

# Saint John's Beacon.

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## ST. MARY'S BEACON

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## THE MOON A DEAD STAR.

The *Maine Journal of Education* has translated an article from the *Cosmos*, in which Stanislaus Meunier gives some curious speculations with regard to the present physical condition of the moon.

His theory is, and he has the support of eminent astronomers like Beer, Moeller and Arago, that the moon is a dead star. He draws this inference from a singular appearance upon the surface, which is called "graves" by the physicists. These grooves have parallel sides nearly a mile in width, and from ten to one hundred and twenty-five miles in length. There are already ninety of them, and it is supposed that more are in the process of formation. Reasoning from analogy, we must believe that, at some period in the distant past, the moon had an atmosphere and water, and also that on account of her inferior size, she had cooled much more quickly than the earth. The water penetrating the crust has been absorbed as the decrease of internal heat increased the thickness of the crust, until long before the cooling process had reached the centre, the water had disappeared. The rocks then solidifying, as the heat supply diminished, contracted in a manner resembling the appearance of basalt and produced the grooves into which the atmosphere settled. Hence comes the "chaotic appearance of the moon, with its immense mountains, volcanoes and craters. Some astronomers have detected an appearance of action in some of the volcanoes; but the general appearance is that every vestige of physical life has long since departed from the surface of our satellite.

These theories are all very well when applied to our distant neighbor, the moon; but we cannot shut our eyes to the startling fact that the earth is undergoing a similar process of transformation. Geologists trace a close resemblance between the circles in the moon and the circles of granite and porphyry upon the earth. They have also traced evidences of a fine stratification among the lunar mountains, while the volcanic formations bear a discernible analogy to those of Teneriffe and Pama.

According to the new theory, the following is the process slowly taking place on the earth's surface: As she, like her subordinate, is gradually cooling, it is estimated that one-fifth of the original ocean has been already absorbed, and that when the crust of the earth has become one hundred miles in thickness every drop of water will disappear. It is also estimated that the earth will easily absorb fifty oceans like those which now cover a large portion of the surface.

All the water at present on the earth constitutes one twenty-four thousandth part of its weight, and once absorbed would become insensible to chemical analysis. The water being absorbed, the earth will crack open like the moon, and form similar grooves into which the atmosphere will settle. Long before this era all life will have ceased.

Whether there is any truth in the theory or not, we have no immediate cause of alarm; for the process will not advance enough to give the slightest record in the short span of a single lifetime. According to the experience of Bisehof, it will take nine millions of years for the earth to cool down fifteen degrees. This loss is almost imperceptible, as the internal heat adds only a thirtieth of a degree to the temperature of the surface.

If this process is true of the earth and the moon, the same cause must produce the same effects in the other planets and satellites of the system. Even the great sun himself must be subjected to the laws which rule his subordinates. Therefore, the time must come in the distant ages of the hereafter, when sun, planets and moon, losing every vestige of heat, will have absorbed every drop of water in their thickened crusts and will have imprisoned every particle of atmosphere in their huge fissures.

The solar system, now so grandly beautiful, will then be but an assemblage of dead worlds, without a ray of light, without a wave of heat, without a drop of water, without a breath of air floating round in the immensity of space, bound together by the law of gravitation in the embrace of death.

It is not a pleasing spectacle, if it is a philosophical one!—*Providence Journal.*

## THE DEAF AUNT AND WIFE.

I had an aunt coming on to visit me for the first time since my marriage, and I don't know what evil genius prompted the wickedness which I perpetrated towards my wife and ancient relation.

"My dear," said I to my wife on the day before my aunt's arrival, "you know my wife is coming to-morrow; well, I forgot to mention a rather annoying circumstance with regard to her. She is very deaf; and although she can hear my voice, to which she is accustomed, in its ordinary tones, yet you will be obliged to speak extremely loud in order to be heard. It will be rather inconvenient, but I know you will do everything in your power to make her stay agreeable."

Mrs. ——— announced her determination to make herself heard in her power.

I then went to John ———, who loves a joke about as well as any person I know of, and told him to be at the house at 6 p. m., the following evening, and I felt comparatively happy.

I went to the railroad depot with a carriage next night and when I was on my way home with my aunt, I said:

"My dear aunt, there is one rather annoying infirmity that Annie, (my wife) has, which I forgot to mention before. She is very deaf, and although she can hear my voice, to which she is accustomed, in its ordinary tones, yet you will be obliged to speak extremely loud in order to be heard. I am very sorry for it."

Aunt Mary in the goodness of her heart protested that she rather liked speaking loud, and to do so would afford her great pleasure.

The carriage drove up—the steps were my wife—in the window was John ———, with a face as utterly solemn as if he had buried his relative that afternoon.

"I am delighted to see you," shrieked my wife—and the policeman on the opposite sidewalk started, and my aunt nearly fell down the steps.

"Kiss me my dear," bawled my aunt, and the windows shook as with the fever and ague. I looked at the window—John had disappeared. Human nature could endure it no longer. I poked my head into the carriage and went into strong convulsions.

When I entered the parlor, my wife was helping Aunt Mary to take off her hat and cape; and there sat John with his face buried in his handkerchief.

Suddenly—"Did you have a pleasant journey?" went of my wife like a pistol and John nearly jumped to his feet.

"Rather dusty," was the response in a war whoop, and the conversation continued.

The neighbors for blocks around must have heard it, when I was in the third story of the building heard every word. In the course of the evening my aunt took occasion to say to me:

"How loud your wife talks?"

I told her deaf persons talked loudly and that my wife being used to it, was not affected by the exertion, and that she was getting along very nicely with her.

"Presently my wife said softly:

"Ally, how very loud your aunt talks?"

"Yes," said I, "all deaf persons do."

You are getting along with her finely; she hears every word you say." And I rather think she did.

Elated at their success at being understood, they went at it with hammer and tongs, till everything upon the mantle-piece clattered again and I was seriously afraid of crowd collecting in front of the house.

But the end was near. My aunt being of an investigating turn of mind, was desirous of finding out whether the exertion of talking was injurious to my wife.

"Doesn't talking so loud strain your lungs?" said she in an unearthly whoop for her voice was not so unaccustomed as when she was young.

"It is an exertion," shrieked my wife.

"Then why do you do it?" was the answering scream.

"Because—because—you can't hear if I don't," squealed my wife.

"What?" said my aunt, fairly rivaling a railroad whistle at the time.

I began to think it time to evacuate the premises; and looking around and seeing John gone, I stepped into the back parlor, and there he lay flat on his back, with his feet at right angles with his body, rolling from side to side, with his fist poked into his ribs, and a most agonized expression of countenance; but not uttering a sound, I immediately and involuntarily assumed a similar attitude, and I think from the relative position of feet and hands, and our attempts to restrain our laughter, apoplexy must inevitably have ensued, if a horrible groan which John gave vent to in his endeavor to suppress his risibility had not betrayed our hiding place.

I rushed my wife and aunt, who by this time comprehended the joke, and such a scolding as I then got I never got before and I hope never to get again.

The *Cologne Gazette* says that at Vienna M. Thiers happened to stay at the same hotel with M. Ranke. These two historians dined together, and M. Thiers put the question, "Against whom does Germany in fact fight at this moment?"

"Against Louis XIV," answered M. Ranke. M. Thiers did not reply.

As a man was taking his seat in a crowded omnibus, a stout gentleman looked up and politely said:

"All full inside?"

"I don't know how it may be with the other passengers," answered the wag, drily; "but that last piece of system, did I bring any more?"

## POPPING THE QUESTION.

"Why don't you get married?" said a brawling girl with a laughing eye, to a smooth-faced, innocent looking youth, who had a very goodly figure.

"Well, I—said the youth, stopping short with a gasp, and fixing his eyes upon vacancy, with a pained and foolish expression.

"Well, go on," said the fair cross-examiner, inclining almost imperceptibly nearer to the young man. "Now tell me right out—you what?"

"Why I—phase, I don't know."

"Yes, you do know—I say you do, now tell me."

"Oh, I can't tell you."

"I say you can. Why, you know I'll never mention it; and you may tell me, of course, you know, for haven't I always been your friend?"

"Yes, I know you have," said the poor, helpless youth.

"And I'm sure I always thought you liked me," went on the maiden, in tender, mellow accents.

"O, I do, upon my word, yes, I do, Maria," said the unsophisticated youth, very warily; and he found that Maria had unconsciously placed her hand in his open palm.

Then there was silence.

"And then—well?" whispered Maria, dropping her eyes on the ground.

"Eh? O, well," said John, dropping his eyes and Maria's hand at the same time.

"I'm pretty sure you love somebody. In fact," said she, assuming a tone of railery, "I know you are in love; and John, why don't you tell me all about it at once?"

"Well, I—O, you silly mortal, what is there to be afraid of?"

"O, it ain't because I am afraid of anything at all; and I'll—well, now, I'll tell you, Maria."

"Well, now, John."

"—Yes."

"I—I am in love! Now, don't tell you won't will you?" said John, violently seizing Maria by the hand, and looking in her face with a most imploring expression.

"Of course not, John; why, you know, I'll never breathe a word about it. Now, you know I won't, don't you, John?"

This was spoken in a low whisper, and the cherry lips of Maria were so near John's ear, that when he turned to look at her, there might have occurred a dangerous concussion.

"Well, Maria," said John, "I've told you now, and you shall know all about it. I have always thought a great deal of you, and—"

"Yes, John."

"I am sure you would do anything for me you could."

"Yes, John, you know I would."

"Well, I thought so, and you don't know how often I've wanted to talk to you about it."

"I declare, John—why, you might have told me long since, if you wanted to; for I never was angry at you in my life. I felt a great deal for you, but I never felt a great deal for you, you know, John."

"Well, now, Maria, do you think I am too young to get married?"

"Indeed, I do not, John; and I know it would be a good thing for you, too, for everybody says the sooner young people get married the better, when they are prudent and love one another."

"That's just what I think; and now, Maria, I do think I want to get married, you will—"

"Indeed I will, John, for you know I always was partial to you, and I've often said so behind your back."

"Well, I declare, I have all along thought you would object, and that's the reason I've been afraid to ask you."

"Object? I'll do first; so you may ask me anything you please."

"And you'll grant it?"

"Then I want you to pop the question for me to Kate Sullivan."

"What?"

"Do you love Kate Sullivan?"

"Indeed I do; with all my heart."

"I always thought you were a fool."

"Eh?"

"I say you are a fool, and had better go home. Your mother wants you—you stupid," exclaimed the mortified Maria, in a shrill reeling. And she gave poor John such a slap in the face that it sent him reeling.

Unhappy Maria—the course of true love never runs smooth.

THE LOWEST TYPE OF HUMANITY.—The following extract is from an article on "Barbarism and Civilization," in the *Atlantic Monthly*:

On the Island of Borneo there has been found a certain race of wild creatures, of which kindred varieties have been discovered in the Philippine Islands, in Terra Del Fuogo, and in South America. They walk usually, almost erect on two legs, and in that attitude, measure about four feet in height. They are dark, wrinkled and hairy. They construct no habitations, form no families, scarcely associate together, sleep in caves or trees, feed on snakes and termites, on ants' eggs, on mice and on each other. They cannot be tamed or forced to any labor, and are hunted and shot among the trees like the great Gorilla, of which they are a stunted copy. When they are captured alive, one finds with surprise, that their uncouth jabbering sounds like articulate language. They turn up a human face to gaze at their captor, and sometimes show instincts of modesty; and, in fine, these wretched beings are men.

## COGNATE USUAL DIVERSITY.

A most ludicrous scene transpired in a place not a thousand miles from the city of Louisville, one night last week, which though a little amusing to the persons immediately concerned, was just as humorous and funny to the casual observer, as giving general pleasure, especially to the eyes of our countrymen, who are so fond of seeing the funny side of things.

Two of the young ladies attended a party on the night in question, and did not get home until half past 12 o'clock at night. As it was late, they concluded not to disturb the household, so they quietly stepped into this room through the low open window.

In about a half an hour after they had left for the party, a young minister called at the house where they were staying, and carved for a night's lodging, which of course was granted. He remained until late in the evening, and then he left, and the young lady, (Fannie) who had not gone to the party, was intrusted with the duty of sitting up for the absent ones, and informing them of the change of rooms.

She took up her post in the parlor, and as the night was sultry, sleep overcame her, and she departed on an excursion to the land of dreams.

We will now return to the young ladies who had gone to their room through the window. By the dim light of the moonbeams, as they straggled through the curtains, the young ladies were enabled to see the outlines of Fannie, (as they supposed) encoined in the middle of the bed. They saw it all, Fannie had set the boots in the room to give them a good scare. They put their heads together and determined to turn the tables on her. Silently they disrobed, and stealthily as cats they took up their position on each side of the bed. At a given signal they both jumped into bed, one on each side of the unconscious person, laughing and screaming, "Oh, what a man! Oh, what a man!" and gave the poor bewildered minister such a promiscuous hugging and tussling as few persons get in the course of a lifetime.

The noise of the proceedings awoke the old lady, who was sleeping in an adjoining room. She comprehended the situation in a moment, and rushing to the room, she opened the door and exclaimed:—"Gracious! it's a man! it's a man sure enough!" There was a long prolonged, consolidated scream, a flash of muslin through the door, and all was over.

ARTHEMUS WARD'S LAST EFFORT.—The following is the last thing written by the late "Artemus Ward":

"Ount quite recently I've bin a healthy individual. I'm nearly sixty, and yet I've got a muscle into my arms which I can't make my fists resemble the tread of a cavalry bird when they fly out and hit a man. Only a few weeks ago I was exhibiting in East Showbagan, in a 'bidlin' which had formerly been occupied by a pugilist—one of them fellers which hits from the shoulders and teaches the manly art of self-defense. And he can and said he was in 'free, in consens of pre-aly okpeyid' sed 'bidlin' with large val-ler dorg. He sed, 'Oh, yes, I sed, 'Oh, no.' He sed, 'do you want to be ground to powder?' I sed, 'yes, I do, if there is any powder grinded handy, when he struck me a disgustin' blow in my left eye, which caused that concern to at once close up for repairs; but he didn't hurt me any more. I went for him energetically. His parents lived near by, and I will simply state that fifteen minutes after I'd gone for him, his mother, seeing the prostrate form of her boy approachin' the house onto a shutter carried by four men, run out of doors. Keerfully looked him over and sed, 'My son, you've been foolin' round a thrashin' masheen. You went in at the end where they put the grain in, come out with the straw, and then got up in the thingumajig and let the horses tread on you, didn't you, my son?' You can imagine by this what a disagreeable person I am when I'm angry.

"Sir," inquired a minister of a well-known lawyer, with whom he was conversing, "do you ever make any mistakes in pleading?"

"Certainly," replied the man of law.

"And what do you do with the mistakes?" said the minister.

"Why, sir, if large ones, I mend them; if small ones, I let them go," said the lawyer.

"And pray, sir, do you ever make mistakes in preaching?"

"Yes, sir, I have."

"And what do you do with the mistakes?"

"Why, sir, I dispose of them in the same manner you do—I rectify the large ones, and patch the small ones. Not long since, continued he, "as I was preaching in a small town, I made a mistake and said the father of Hays; but, made a mistake and said the father of lawyers. The mistake was so small that I let it go."

A man in Waukegan, Mo., celebrated an uncommon drunk a few days ago by chasing his wife up an apple tree, throwing his children out of the window, and drowning himself in a well.

## A MAN HOURS AGO.

The impression is made upon the mind of a stranger, looking down from the Speaker's gallery, gained by Mr. Dirrell, from his showy dress, jeweled fingers, spotted lines, and long, fakes of curling, black hair, that of emaciated affection. This is generally associated with lofty, aristocratic appearance. He stands, Mingling, unsteady. There were never more than a few words, and he with his head on his side, and whole appearance an equivalent as a state figure of ancient Egypt. There is no gazing around, no fanning in this seat. Nobody converses with him. Isolation and self-absorption are the gloss the observer gains of him so long as he occupies his seat. He seems to live in a world of his own thoughts. When he really speaks it is scarcely different. There is intellectual power in his aspect, but it seems almost fatuous. Like Shylock, in the judgment scene, he stoops, almost crouches, and darts furtive glances from eyes that flash some concealed purpose. The forehead, eyes, mouth, and chin, hang. The head hangs on the breast, the shoulders on the body. If men carry a table of contents in their external aspect, that of Mr. Dirrell, when he rises to address the House, is that of a blank leaf. But when he makes his points the manner changes. He becomes animated. The thumbs are removed from the armholes of his waistcoat. The most delicate inflexions of his voice can be detected. They are managed with exquisite art to give effect to the irony of the moment. An almost imperceptible motion of the body and hands grows in subtle harmony with the tones. He convulses his features with increment without a smile on his face. His shaft is armed with deadly precision, while he himself is imperturbably cool. The process by which he deliberately tortures his antagonist is fine. But he can be argumentative as well. In the accepted sense he is not an orator. He never rises into the eloquence of the stamp speaker. But on abject subjects—when the theme is literature, or science, or philosophy—he attains a loftiness of thought equal to the occasion. Independence.

HARD BARS.—The idea that the soft side of a plank makes the best couch when one gets used to it, was long ago exploded. People who know what is what, who read the newspapers and mean to be somebody, don't believe a word of it. Those who have settled down to a Diogenes-in-the-tub life accept the doctrine. It is true that the tired man or woman will sleep soundly on a hard bed, and habit may make the hardness dear to them. It is also true that Napoleon's soldiers slept while on their march homeward from Russia, and some of them may have become attached to locomotion and sleep united. Notwithstanding all this, those who have once felt the almost human kindness and warmth of a hairy mattress beneath them, cannot go back to straw and lunks without a pang.

We do not recommend softness, but elasticity. Feathers, except in very cold weather, are unwholesome, because they retain an excess of warmth about the body, and also because they absorb the insensible perspiration thrown off by the pores, and permits the body to reabsorb the excrementitious matter. A bed of soft, fresh straw, evenly distributed and covered with a thin cotton or woolen mattress, may be a good resting place, and furnish sweet sleep. But how can man or woman rise refreshed, from a couch of straw or shuck mattress, which has been in nightly use without renewal for a series of years? Yet there are portions of this very land of plenty, where travelers are put to sleep upon just such beds as this.

Every man in grazing districts, may own a dozen or two of coarse woolen sheep. These and their increase will in a short time give him wool mattresses, than which none are more pleasant, more wholesome, or durable. The tag-locks washed and carded, should be headed by every farmer's wife for this purpose. In cities and villages, and in the more populous parts of our country, those who can afford good sleeping places generally have them.

As a general rule, the better care a man takes of his body, in feeding it with skill, clothing it with discretion, and giving it due and refreshing sleep, the more work he can do, and the higher the quality of his work.

DEEP WATER.—The deepest sea sounding ever made was in the northern extremity of the Bay of Biscay last year. The depth was two thousand four hundred and thirty-five fathoms—nearly three miles. So practical was the hand of the officer who made the sounding, that the shock of the arrest of the weight at the bottom was distinctly heard by him. The sinker on the apparatus weighed three hundred weight, and the time occupied in descent was thirty-three minutes and thirty-five seconds.

An old sailor passing through a graveyard saw on one of the tombstones, "I still live." It was too much for Jack, and shifting his quid, he said:

"Well, I've heard said that there are some in which a man may lie; but if I were dead, I'd own it."

"Now, children," asked a school inspector, "who loves all men?" A little girl, not four years old, and evidently not well up in the catechism, answered quickly:

"All women."

An editor out West says he is so short-sighted that he frequently rubs out with his nose what he writes with his pen.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SOUND.

The following curious observations in regard to the transmission of sound have been carefully verified by an extended series of experiments.

The whistle of a locomotive is heard 3,300 yards through the air; the sound of a railroad train, 2,700 yards; the report of a musket and the bark of a dog, 1,800 yards; an orchestra or the roll of a drum, 1,600; the human voice reaching to a distance of 1,000 yards; the croaking of frogs, 900 yards; the chirping of crickets, 800 yards. Distant speaking is heard in the air from below up to a distance of 600 yards; from above it is only understood to a range of 100 yards or more. It has been ascertained that the echo is well reflected from the surface of smooth water only when the voice comes from an elevation.

Other singular phenomena connected with the transmission of sound have been observed, but the results disagree either from the inaccuracy in the observations or from the varying nature of the circumstances affecting the numbers obtained. Such variations occur to an extent of ten to twenty per cent; and even when the weather being cold and dry, and the wind, and wet, are the chief influencing causes. The velocity of sound varies, also, with the temperature, traveling faster as the air is rarified by heat. At the point of freezing water, sound travels 1,000 feet per second; at 62 degrees it travels 1,126 feet per second.

DEAN SWIFT'S PARROT.—A good story is told of Dean Swift's parrot, which was a great pet with the whole family. One day Polly managed to open her cage and get away, to the great consternation of the whole household. After a good search some one found Polly in the garden, at the top of the apple tree. The well-meaning neighbors were communicated by the Dean, with the whole of the incident, rushed out at once, accompanied by Dr. J. Nathan, who, with some friends, was then on a visit to the Dean. Polly was found sitting on the topmost branch, but when she discovered the large number below she looked gravely solemn at the group, and said, "Let me pray you to drive me out."

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