

Facts About the Sun.

The earth on which we stand, says Sir Robert Ball, is no doubt a mighty globe, measuring as it does 8,000 miles in diameter; yet if the earth be represented by a grain of mustard seed, then on the same scale the sun should be represented by a coconut. Perhaps, however, a more impressive conception of the dimensions of the great orb of the day may be obtained in this way. Think of the moon, the queen of the night, which circles monthly around our heavens, pursuing, as she does, a majestic track at a distance of 240,000 miles from the earth. Yet the sun is so vast that if it were a hollow ball, and if the earth were placed at the centre of that ball, the moon could revolve in the orbit, which it now follows, and still be entirely enclosed within the sun's interior.

For every acre on the surface of our globe there are more than 10,000 acres on the surface of the great luminary, writes Sir Robert Ball. Every portion of this illimitable desert of flame is pouring forth torrents of heat. It has indeed been estimated that if the heat which is incessantly flowing through any single square foot of the sun's exterior could be applied under the boilers of an Atlantic liner, it would produce steam enough for an entire record-breaking voyage from Ireland to America. It would seem very presumptuous for us to assume that the great sun has come into existence solely for the benefit of poor humanity. The heat and light daily lavished by that orb of incomparable splendor would suffice to illuminate, quite as efficiently as the earth is warmed and lighted, more than two thousand million globes each as large as the earth.

Sir Robert Ball has odd methods in his lectures of making comparisons by which facts are more clearly shown than any figures can do. What should we think, he asks, of the prudence of a man man, having been endowed with a splendid fortune of not less than \$20,000,000, spent one cent of that vast sum usefully and dissipated every other cent and every other dollar of his gigantic wealth in mere aimless extravagance? This would, however, appear to be the way in which the sun manages its affairs, if we are to suppose that all the solar heat is wasted save that minute fraction which is received by the earth. Out of every \$20,000,000 worth of heat issuing from the glorious orb of day, we on this earth barely secure the value of one single cent, and all but that insignificant trifle seems to be utterly squandered. We may say it certainly is squandered so far as humanity is concerned. No doubt there are certain other planets besides the earth, and they will receive quantities of heat to the extent of a few cents more. It must, however, be said that the stupendous volume of solar radiation passes off substantially untaxed into space, and what may there become of it science is unable to tell.

Suppose that all the coal seams which underlie America were made to yield up their stores. Suppose that all the coal fields of England and Scotland, Australia, China and elsewhere were compelled to contribute every combustible particle they contained. Suppose, in fact, that we extracted from this earth every ton of coal it possesses, in every island and in every continent. Suppose that this vast store of fuel, which is adequate to supply the wants of this earth for centuries, were to be accumulated in one stupendous pile. Suppose that an army of stokers, arrayed in numbers that we need not now pause to calculate, were employed to throw this coal into the great solar furnace. How long, think you, would so gigantic a mass of fuel maintain the sun's expenditure at its present rate? I am but uttering a deliberate scientific fact when I say that a conflagration which destroyed every particle of coal contained in this earth would not generate so much heat as the sun lavishes abroad to ungrateful space in the tenth part of every single second. During the few minutes that the reader has been occupied over these lines a quantity of heat which is many thousands of times as great as the heat which could be produced by the ignition of all the coal in every coal pit in the globe has been dispersed and totally lost to the sun.—Sir Robert Ball in McClure's Magazine for December.

That wonderful people, the Chinese, are said to have constructed bridges from very early times, but those known to us date from comparatively late periods, and many of them are timber structures of the cantalver type.

The largest nugget found in North Carolina weighed 80 pounds. The largest ever found in Siberia weighed 96 pounds 4 ounces. The largest piece of gold ever found in Colorado weighed 13 pounds, and was by no means pure gold. The largest ever found in the world was in Australia in 1852, and was known as King of the Water Moon nugget. It weighed 223 pounds and 4 ounces, and was worth about \$40,000.

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The Willows Man.

"There is a good story on the Examiner," said J. Ross Jackson, the newspaper man, to some friends in the Palace recently, "and although I'm out of the business I can't overlook its merit on that account. It appears that a druggist named Putnam was killed in Willows recently by a man named Sehorn. The telegraph report came to the Call and also to the Chronicle. The next morning when Managing Editor Hamilton of the Examiner was looking over the record of the day he discovered that his paper had been 'scooped' on that particular item. He thereupon sent for Mr. Corey, the coast editor of the paper.

"Mr. Corey," he said, with a dignified look on his face, "have we a correspondent in Willows?"

"Yes."

"Did he send a report of that murder?"

"No."

"Fire him."

"How? By mail?"

"No. By telegraph. We can't dispose of a man like that too quickly. A correspondent who doesn't know that a murder has been committed in his town isn't fit for the position. Bounce him."

"Mr. Corey went to his record book of correspondents and presently returned to the managing editor.

"Mr. Hamilton, there are certain circumstances in this man's favor that—"

"There are no circumstances that would justify such an exhibition of incompetency. Bounce him, I say!"

"But, Mr. Hamilton, this case has no parallel. That man has a good excuse for overlooking the importance of the story."

"Well, what was his excuse?" inquired the editor, becoming nervous.

"Well," answered Corey, scratching his chin a moment, "he was the man who got killed."

"Mr. Hamilton lapsed into silence, and went on reading some proofs of the story of Mr. Hears's latest investment in newspapers"—San Francisco Call.

Her First Trip by Rail.

At a small railway station in the hilly part of Alabama an old man, carrying a carpet bag and accompanied by his wife, boarded the train. They took the first seat, the old lady sitting next the window. It was apparent that this was their first railway journey. The train started, and they both looked eagerly out of the window, and, as the speed increased, a look of keenest anxiety gathered on the old lady's face. She grasped her husband's arm and said, in a voice plainly audible to those about her: "Joel, we being goin' awful quick. I know 'tain't safe." A few minutes later the train ran on a long trestle. With a little shriek of terror the old lady sprang to her feet and seized the back of the seat in front of her. There she stood, trembling from head to foot, staring from the window. Meantime the train sped onward, and was once more on solid earth. The old lady was quick to note the change. Her features relaxed, and she sank into her seat with the fervent exclamation: "Thank goodness! She's lit again!"—Omaha Bee.

His Friend John.

A man was having his fortune told. "I see," said the seventh daughter of the seventh daughter, "contracting her eyebrows, "I see the name of John." "Yes," said the sitter, indicating that he had seen the name before. "This name seems to have given you a great deal of trouble." "It has." "This John is an intimate friend." "That's so," he said, wondering. "And often leads you to do things you are sorry for." "True, every word." "His influence over you is bad." "Right again." "But you will soon have a serious quarrel, and then you will become estranged." "I'm glad of that. Now spell out his name." The fortune teller opened one eye and carefully studied the face of the visitor. Then she wrote some cabalistic message, and handed it too him in exchange for her fee. "Do not read it until you are at home," she said solemnly. "It is your friend's whole name." When he reached home he lit the gas and gravely examined the paper. There he read, in picket-fence characters, the name of his friend: "Demi-John."—Ram's Horn.

Miss X.—I'm going to send this item about our five o'clock tea to the Weekly Gossiper.

Miss Z.—They won't take it; you've written on both sides of the paper.

Miss X.—Dear me, I don't see why they need be so stiff about it. They print on both sides of their own paper, don't they?