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OUR SHRINKING SUN.

Its Diameter Becomes About Four Miles Less Each Century.

There are various theories to account for the enormous store of heat and light in the sun. The theory now generally accepted by physicists is that the gradual contraction of the sun in cooling is the chief source of apparent inexhaustible energy. It has been calculated that at the present rate of expenditure of heat the sun's diameter would contract four miles in a century, and in a few millions of years it may become as dense as the earth.

The sun is supposed to be composed of much the same materials as the earth, except that they are at a much higher temperature. About forty of the seventy terrestrial elements have been identified by the spectroscopic analysis existing in the vapors around the sun. Astronomers think that they find traces there of very few substances not already known. Even these may be discovered on the earth some day.

It has been calculated that the heat thrown on a square mile exposed at noon under the equator would melt in an hour 26,000 tons of ice. This amount has to be multiplied fifty million times to arrive at the quantity of heat received by the earth's surface during a single hour. Yet this enormous supply is even less than one two-thousand-millionth part of what the sun pours forth in all directions in space. It stands to reason that this inconceivable outpouring of heat must be accompanied by a gradual though imperceptible diminution in the size of the sun.—Philadelphia Press.

THE CZAR'S CHECK.

It Passed Over Itching Palms, but That Was No Surprise.

When Professor Tuxen, the Danish artist, had finished his great work, "The Coronation of Edward VII," he received, it appears, an order from the Russian emperor for a copy of this painting, for which the czar was to pay 12,000 rubles.

In due course the professor repaired to Petrograd to deliver the painting. He was granted an audience with the czar, who expressed his satisfaction with the picture and who handed the professor an order on the Imperial treasury for the sum agreed upon.

When the professor presented the

check for payment he was told that an order from the emperor was subject to a discount, and he had, therefore, to accept a sum considerably smaller than the face value of the check.

Before his departure from Russia the professor had a farewell audience with the czar, who in the course of conversation asked him, "Did you get your money, professor?"

Professor Tuxen replied that he had not intended to mention the matter, but since his majesty himself raised the question he would say he had received only part of the money.

At this the czar seemed not at all surprised, but calmly made out another order for the sum which had been deducted from the original amount, and thus Tuxen got his money.—Washington Star.

The Unexpected.

"Before engaging rooms in your house," said the bachelor, "I want to know if there are any families with crying babies staying here."

"I'm afraid there is," replied the landlady, "but we—"

"Well, I was just going to say," continued the other, "that if there are I want you to put me in the room next to theirs. I want to wake up in the night and hear their trouble, so that I can congratulate myself again that I'm not married."—London Telegraph.

A Correct Diagnosis.

There was a sudden loud report, and Wiggins brought his car to a standstill.

"Mercy!" cried Mrs. Wiggins. "What was that? It sounded like a revolver."

"It was," said Wiggins wearily. "It was our off hind wheel. It has stopped revolving."—Pittsburgh Press.

Superior.

Tourist—You must get some business here, advertising "All the Comforts of Home For One Dollar." Real Landlord—We did until the fellow opposite opened up with "None of the Discomforts of Home For Two Dollars."—Boston Journal.

Accounting For It.

"I wonder why barbers are generally such sociable men."

"I suppose it is because they find it so easy to scrape an acquaintance."—Baltimore American.

LURING WILD GEESSE.

Live Decoys Are Often Used and Made to Play the Traitor.

American wild geese each spring migrate from waters of the southern states to the shores of the Arctic in northern Canada. The two great common varieties of the bird are the honkers and the wavy, or white, geese.

Both of these are extensively hunted. Covering, as they do, about 5,000 miles on their annual migration, these birds rest at various places en route and are thus shot by sportsmen almost across the length of the continent. The birds have a peculiar trait of always leaving one of their number on look-out while the rest feed.

To aid in the shooting of wild geese live wild-ones, captured young and raised in captivity, are often placed in feeding grounds in likely territory on the line of flight of the migrating flocks. These decoys are terrible traitors and by their calling often bring the flying ones within shooting distance of the sportsmen, who lie in hidden pits near at hand.

Painted decoys, shaped like geese and made of steel, are also used by the hunters. In the latter case the men, from their hiding place in the pits, call the birds by using a goose call, a metal instrument like a flute, which mimics the sound of the geese with remarkable realism.—Philadelphia North American.

WRITING ON METALS.

By the Use of Wax and Acids Etching May Easily Be Made.

Usually a man attempts to put his name on his metal possessions by scratching with a file or knife point and makes the poorest sort of a job. It is really very easy to write on any metal—the blade of a jackknife, a watchcase, skates—if one happens to know how, and the attractiveness of the inscription is limited only by the artistic ability of the individual.

Cover the place where you wish to write with a thin coating of melted beeswax. When the wax is cold write plainly with any pointed instrument, being particular to cut the letters through the wax to the metal.

Then mix one ounce of muriatic acid and one-half of an ounce of nitric acid, or smaller quantities in the same proportions (and remember that these acids are deadly poisons), and apply the mixture to the lettering with a feather, carefully filling each letter.

Allow the acids to remain from one to ten minutes, according as the etching is to be light or deep. Next dip the article in water, wash out the acids and melt off the wax, and the thing is done. A little oil should be applied as a finishing touch. Gold, silver, iron or steel can be marked in this way.—Youth's Companion.

Berthollet and Robespierre.

It is said that the celebrated savant Berthollet in the most dangerous times of the republic sustained his fearless love of truth. Some days prior to the ninth Thermidor a sandy deposit was found in a barrel of brandy intended for the army. The contractors, suspected of poisoning, were immediately arrested, and the scaffold was already prepared. Berthollet, however, examined the brandy and reported it free from all adulteration.

"You dare maintain," said Robespierre to him, "that that brandy does not contain poison?"

As his reply Berthollet drank off a glass, saying, "I never drank so much before."

"You have plenty of courage," exclaimed Robespierre.

"I had more when I signed my report," replied the chemist, and here the matter terminated.

Seventh Century Needlework.

Before the end of the seventh century needlework was carried to great perfection in convents, where it was used for the establishment of the church and the decoration of priestly robes. Artists did not think it beneath their dignity to trace the patterns used for embroidery in their natural colors. A certain religious lady, wishing to embroider a sacerdotal vestment, asked no less a personage than St. Dunstan, then a young man, but already noted for his artistic skill and taste, to draw the flowers and figures, which she afterward worked in gold thread.—Exchange.

Easily Arranged.

A man took the following telegram to a telegraph office: "Mrs. Brown, Center Street: I announce with grief the death of Uncle James. Come quickly to read the will. I believe we are his heirs. John Black."

The telegraph clerk, having counted the words, said, "There are two words too many, sir."

"Cut out 'with grief,'" was the reply.—Chicago News.

In These Martial Days.

"You must not be so quarrelsome, Willie," said William's father impressively. "Remember that the meek shall inherit the earth."

"Maybe they will hereafter," responded the young militant, "but around in my school they are used to wipe up the earth."—Chicago Herald.

What It Will Be Called.

Teacher in Civics—When we have everything in common and your business is everybody's business, what is it called? Observing Student—It is usually called gossip.—Judge.

Corrected.

Mr. Hennepeck (peevishly)—When you tell me to do a thing, like a fool I go and do it. Mrs. Hennepeck (acidly)—No; you go and do it like a fool.—New York Post.

SONG OF THE SHREW.

It Is Pitched So High That Only Sharp Ears Can Hear It.

The high pitched squeaking or whistling of the shrew is a curious sound and frequently acquires quite a song-like character. More often, however, the voice of the shrew is raised in anger, for it is a pugnacious little animal, and the males have fierce combats in the spring of the year. It is a curious fact that many people are unable to hear the shrew's squeaking, not that the sound is not loud enough, but because it is so highly pitched that only sharp ears can record the vibrations.

Though often spoken of as a mouse, the shrew is of an entirely different species, being insectivorous and having sharp teeth on each side of the mouth instead of front teeth, suitable for gnawing, such as are possessed by mice and other rodents.

Though it exists in very great numbers and can very frequently be observed, much remains to be discovered regarding the life of this little creature, an Italian species of which is our smallest known mammal. It is still a mystery why so many dead shrews should be found about the roadsides and pathways. They are fearless little animals, and even when disturbed in their spring journeys from one place to another they do not allow themselves to be put out of their course by a trifle.—London Spectator.

SIX MEALS A DAY.

This Husky Old Laborer Had a Fairly Healthy Appetite.

Undoubtedly it is better as a general rule to take food sparingly than to eat to repletion, and there are some people who even advocate living on one meal a day and who practice what they preach. But there was no "one meal a day" nonsense about the aged Sussex laborer whom E. V. Lucas met. Thus he described his daily round and common task:

"Out in the morning at 4 o'clock, mouthful of bread and cheese and pint of ale; then off to the harvest field, ripping and mowing (reaping and mowing) till 8; then morning breakfast and small beer—a piece of fat pork as thick as your hat is wide; then work till 10 o'clock; then a mouthful of bread and cheese and a pint of strong beer (forenoon—'farnooner's lunch,' we call it); work till 12; then at dinner in the farmhouse, sometimes a leg of mutton, sometimes a piece of ham and plum pudding; then work till 5; then a lunch and a quart of ale (munch was cheese, 'twas skimmed cheese, though); then work till sunset; then home and have supper and a pint of ale."—London Chronicle.

Arithmetic by Hand.

We shall never be in danger of forgetting that our ancestors did their sums on their fingers so long as arithmetic retains the word "digits." But modern civilization knows nothing of the elaborate developments of this method. It takes a Wallachian peasant to multiply 8 by 9 on his hands. This is how he does it: The fingers of either hand, beginning with the thumb, stand for the numbers from 6 to 10. So the ring finger of one hand and the middle finger of the other are stuck out to represent 8 and 9. Counting the fingers remaining on the side farthest from the thumbs, he finds them 1 and 2 respectively, and 1 multiplied by 2 gives him the units of his product—2. Then he counts from the thumbs to the stuck out fingers inclusive, finds them 3 and 4, adds these and gets 7 for his tens. Answer, 72. All this to avoid knowing the multiplication table beyond 4 times 4!

Napoleon's Temper.

A story is told of a sudden rage into which Napoleon I. fell one day as he was at dinner. He had scarcely partaken of a mouthful when apparently some inopportune thought or recollection stung his brain to madness, and, receding from the table without rising from his chair—his small stature permitted that—he uplifted his foot—dash went the table, crash went the dinner, and the emperor sprang up, intending to pace the room. Quick as a flash his waiter scratched a few magic symbols on a bit of paper, and the emperor's check had grown more than double. Napoleon appreciated the delicacy of his attendant and said, "Thank you, my dear Dunand," with one of his inimitable smiles. The hurricane had blown over.

An Old Verb.

To lase is an old verb. In Samuel Rowlands' "Martin Marcell," 1610, we are told that "lozgers lase in the streets, lurke in alehouses and range in the highways." The word occurs, I believe, in some of Mortimer Collins' lyrics:

But Cupid laseeth 'mongst the fairy lasses;
Whose clere complexion he oft sweareth passes.

—London Notes and Queries.

Anchovies.

The delicious little fish called the anchovy is found in large quantities in the Mediterranean sea and also on the coasts of Spain, Portugal and France, where extensive fishing operations are carried on during the months of May, June and July.

A Far Cry.

Ellis—Miss Antique says she wishes she could step to the phone and call up her happy college days. Bella—If she did she'd have to employ the long distance phone.—Florida Times-Union.

Nothing but the harmony of friendship soothes our sorrows. Without its sympathy there is no happiness on earth.—Mozart.

TONNAGE OF A VESSEL.

Just What It Is and the Methods by Which It Is Measured.

To find the tonnage or displacement of a ship is rather puzzling. The tonnage of a ship is the measure of its cubical or carrying capacity expressed in tons. At the present time there are four methods in use of expressing the tonnage of a ship, known respectively as the gross tonnage, the net register tonnage, the deadweight tonnage and the displacement tonnage.

In calculating the gross tonnage the whole interior capacity of the ship below the tonnage deck is found, including that of all covered in spaces on deck used for stowage, and the result in cubic feet is divided by 100.

The net register tonnage is the gross tonnage minus all the spaces used for the accommodation of the crew and instruments and the working parts of the ship. It is on the net register tonnage that almost invariably dues are paid.

The deadweight tonnage is the measure of the exact amount of cargo that a ship can carry without sinking too deep in the water.

The displacement tonnage is the space occupied by the ship in the water. The amount of water displaced by a ship is, of course, equal in weight to the ship and all it contains. As one ton is equal to thirty-five cubic feet of water, the displacement tonnage is found by dividing the number of cubic feet of water displaced by thirty-five when the ship is immersed up to its draft or load line.—London Standard.

Curious Letter Endings.

A few specimens of the style of beginning and ending letters in the old days may prove interesting as in striking contrast to the laconic "Yours obediently," "faithfully" or "truly" of the present day. It would certainly be difficult to match the following subscription of a letter from the Duke of Shrewsbury to Sir Thomas Hamner, dated September, 1713: "I desire that you will believe that, wherever I am, I shall always endeavor to deserve and very much value your friendship, being, with a sincere esteem, sir, your most faithful and obedient servant, Shrewsbury."

Frequently one meets with bellicose subscriptions, as in the case of the Marquis of Huntly and Errol, who in 1504 threatened "awful consequences" to the magistrates of Aberdeen unless they released certain gentlemen imprisoned in their city and subscribed, "Yours as ye will, either present peace or weir."

"Do you see that youngster standing on the corner with his hands in his pockets and whistling with all his might?"

"Of course I see him and hear him too."

"He's one of the calamity howlers in our neighborhood."

"You must be mistaken."

"No, I'm not. He sells newspapers after school."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Because of the scarcity of clocks in West Africa events are timed by the regular daily occurrences. For example, a native wrote that she had received news of her sister's illness "a little while before the guinea fowl talk"—that is, about 5 o'clock in the morning.

The New Minister.

"How do you like your new minister?"

"Very much, indeed. He's the right sort, one of those 'man among men' ministers, you know. Comes over to the house occasionally and smokes a pipe, plays on our baseball team, good at tennis and golf and seems to believe in getting pleasure out of this life."

"I see."

"Yes, and he's interested in the things we laymen are interested in. He discusses the problems of the day. I tell you he's a fine fellow."

"I know, but what sort of sermons does he preach?"

"Well, that I can't tell you. I haven't been over to hear him preach yet."—Detroit Free Press.

Swift and Stubborn.

Absalom rode a "mule." Some of the easiest, strongest, swiftest riding animals in the country still are mules, and a fine white mule brings a price equal to the finest horse. When the Egyptian army invaded Syria in 1830 its leader, Ibrahim Pasha, rode a remarkable mule, which covered almost unbelievable distances in a single day. Mules are phenomenal in their toughness and were no doubt as stubborn and unmanageable in Absalom's day as in ours, so that there was no holding the animal back after Absalom became entangled in the oak undergrowth.—Christian Herald.

Obliging.

Mr. Bowen was having dinner with the Reillys, and the seven-year-old son of the family was present.

"And what are you going to be when you grow up, young man?" asked Mr. Bowen of the little boy.

"Well," replied the boy thoughtfully, "after I've been a minister to please mother an' a judge to please father I'm goin' to be a policeman."—New York Times.

Burdens of Fashion.

"I guess," said she, "I'll put on my thinking cap and consider the matter."

"Well, well!" said an old codger who overheard the remark. "Has it gotten so a woman has to put on a special form of headgear just to do a little thinking?"—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Didn't Pay.

"You department store people have everything. It's a wonder you don't have a department to supply women with husbands."

"We tried that once, but the percentage of returned goods was too large."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Her Idea of It.

He—I am joining the Seventy-fifth Infantry. She—My brother Jack is in the Seventy-sixth. So glad you two boys will be near each other.—Boston Transcript.

Hope against hope, and ask till ye receive.—James Montgomery.

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