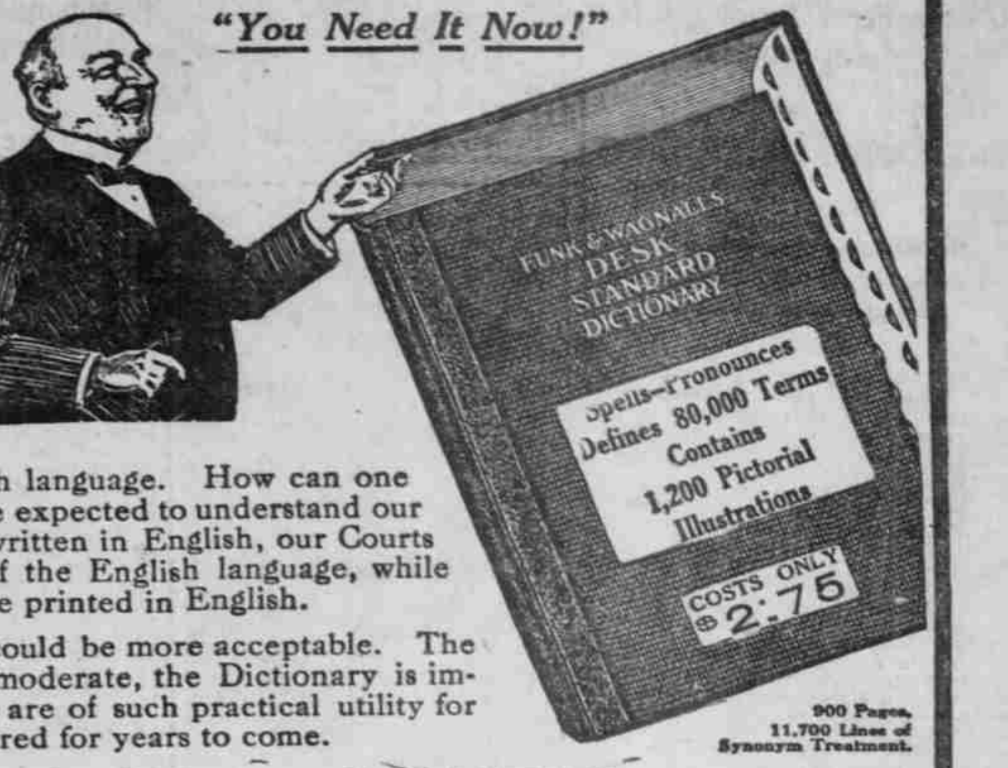
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