

WOT SIGNALS FROM MARS.

Light Observed in December, 1906. Attributed to Illuminated Clouds.

While far removed from the popular notion of signal lights from Mars...

By analogous reasoning he showed that the "projections" were altogether dissimilar to projections which may be observed on the moon...

In the discussion on the subject, says the Philadelphia Ledger, Prof. Sawyer, of the Philadelphia observatory...

A STAGE TRAGEDY RECALLED.

Reasons That Impelled the Sad Suicide of Walter Montgomery Many Years Ago.

Clement Scott, the dramatic critic, is in a reminiscent mood in the Free Lance...

In September, 1871, London was startled to hear that Walter Montgomery had committed suicide two days after his marriage at St. George's, Hanover square, on August 20, 1871.

The actor, piqued, disappointed and apparently heart-broken, sailed from Australia to England.

A few hours after the marriage Walter Montgomery received a letter from the father of the Australian girl, saying that he had relented...

BORROWED CHURCH CHOIRS.

Requests for Loans of Boy Singers Frequent in the Holiday Season.

"I suppose you don't know," said a choir master, according to the New York Sun, "how glad I am, in one way, that Christmas is past."

"Of course, it would be very nice if we could respond. But the music in our churches for Christmas is usually quite elaborate and the work is harder than usual."

"In my choir, for example, we begin the rehearsal of this music two or three weeks in advance of the Christmas service, and then there are extra services. My own vested choir is worked to its utmost, and some of my boys are tired out long before the season is half over."

"And yet people come from various quarters asking me to lend them a few boys to sing for special occasions. I know they don't stop to think or they wouldn't do it."

Free Spectacles.

London has what is known as a spectacle mission for those who cannot afford to buy spectacles for themselves. On certain days each month the applicants repair to the headquarters of the mission for their spectacles.

Annual Catch of Salmon. The annual "take" of salmon in the Columbia river is about 1,000,000 fish; 600,000,000 young ones from the hatcheries were recently put in.

Portable Bakeries of France. The French army portable bakeries, which make bread from the grain, will be put on automobiles.

COLUMBIA'S GIFT.

University to Be Enriched by Valuable Collection by Chinese Government.

Dr. Nicholas M. Butler, acting president of Columbia university, has received from United States Minister Conger, in Peking, a letter saying that the Chinese government is preparing to present to Columbia university for its chair of Chinese literature, maps, official papers, illustrations, books on Chinese literature, and other material.

Dr. Butler, when seen regarding what is being done for this educational work, said: "Last June this chair for the study of the Chinese language, literature, history and nation in general was founded by a subscription of \$100,000, which has been subsequently increased by \$12,000, and I feel sure that it will be still further increased this year."

"In just what manner the chair will be conducted has not been determined. The committee is at work studying the manner in which the Chinese and oriental chairs are conducted in the universities of England, Germany and France. A report will be made soon. A report of the United States is peculiar to China since the acquisition of the Philippines, and this political fact must be considered in addition to that of the purely educational one. Despite the fact that French and German students have been studying China for more than 20 years, it still remains an unknown nation and country."

"We are only just beginning to learn something about her and her mysterious past, which gives evidence that a civilization existed there long before that of Egypt."

MRS. JACK GARDNER DEFIANT.

She Will Not Allow Boston City Employees to Inspect Her Venetian Palace.

Rather than permit inspectors from Wire Commissioner Lott's department to inspect her Venetian palace, Mrs. Jack Gardner threatens to light her great ballroom and the interior of the building with candles, and to run the risk of fire, as the underwriters have notified all the insurance companies not to accept a risk upon the place under the present conditions.

When the place was being constructed Mrs. Gardner had the wiring done by an expert man, and supposed she would have no difficulty in having a connection made with the cables of the power-furnishing company.

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An inspection was unnecessary, but the inspector was obdurate. Then Mrs. Gardner grew indignant, and said she would light the place by candles rather than allow a city employe to enter the place. The fire underwriters have sent out notice that insurance companies must not insure the palace, and the city has notified the electric light companies not to make connections with it until the owner has complied with the usual requirements.

PLATINUM IN THE YUKON.

Consul at Vancouver Suggests That Miners Are Through Ignorance Losing Valuable Mineral.

Consul Dudley, at Vancouver, sends to the state department a report in which he says: "The superintendent of the assay office here has reported to the press that among the specimens of gold brought to him to be refined he has found considerable quantities of platinum, and he is under the impression that the miners do not know platinum when they see it. In all the placer mining districts of British Columbia and the Yukon territory large amounts of platinum and kindred metals have been thrown away by miners who did not know the value of the product. With the present price of platinum it will pay prospectors to be on the lookout for this metal, which doubtless exists in considerable quantities in this province. Platinum is not found in ledges, so far as is known, excepting in one place in the world. It is found in black sand containing a large percentage of magnetic iron ore and a varying quantity of gold."

Has Passed Experimental Stage.

The wireless telegraphic system of Mr. Marconi has passed out of the experimental stage, and is already being adapted to commercial needs, cables the London correspondent of the New York Herald. Arrangements have been entered into between the Marconi company and the London & Brighton railway and the corresponding French Railway company to have an installation of a permanent character between New Haven and Dieppe. The departure of boats will be signaled, with instructions as to the amount of luggage, number of passengers and other useful information, and it will no longer be necessary for the friends of the passengers to wait hours at either end when fog has delayed the boats starting.

A Yankee in Egypt.

An American engineer has introduced at Alexandria, Egypt, an arrangement of hoisters by means of which 2,120 tons of coal can be unloaded in ten hours, and vessels will save five days out of seven.

FOREIGN GOSSIP.

Successful experiments in raising tea have in recent years been made on the Caucasian coast of the Black sea.

The carbonic acid in the cars of the Metropolitan railway of Paris never exceeds one per cent. in the tunnel. The frequent trains going in opposite directions act as powerful ventilators.

The French census returns for Algeria reveal the fact that in less than 50 years the native population of the colony, Arab and Kabyle, has almost doubled itself, having risen from 2,307,000 in 1856 to 4,071,000 at the present time.

Three friends of a Russian living at Marienburg gave him 100 marks to shave off his beard. But his wife interfered with a police notice to the effect that she claimed part proprietorship. The three friends are now suing the husband for nonperformance of his contract.

Serbia has been extensively advertised as "a poor man's paradise," as the soil, climate and other conditions are favorable for people of small means. Farms can be bought for small sums of money, and the ranges for cattle and sheep are usually public lands, which cost nothing except a small tax, which is paid into the treasury of the township or commune.

During the last 40 years the yearly expenditure of Russia has increased enormously. Thirty years ago its budget was less than 500,000,000 rubles (\$250,000,000); 20 years ago it was 900,000,000 (\$450,000,000); ten years back it amounted to 1,000,000,000 (\$500,000,000), and at present it has reached nearly 2,000,000,000 (\$1,000,000,000). The peasantry, and the industrial classes, who form nearly 90 per cent. of the whole population, have to bear this burden.

UNDERSTUDIES OF KINGS.

Every European Monarch Has One, But the Job is Growing Unpopular.

Practically every European potentate hires an understudy, whose duty it is to impersonate his royal master what time the latter desires to be left free from public observation and intrusion.

At one period posts of this kind were eagerly sought after; but that was before the evolution of the anarchist and the nihilist, says Stray Stories.

Candidates nowadays are apt to recall with a shudder the fate of Sergius Komaroff, the late czar's double, assassinated in mistake for his sovereign and employer at Moscow a few years back; and of Abdul Hamid's unhappy understudy (so like his royal master that even the palace officials, so it was said, could scarcely tell 't'other from which), who was "removed" by the emissaries of one of the Armenian revolutionary committees only last summer.

Not that the "billet" was ever a particularly "soft" one. Count Capo d'Istria, president of Greece, originated the idea, and he had the mortification of losing two of his best doubles in less than 18 months.

After that no one would take over the job on any terms whatever; so the president has perforce to content himself with publicly promising that whoever assassinated him should, if captured, be punished by being immured within brick walls built round them up to their chins, and that they should be kept supplied with food in this species of torment until they died.

The threat, however, fell flat. The count was murdered shortly after ward. And the terrible promise made by the deceased president was carried out to the letter by his government.

In Spain, where court etiquette is exacting and inexorable beyond all conception, it would be well-nigh impossible even for a sovereign who was a man or woman grown to do without an understudy. To a child, such an ordeal would be quite out of the question.

Consequently, the little Leon Alphonso, who, as all the world knows, came into the world a king, has had a succession of understudies from his cradle upwards. They have, for the most part, however, had a fairly safe, if not particularly easy time of it, their duties being principally limited to deputizing for the boy monarch in as many as possible of the endless and tiresome court ceremonials.

The last understudy of Queen Victoria is now living quietly in retirement in a little Gloucestershire village.

Do We Wash Too Much?

For many years medical men and others have recognized the dangers accruing from a restricted use of soap and water. There is a generally accepted belief that people cannot wash too often. Physicians are now prepared to say that this is a mistaken idea. It has been pointed out that the skin is not well adapted to frequent applications of water, accompanied by even the least irritating of soaps. A tendency arises to maceration of the superficial part of the epidermis, which is too frequently removed. There is no doubt, according to the Lancet, that many cases of roughness of the skin of the face comes from too much washing. It is a good thing to rub the face with a soft, clean towel two or three times a day. If, in addition, water is used in the morning and at night, the skin will be kept in a sounder, smoother and healthier state than if, as is often the case, soaps and water are used three or four times a day.—Chicago American.

When He Gets Into Trouble.

About the first thing a man notices when he has fallen into trouble, is that all of his friends seem to be looking the other way.—Aitchison Globe.

TO INCREASE THE ARMY.

Retired United States Officer Suggests a Plan for Utilizing the National Guard.

"Thinking men realize that the United States must have a decent-sized army," said a retired officer, according to the New York Sun, "but many people are opposed to its material increase, even though our possessions are growing very fast, and the needs for a large military force seem imperative. I have what I think is a plan that will solve the problem to the satisfaction of everybody. While our people as a whole may be opposed to a large military establishment in time of peace, yet it is plain that our militia as now organized is hardly sufficient to meet the needs of the country in an emergency like that which confronted us when we declared war against Spain. Had Spain been a first-class power we would have felt our need very sorely at that time."

"What I would advise," he continued, "is the appropriation by the national government of a sum each year sufficient to make the militia strong in number and efficient in drill and discipline. This could best be done by providing for a 30 or even a 50 days' encampment for the militia in each state each year, the national government paying the officers and men taking part salaries equal to those paid in the regular army for the same period, each encampment to be under the command of some competent officer of the regular army."

"In 30 days a man can learn something about soldiering, especially as to how to take care of himself in camp and on the march. We would thus in a few years have a great army of, say, 250,000 men, ready to mobilize on a few days' notice, and almost as effective as regulars."

"The encampments should be held during the school holidays, and this would attract to the militia the students from the high schools, academies, colleges and universities, always desirable for soldiers. By adopting this plan the standing army could be kept at a minimum and the government would still have at its call a large and well-disciplined force of citizen soldiers."

ABOUT ARTIFICIAL ICE.

The Principle Upon Which This Great Commodity is Manufactured.

The principle upon which the manufacture of ice is based is that a gas, when compressed, gathers heat enormously, and if robbed of this heat and allowed to escape at a future time, it seeks to regain its heat by withdrawing heat from its surroundings. Ammonia gas is generally preferred to others, because it can be liquefied with comparatively little pressure. On removing the water from common ammonia by distillation, anhydrous ammonia is obtained. This is compressed by a combined steam pump and a compressor, and the resulting liquefaction induces heat, which is economized by circulating water about the vessel or pipe containing the liquefied ammonia. Thus the ammonia is cooled and the heat largely transferred to the water, which is then pumped back to the boiler that supplies the steam pump. The liquid ammonia is then carried in a pipe to expansion coils that afford plenty of room for its evaporation, when it begins to return to the gaseous form and to draw heat from its surroundings—which gradually reduces the temperature. Proper vessels of water are placed in contact with the expansion coils and in due time ice is formed.

Germany's War Treasure.

The town of Spandan, a peaceful little country place near Berlin, with houses dirty with age and old-fashioned cobble-stone streets, is where Germany's war treasure is kept, and where are stationed no inconsiderable number of troops. In the center of the outlying part of the town rises the celebrated Julius tower that in former years has withstood many an attack from without; its walls are six feet thick; the entrance is guarded by three ponderous iron doors, and provided with no less than six locks. This stronghold contains treasure amounting to no less than \$30,000,000 in good coin of the German empire, laid out in numerous chests, each containing 100,000 mark pieces wrapped in thick linen bags. An officer goes the round inside every day and from time to time every chest and every bag is minutely examined and weighed.

Has King for a Godfather.

For the second time since his accession the king has stood sponsor in person for a nonroyal infant. The lucky baby so honored was the son of Sir Archibald and Lady Edmonston. As prince of Wales the king was always willing to stand as godfather for the children of old friends. Among the peers who have the right to call their sovereign godfather are Lord Castlemaine and the dukes of Marlborough and St. Albans. Elder sons of peers similarly privileged are more numerous. They include Lord Fincastle, Lord Dalmeny, the little marquis of Blandford and Lord Wandover. Another godson is Sir Albert Naylor Leyland. All are frequently reminded of the fact that his majesty is a judicious and generous giver.

Longest Drift of a Bottle.

The longest measured drift of a bottle was in the Pacific, from four degrees south of the equator to the Fiji islands, a distance of 6,700 miles, in 455 days.

Telephones in Western Europe.

Western Europe will soon have as complete a long-distance telephone service as the United States now has.

THINGS ONE CANNOT DO.

Some Limitations Which Nature Has Imposed Upon the Most of Mankind.

A man cannot rise from a chair without bending forward, or putting his feet under the chair or outside of it, says the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Many a man will back himself to give another a start of 50 yards in a race of 100, provided the man having the start hops all the way. But no runner, however swift, can give that amount of start to an ordinary man. For the first five yards they go at practically the same pace. Therefore the runner, to go 95 yards while the "hopper" goes 45, would have to run more than twice as fast, and it would be a weak man who could not hop 45 yards at a pace equal to 20 seconds for 100 yards; and that would mean that the runner, in order to win, would have to beat all previous records.

If a man boasts that his penknife is particularly sharp, ask him to cut with one stroke of the blade one of those yellow ribbons, mostly of silk, which are round bundles of cigars. In 999 cases out of 1,000 the knife is not sharp enough to do this. It will cut through all the ribbon but the last strand, and that will pull out long, and the more he tries to cut it the longer it will pull out.

No one except a blind man can stand without support of any kind for five minutes at a stretch, if he is thoroughly blindfolded, without moving his feet. If he does not move his feet he is pretty sure to topple over in about a minute.

JOHN ADAMS' MIRROR.

The Historic Relic Rescued from the Capitol Storeroom by Senator McMillan's Secretary.

When John Adams was vice president of the United States (more than 100 years ago) he paid \$40 for a little gilt-framed mirror and there has been trouble about it ever since, says the New York Sun. Several senators in the course of the debate over the payment for its purchase took occasion to censure Mr. Adams for having set an example of unwarranted extravagance. The mirror was purchased in New York, brought to Washington and put in place in the room occupied by the vice president, and for a great many years was pointed out to rural visitors, who were entertained with more or less accurate tales of its history. As years went on and the vice president's room grew in elegance, the little historic mirror seemed to grow smaller and less ornate. Three years ago it was sent to the store room, whence it was resurrected and placed on the wall of the District of Columbia committee room by the clerk, Charles Moore, who appreciated the beauty of its simple design and its value as a relic.

Shortly afterward Senator Hoar and some of his colleagues heard the story of the exiled mirror and grew very indignant. So, with the consent of Senator Frye, the president of the senate, it was brought back and placed of honor given it on the wall of the vice president's chamber, which it is hoped will be its final resting place.

NEGROES MOST TROUBLE.

Proportion of Colored People Arrested in Chicago Largest and of Whites Smallest.

It may not be true that the average Chicagoan is a Chinaman, but it appears pretty well proven by the statistics of the police department that the Chinaman is an average Chicagoan, states the Tribune. The quiet Celestial, who shuffles around in soft shoes and overalls, makes less noise than the colored population and more than the whites. In fact, the evil in nature and the proclivity to do things that will lead to arrest appear to grade pretty nearly by color, so that the white man has the least of it, the Chinaman a little more and the dusky people the most.

Chicago has 2,000 Chinamen, the majority of whom live within the boundaries of the old First ward and are under the care of the police of the Harrison Street station. Police statistics for last year show that of these 2,000 only 128 were arrested last year according to the police figures. This is a ratio of a little more than one to 20. Of the 2,000,000 white population nearly 70,000 were arrested, or about one of every 30. Of the 35,000 colored folks living in the city 7,000 were arrested, or one in every five.

"The Chinese don't trouble us much," said the desk sergeant of the Harrison Street Police station, speaking of this fact. "They are quiet, peaceable and get along pretty well without bothering anybody."

It Keeps Good Time.

An interesting exhibit in the Smithsonian Institute, at Washington, is an old German clock that was ticking about 15 years before the birth of the great American republic. It keeps good time and is 140 years old. It is made of hardwood and the work was all done by hand. Every piece of the mechanism is highly polished, and it is put together with hand-wrought rivets of brass. The parts show very little wear, and the time-piece is so carefully constructed that it does not vary a second in time during 24 hours.

A New Russian City.

The Russian authorities are as alert for trade as Americans. At and near Dalny, the commercial seaport of the Siberian railroad, they have 24,000 men at work to make a 30-foot harbor. They are rushing up docks, dry docks, shops and buildings, and also are building a great modern city. The Russian minister in charge of this enterprise recently arrived there, having taken 21 days by rail from St. Petersburg.

TROOPS TO WAR ON RATS.

General Chaffee Takes Steps to Prevent Spreading of the Plague in the Philippines.

The rat problem in the Philippines has now become so important that for a time the American soldier will turn his attention to fighting them instead of insurgents. In Manila 14 per cent. of the rats captured were found infected by plague, and it is to remove this menace to health and safety of the American troops that orders have been issued by Gen. Chaffee to exterminate the rats, says a Washington report.

So far the plague has been kept down by rigid sanitary rules, and a constant warfare against the rats, but Gen. Chaffee, to guard against an epidemic of the disease, has issued an order, in which he calls the attention of commanding officers and all others responsible for the care of troops to the absolute necessity for the extermination of rats in barracks, quarters and other buildings occupied by officers and enlisted men and civilian employes, and for the immediate disinfection of such buildings, if plague rats are discovered therein.

He advises that they be killed by the use of poison, the principal component of which is arsenic, and gives minute directions for carrying on a campaign, and for the disinfection of dead rats by immersion in a solution of carbolic acid.

ENGLISH RAILWAY SERVICE.

Noted Traveler Calls It Poor as Compared with American, German and French.

In every respect the United States is superior to England—comparing like with like—but what is more notable, in Germany and France railway travel is cleaner, more speedy, and cheaper. No week passes that I do not run out from London for country air, and wherever I find a train that reaches its destination on time I make a note of it as a strange thing, writes Poutney Bigelow, in New York Independent. There are one or two trains that run fairly fast, according to British notions, and are tolerably good, owing to a faint degree of competition, but in the majority of cases the Englishman is satisfied to travel 25 miles an hour in dirty carriages which are not heated in winter and which are habitually late in starting and arriving. And as to overcrowding, I have frequently found myself in railway carriages wherein passengers have had to stand up all the way after having paid their fares. So far as my experience goes, I can travel with more speed and comfort in a German third-class carriage from Berlin to any big town like Hamburg, Frankfurt or Cologne than in a first-class carriage in England, and it will cost me about one-fifth of the English price.

ONE OYSTER FEEDS 75 MEN.

Monster Bivalve Lately Taken from the Niagara River Near Buffalo, N. Y.

A most remarkable oyster has recently been taken from Niagara river by two Buffalo fishermen.

The shell alone, without the meat, weighs 312 pounds, and is two feet eight inches across and 19 inches broad. It contained 59 genuine pearls, says a report from that city.

That it might be proved that his wonderful tale was no "fish story" the oyster was placed on exhibition for a week at a Buffalo saloon, where the public was bidden to ome and see it.

The meat was cooked and made into a stew, which filled to the brim two eight-quart pails. Seventy-five men partook of the repast it furnished.

The fishermen made the find when their net caught on a snag of some sort and was held fast. As the water was shallow, not more than waist deep, one of them jumped from the boat to investigate and found the net attached to what seemed a big rock.

It was covered with a white substance resembling lime, and its peculiar appearance induced the fishermen to take it ashore with them. There, when it was washed off, they discovered, to their amazement, that they had a mammoth oyster.

One Mystery Solved.

"I have in my hallway," said a householder, "one of those Japanese curtains made of long strings of bamboo and colored beads that are so pleasant in the summer time and so artistic always. Recently I found that the beads on this curtain were disappearing at a great rate. I would examine them in the evening, and in the morning I would find that a dozen or two were gone. One night I saw a mouse leap up at the curtain, bite a bead off and run away with it. 'What, I asked myself, 'does a mouse want with a glass bead?' and I made a close investigation that proved that, while some of the globules were glass, many were rice grains, which are, I suppose, cheaper than glass in the orient. In nearly all Japanese curtains you'll find, if you examine them, that the pale beads are rice."

A Hog.

Down in Vladosta, Ga., recently, a hog was killed whose gross weight was 1,260 pounds; his net weight was 955. Each ham weighed 102 pounds. This fat monster produced 510 pounds of lard, or nearly 1 1/2 tierces—enough to last a small family about four years. Besides the lard, there was nearly a wagonload of sausage from this one pig, to say nothing of big dishpans full of hoghead cheese, liver pudding and other products.