

STUDY MAN-MADE LIGHTNING

Engineers Confident That Experiments Going On Will Prove to Be Successful.

Two-million-volt artificial lightning is being created in the research laboratories of the General Electric company, Pittsfield, Mass. In order that buildings and high power electrical transmission lines may be protected against the powerful "electrical dynamite" that nature discharges during storms, reports the Kansas City Star.

F. W. Peer, Jr., engineer in charge of the spectacular experiments now in progress, explains that in addition to the trouble that engineers have in keeping power current from escaping from the conductors there is the very important problem of lightning protection. A few million horsepower are released in a fraction of a millionth of a second when lightning strikes. Electrical engineers must know how to prevent this destructive force from reaching the conductors of power lines or they must arrange so that it will discharge harmlessly to the ground when it does get to the line.

RETORT WAS RATHER GOOD

Evidently There Were Humorists in the Missouri Legislature of the Year 1887.

W. O. L. Jewett of the Shelbina Democrat tells an incident in the legislature of 1887, in which Mark Twain figured:

"Henry Newman, representing Randolph county, was the wit of the house, and was trying to secure the passage of a bill to amend the stock law. This, Robert Bodine, representing Monroe county, was opposing. Mr. Newman said in his humorous style: "I was in the gentleman's county once. I made a speech at a big picnic in Florida, and I thought I made a good one. In it I referred to the fact that we were close to the place where Mark Twain was born. After I was through, one of the gentleman's constituents, a tall, raw-boned long-haired, unkempt individual, came up and shaking his finger in my face said: "What liars you politicians are. I have lived here nigh onto fifty years and there was nary a man named Twain about here."

"The gentleman from Monroe county immediately was on his feet to reply: "Mr. Speaker, I want it distinctly understood that when the gentleman from Randolph was in Monroe county it was before the enactment of any stock law."—Kansas City Star.

Not Prepared.

The old deacon was the kindest of men, deeply religious and always ready with a good word. One day while he was driving to town he overtook an Italian peddler with a large pack on his back. Stopping his horse, the deacon suggested that the man ride. The Italian carefully stored his pack in the back of the spring wagon and then climbed to the seat beside the good deacon.

For some time the two talked pleasantly. Then there was a rather long pause, and, thinking to improve the occasion in a religious sense, the deacon turned and asked, "My friend, are you prepared to die?"

With a shriek the Italian sprang to the ground and disappeared into the nearby woods. The calls of the deacon only hastened the fellow's flight, and neither the deacon nor any one else ever saw him again in that neighborhood. It seems that the peddler was not prepared.

Sentiment and Sense.

It was evening by the sea, and the poetess walked with the professor along the margin of the ocean. "Don't you love to see the phosphorescence on the waves?" she said. "What can it be, I wonder? Is it the mermaids lighting up their lamps, or the glow from the sea fairies' ballroom? Or can it be the reflection of golden treasure stored in the vasty caverns of the deep?"

"I think not, madam," said the professor. "It is only quite recently that the discovery of luminous bacilli has rendered possible any general explanation of the phenomenon, and even yet its wide applicability remains to be proved. It is, however, generally attributed to the decaying organic substances of diseased fish."—Boston Herald.

She Had It Right.

Two Irishmen had visited St. Paul's cathedral. One was from the country and had been taken to the famous building by his friend, who wished him to be duly impressed by its grandeur.

As they came out, the resident of the city said: "Well, Mike, and phwat' do you think of it? Isn't it grand?" "Pat," said the one from the country, "it bates the devil!" "That," said his friend, "was the intention."

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Italian Farmer Who Found Marble Torso of a Venus First Sold It for \$5.

The history of some pieces of marble which were found buried in a field at Sinnessa, near Naples, in ancient days the site of a Greek colony, has formed the subject of a long-drawn-out law case in which the government has at length secured an important verdict.

The fragments were apparently of no particular value and the farmer sold them for \$5. They were on their way to the new purchaser when the government director of antiquities, Professor Spinazzola, ordered him to return them to Naples for examination. The professor, having looked at them, exercised his powers of compulsory purchase and bought the fragments for \$50.

Under his direction they were cleaned and put together, when they appeared as the torso of a beautiful Venus, undoubtedly by the hand of Praxiteles (the greatest of the Attic sculptors of the Fourth century B. C.) and worth about \$100,000.

BIRD ENTOMBED BY MARTINS

Sparrow That Had Grabbed Martin's Nest Is Made the Victim of Dire Revenge.

An English ornithologist, G. Garrett, makes a specialty of observing the manners and methods followed by birds. He recently recalled the story of a sparrow which, finding a newly built martin's nest, took "possession" in the absence of the owner. The martin, seeing the usurper, called for help, and soon a thousand martins came, at "full speed," to attack the sparrow; but the latter was invulnerable. After a quarter of an hour's conflict all the martins disappeared. The sparrow thought he had got the better, and the spectators judged that the martins had abandoned their undertaking.

The Split Infinitive.

One thinks of that solemn warning against the enormity of the split infinitive which has done so much to aggravate the Pharisalism of the bad writers who scrupulously avoid it. This superstition seems to have had its origin in a false analogy with Latin, in which the infinitive is never split, for the good reason that it is impossible to split. In the greater freedom of English it is possible and has been done for at least the last five hundred years by the greatest masters of English; only the good writer never uses this form helplessly and involuntarily but with a definite object, and that is the only rule to observe. An absolute prohibition in this matter is the mark of those who are too ignorant, or else too unintelligent, to recognize a usage which is the essence of English speech.—Havelock Ellis, in the London Mercury.

Odd Way of Drawing Water.

I took notes while we were at Epa, New Guinea, of a rather curious method of drawing water from the communal spring, half a mile from the village, writes Reginald Pound in the Wide World Magazine. Twice a day the women went down in chattering groups to the spring, carrying bamboo pipes 12 feet long. These pipes were made by forcing out the pith at the joints, and held about five gallons of water apiece. When full, the drinking end was plugged with leaves, the pipe being stood in a shady spot near its owner's house and used when needed. Incidentally, drinking from these weird receptacles was a rather hazardous business, care being necessary lest a too copious supply should gush out when the pipe was held to the mouth.

Blueberries an Inch Thick.

A blueberry an inch in diameter is not a dream but a possibility. At the government testing plantation at Whitesbog, N. J., about 25,000 hybrids have been fruited. Berries three-fourths of an inch in diameter have been produced on many of them, and one of them this year reached almost seven-eighths of an inch. The Department of Agriculture will continue the experiments until berries an inch in diameter are obtained.

Needed Awakening.

A Yankee tourist was being shown over an old church wherein hundreds of people were buried.

"A great many people sleep between these walls," said the guide, indicating the inscription-covered floor with a sweep of his hand.

"So?" said the American. "Same way over in our country. Why don't you get a more interesting preacher?"

She Would Hold the Ladder.

A very loving couple had just returned from their honeymoon. "Hilda, dearest," said George. "I see there is some asparagus ready for cooking. Shall we go and pluck it together, love?"

To which Hilda replied, coolly: "George, dearest, it will be heavenly! Yet shall pluck it, and I will hold the ladder."

INDIAN LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Organization for Promotion of Universal Peace Existed Among Indians Back in Stone Age.

New York state Indians in the Stone age had a constitutional league of nations for the promotion of universal peace which was based on and dominated by woman's suffrage and in which the initiative, referendum and recall were employed, so J. N. B. Hewitt, ethnologist of the Smithsonian institution, who has just returned from an investigation among the Iroquois of New York and Canada, declared here, says the New York Evening Post. Chieftainesses among the confederated Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga and Seneca tribes had equal rights and titles with the male chiefs, who were nominated by women's votes, his most recent researches into the governmental plan of these five nations reveal.

The scope of the league formed among these Indians in the Sixteenth century, Mr. Hewitt said, was not limited to the five Iroquois tribes, but they proposed to bring under their form of government all known tribes of men. The league was based on peace, righteousness, justice, power and health. Laws were provided to stop family feuds and regulations for the promotion of mental hygiene were laid down.

Hiawatha was one of the league chiefs selected by the women and subjected to recall by them, he said. Mr. Hewitt found that the automobile, the phonograph and other modern products are rapidly causing the Indians to forget many of their former laws and customs.

LIFE ON THE OTHER WORLDS

Astronomers Less Optimistic Regarding Existence of Life Than the Enthusiast.

Discussing planetary life, so far as it bears on the planetary system of the sun, we may state the average astronomical opinion; it is far less optimistic for the diffusion of life than is the opinion of the enthusiast.

(1) Venus, so far as we can see, more nearly fulfills the conditions than any planet other than the earth. Its mass and orbit are certainly favorable, its distance, rotation, and chemical constitution, are probably not unfavorable, though we cannot penetrate its dense covering of clouds and seek out the mysteries of its surface.

(2) Low forms of life may exist on the planet Mars, where the thin atmosphere does permit our telescope explorations. High forms of life at the present time are, however, generally deemed improbable, and beings comparable with man and other terrestrial mammals are considered utterly impossible.

(3) The other planets of the solar system are now quite unsuited to protoplasmic life.—Harlow Shapley, director of Harvard College Observatory, in Harper's.

Couldn't Wait Longer.

An old lady was on a visit to her married daughter. One day there was company, and little Theodore, the hope of the house, was doing his best to amuse his mother's visitors. Presently he left the room, to return soon afterward with a zinc bucket. This he planted right in front of his grandma, while the others sat wondering what was about to happen. "Grandma," said little Theodore, "will oo kick it?" "Bless the child," said the surprised old lady, "why do you wish me to do that, darling?" "Because," replied the young hopeful, "I heard pa say we should be awfully rich when oo kicked the bucket!"

His Boss-y.

All good farmers like their cows, but Lewis Owen either carried matters to extremes or else he must have had an especially likeable cow. This is the way they tell the story down in Crawford county, Indiana, where Mr. Owen, a Kentuckian, recently bought a farm. One of his neighbors was James H. Clay, also a Kentuckian, and from him Owen bought a cow, but the cow didn't want to leave her family pasture. She liked the Clay farm, she was contented there. So they traded farms and Owen moved over with the cow. Everyone is said to be satisfied, especially Boss-y.

Yes, Why?

"Do you think I shall live until I'm 90, doctor?" "How old are you now?" "Forty." "Do you drink, gamble, smoke, or have you any vices of any kind?" "No, I don't drink, I never gamble, I loathe smoking; in fact, I haven't any vices." "Well, good heavens, why do you want to live another 50 years?"

The Test.

Villager (standing at his gate holding a dog on a leash, to passing neighbor)—"Won't you step in and chat a moment, Monsieur Paul?" Neighbor—"You're sure your dog won't bite me?" Villager—"That's just what I want to find out. I only got him this morning.—Petit Parisien, Paris.

Impending Catastrophe.

It was in the midst of a nose dive and Reginald, who was making his first flight, tugged frantically at the pilot's sleeve. "We better get away from here," he shrieked; "the earth's swelling up like a balloon and it's liable to bust any minute."

REWRITING THE HOLY WORD

Dutch Historian Explains Why He Has Undertaken the Task—Makes Appeal to the Masses.

Fancy the nerve a man must have to suggest that our grand old Bible should be rewritten.

And yet Dr. Hedrick Willem van Loon, famous Dutch United States historian, has undertaken this task, very seriously and reverently indeed.

He explains: "I firmly believe that 90 per cent of the world's Christian population never look at the Bible. After all, it contains nearly two million words, and much of it is written in a language which only the educated man can understand.

"My book, which I have called 'The Story of the Bible,' only contains 120,000 words, and the whole of it is written in the simplest language.

"In the States, and probably the whole world over, there are a large number of the working classes who want to learn. But until they find something that they can easily understand they are at a loss where to start.

"It is true that my way of retelling the old story may rob it of some of its charm, but I have tried to be reverent throughout, while all the time speaking in a language that is easily understandable.

"This work has taken me nearly two years and I have spent much labor and thought on it. I feel confident that the result will not only appeal to the masses, but it may induce them to study the Bible for themselves."—Exchange.

HABITS OF FALL WEBWORM

Explained by Official of United States Bureau of Entomology—Question of "Intelligence."

The familiar ugly brown patches which appear on trees in the city, orchard and forest in the fall are the work of the fall webworm, whose habits and life history have been thoroughly studied by R. E. Snodgrass of the United States bureau of entomology. These little worms, which are the progeny of a small, night-flying white moth, construct bags of glistening silk among the foliage in the spring and begin to eat the leaves inclosed in their houses. As the leaves are consumed, the houses must be expanded to cover more food, until at length brown patches of several feet in extent appear in the trees. The author gives many interesting details of the life cycle of this little creature from the time the moth lays its eggs on a leaf, through its various stages of development as a worm, until it spins a cocoon and goes into confinement only to change to a pupa, then a chrysalis and finally emerges a full-fledged moth.

In concluding, the author speculates as to whether or not such insects have any so-called intelligence. "Can the caterpillars have appetites, a sense of touch, fear of danger, and show resentment at an interference with their natural rights without some consciousness at least of their own existence?"

What Insulin Is.

Much has been said in the newspapers lately about "insulin," the new remedy for diabetes discovered by Dr. F. G. Banting, of Toronto University, but few people know exactly what it is. Insulin is an extract of fresh, healthy beef pancreas, a solution of the internal secretion of the pancreas of the ox. The extract is made by soaking the fresh organ in a mixture of alcohol and diluted hydrochloric acid. One reason for choosing this solvent is that while it dissolves the internal secretion, the external secretion (whose chief constituent is trypsin and which is of no value in the present connection) is left undissolved. The solution so made is sterilized. Insulin has caused sugar varying in quantities from 2 to 7 grams to be utilized in various patients per diem. The effect, apparently, is evanescent and lasts only eight or nine hours, so that injections are necessary every day.

Crossed Shoes Cure Cramps.

My mother suffered at night with cramps in her feet and ankles. One day a sewing-woman told her that if she would cross her shoes when she took them off she would have no more trouble. My mother tried it, and we all laughed and teased her whenever she assured us that the cramps had departed. Some time afterward, in the upper berth of a sleeping car, I was seized with a violent cramp in my right foot. I was undressed and could not get down to go to the dressing room, because it was early and people were walking about the aisle. Meantime the pain became unbearable. Suddenly I thought of crossing my shoes which lay near. I crossed them and the cramp magically disappeared.—Chicago Journal.

And After That.

"Where have you been, old-imer?" inquired Outhbert, upon meeting up with his friend Hoffy. "Been to Iceberg beach?" "Down where the sea has a permanent wave, eh?" "Exactly."

"I suppose you were engaged to a summer girl?" "I was."

"There is a theory that summer girls are very fickle."

"Oh, I don't know," responded Hoffy. "Mine stuck to me as long as I had money for rolling chairs and ice cream soda."

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