

THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

What Preceded the Nebulous State—Our Limited Knowledge.

We have before us in the sun and planets obviously not a haphazard aggregation of bodies, but a system resting upon a multitude of relations pointing to a common physical cause, says Dr. William Huggins, in his recent presidential address before the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

From these considerations Kant and Laplace formulated the nebular hypothesis, resting it on gravitation alone, for at that time the science of the conservation of energy was practically unknown. These philosophers showed how, on the supposition that the space now occupied by the solar system was once filled by a vaporous mass, the formation of the sun and planets could be reasonably accounted for.

By a totally different method of reasoning modern science traces the solar system backward, step by step, to a similar state of things at the beginning. According to Helmholtz, the sun's heat is maintained by the contraction of its mass at the rate of about two hundred and twenty feet a year.

Whether at the present time the sun is getting hotter or colder, we do not certainly know. We can represent the time when the sun was sufficiently expanded to fill the whole space occupied by the solar system, and was reduced to a great glowing nebula. Though man's life, the life of the race, perhaps, is too short to give us direct evidence of any distinct stages of so august a process, still the probability is great that the nebular hypothesis, especially in the more precise form given to it by Helmholtz, does represent broadly, notwithstanding some difficulties, the succession of events through which the sun and planets have passed.

The old view of the original matter of the nebula, that it consisted of a "fiery mist," fell at once with the rise of the science of thermodynamics. In 1854 Helmholtz showed that the supposition of an originally fiery condition of the nebulous stuff was unnecessary, since in the mutual gravitation of widely separated masses we have a store of potential energy sufficient to generate the high temperature of the sun and stars. We can scarcely go wrong in attributing the light of the nebulae to the conversion of the gravitational energy of shrinkage into molecular motion.

The inquisitiveness of the human mind does not allow us to rest in content with the interpretation of the present state of the comical masses, but suggests the question: What was the original state of things? How has it come about that by the side of aging worlds we have nebulae in a relatively younger state? Have any of them received their birth from dark suns, which have collided into new life, and so belong to a second or later generation of the heavenly bodies? During the short historic period, indeed, there is no record of such an event; it is seen to be only through the collision of dark suns, of which the number must be increasing, that a temporary rejuvenescence of the heavens is possible, and by such ebbings and flowings of stellar life that the inevitable end to which evolution in its apparent uncompensated progress is carrying us can, even for a little, be delayed. We cannot refuse to admit as possible such an origin for nebulae.

Since the time of Newton our knowledge of the phenomena of nature has wonderfully increased, but man asks perhaps more earnestly now than in his days: What is the ultimate reality of the perceptions? Are they only the pebbles of the beach with which we have been playing? Does not the ocean of ultimate reality and truth lie beyond?—Boston Herald.

PEGGOTTY BEACH MOSSERS.

A New England Industry That Provides Fair Old Scutts for an Industry in which, if in no other, it is the leading town in the country. It has, as none of its more wealthy sister towns have, its moss. From the rocks that carpet its harbor and make its shores feared by the sailor is gathered an income every year that may not be princely, but is still large enough to compensate the town for the lack of noisy, smoky factories and strong-smelling wharves.

When the moss-gathering industry began in Scituate no one knows. Probably the value of the moss was first discovered by accident by some fisherman's wife. The gathering and curing of moss for food began in Ireland many years ago. It was used principally by the people of the south of Ireland, near the seacoast. Many people have made the claim that they introduced the industry in this country, but even the oldest inhabitants of Scituate are in doubt as to who was the first.

The particular locality where the business is carried on is called "Peggoty Beach." Little Peggoty village is bunched here, and here the mossers and their families ply their trade. There is no loafing. Everybody is expected to do his share of the labor. While the father is out in his boat robbing the sea for moss in his family's mouth and blue mangle and jelly into the mouths of mankind, the wives and daughters are wading along the rocks near the shore filling their aprons with the smaller pieces of the moss. The boys are at the same time raking and turning the patches of moss that are laid out in the regular lots in front of each creel house. The veteran "mossers" is on the beach at sunrise. There is much to do before the tide "will answer," and he must watch the tides. With rarden rake he levels off a patch on the gravelled beach, always being careful not to leave a footprint. Then he carries the moss that his wife and daughters have washed out the night before and spreads it on the smooth spots. It is of many colors, from the maroon, purple black, to a delicate yellow, according to the washings and bleachings it has received.

The globe man happened upon the best possible day to see the process of mossing. A low tide in the morning and a westerly breeze—not a wind—is what the men pray for. Out by the rocks of Third Cliff the double sprits and dories were already stationed, and men were standing up in the boat, poled around in the water with long poles. In order to get a nearer view the globe hired a typical small boy to take him out in his dory.

"How do you know when you are over moss?" was asked of a man whom the guide called "father."

"I, I can see it," was the answer.

The uninitiated could not distinguish one rock from another at the bottom, but the experience of years for as many of these people have been here as

OF GENERAL INTEREST.

A citizen of Chestnut Ridge, Pa., owns a tame crow that is remarkably intelligent. Last summer he split the bird's tongue and taught him to talk. The crow delights in calling the cows, and will laugh immoderately when he succeeds in fooling the dog and cat.

A precedent which may yet be followed to unforeseen conclusions has been set by Mr. J. Harbin Pollock, of Cincinnati, who is suing a rival for "alienating the esteem of Mr. and Mrs. A. Monroe," whom Mr. Pollock hoped to make his father and mother-in-law.

The assertion is made by workers in ornamental wood that yellow pine, hard finished in oils, is the rival in beauty of appearance of any wood that grows, not excepting the costliest of the well known hard species, it being susceptible of receiving and maintaining as high a degree of polish as any known wood, while, when impregnated with oil, it is well nigh indestructible.

Miss Hattie J. Tappé, who lives near the head of the head of over 2,000 individuals into a large wreath of over 1,000 flowers and leaves. This unique oddity is composed of hair of every shade and color known to the anthropologist. The young artist spent over a year in collecting the locks of hair before commencing work on the wreath.

A remarkable somnambulistic feat is reported from Bath, Me. A young man of that place went to bed with the idea of rising early and shaving. In the night he suddenly awoke and found himself standing in the middle of the room. He went to bed again. When he arose in the morning he went to his dressing case and prepared to shave, when, on looking in the glass, he found that he was already shaved as neatly as any barber could have done it.

A Portland, Me., lady noticed a couple of young orioles that had fallen from their nest in a tall elm tree into the street, where they were in imminent danger of being run over or being devoured by the neighborhood cats. She placed them in a basket and left them on the roof of a high shed, where in a very short time the parent birds found them and carried them away. Each of the old birds placed a wing beneath their young, and then using their outside wings to fly with, carried the lost birds safely home.

A farmer named Shutt, living near Sulphur Springs, was up at the cranberry marsh at work, says the Cincinnati Enquirer, when he found six pretty round eggs, and so greatly pleased was he at their appearance that he picked them up and put them in his pocket to take home to the children. The warmth of his pocket spoiled the eggs as playthings for the children, for when he reached home, Mr. Shutt found that he had five little "blacks" in his pocket, one of the eggs falling to hatch. There is in this country the greatest army in the world—not a standing army, but a constantly moving body of 700,000 men, who march and counter-march day and night, through heat and cold, from year's end to year's end. Each year they have 3,000 killed and 20,000 wounded. One man in 237 lost his life last year; one in every 35 was wounded, and the total loss by the operations of the army was 3,522 killed and 23,309 wounded. The army is composed of this army 3,000,000 of our people depend for their living. This army and its soldiers are the railroad employees of America.

The corner of Henderson, Union, and Hopkins counties, Ky., was from 1811 to 1860 marked by a famous oak tree, of which John Young Brown tells this story: "At the beginning of the century Micajah and Wiley Harpe and their families moved in from North Carolina. Micajah was called Big Harpe, and his brother seemed inspired by a thirst for human blood. They murdered a drover, then a mill boy, then three farmers, then a whole family. Big Harpe was lynch and decapitated and his head stuck up in the tree in question, the intersection of the three counties being called Harpe's Head to this day."

VIOLET GROWING.

How and When You Should Prepare a One and when the finest plot of ground may have two delightful possessions at a minimum of cost. We have always recommended the progressive bulb garden, where year after year crocuses, hyacinths and tulips come up in delicious rotation. You should now prepare a violet frame, where next winter, from January to March, you can gather a dollar or two worth of flowers, which will give the atmosphere of your chief living room, which can only be obtained from freshly picked violets. A very few of them gathered from the bed and placed in water are sufficient to fill the room with odor. Success in violet growing in the winter entirely depends upon the attention which is given during the growing season. Sweet violets are the most generally grown, and are of late years, and also white double ones, as well as the well-known Parma and Russian varieties, which are respectively light and dark, but both large, double specimens and very sweet. There is a very few flowering white violet which has been a great favorite. Any florist, doubtless, could give the name. Choose short runners with a crown of leaves. It is a very good plan to go into the nurseryman's garden and choose your own plants. Of course, the first thing to do is to prepare your bed, where the nurslings may grow and prosper until it is time to remove them to their winter quarters. This should be well dug and prepared with leaf mold and rich garden soil that has already been used and well fertilized. The situation should be moist and cool. Set the young plants in rows a foot apart, one-half a foot from each other. As soon as they begin to grow freely, they must be kept perfectly clear of weeds and have plenty of water. About August "runners" will appear and must be at once nipped off, or the plants will become too exhausted to produce flowers later on. One or two runners may, however, be allowed to each plant for future stock; these should be pegged down and by autumn they will have grown into sturdy little frames. These are filled with manure or leaves to give a gentle bottom heat on which a layer of soil is placed, the whole being deep enough to bring the plants within a few inches of the glass. The clumps are then lifted, with as little disturbance of the roots as possible, and planted close together in the frame, allowing room for the rooted runners which make the new plantation for the succeeding season.—N. Y. Tribune.

THE ONLY ONE EVER PRINTED—Can You Find the Word?

There is a 3 inch display advertisement in this paper, this week, which has no two words alike except one word. The same is true of each new one appearing each week, from The Dr. Harter Medicine Co. This house places a "Crescent" on everything they make and publish. Look for it, send them the name of the word and they will return you a book, beautiful lithographs or samples free.

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