

A NATURAL RIDDLE

Attraction of Gravitation is a Mystery to Science.

IT CONTROLS THE UNIVERSE.

Yet That Wonderful Force That Directs and Regulates Moons, Planets, Suns and Stars Without Visible Means of Connection is Inexplicable.

The mystery of mysteries in science is the attraction of gravitation—that very force of nature that is the most familiar to us all. It seems strange that the most familiar thing in the world should be at the same time the most inexplicable, but so it is.

In order to see clearly wherein the mystery consists, let us first consider what gravitation appears to be. It is gravitation that gives the property of weight to all bodies. If there were no gravitation we could float like thistle-downs and infinitely better than thistle-downs, for they, too, are finally brought down by gravitation.

It is gravitation that brings a cannon ball eventually to the earth, no matter how swiftly it may be projected. The faster it starts the farther it will go, but during every second of its flight it drops the same distance vertically toward the earth, whether the speed imparted to it by the powder is 500 or 3,000 feet per second. Gravitation acts on a moving body exactly as well as on one at rest.

It is gravitation that curbs the motion of the moon and keeps it in an orbit of which the earth is the active focus.

So, too, it is gravitation that governs the earth in its motion around the sun, preventing it from flying away into boundless space. Astronomy shows that gravitation acts between all the plants and all the stars and controls their motions with respect to one another.

Now, this mysterious force appears to be an attraction, as if there were elastic cords connecting all the bodies in space and tending to draw them together. But space, as far as our senses can detect, is empty. There are no elastic cords and no physical connections whatever between astronomical bodies or between a flying stone or cannon ball and the earth. How, then, can there be an attraction? In order that a body may be attracted or drawn there must be something to draw it.

When an unfortunate aeroplanist drops from his machine at a height of a thousand feet he begins at once to fall toward the earth as if it were pulling him. But how can it pull if it has nothing to pull with? You may think at first sight that it is the air which acts as an intermediary, but that is not so, because the earth and the moon "pull" upon one another with a force equal to the strength of a steel cable 500 miles in diameter. But there is no air and no other tangible thing in the open space, 240,000 miles across, that gaps between the moon and the earth.

Then, gravitation exerts the same force at every instant. No matter how fast the falling aeroplanist may be descending at any moment, gravitation will keep on adding speed as if he had just started. Disregarding the slight retardation produced by the resistance of the air, he will fall sixteen feet in the first second, forty-eight feet in the second second, eighty feet in the third second, gaining thirty-two feet in his velocity during every second after the first.

From a height of 1,000 feet he will come down in about eight seconds, and will strike the ground with a velocity of about 256 feet per second. From a height of 10,000 feet he would fall in about twenty-five seconds and would strike with a velocity of 400 feet per second.

The same kind of calculation can be applied to the gravitation between the earth and the moon. If the moon were not in motion across the direction of the earth's "pull" it would fall to the earth in about 116 hours.

Now, to return to the mystery, how is this force exerted? Is it really a pull, as it seems to be? The answer to which science is tending is that instead of being a pull, gravitation is a push; in other words, that the falling aeroplanist is pushed toward the ground and the moon is pushed toward the earth.

On the face of it one might think that nothing was gained by this theory, because it seems as impossible that a push should be exerted without a tangible connection as a pull. But the clew is found in the supposed properties of that invisible, intangible, all-pervading medium called the ether.

This, to be sure, is explained; one mystery by another, for we know nothing about the ether except that it conveys the waves of light and electricity; but, at any rate, it affords a conceivable explanation of gravitation. Dr. Charles F. Brush's theory regards the ether as being filled with a peculiar form of waves and that material may be interpreted these waves in such a way as to be pushed toward one another on account of the dimming effect of the ether waves in the space between the bodies.—Garrett P. Serviss in New York Journal.

If you know how to spend less than you get you have the philosopher's stone.—Benjamin Franklin.

TRIALS OF AN EXPLORER.

Sickness and Agony That Livingstone Endured in Africa.

Writing on David Livingstone, missionary and African explorer, Sir Harry H. Johnston says in the British Geographical Journal: "During the winter or rainy season of 1848-9 Livingstone was very ill. He had been wet times without number and suffered from terrible pains in the chest and pneumonia. He was often semi-delirious and subject to delusions, such as that the bark of the trees was covered with figures and faces of men. He thought often of his children and friends, and his thoughts seemed almost to conjure them up before him. For the first time in his life he was being carried and could not raise himself to a sitting position. The Arabs were very kind to him in his extreme weakness, but the vertical sun, blistering any part of the skin exposed to it, tried him sorely in the day marches.

"In July, 1870, his feet were almost consumed with irritable, eating ulcers, pulsating with pain. * * * These sores were obviously communicated by mosquitoes from the blood of the wretched slaves who were tortured with them. Livingstone could fall asleep when he wished at the shortest notice. A mat and a shady tree under which to spread it would at any time afford him a refreshing sleep. But in his last years of travel sleep was often made sad by the realistic dreams of happy English life from which he wakened to find himself ill and consumed with anxiety that he might not live to complete his mission.

"After 1839 he suffered much from the results of the decay and loss of his molar teeth, so that imperfect mastication of rough African food induced severe dyspepsia, and his bodily strength weakened under a condition of permanent malnutrition. Stanley, by relieving him when he did, gave him at least two more years of life, a certain measure of happiness and the sweet consolation that he was not forgotten and that the magnitude of his discoveries was appreciated."

BOATS GROW ON TREES.

West Indian Boys Can Get All of Them They Want.

When a West Indian boy wants a toy boat all he has to do is to visit a coconut tree. These trees bear great bunches of nuts among their drooping green leaves, and when the bunch first sprouts out in the form of a big bud it is inclosed within a hard, tough, woody case or spathe two or three feet long, eight or ten inches in diameter and tapering to a point at one end and to a slender stem at the other. In fact, it looks very much like a huge wooden cigar.

As the buds and flowers develop the spathe splits open, and the flower bud continues to grow out beyond it until the nuts begin to ripen. By this time the spathe has become dry and hard and break off and drop to the ground of their own accord.

It is the spathe or bud coverings that the West Indian boys use for toy boats, and, while the dry and fallen ones will answer, better boats are made from the more flexible and partly green spathe still clinging to the flower stem.

The spathe as gathered from the tree is almost in the shape of a boat, and all that is necessary to transform it to a very seaworthy and fast sailing toy canoe is to sew the open end together and fit rudder, sail and seats or thwart.

When this is done the boat is almost an exact model of the big dugout canoes that the boys' fathers use in fishing. In fact, these dugouts were probably copied from one of the tree grown boats.—From "Harper's Book for Young Naturalists."

A printer's error in perpetuity! How many know that when joining in the "Te Deum" they are carrying on, in one phrase of that song of praise, an ancient blunder? "Make them to be numbered with thy saints," so it runs. And so when manuscript copies gave place to printed books it was rendered in the medieval Latin then in use, "nummerari"—"to be numbered," as we say in English. Transpose the first and third letters and you get "munerari," "to be rewarded," which is what all prayer books would be printing today and congregations singing were it not for that fifteenth century printer's error.—London Tatler.

Wrang Hunch, No Lunch. "Here, my boy," said his new employer, "take this quarter and go out and get three ham sandwiches." The boy vanished and did not return for half an hour.

"See here. Where have you been loitering," demanded the boss, "and where are my sandwiches?" "Scissors!" gasped the boy. "I thought they were for me!"—New York World.

Upbringing. "Aren't you having your daughter taught to play or sing?" "No," replied Mrs. Filmgilt. "I have decided that she shall have no accomplishments whatever. Instead of striving for approval I want her to have the superior pose that enables her to observe the efforts of others with tolerant interest."—Washington Star.

Quite Natural. "Of course," said the tourist, "you know all about the antidotes for snake bite?" "Certainly," replied the explorer. "Well, when a snake bites you what's the thing you do?" "Yell!"—Philadelphia Press.

The New Mother. "When you kissed your weeping mother goodby and went out into the world to make your fortune I presume her last fearful injunction was for you to be good?" "No, make good."—London Globe Democrat.

TWISTING THE LANGUAGE.

English Has Received Some Severe Joins in the Philippines.

Baby talk is a highly developed language compared to the jargon American housewives talk to their Filipino boys. But it usually conveys the meaning when accompanied by expressive gestures. At best, however, the performance of the command speaks well for native instruction.

Spanish construction of English words is another twist that our poor language gets in the Philippines. "No got" in the island is the most commonly used expression for "I haven't any." Similarly "no can do" means "I can't," and "no want" means "I don't want it." Not only between Amerlenn and Filipino, but among Americans themselves, this twisted construction has largely supplanted the legitimate one.

With the soldier anything that belonged peculiarly to the Philippines was described as "bamboo." Now all colonials use the term. The "bamboo fleet" is the one assigned to Philippine waters, and the "bamboo government" is the Philippine civil government in distinction from the United States military.

Among other "soldierisms" (if I may be permitted this contribution to the new language) were certain pure Malay words. The list is continually growing, and now there are dozens of Tagalog and Moro expressions in constant use among the Americans. For example, there are the Tagalog words "bagulo," meaning "storm," "carabao," meaning an animal; "palay," meaning "rice," and "tao," meaning "man." Moro terms in common use are "amok," meaning "wild," "dato," meaning "chief," "kris," meaning a wavy edged knife, and "sarong," meaning a garment.—Review of Reviews.

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Cuzco's original plan was, singularly enough, that of the Roman camp, a quadrangle divided by two intersecting streets into quarters, with a gate on each face and towers at the angles.

The Incas, like the citizens of the United States, had no more definite name for their country than Tawantinsuyu, the Empire of the Four Provinces. The four streets of the capital, prolonged by great roads, divided it into four main provinces, each under the dominion of its governor. When their people came to Cuzco they lodged in their own quarter, where they adhered to their national costumes and the customs of their own province.

The city today retains the same general plan, its two principal streets being virtually the old main thoroughfares. Its two eastern quarters lie upon steep hillsides; the two western are in the valley, where runs a little river, the Huatanay, spanned by bridges.

The northeast quarter was the Palatine hill of this South American Rome and contains the palaces of the kings, for each Inca, after the manner of the Roman emperors, built his own abode, scoring to live in that of his predecessor.—Scribner's Magazine.

SHAW, THE ECCENTRIC.

His Personality Compels Him to Wear Cocoa Colored Clothes.

"I love order in all things," said George Bernard Shaw at a public meeting some time ago. "For this reason I am not content with ordering my life; I also order my personality. I have cocoa colored hair, so I wear cocoa colored clothes and drink cocoa." Shaw today has reached the position of becoming a public institution. For more than twenty years he has succeeded in fulfilling his boast that every day some leading paper would have something to say about him.

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"Very well then," said the critic, "I will remove it." And the next moment he was striding up the aisle in his shirt sleeves.

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During the first nine years of this brilliant man was in London his earnings from literature brought him the princely sum of £6. Now he has an income of several thousands a year. Of that period which he spent in want he says with his characteristic candor: "My mother worked for my living instead of preaching that it was my duty to work for her; therefore, take off your hat to her and blush. I did not throw myself into the struggle for life; I threw my mother into it. I was not a staff to my father's old age; I hung on to his coat tails."—London Life.

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HISTORIC NOTRE DAME.

Checked Career of the Wonderful Parisian Cathedral.

Some account of the history and vicissitudes of Notre Dame appears in the London Strand Magazine. The first cathedral was erected in the year 528 by Childbert and afterward demolished, the same site being used for the present building, which was begun in 1163 and finished in 1351.

Alexander III. laid the foundation stone, the first mass being celebrated by the patriarch Heraclius. The grand old building has been sorely beset by many dangers and has witnessed many strange and stirring scenes.

The reign of terror in 1793 led to such disgraceful orgies within the precincts of the cathedral that it was closed to the public as a place of divine worship in 1794, but was reopened in 1802 by Napoleon. The interior has suffered severely at times at the hands of the mob and individuals.

The worst offender was perhaps Louis XIV., who, carrying out his father's vow, caused the destruction of the fourteenth century stalls, the high altar embellished with gold and silver statuettes, the cloisters, tombs and unique stained glasswork. In 1845 restoration was necessary in many parts of the building, the work being successfully undertaken by Lassus, Viollet le Duc and Boeswillwald.

In 1871, also during the commune, Notre Dame was menaced with grave dangers owing to the fury of the communists, who, having effected an entrance, collected all the available chairs and other combustible material and, piling them in a bonfire, drenched with oil in the center of the choir, attempted to destroy the cathedral by fire. The evil designs of the incendiaries were, however, happily frustrated by the arrival of the national guard.

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A CURIOUS LOVE SCENE.

Rochefort Sprang a Surprise on the Troubled Couple.

Rochefort could be very democratic on occasions. I remember an amusing incident which occurred when Rochefort was in London. His French chambermaid fell in love with his English coachman, and they were engaged to be married. John, who never spoke of Rochefort otherwise than as "the marquis," gloomily informed Charlotte that their project must be kept a profound secret, for it was a custom in aristocratic houses in London that when servants in the same household became engaged to be married they were promptly dismissed. Charlotte could hardly believe this, but John assured her that it was so.

At last Charlotte took her courage in two hands and, dragging the trembling John behind her, advanced into the awesome presence of "the marquis" while he was taking coffee after lunch. He was present and witnessed the scene. "Monsieur Rochefort," said the chambermaid boldly, "I have something to tell you."

Rochefort—Tell me, my child. Charlotte—John loves me, and I love John, and we want to be married. (John went as pale as a sheet.) Does monsieur see any objection?

Rochefort—This great blue eyes dancing with fun, his arms raised in the air—Objection, my children, objection? What earthly objection can I have? Venez donc que je vous embrasse! (Come and let me embrace you.)

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