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SOMETHING ABOUT SIRIUS.

THE DOG STAR HAS CREATED MORE TALK.

The Brightest Star in the Heavens—It Rules During the Dog Days and is Not Conductive of Health—A few Facts about the Brilliant Sun.

A star which so upset the midnight gravity of the Associated Press officials as to impress them with the idea that a strange Daimon was abroad has naturally attracted great attention. The beautiful "Dog star" the brightest of all the distant suns, has been more talked of in the past few days than all the other stellar luminaries—on this coast, at least.

Sirius to the ancients was the most familiar of all the fixed stars. The Egyptian year used to begin with the date on which this brilliant star rose with the sun. This would be about July 20th of our calendar. The star ushered in the "dog days." It was made most memorable by the inundation of the Nile and in those days of superstition it only needed a tremenpous star to rise coincidentally with the sun as sufficient reason for any number of fearful occurrences. All of the old historians mention the star Sirius. It was a landmark in the sky—to use a rather curious figure of speech. Theon Alexandrinus gave a table for determining the "heliacal rising" of the dog star. He said that a period of forty days, twenty before and twenty after, this momentous event included the time of perspiration, hydrophobia and other evils.

The name Sirius is usually considered as derived from the Greek Scirios. It was supposed to be given to this bright star because of its brilliancy and because of the dryness and heat of the weather which attended its annual appearance. However this may be there seems to be a singular felicity in the name of the constellation of which Sirius is the most brilliant member. Canis Major, the "great dog," is a constellation just south of the equator, and it needs but little imaginative force to descry the rude outlines of man's faithful friend in the group of stars included within its boundaries, when Canis Major is a little past the meridian, say about 8 p. m. At this time of the year an observer studying the asterism from a convenient point—say the nearest boundary of some southeasterly hill—sees the uncouth figure of this canine mass majestically stalking toward the sunset point. Sirius is the eye, a second magnitude star about four degrees distant toward the west forms the tip of his nose, and the remainder of the apparition is the result of a sudden inspiration.

From the modern astronomers Sirius has been a recipient of much attention. Sir John Herschel estimated its light as equal to 325 times the brilliancy of the smallest star we can see with the naked eye. It is over four times brighter than any other star in the sky. Twenty of the most brilliant stars in the firmament are rudely classed as "first-magnitude stars." They are, Sirius, Canopus, Alpha Centanri, Arcturus, Rigel, Cahpella, Vega, Procyon, Betelgeuse, Acheraur, Aldebaran, Beta Centauri, Alpha and Beta Crucis, Antares, Altair, Spica, Fomalhaut, Pollux and Regulus. There are sixty-five second-magnitude stars and 200 of the third, nad so on, in all about 5000 stars visible to the naked eye. The elder Herschel supposed Sirius to be the center of a system and viewd it through his famous reflector. He said that its approach to the field of his great telescope was accompanied by a flood of light like the coming of day, and that it was impossible to observe its image without actual pain to the eye. Herschel's mirror was six feet in diameter, and gathered much more light than is given by the Lick reflector.

The star has been seen to cast a distinct shadow on a dark night, and yet its light is only the one-7,000,000,000th part of that of our sun in full daylight. How far distant from us must this immense sun be then? The mathematical astronomers have not been silent on this point. They tell us that the dog star is just 542,000 times as far away as the center of our solar system. Light takes nine years to reach us from this distant body, and our own sun, seen from one of his planets, would only appear as bright as a third magnitude star—not so large as any of the stars in the "dipper." It is simply impossible to comprehend such celestial distances. We may approximate the idea, as Prof. Langley did, by saying that if the distance from our earth to the sun were represented by the length of a man's arm, he would have to reach one hundred miles to touch the star Sirius.

And now about the wonderful appearance seen the other evening. It is strange, of course, that a well-known star should be responsible for so much tumult, and yet it has been conclusively shown that the "meteoric body" was only Sirius, twinkling abnormally from disturbed atmospheric conditions. As one of the oldest writers once remarked:

"The fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald."

The fiery Sirius was bickering into several other colors on Monday evening, and probably did seem a surprising object to the novice. A ship captain on one of the Atlantic lines once hurried to the company's office upon arriving in New York with the statement that he had discovered a comet while on the high seas. The strange object was none other than the Andromeda nebula.

The star which caused the recent commotion has frequently attracted attention by its peculiarities of color. Aratus called Sirius "poikilos," the many colored. Seneca spoke of the dog-star as "redder than Mars," but it is now distinctly white or bluish white. Similarly, Capella was formerly red, but now certainly blue. In the spectroscope the star gives every indication of possesing a very high temperature. Sodium, magnesia, hydrogen and iron are shown to be among the constituents of this fiery twinkler. One very curious feature of the star is its irregular movement through space. Mathematicians had shown that it behaved as if attended by a large dark companion, and had actually computed the distance and orbit of this companion, when Alvan Clark first beheld the comes in 1862. He had just finished an 18-inch telescope for the Chicago observatory, and turned its huge lens on the Dog-star only to discover the hitherto unseen body of the computers. The companion revolves about its primary in about forty-four years; it is ten seconds of arc distant (or the two-hundredth part of the apparent lunar diameter). The companion of Sirius is only of the tenth magnitude, and is a deep yellow color. It is really not much smaller than Sirius itself but is evidently a burned out sun.

And what a glorious sun Sirius must be! It is over six times heavier than the center of this great system, and in actual light-giving power must exceed forty-two of our suns. And yet it may have burned out nine years ago, for all we know to the contrary.—*C. B. H. in Examiner.*

When Edison Was Young.

"I was an operator in the Memphis office when Thomas A Edison applied to the manager for a position," said A. G. Rockfeller, a member of the Reminiscence club, St. Louis. "He came walking into the office one day looking like a veritable hayseed. He wore a hickory shirt, a pair of butternut pants, tucked into the top of boots a size too large and guiltless of blacking. 'Where's the boss?' was his query as he glanced around the office. No one replied at once and he repeated his question. The manager asked him what he could do for him and the future-great proceeded to strike him for a job. Business was rushing and the office was two men short; so almost any kind of a lightning slinger was welcome. He was assigned to a desk and a fusilade of winks went the rounds of the office, for the 'jay' was put on the St. Louis wire, the hardest one in the office.

"At this end of the line was an operator who was chain lightning and he knew it. Edison had hardly got seated before St. Louis called. The newcomer responded and St. Louis started in on a long report and he pumped it in like a house afire. Edison threw his leg over the arm of his chair, leisurely transferred a wad of spruce gum from his pockat to his mouth, picked up a pen, examined it critically and started in about 200 words behind. He didn't stay there long, however. St. Louis let out another link of speed, and still another, and the instrument on Edison's table hummed like an old-style Singer sewing machine.

"Every man in the office left his desk and gathered around the 'jay' to see what he was doing with that electric cyclone. Well, sir, he was right on the word, and putting it down in prettiest copper plate hand you ever saw, even crossing his t's, dotting his i's, and punctuating with as much care as a man editing telegraph for printers. St. Louis got tired by and by and began to slow down. Edison opened the key and said, "Here, here, this is no primer class! Get a hustle on you."

"Well, sir, that broke St. Louis all up. He had been 'raw hiding' Memphis for a long time and we were terribly sore, and to have a man in our office that could walk all over him made us feel like a man whose horse had won the Derby. I saw the 'wizard' not long ago. He doesn't wear a hickory shirt nor put his pants in his boots, but he is very far from being a dude yet.—*Practical Electricity.*

The Countess of Tolstoi is an extremely clever woman intellectually, and one who is more than a match for her husband in his arguments. She transcribes his books as they are written, as frequently they are altered and revised, and in the case of the "Kreutzer Sonata," copied it four times before the book was completed. The countess, who is of necessity the financial manager of the family, has taken possession of the estate, which she administers for the good of her husband and children. She it was who issued a few years ago, the cheap edition of Count Tolstoi,s novels, on the royalties of which the household has been supported. To her firmness and determination the credit for the home in which the family reside, as well as the blame—if such it be called—for her husband's failure to practice the doctrine of a community of goods, which he so earnestly advocates, must be given; and her realization that a home must be provided for the nine children who have lived of the sixteen born to them, must be her excuse.

A new way of trimming a cloth skirt is to join tne separate gores with puffings of satin. A dark brown skirt of very light weight cloth presents a charmingly stylish appearance if the gores of seams are covered with a puffing of satin of a lighter shade, about an inch or two inches wide. A trimming of this kind makes a skirt look longer and its wearer consequently taller. But there is no denying the fact that a little crinoline stiffening is put into every skirt which is finished thus plainly around the bottom.

An iron meteorite of nearly a ton and measuring four feet two inches long, two feet three inches wide and twenty inches thick was recently found in Youndegin, Western Australia, and has been sent to London.

ON THE UPPER NILE.

Digging Out the Modern Plow, Lens, and Telescope was the Strangest.

"I have spent much time in traveling in India, Borneo and on the Malay peninsula," said William Huntington at the California a few days ago, "and I have also traveled a good deal in other lands. I think on the whole the most interesting experience I ever had was in an ancient city on the Nile in Upper Egypt.

"I am not going to quote any guide books nor more than allude to anything that is not well known, but I want to say that to even the well informed man the things he sees on the Upper Nile will stay with him forever. I may be permitted, perhaps, to remind you that these cities are more than 6000 years old, and that some of them had as many as a million inhabitants each. Indeed some had even more.

"Well, when I was there a year ago, and men were digging among the ruined temples, some curious things were brought forth and these I regard as the strangest things, seen in all my wanderings. In an old tomb was found a curious glass and iron object, which on investigation proved to be a photographic camera. It was not such a camera as is used now, or has been since our photography was invented, but something analogous to it, showing that the art we thought we had discovered was known over 6000 years ago.

"Another thing that was discovered there in the sands of the Nile was a plow, constructed on the modern plan. It was not of steel, but of iron, and it had the same shape, the same form of point, and bend of mold board as we have now. Yet another thing was brought forth, showing that they were expert astronomers. It was a lens constructed in such a manner as gave evidence to the fact that they knew the distance from the earth to the sun and moon and had many of our ideas in regard to the science.

"I saw where the Mohammedans had razed and attempted to destroy those cities, but many of the buildings, or at least, parts of them, are yet in a good state of preservation. The stones are largely granite, and there never was a better expression than "imperishable granite" so far as they are concerned.

"These things start men to thinking, and convince us that civilization may, after all, move in a circle, and things which we call new, are often old as the mountains, America and California are new to me but already I find here you refer to your lost civilization, meaning, as I take it, more particularly the civilization of the Aztecs and the Toltecs.

"I don't know whether you will find a modern plow, an astronomical instrument and camera or not, but I would not be surprised if some one should find as remarkable things in this country as they have found in Egypt."

Are Americans a Practical People?

The notion prevails in this country that we are a very practical people. We take credit to ourselves for being sensible, shrewd, and at least mindful of our interests. This quality gets a harsher name from our foreign critics. They say we are materialistic, grasping, and, in fact, sordid, as the thing we care most for is money, and that which we are most alive about is our material interests. They admit that we are "smart," but say that we are mentally commonplace and unimaginative. The critics are mistaken, and our own estimate of ourselves is more complacent than correct. We are a very imaginative people and in many ways the most unpractical. The old stage conception of Uncle Sam as a good natured rustic sitting in a rocking chair whittling, was not altogether out of the way. Whittling is not a remunerative occupation as a rule, although this quaint waiter on Providence, who seemed to imagine that if he sat at ease all good things would, in the course of time, pass his way, occasionally did whittle out an invention that would save him from labor. He answered the jibes of his critics by pointing out the fact that the chair he sat in was a self rocker—a little invention of his own. He was a man of vague dreams and imaginations,

No, brought to the test in the commercial struggle of the modern world for supremacy, the American is not practical. In rivalry with other active nations he shows himself a bungler, and lacking in practical wisdom and foresight. An inventor, yes; but lacking practical shrewdness. He is very ingenious. He has gone on doubling in the past few years the great world staples of corn, cotton and iron, and he seemed confidently to expect that Providence will market them for him; especially as he has cheapened the cost of all these products, it would only be fair for Providence to attend to the selling part. He knows that one per cent of the arable land in the cotton states would produce all the cotton the world can use, and he knows that the product of iron, cotton and grain increases in an enormously greater ratio than the population, and yet he neglects many of the most obvious means to profit by this bounty of nature and of his situation. He looks on and braggs about his greatness, while his industrial and commercial rivals occupy the markets of the world. Now that he is in rivalry with them for a fair share in so plain a prize, his conduct shows him to be the most unpractical of men.—*Charles Dudley Warner, in Harper's Magazine for April.*

The painting by Millet recently sold at Brussels for $200,000 was originally sold by the artist for a cask of wine worth about $8.

WONDERFUL CAICEDO.

He Wears High Boot Heels and Spurs on the Tight Wire.

The one especial thing in its line that seems to be most pleasing vaudeville audiences in London just now is the performance of Caicedo, the tight wire dancer. Tight rope walkers there are galore, and clever enongh are their achievements, but of tight rope performers there are none save Caicedo. Even on the tight rope and slack wire which Caicedo smiles at as well enough as well enough for amateurs, his feats are hardly duplicated. His wire is a mere thread, invisible when stationary except from very near the stage, and wholly so even to Caicedo when vibrating, as it most of the time. It is stretched tightly as a fiddlestring some ten feet above the stage. On this he performs all the ordinary feats of the ordinary performer. Dressed in tights and carrying a balance pole he walks backward and forward, dances, leaps and turns somersaults. But all this is preliminary. Later he dons a military uniform and heavy riding boots, with high heels and immense spurs, does all the feats over again, and adds others that are simply astonishing.

He marches across the wire with giant strides, bounding in the air three or four feet at a step. He jumps away up in the air, coming down first on one foot, then on the other. Then he makes prodigious leaps—seven, eight feet and more—into the air, and lands lightly with both feet on the wire. A peculiar thing is that as soon as he lands on the wire it stops dead, and he stands as firmly and steadily on it as though poised on a granite pedestal. He makes a great bound, assisted by the spring of the wire, six or seven feet into the air, and comes down sitting sidewise on the wire. Then comes his greatest feat. Bounding up from the sitting posture still higher skyward, he turns a somersault high in the air and comes down with his feet firmly planted on the slender thread of wire easily and with more grace than many an acrobat lands on a mattress. All this, with clumsy, thick soled, high heeled, spurred riding boots on his feet. The boots have been investigated and found to be just the ordinary kind.

Caicedo is a South American, born in Popayan, Colombia. He has spent all his life in the circus ring, and was an expert fancy rider and acrobat before he tried the tight wire. He practiced four hours a day for nine years before he could do his feats and all the time folks said he would never succeed. After three years' practice he continually fell from the wire, and after five he could just walk and dance with a balancing pole. He does not now know how he preserves his balance, or manages to come down just where the wire is. He does so unconsciously. He says, and truly, he cannot see the wire. No one can, for it vibrates like a harp string. He says he sees with his feet. Just now he is making $200 a week and a reputation that is worth much more soon—unless every one's expectations are realized and he breaks his neck.

Homes at the World's Fair.

There is no reason why anyone should be deterred from visiting the World's Fair by reason of possible inconvenience and uncertainty attending the securing of satisfactory hotel accommodations.

The Northern Pacific railroad will in due time publish low excursion rates to Chicago and return for this occasion, while its double daily passenger train service, including through sleeping cars of both classes (Standard and Tourist) to Chicago, will as usual be at the head of the list in every particular.

To help you in fixing in advanee upon your place of residence while attending the World's Fair, we have placed in the offices of the company at 121 First Street, Portland, Or., compiled by perfectly trustworthy parties, called "Homes for Visitors to the World's Fair." This little book, which you can purchase for fifty cents, contains a list of about 9,000 private families who will accommodate visitors in Chicago during the time of the fair, viz: May 1st to October 30th; gives their names and addresses and number of rooms each will have to spare. The book also gives a list of the hotels and their locations; has twelve full-page large scale maps, each representtng a section of the city, so that with this information before him the intending visitor himself can, at leisure, select the quarter of the city in which he would prefer to stop, corresponding in advance with one or more families in that locality with regard to rates and the accommodations desired.

A. D. CHARLTON,
Asst. Gen. P. A., N. P. R. R.
Portland, Oregon.

What's the Answer?

She was a bright mathematical scholar and pretty and when she rattled at the stamp window and laid down a dollar bill the handsome young clerk in a blue necktie was all attention.

"There's a dollar bill," she said. "Give me four times as many twos as ones and give me the rest in threes."

"I beg your pardon, miss," he stammered.

She repeated he request.

"Certainly," he said and began to lay out the stamps.

He worked at it ten minutes without success, she waiting patiently the meanwhile.

He wasn't busy with any one else and she didn't seem to mind seeing him calculate, so she gave him another five minutes.

Then a customer came in.

"Just keep the dollar," she said very sweetly, "and I'll come around in the morning and get the stamps in the proper proportions."

DR. PRICE'S Cream Baking Powder.

The only Pure Cream of Tartar Powder.—No Ammonia; No Alum.

Used in Millions of Homes—40 Years the Standard.

SAVED BY A KISS.

Sudden Bend of a Head Enables Him to Escape Death.

"I was lieutenant-colonel of a Kentucky cavalry regiment," continued Colonel John C. Underwood of Kentuck, while relating a story to a Boston *Globe* reporter. "Our command was in East Tennessee and one bright, moonlight night I concluded to ride away from camp and take a look about the vicinity. I rode several miles and coming to a farmhouse, hitched my horse and knocked at the door. A young woman, the most beautiful I had ever seen, it seemed to me, appeared after a while and invited me in. She and her aged mother were the only occupants of the house, the men in the family being in the Confederate army. We chatted pleasantly for a few moments when my fair hostess arose and said: "Colonel, you ran a great risk in leaving your horse in such an exposed position. The Yankee pickets are all about us. I will go and put him in the barn."

She left the room, and after a few minutes returned and we resumed our conversation. Suddenly she started up and listened. 'Colonel, you must go now;' she exclaimed; 'I hear the sound of horses' hoofs: the federals are coming!" Rushing out of doors, she led my horse to the back of the house, and I, following her, jumped on his back. The most natural thing for me to have done would have been to set spurs to him and get away as soon as possible. But I could not. I was young and impressionable, and the situation was entrancing. The moon shed a silvery light upon the earth, a gentle breeze was blowing and the rustle of the leaves in the grand old trees was like music to my soul. And amid these enchanting surroundings a beautiful face with tearful eyes looking up into mine beseeching me to hasten. I could not resist the temptation and stooping down from my horse put my arm around her, drew her closer to my side and kissed her.

"As I did so a shower of bullets passed over my head. I was in full sight of a company of federal horsemen. My horse realized the danger as well as I and a race for life ensued. The enemy pressed hard upon me for a time, and more than once their bullets grazed my head, but fortune favored me at last, and I reached the Confederate lines in safety. Do you wonder that I remember when a kiss saved my life?"

She Objected.

One of the most estimable women of Louisville and one whose friends would never suspect her as the one referred to below, is subject to smothering spells, and confidently expects some day to die during one of them. Several days ago, while sitting at her front window engaged at some light needlework, conversing with a neighbor, she felt one of the spells coming over her. She called to her friend to summon Dr. —— and then fan her. The friend was sent for the family physician, and in no time he was at the house. Meanwhile the sufferee was sure she was dying. "Oh, Mrs. ——," she sobbed hysterically, "I know I am going this time. I am dying now, I'm dying. Good bye, Mrs. ——." The doctor at once began the application of the usual restoratives, but they seemed of no avail. The sufferer appeared to be gradually losing her breath, and the doctor believed she was expiring. He tore away the ruching about her neck and called to her friend: "Mrs. ——, take off her shoes, please; we must enliven her circulation, somehow." The doctor got her neck free enough, but when the friend attempted to remove one shoe the sufferer kicked her friend's hands with the other foot. The doctor did not notice this, but, thinking perhaps the friend could not undo the buttons, he reached down and picked up one of the patient's feet. The sufferer, evidently in her last gasps, kicked him also, but the doctor was determined. "Mrs. ——," he said, "your shoes are too tight. They must come off.

"Don't doctor." gurgled the patient, "don't doctor, I'm dying."

"I know it, Mrs. ——," he said, "but these shoes must come off."

"Oh, no, doctor," was the feeble pleading.

"But I say yes," answered the now thoroughly frightened doctor, 'and I'll take them off, too."

"Oh, doctor, please don't, please don't"——

"I'm sorry, Mrs. ——, but"——

Raising herself with a powerful effort, the patient, pale as death itself, gasped: "Please don't take off my shoes, doctor, my stockings are full of holes."

The effort seemed to bring back the life to the sufferer, and in half an hour she was as well as ever, with a new pair of stockings on, fully ready for the next "spell."

Women will be much comforted and reassured to learn from Dr. Allen that in an emergency one must always grab a rattlesnake by the neck. However, there is reason to fear that in the future as of yore, women will continue to grab their skirts and run.

Put up in neat watch-shaped bottles, sugar coated, *Small* Bile Beans. 25c. per bottle.

ROCKING STONES.

A Curious Geologic Phase on the Bank of the Congo.

When the engineers were surveying the Congo railroad they found on the bank of the river a curiously shaped stone, so poised on several smaller bits that it rocked from one side to the other. The rock bore a striking resemblance to the remarkable monuments still found in France and England which were used as altars by the Druids about the beginning of the Christian era. It was on such altars that the Druids offered their sacrifices. So on the banks of the Congo was found a counterpart of the Dolmens of north Europe.

The rock was in the way of the railroad track, and was therefore removed. Its fantastic outlines were never fashioned by human hands; nor was it placed upon the supporting stones by human agency. At least the geologist, E. Dupont, who visited the Congo to make a study of its geology, says we have no proof of the existence among the people of the lower Congo or their ancestors of a state of civilization that would justify us in attributing to their handiwork even so rude and primitive a monument as a Dolmen.

There are in this part of West Africa a number of tottering rocks like the one discovered on the Congo. They are all of natural origin, and show the plainest evidence of erosion. Most of them have been carved by the elements out of mica schists. They contain veins of amphibolitic gneiss or quartz much harder than the schists, and here and these some of the softer rock above the hard quartz veins has been worn away, completely severing the connection between the once united upper and lower parts of the mass, and so the upper portion is left to balance on the rock or rocks beneath.

Organs Lost by Disuse.

It is a suggestive fact not always sufficiently considered, that "as soon as any organ or faculty falls into disuse it degenerates and is finally lost altogether."

Through all the ages that man has had the power of speech this power has not been fixed in us in any degree whatever by heredity. It is regarded as definitely proved that if a child of civilized parents were brought up in a desert place and allowed no communication whatever with man, it would never make any attempt at speech. Up to the last century it was not uncommon to find persons living in a wild state in the woods and forests of England, France Germany and Russia, who were utterly incapable of speech, though they could make sounds in imitation of the cries of wild animals. Certain parasitic insects have so completely degenerated that they possess neither eyes, legs, heads, mouths, stomachs or intestines. Animals that burrow and live under the ground lose the power of sight or have eyes that are merely rudimentary. Slave ants and working ants have lost their wings through being kept entirely to a life on the ground. The masters in some colonies of ants in which slaves are kept have become so hopelessly dependent on their slaves that they not only will not seek food, but are incapable of feeding themselves, and will starve with food before them unless a slave is present to place it in their jaws.

A gentleman who has been exploring near the former sites of Sodom and Gomorrah states that, though he looked for the pillar of salt into which Lot's wife hadthe misfortune to turn, he did not find it. This leaves his reputation for veracity in excellent repair.

The smallest holes pierced by modern machinery are 1-1000 part of an inch in diameter. They are bored through sapphires, rubies and diamonds by a machine invented by one John Wennstrom, which makes 22,000 revolutions a minute.

New Zealanders are protesting against the annexation of the Hawaiian islands by the United States, because that would give this country complete control of the proposed Pacific cable from America to Australia.

There will be no Wagnerian performance this year at Baireuth. A Wagner festival on a grand scale will be held there in 1994, however, when "Parsifal," "Tannahauser" and "Lohengrin" will be given.

A Mussulman candidate is to contest for a seat in the legislature at the next election in Cape Town. He is the first non-European candidate there since the cape constitution was granted.

There are no undertakers in Japan and when a person dies it is the custom for his nearest relatives to put him in a coffin and bury him.

Bucklen's Arnica Salve.

The Best Salve in the world for Cuts, Bruises, Sores, Ulcers, Salt Rheum, Fever Sores, Tetter, Chapped Hands, Chilblains, Corns and all Skin Eruptions, and positively cures Piles or no pay required. It is guaranteed to give perfect satisfaction, or money refunded. Price 25 cents per box. For sale by Rogers Bros.