[LIG]HT WITHOUT HEAT

Puzzle of the Tiny Firefly and the Mighty Comet.

[WHIC]H HOLDS THE SECRET.

[It i]s a Mystery to Science, and the Man [W]ho Is Able to Penetrate That Mystery Will Be In a Position to Revolutionize This Planet of Ours.

This is not an Aesop fable, although it has a moral.

There are two things in whose presence science stands wondering and abashed—the little glowworm (or the yet tinier firefly) and the mighty comet arching the sky with its glimmering train. Each of them holds the same secret—how to make light without heat. The man who gets that secret will revolutionize the planet.

The late president of the Royal Astronomical Society of Great Britain referred to the value of the comet's secret in his retiring address. He thought that we do not sufficiently appreciate the wondrous spectacle of a comet's tail. It shows us hundreds of billions of cubic miles of space simultaneously glowing with luminosity whose origin is a mystery.

It is a gigantic experiment in a branch of physics of which we as yet know very little. The comet is immersed in what we may well regard as a vacuum; at least it is a far more perfect vacuum than we can produce. Yet the persistent glow of the comet's tail shows that there is no real vacuum there, but a vast quantity of extremely attenuated matter which no doubt is the cause of the luminosity.

We ought, Professor Newall thinks, to awake to the importance of this hint. "Who knows," he says, "whether, if we could discover a method of disrupting gases and vapors in ultra vacuous spaces artificially maintained on earth, we should not have a method of artificial illumination as economical as that of the glowworm and as brilliant as is needed for our nocturnal life?"

This thing may really be within our reach, although at the present time we cannot even suggest to ourselves exactly how it is to be attained. But the tendency of recent investigation is in that direction. As Sir John Herschel said of another discovery which was just at the door, "We can feel it trembling along the farreaching line of our analysis."

There are not a few men, who are regarded by their harder headed scientific brethren as "dreamers," who picture to themselves a fast coming time when we shall not only obtain light at as cheap a rate as the firefly has it, but when we shall have tapped the exhaustless stores of energy that sleep all around us in nature.

We are like one in a dream suspended in the midst of a vast workshop crowded with multitudinous machines, all whirling and fluttering in a storm of energies, but which he can neither control nor understand. If we could see these things they might terrify us, as the dreamer is terrified by the whirring belts and spinning wheels of his vision, seeming to grasp at his life.

If the scientific investigator needs to establish a raison d'etre in the eyes of the public, which cannot follow either his processes or his results, he has only to point to the fact that the greatest practical discoveries of modern times have come out of the laboratories from things as incomprehensible to the unitiated as so much magic. It is a well known fact that the growing might of Germany springs from her devotion to "pure research."

Referring again to the pregnant hint of the comet, Professor Newall is clearly right in saying, "Here is a theme that should stir up the most commercial mind in the support of astronomy."—Garrett P. Serviss in New York American.

On the Cars of New York.

The surface cars of New York carry in each line as different a nationality as if each belonged to a different country. On the Eighth avenue line there are mostly colored people; on the Sixth avenue they are largely Americans, if there are any Americans in New York; in the Broadway cars there are stylishly dressed New Yorkers; on the Third avenue Irish and Jewish people predominate, on the Second avenue Jewish, Italian, Hungarian, Swedish and German, while on the surface cars that run along Avenue A you see every foreign nationality under the sun, all bareheaded.—New York Press.

Vain Regrets.

"That man Biffin lacks courage and energy."

"Yes, confound him!"

"Why do you say that?"

"Because he was courting my wife before I met her. If he had had a little more courage and energy— But what's the use of talking about it now?"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

What Rules the World.

When Napoleon caused the names of his dead soldiers to be inscribed on the base of Pompey's pillar, some one criticised the act as "a mere bit of imagination." "That is true," replied Napoleon, "but imagination rules the world."—Atlantic.

Compensation.

A young cadet was complaining of the tight fit of his uniform.

"Why, father," he declared, "the collar makes my Adam's apple so hard I can't taste cider!"—Harper's Weekly.

A little child is your only true democrat.—Stowe.

WILD ELEPHANTS.

A Herd's Successful Raid on a Granary In Ceylon.

Some soldiers stationed at an outpost in Ceylon, says a Colombo paper, to protect a granary containing a large quantity of rice were sent off a few miles to quiet some unruly villagers, only two of the party remaining behind. No sooner had the soldiers departed than a herd of wild elephants, which had long been wandering about the neighborhood, appeared in front of the granary. Its walls were of solid brickwork, very thick, and the only opening into the building was in the center of the roof, which was reached by a ladder. On the approach of the elephants the two men clambered up into a lofty banyan tree to escape injury. Screened by the thick foliage, though unseen by the elephants, they easily saw all that went on below. The sagacious animals began operations at the corners of the building. Two powerful elephants, after putting forth every effort, but in vain, to make an impression on the building, were forced to retire exhausted. A third came forward, and, applying his tusks as levers, he at length succeeded in dislodging a single brick. An opening once made, others of the herd advanced, and soon an entrance was obtained sufficiently large to admit them. As the whole company could not be accommodated at once, they divided into small groups of three or four. After satisfying themselves they retired and gave place to others until the whole herd, upward of twenty, had made a full meal. By this time a shrill sound was heard from one of the elephants, and those still in the granary rushed out and joined their companions. One of the first divisions, after leaving the building, had acted as sentinel while the others were taking their turn. He had perceived the troops returning from the village and gave the signal for retreat, when the whole herd, flourishing their trunks, moved rapidly into the jungle.

The soldiers found the animals had devoured the greater part of the rice. A ball from a fieldpiece was discharged at them in their retreat, but they only wagged their tails as if in mockery and were soon hidden in the recesses of their native forests.

DAYS OF THE WEEK.

At One Time They Were Designated Merely by Numbers.

Formerly the days of the week were numbered one, two, three, four, five and six, beginning with the Sabbath. Even now the custom still prevails among certain modern Greeks, the Slavs and the Finns. Many old fashioned and orthodox Quakers, particularly in the north of England, still hold to this custom, which was the common one in the days of the apostles and down to the fourth century as well as usual among the Jews and the Arabs. The orthodox Quakers use the numerical system in preference to the ordinary on the ground that the gods and goddesses, from whom the names were taken, were not of the highest respectability in point of morals.

The week was originally only a convenient quarter of the lunar month; hence it began on Monday, or moon day. The Italians still call Monday the first and Sunday the seventh day of the week. Tuesday is derived from the Norse Tiw, who corresponded to Mars, the god of war, a most disreputable person in the eyes of Quakers. Thursday was Thor's day, Thor being a god warrior who was morally no better than he ought to be. Wednesday, again, was Woden's day, Woden being the god of battle rage. The Romans called this day Mercury's. Friday was supposed to be the luckiest day of the week—for women. It was called after the Norse Frija, the goddess of love, and is the best day for weddings. For the pagan Romans it was also the day of Venus, though the Christian Romans called it the day of ill luck because Christ had been crucified on that day. Saturday was called after Saturn, and Sunday was known to the Christians as resurrection or sun day.

The week of seven days was imported from Alexandria into Greece and into Italy about the time of Christ. The Greeks had previously divided their month into sets of ten days, the Romans into sets of eight days, three and a half sets being equal to one month.—New York World.

An Author's Initials.

Initials are sometimes the resort of the writer who is anxious to conceal his identity, and a glance through any one of the 700 volumes that comprise the catalogue of the British museum reading room will discover some strange instances. A theological book, entitled "Inquiry Into the Meaning of Demoniacks In the New Testament," is attributed to T. P. A. P. O. A. B. I. C. O. S. Its real author was a certain Arthur Sykes, and the initials reveal his position as "the precentor and prebendary of Alton Borealis in the church at Salisbury."—London Chronicle.

Revenge.

"That organist Belle jilted for the aged millionaire played a spiteful trick at her wedding."

"What did he do?"

"Instead of playing them up the aisle with the wedding march, he struck up 'Old Hundred.'"—Boston Transcript.

Prospects Brilliant.

"I see you got married yesterday, Chloe. Are your prospects brilliant?"

"Yaas. Mah husband's friends brought me fo' mo' washin's."—Circle Magazine.

This world is to the sharpest, heaven to the most worthy.—Hamilton.

THE MYSTERY OF MARS.

[Ol]d but Unsolved Problem, Is There Animal Life on the Planet?

With a planet so old as Mars and so far along in the process of life extinction the conditions of life would be severe, and only a highly intellectual and scientifically developed race could endure and master them. The engineering skill and constructive capacity to control the annual floods from the poles, store the waters and build the thousands of miles of huge canals would require scientific knowledge beyond that possessed by us at the present time and financial resources in excess of those we have yet accumulated. The nation that finds the digging of a little ditch at Panama so great a task would be helpless in the face of such a problem as these thousands of miles of Martian canals, if, indeed, canals they be. Yet, in view of the greater life age of Mars, such higher intelligence would be natural in the regular process of development, assuming that it has ever been the abode of intellectual life.

Scientists are in the main in a receptive state on this subject. They are not ready to admit that the existence of life on that planet has been proved. They do not deny it, but call for greater proof than a plausible theory. Among others than scientists there is in the main a disposition not to accept the Martian human life theory or the theory of life on any of the thousands of spheres that wheel and glisten in illimitable space. They seem to think that such a theory conflicts with religion and dwarfs man and his importance in the scheme of creation.

This seems to be a very narrow view to take, since it appears to set bounds upon the infinite power and creative desires of the Almighty, whose great scheme of mortal and immortal life is not necessarily confined to a single planet or the few billions of human beings who are born and die upon it. As to dwarfing the importance of man, a few billions more added to the billions on earth would make little difference. Man is at best a small and insignificant creature, but if all embracing wisdom, power and love takes solicitous note of him it would be limiting those infinite qualties to say that one planet must be his abiding place. Therefore the question of human intelligence on Mars or any other planet of the solar system or the other great systems in remote space should be purely and simply a scientific one, to be accepted as true only when proved but not to be rejected through sentiment or for any other reason whatever except lack of proof.—St. Louis Star.

An Oriental Blessing.

A well known representative from China, who was a guest at a wedding in a capital city, was approached after the ceremony by the best man and jocularly asked to go over to the young couple and pronounce a parental blessing. The obliging dignitary complied with pleasure. Placing his hands on the blushing bride and shaking bridegroom, he said: "May every new year bless you with a man-child offspring until they shall number twenty-five in all. May these twenty-five man children offspring present you with twenty-five times twenty-five grandchildren, and may these grandchildren"—

But the little bride grew hysterical about this time, and the oriental blessing was ended amid the laughter of the guests.—Ladies' Home Journal.

A Cowboy Spider.

"Faking aside," said the nature student, "there is in New Zealand a cowboy spider. This creature throws a coil of web like a lasso over its prey's head, then adds more and more coils and when the prey is bound hand and foot devours it.

"There is a Borneo spider that in the spring days plays a fiddle. It is a common thing for a lovesick spider to dance before his girl, but this Borneo boy my drawing his arm across his tum produces a sweet, clear note. Whenever he sees a good looking young lady spider he stops and gives her a tune, hoping to win her by music."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Miners' Freedom From Cancer.

"Miners never have cancer. In thirty-five years' practice in a mining town I haven't had a single cancerous patient."

"And to what, doctor, do you impute this immunity?"

"Miners are singularly cleanly. They bathe every day. They rarely smoke. They are a temperate and regular set. Above all"—

The physician smiled grimly.

"Miners," he said, "die young. Cancer is an old age disease. And there really is the reason of the miner's cancerous immunity."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Not the Same.

"Excuse me," he said as he entered the public library at Pegantic, "but do you have any social registers here?"

"No, we hain't," said the librarian, with considerable hauteur. "This here buildin' is het up by steam, and we hain't got nothin' but radiators, and we don't allow no settin' around with your feet on to them neither. The nearest thing we got to a social registry in this town is the postoffice stove."—Lippincott's.

A Reminder.

Mamma—What are you doing with that string, Lola? Lola (aged five)—Tyin' it on my finger, mamma, so if I ferget anything I'll be sure to 'member it.—Chicago News.

That experience which does not make us better makes us worse.—Holmes.

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