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TRANSMUTATION AGAIN.

When Sir William Ramsey was in this city two or three weeks ago he referred to the possibility that he was on the verge of an important chemical discovery, says the New York Tribune. Evidence had been obtained which suggested, though it did not yet prove, that one element might be made from another with the assistance of concentrated energy, like that emitted by radium. At that time The Tribune mentioned that an inkling of the facts was afforded by a letter which Sir William had written to "Nature." Further information is now afforded by belated reports of the recent meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

The kind of change of one material into another which formed the subject of Sir William's experiments is not identical with that revealed in his earlier discovery—the evolution of helium. This is regarded as a product of disintegration. The newer researches were meant to find out whether a transformation could be effected by the opposite process—building up. What Sir William now describes is the formation of a deposit on the walls of several glass vessels which had long been exposed to the influence of a solution of radium. One of the substances which he thinks were developed there resembles lead, apparently came from the glass or the air, and is attributed to the action of the so-called "beta" rays, thrown off by the radium. The experiments were interrupted in such a manner that no final conclusions could be drawn, but their director wisely made a preliminary announcement of the result. By thus putting himself on record, he secures whatever credit is justly due him for pioneer work, but in the meantime he states the ease with commendable caution. It will be necessary for him or others to carry the research much further. It will then be known whether any new matter was created at all, and the nature of his product or products can be determined with precision. If elements hitherto unknown have thus been generated, their properties should be ascertained. If an old one—lead, for instance—was produced by a method hitherto unpractised, the fact should be fully demonstrated. Years may elapse before these results can be attained, but it is greatly to be hoped that Sir William's perseverance will match his insight and past activity.

If his suspicions should be verified, a good many people will be eager to learn whether the discovery possesses any commercial value. The distinguished chemist himself is reticent on that point, doubtless feeling that any expression of opinion at present would be premature. Without a scientific training, however, it is easy to see that at least two questions must be settled before such an inquiry can be answered. One relates to the utility of the product, and the other to the cost of obtaining it. Many of the elements already known have failed thus far to render any service to humanity. Hence, there is no telling in advance what to expect from future additions to their number. Again, if the "beta" rays required for the conversion could be obtained only from such an expensive substance as radium, it would never pay to use them industrially. The "cathode" rays of a vacuum tube are believed to be identical in nature with the "beta" rays of radium, but they are less powerful. The fact that Sir William kept his glass under the influence of a solution of radium for nearly a year in order to secure what proved to be a microscopic quantity of product is not encouraging to the theory that any substitute could be found, but it is too soon to judge. Nevertheless, if the discovery did nothing more than throw some light on some of nature's operations, it could not fail to add materially to its author's reputation.

NO ISSUE ON MERCHANT MARINE.

Among our republican contemporaries we note a very general editorial reticence on the subject of the American merchant marine as referred to by Judge Parker in his letter of acceptance, says the New York Commercial. He said that "the record of the democratic party gives assurance that the task (of restoring our merchant marine) can be more wisely entrusted to it" than to the Republicans. There is really little in the latter's record to which they can

"point with pride" in the way of legislation for American shipping during the fifty years of their party's existence. It is not surprising, therefore, that Republican newspapers are preserving, for the most part, a discreet silence on what there may be if anything, in the merchant marine issue. Not so the Parker "organs," however.

"The pretence, repeated for a hundred times by President Roosevelt," says the New York World, "that the Republican party is the particular friend of the American merchant marine, is one of the most amazingly audacious things in American history." And, after citing various shipping planks in Republican national platforms during the past thirty-two years, it shows that, with the Republican party in absolute control of the government from 1860 to 1872, with the presidency in its hands for twenty-four years since then, the senate for twenty-eight years and all branches of the government together (including the house) for sixteen years, American ships are now carrying only about 9 per cent. of our own imports and exports!

This is a sorry showing, indeed! It must be said in fairness to the party of protection, however, that some of its leaders have persistently tried to "do something" for our shipping in the way of protection, through most of the forty-four years since 1860. But they have always failed—and always either through open hostility to their measures in their own party, through lukewarmness in the same quarter, or through treachery at the critical moment. Republican effort has not been lacking in behalf of the merchant marine.

With both party nominees now committed to an upbuilding policy for American shipping and with both parties professing friendship for the cause, what excuse will there be for letting the coming session of congress pass without the enactment of some helpful legislation to that end?

DARWIN'S THEORY COMBATTED.

The maxim of "live and learn" might be well reinforced by "live and unlearn," if one would get a clear idea of the progress of the human mind in the field of theories drawn from physical research, says the Examiner. Darwin spent his life investigating material things, and then conceived his scheme of evolution.

No man within the century so influenced the thinking mind. His doctrine of evolution, as a result of his own experience, seemed so sound that it for years was accepted as absolute and infallible. In the conflict between Darwinism and religion the advocate of religion often became apologetic, accepted the scientist's theories as established facts and sought to make the eternal truth that God made the world out of nothing and man in His own image and likeness conform to the set rules of the great English materialist. He was not content to wait the result of other scientists working along the same lines that Darwin followed, but demanding that their experience prove his theories before accepting them.

Now comes Count Hugo de Vries, professor of botany in the University of Amsterdam. This scientist from the land of tulips draws his conclusions from plants. He followed a line of work similar to Darwin, and he advances a theory opposed to the cardinal points of that of the Englishman. The doctrine of heredity as advocated by Darwin he finds to be unsound. He combats Darwin's theory of the origin of species.

Thus we have two great minds in the same line of investigation arriving at diametrically opposite results. So it runs in speculative thought. The fact of yesterday is the absurdity of today.

The only thing we are certain of in speculative philosophy is that we are certain of nothing.

All of which goes to show how foolish is a bigoted certainty in the correctness of one's own theories and the intolerance of the theory of the other man.

POULTRY AND PORK.

A poultry-breeder says a farmer will feed a bushel of corn to produce six pounds of pork worth 25 cents, while this bushel would keep a hen a year. She would lay at least 12 dozen eggs, which, averaging 10 cents a dozen, would equal \$1.20, and she would rear a brood of chickens worth twice as much more, making a total of nearly \$5.00. Experiments made at the Utah agricultural experiment station seem to prove the correctness of the statement made in the paragraph quoted above. Another paper says: "Forty dozen eggs will bring more money than a load of hay, which requires a great deal of labor to produce and a good-sized patch of ground to grow, besides a lot of sweat. Study the egg question."

Secretary Wilson is not worrying himself just now about the boll weevil, as he is giving all his attention to the democratic poll weevil.

A number of politicians regard the assurances that a candidate will do his best to abolish graft not as a promise but as a threat.

The welcome season is not very far distant when the drinking water will have to be thawed instead of boiled.

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MEN'S OUTFITTERS

A. O. U. W. Funeral Notice.
Members of Seaside Lodge No. 12 are hereby notified to assemble at the residence of our late brother, Timothy J. Kelly, at 779 Franklin avenue, to attend the funeral of the deceased. The funeral service will take place at 9 a. m. at the house, and at 10 o'clock at St. Mary's Church.
By order of C. E. FOSTER,
Master Workman.

Seeking a Wife.
The Star tells all about it this week. It will make you laugh.

Broke into His House.
S. Le Quinn of Cavendish, Vt., was robbed of his customary health by invasion of chronic constipation. When Dr. King's New Life Pills broke into his house, his trouble was arrested and now he's entirely cured. They're guaranteed to cure, 25c at Chas. Rogers' drug store.

Personal.
Wife wanted by a young Frenchman. Apply at the Star, this week.

Confessions of a Priest.
Rev. Jno. S. Cox of Wake, Ark., writes, "For 12 years I suffered from yellow jaundice. I consulted a number of physicians and tried all sorts of medicines, but got no relief. Then I began the use of Electric Bitters and feel that I am now cured of a disease that had me in its grasp for 12 years." If you want a reliable medicine for liver and kidney trouble, stomach disorder or general debility, get Electric Bitters. It's guaranteed by Chas. Rogers. Only 50c.



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