

### SIAM'S FIRST RAILROAD.

**The Work of an Enterprising King.**  
That is an interesting announcement, recently made, that the King of Siam personally opened to traffic the first railroad in his dominions, connecting the capital, Bangkok, with the port of Paknam, at the mouth of the Menam River. On this occasion, it is also made known, His Majesty delivered a speech, in which he referred with eloquent enthusiasm to the progress which his country is now making in what are conventionally called the arts of civilization. This railroad is not nearly so great nor so important as many others in many parts of the world. Yet there is scarcely another so richly invested with picturesque interest or so suggestive in its prominent contrast of high civilization against primitive simplicity.

The very idea of a railroad in Siam seems incongruous. True, the capital city of that country has for years enjoyed such "modern improvements" as street cars, electric lights, passenger elevators, telephones and newspapers. Yet they all still have an exotic air. They seem like curiosities on exhibition. All around them lies the world of

CENTURIES AGO.

In no other Oriental country has so much come into contact with Europe as in the Land of White Elephants. The ancient manners and customs still flourish intact. The old-time ceremonies, endless processions, innumerable umbrellas on display, are still observed. The overwhelming mass of the people are exactly as they were hundreds of years ago. Probably the chief explanation of this lies in the nature of the people themselves. They are not exactly indolent, they are absolutely unambitious; mild, amiable, contented with whatever befalls them. Does the King increase their taxes? They smile and work a little harder so as to pay them. Does he remit a tax? They smile and do less work. It is all the same to them. The Alpha and Omega of their creed is that "whatever is, is right."

Now it might be supposed that the chief bulwark and support of this conservatism was the King himself, who is the absolute ruler of the country, with power of life and death over his subjects, and who is indeed regarded as half divine. But such is not the case. On the contrary, Chulalongkorn is the chief factor of progress and liberalism. It is he personally who is to be credited with the introduction of all the "modern improvements" the land enjoys. He is an intelligent and progressive monarch, who fully realizes the desirability of getting in line, so far as possible, with

EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION.  
He has done away with many of the old court customs. Visitors when they enter his presence do not have to kneel and knock their foreheads against the floor, as in former times; but they may walk squarely up to him and shake hands with him. True, His Majesty has imported some of the vices as well as the virtues of the western world. For example, he smokes cigarettes. But for the whole he has done exceedingly well for his country.

Some thirteen or fourteen years ago the King decided that it would be well to have some railroads built in Siam. Accordingly he engaged a number of European engineers to survey routes and prepare plans and estimates. The advance of the French in Tonquin, on his eastern borders, hastened him, for he was persuaded that a railroad system would be a potent aid to defense against invasion. But rivalry between foreign speculators caused much delay. English and German contractors were both eager to get the concession for building the roads, and each was determined, by hook or by crook, to prevent the other from getting it. The Germans told the King that they were the natural enemies of the French, and would therefore surely defend him against an attack from Tonquin.

THE ENGLISH.  
On the other hand, told him that to let the Germans in would exasperate the French and provoke an attack; and that moreover the proximity of the British Empire in Burma and Hindostan made it advisable for him to look to it for alliance. His Majesty listened with patient courtesy to all these arguments, and then announced that he didn't care a row of pins—or words to that effect—about any such things. All he wanted was a first-rate railroad at the lowest possible price. Therefore he would grant the concession to the lowest responsible bidder. The result was that an English company got the job, and has built the road. The line, as stated, extends from Bangkok to Paknam, the chief seaport of the Kingdom.

It was nearly two years ago that the work was actually begun, the King personally turning the first sod. The ceremony on that occasion was picturesque and impressive, especially in its curious mingling of Oriental and Occidental manners. There was a great crowd present, including the King and his Ministers. There were many foreigners, looking practical and business-like, and a host of curious, happy-go-lucky natives. There was much dignity and formality about it all, as was fitting. But there was also a great deal of ease and informality. The Minister of Public Works, a Prince with an unpronounceable name, began the programme by reading an address to the King. To this the latter listened courteously, but with an amused air, as though it were really a little superficial to read to him a document which had already been submitted to him for careful reading and revision. This done, His Majesty made a speech, ostensibly in reply to the Minister, but really addressed to the general assemblage. He spoke

EASILY AND ELOQUENTLY,  
dwelling upon the greatness of the country and the progress already made in the arts of modern civilization, and then portraying with entirely warrantable enthusiasm the great advantages that would result from the building of this railroad and of other roads which in the near future would be connected with it. The Siamese scarcely seemed to know how to receive this speech, but the foreign population quickly set their doubts at rest by leading off in hearty applause, in which all joined.

These formalities gracefully concluded, the King took a spade in his hands and stepped forward where a wheelbarrow was standing. It was a spade of the most improved New-England pattern, but the blade was made of silver, presumably solid, and the handle was composed of a solid shaft of ivory. The wheelbarrow was also of American design, but was made of ebony

and silver. His Majesty thrust the silver blade of the spade into the ground, energetically pressing it to its full depth spadeful of soil and deposited it in the wheelbarrow. Then the Crown Prince came forward, handsome and amiable young gentleman who had recently celebrated his coming of age with characteristic Siamese rites. He took up the handles of the wheelbarrow and trundled it along a carpeted pathway, twenty-five or thirty yards, and then dumped the spadeful of earth which it contained upon the ground. The King, the royal family, the Minister of Public Works and a number of noble guests followed him as he wheeled the barrow and looked with earnest interest at the spadeful of clods as he turned them out upon the ground. Then four stately and solemn Bramin priests, in their sacerdotal robes, stepped forward and sprinkled upon the clods a few drops of solid gold, which they took from a vase of native musicians, played the Siamese National anthem, and the ceremony was concluded. But the King and his august followers had scarcely left the spot before the contractors took possession of it, and their workmen were busily engaged with hundreds of spades and wheelbarrows proceeding with the actual construction of the rail road.

### BITTEN BY A CEN TIPEDE.

**Mrs. Lastenhow Displays Several Characteristics of the Insect.**  
Mrs. Julia R. Lastenhow, the wife of R. M. Lastenhow, a well-to-do farmer of Texas, was bitten a few days ago by a centipede, and is so singularly affected by the bite as to puzzle all physicians who have seen her. The insect was introduced into the house in a log of wood, which, being placed on the fire, became too warm under a hiding place, and after several days' search concluded that it had escaped and gave herself no further uneasiness regarding it.

But on retiring a few nights after, the lady, altering the position of the pillows, discovered a small object beneath one, and not detecting what it was put out her hand to remove it, when the centipede bit her on the palm and wrist. It was with difficulty that she succeeded in detaching the insect from its hold on her flesh and was just able to kill it when she fainted from the agony of the wound.

When first inflicted the sting resembled the red appearance of a place scalded by a hot iron, but in a few hours it began to swell until the entire arm was of a size equal to the rest of the lady's body, and to turn a livid purple with spots of nearly white with a quantity of corruption beneath them. Mrs. Lastenhow now lost consciousness and began to foam at the mouth, uttering cries of intense pain, until opiates were administered.

After a day or two the swelling disappeared from the arm, but all over the sufferer's body the impression of the insect's sting broke out in angry marks, as if burned, and remain exceedingly painful. Mrs. Lastenhow is still insensible, and has to be kept under the influence of drugs, as she manifests a disposition to indulge in a crawling movement which is said to bear a hideous resemblance to the sliding action of the insect, and will snap at and attempt to bite any one.

Her senses seem affected, particularly her sight, which appears to be nearly gone. Physicians can only explain her symptoms by the supposition that the poison of the insect's bite has affected her brain through the blood, which has reproduced the marks of the sting all over the body. A day or two ago, during one of her paroxysms, she seized Dr. Steinbock's hand between her teeth and gave it a severe bite, which soon began to burn and swell, and it was only by promptly cauterizing the wound that the limb was saved. It is thought that it is only a question of a very short time before death will bring relief to the unfortunate lady.

### Man-Eating Tigers.

As many people regard the lions and tigers as the most important part of the show, I may here say something more about the tigers and lions that we managed to collect for the Calcutta Zoological Society. In India, as the land of tigers, there was no difficulty in procuring them; we were only obliged to limit our numbers to seven or eight, for want of room and on account of the expense of feeding them. We lost several tigers at first from overfeeding them. The public always wants to see the tigers fat and fleshy, but such a condition usually conduces to the fatal liver disease. The finest tigers that we had were a male and female that had been caught full-grown in a pitfall. There was no doubt that they belonged to a family of human beings on the high road to Hazaribagh. Other kinds of natural tiger food, such as deer and wild pigs and cattle, were scarce in that part of the world, and the tigers had found human beings an easy and agreeable prey. When the jaws of a tiger are close on the human neck, death is instantaneous, and the victim makes no struggle. The deer and cattle, with their horns and hoofs and the wild pigs with their sharp tusks and horny feet, may injure the tiger.

When a tiger has once found out how easy it is to spring on a defenseless man or woman and to break their necks, it becomes indifferent to other food. Our two tigers were in perfect health and good condition. They were morose, and would not submit to be petted or played with, though they would condescend to eat the dhoop grass, fresh with morning dew, that we cautiously placed before their noses. Eventually they gave us some tiger cubs. [Longman's Magazine.]

In full mourning among the Chinese the black strands of the queue are replaced by white ones and in the second mourning by light blue or green. It is an unpardonable breach of etiquette for an inferior to enter the presence of a superior with his pigtail wound round his neck or head, and the greatest insult one man can offer another is to pull his pigtail. It seems very odd to see sailors on ship or in barracks combing each other's long tresses, or coolies at the street corners performing the same friendly office. Custom forbids a man to wear a beard and moustache until he becomes a grandfather.

### NEW YORK STATE MIRACLE.

**A Young Lady's Grateful Acknowledgment of a Timely Rescue.**

**Miss Lillian Sparks Restored to Health and Strength After Medical Aid Had Failed—Her Condition That of Thousands of Other Ladies Who May Take Hope From Her Story.**

From the Hornellsville, N. Y. Times.

Painted Post is the name of a pretty little village of one thousand inhabitants, situated on the line of the Erie Railroad, in Steuben county, two miles from Corning, N. Y. The name seems an odd one until one learns of the circumstances from which it was derived. When the first settlers came here from Pennsylvania, all this beautiful valley was heavily wooded, and abounded in many kinds of game, and was a favorite hunting ground for the Indians who then claimed exclusive right to the territory. An object which attracted the attention of the first settlers and excited their curiosity, was a painted post which stood prominently in a tree. It was stained red, as some supposed some noble and evidently commemorated from this incident the Indian life. And so from this incident the place naturally took its name. The city of Batavia, also took its name from a similar circumstance.

But the main purpose for which your correspondent came here was to learn the particulars of a notable, indeed miraculous, death of a young lady and her rescue from death by the efficacious use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. Your correspondent only knew that the name of the young lady was Lillian Sparks, daughter of Mr. James W. Sparks. On enquiring at the post office for her father's residence we learned that he lived on the road to Hornellsville, five miles from Painted Post village. "And," said a young man who had overheard the conversation with the postmaster, "it is his daughter who was so sick that the doctors gave her up and she was cured by Pink Pills." And the young man volunteered to guide me to Mr. Sparks' home. The courteous young man was Mr. William C. Sparks, a resident of the place, organizer for the Methodist church, and formerly organist for the Young Men's Christian Association of Rochester. So getting a horse we started in the storm, with the mercury ranging at zero, for a five-mile drive over the snow-dusted roads of Hornellsville. Hills. When we reached our destination we found a very comfortably housed family consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Sparks, one son and five daughters. The oldest of your correspondent, Miss Lillian, twenty-two years old, by the name she reported yesterday for Pale People, your correspondent had knowledge. This is the story told by Miss Sparks to your correspondent in presence of her grateful and approving father and mother, and is given in her own language.

"Yes, sir, it is with pleasure that I give my testimony to the great value of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I was ill for four years, doctoring nearly all the time but without any benefit. I had six different doctors; Dr. Hedden, Dr. Purdy and Dr. Dr. Remington of Painted Post, and Dr. Bell of Monterey. They said my blood had all turned to water.

"I was as pale as a corpse, weak and short of breath. I could hardly walk, and I was so dizzy, and there was a ringing noise in my head. My hands and feet were cold all the time. My limbs were swollen, and my feet so much so that I could not wear my shoes. My appetite was very poor. I had lost all hope of ever getting well, but still I kept doctoring or taking patent medicines, but grew worse all the time. Last September I came through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People, and I thought I would try them. I did so, giving up all other medicines and following the directions closely. By the time I had taken the first box I was feeling better than I had been in a long time, and I continued to take them now as you can see, and as my father and mother know, and as I know I am perfectly well. I don't look the same person, and I can now enjoy myself with other young people. Indeed I can't say too much for Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, for I am sure they saved my life. I have recommended them to every one who is using them with much benefit, and I earnestly recommend them to any one who may be like me. I am sure there is no medicine like them, for I am sure there is no medicine like them. I am entirely willing you should make any proper use of this statement of my sickness and cure by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills." In further conversation Miss Sparks said she felt away during her sickness so much that she only weighed 80 pounds, while now she weighs 107.

"I suppose," said her father, "that it was overwork that made her sick. You see we have 400 acres of land, keep 35 cows and there is a great deal to be done and Lillian was always a great worker and very ambitious until she overdid it and was taken down."

The facts narrated in the above statement were corroborated by a number of neighbors, who all express their astonishment at the great improvement Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have worked in Miss Sparks.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are a perfect blood builder and nerve restorer, curing such diseases as rheumatism, neuralgia, partial paralysis, locomotor ataxia, St. Vitus' Dance, nervous prostration and the tired feeling therefrom, the after effects of grippe, diseases depending on humors in the blood, such as scrofula, chronic erysipelas, etc. Pink Pills give a healthy glow to pale and sallow complexions and are a specific for the troubles peculiar to the female system and in the case of men they effect a radical cure in all cases arising from mental worry, overwork, or excesses of any nature.

These Pills are manufactured by the Dr. Williams' Medicine Company, of Brockville, Ont., and Schenectady, N. Y., and are sold only in boxes bearing the firm's trade mark (printed in red ink) and wrapper, at 50 cents a box, or six boxes for \$2.50. Bear in mind that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are never sold in bulk, or by the dozen or hundred, and any dealer who offers substitutes in this form is trying to defraud you and should be avoided. The public are also cautioned against all other so-called blood builders and nerve tonics, no matter what name may be given them. They are all imitations whose makers hope to reap a pecuniary advantage from the wonderful

reputation achieved by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Ask your dealer for Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People and refuse all imitations and substitutes.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills may be had of all druggists or direct by mail from Dr. Williams' Medicine Company from either address. The price at which these pills are sold makes a course of treatment comparatively inexpensive compared with other remedies or medical treatment.

### THE WORLD'S POST OFFICES.

**Some Interesting Statistics from Many Sources.**

In 1899 the Swedish Post Office carried 117,652,755 letters, postal cards, journals and packages.

The Chinese Post Office handled last year 17,000,000 letters and 24,000,000 papers. There are 506 post offices.

Turkey has 1150 post offices, but no record are kept of the amount of mail handled.

There were in 1891 1192 post offices in Mexico, which handled 125,000,000 letters, newspapers and packages.

Brazil in 1890 carried 18,000,000 letter and 19,000,000 packages of printed matter. There were 2733 post offices.

The annual number of letters that pass through the world's mails is computed at 8,000,000,000; of newspapers, 5,000,000,000.

The annual business of the Swiss Post Office comprises 110,000,000 letters and 74,000,000 papers. There are 1485 post offices and 1675 letter-boxes.

In 1890 the postal department of Norway handled 37,248,400 letters and 24,552,300 pounds of books.

The postal traffic of the Netherlands during 1890 comprised 68,000,000 letters, 30,000,000 post cards, 90,000,000 newspapers and 4,000,000 miscellaneous parcels.

The Belgian post offices in 1890 handled 95,484,491 private and 16,567,965 official letters, 73,000,000 packages of printed matter and 4,000,000 newspapers.

In 1889 the Spanish postal service handled 112,351,000 letters, 1,141,000 postal cards and 50,752,000 papers and samples. There are 2830 post offices.

In 1889 the Imperial Post Office of Russia handled 187,816,000 letters, 23,052,000 post cards, 12,550,000 registered packages and 31,742,000 samples of merchandise.

Italy, in 1890, handled 171,631,040 letters and post cards, to which were added 39,075,241 Government dispatches and 170,149,368 papers and periodicals. The total receipts were 45,420,386 lire, the expenses 39,245,400. There were 5511 post offices.

In 1890, France had 6932 post offices, besides eighty-eight movable offices and 58,464 letter boxes. In all there were carried 710,600,000 letters, 22,000,000 registered papers, 45,000,000 postal cards, 472,000,000 packages, 34,000,000 samples, 458,000,000 orders and pamphlets. The money orders were 750,500,000 francs, and the postal telegrams numbered 35,000,000.

There were in 1889 4659 post offices in Austria and 4235 in Hungary. In 1890 Austria handled 444,134,380 letters; Hungary, 168,801; the former 68,985,020 journals and 60,198,560 samples. The expenses of the Austrian office for the same year were 25,187,836 florins; of the Hungarian, 9,297,000. The receipts of the Austrian were 29,530,836; of the Hungarian, 12,268,000.

In 1891 there were in Canada 7913 post offices, which handled 94,000,000 letters, 19,000,000 cards, 10,000,000 papers and 16,000,000 books and parcels. Newspapers, sent from the office of publication, are carried free. Their number is estimated at 60,000,000. Canada has a system of postal savings banks, with 112,231 depositors and \$21,990,653 deposits.

The number of post offices in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in 1892 was 18,806; there were 21,827 letter boxes, 117,868 employees, and 1,705,500,000 letters delivered, together with 195,000,000 post cards, 411,000,000 book parcels, 127,000,000 newspapers, and 38,000,000 packages. The money orders amounted in value to £27,867,857.

In 1890, the German Empire had 179,000 employees in the postal service, 24,970 post offices, and 84,656 letter boxes. The number of postal telegraph offices was 17,454. The number of letters transported was 1,073,717,290; of post cards, 351,459,660; of packages of printed matter, 437,921,908; of samples, 25,808,840; of journals, 818,392,050. The amount of money sent was 21,873,168,000 marks. The receipts were, in marks, 253,941,253; the expenditures, 231,886,252.

The United States had in 1892 67,119 post offices, of which 3156 were presidential. The revenue of post routes was 447,591 miles; the expenditure \$70,930,495; the amount paid for the salaries of post masters was \$15,259,565; for transportation of the mails \$38,837,236. The number of pieces of mail which annually pass through the post office is 3,800,000,000. The money orders issued in 1890 amounted to \$114,362,757.12 in the domestic business and \$13,230,135.71 in the international, and \$12,160,489.60 in postal notes. The total expenditures were \$65,930,717.11; the total income was \$80,882,097.92.

### THREE NEGROES LYNCHED.

**An Hour Later, When the Sheriff Arrived, the Town Was Asleep.**

A Camden, Ark., despatch says:—Three negroes were lynched at Bearden last night for a murderous assault on Jesse Norman, a merchant of Bearden, on Saturday night. The men lynched were Abe Crain, aged 25; Doc Benson, 46; Jim Stewart, 20. Two of the men were arrested immediately after the assault and were lodged in the Bearden jail, where they remained last night. Strangers began gathering in Bearden yesterday, coming from the interior and from stations east and west on the St. Louis and Southwestern Railroad. The mob about midnight held up the Town Marshal and obtained the keys to the lockup.

The doors were opened and the three negroes brought out. They were asked to confess, and did so. They said they had assaulted Norman and robbed him of his pocketbook, containing several hundred dollars. Ropes were placed around the necks of the men and the ends thrown over the arms of telegraph poles. The mob divided into three squads, pulled on the ropes, and the negroes were hoisted. The mob dispersed, and the Sheriff and posse arrived an hour later. All Bearden was asleep then. Nothing could be learned by the Sheriff, and he and his posse returned to Camden.

### BOTHERING THE CHINAMEN.

**Canadian Pacific in Trouble With American Customs.**

A Vancouver, B. C., despatch says:—The Canadian Pacific officials are having an anxious time, having over a thousand Chinese on their hands who must either get into the United States or be returned to China by the Company.

The steamer "Danube" left Victoria recently for Portland with 612 Chinamen on board, but owing to the severe examination only 180 passed. The steamer is now in trouble with the American customs officials, who claim she is liable to a fine of \$19,660. The Chinamen were dumped into the ship's hold without bunks, and it is claimed the vessel was only intended to carry 300 Chinese. A fine of \$50 each can be imposed for carrying over that number, \$5 each because no chairs or tables were provided, \$500 because no berths were provided, \$250 because there were no ventilators, and \$250 because no surgeon was carried. The steamer belongs to the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company, who claim the law does not apply to Canadian vessels.

Last evening the barquentine "Tacora" left here for Portland with 500 Chinamen on board. The Company, however, took the precaution to have berths built between the decks and other conveniences. The vessel looked like a slave steamer, with her curious cargo. This is the largest batch of Chinese yet brought over, and they all claim to be merchants. It is thought a number will be refused admittance. The Company has secured the bulk of the trade. It is thought that rival American companies are competing the American officials to stick to the letter of the law. As the fare is \$30 a head the Company makes a big profit.

### Distance of the Stars.

The saying of Seneca with reference to the impossibility of achieving immortality by ordinary efforts, that there is no easy way from the earth to the stars—Non est ad astra mollis a terra vis—is one which may be applied in a literal sense to the determination of stellar distances. In old times Hook, Flamsteed, Cassini and others made numerous but unavailable efforts to measure the distance of some of the fixed stars, and it is only in recent years that careful measurements, made with accurate instruments, have partially solved the enigma.

It was during a series of observations made by Sir William Herschel at the close of the eighteenth century, carried out with a view to finding the distance of certain double stars, that he made his great discovery of binary or revolving suns. Although unsuccessful in his efforts, his labors were fully rewarded by the stellar systems moving in obedience to the law of universal gravitation. This important discovery times—seems to have diverted his attention from his original design; but, in any case, his instruments were not sufficiently accurate for so delicate an investigation.

The bright southern star, Alpha Centauri, is so far as we know at present, certainly the nearest fixed star to the earth. As might be expected from its comparative proximity to our system, it is one of the brightest stars in the sky. It ranks third in order of brightness—Sirius being Acile second, among the starry hosts, Canopus slightly brighter than Arcturus, which may, perhaps, be considered the leader of the northern hemisphere. The idea that this bright star might possibly be within measurable distance was suggested by two facts: first, by being a remarkable binary star with the distance between its components unusually large for an object of this class; and, secondly, from its large "proper motion" across the face of the sky—a fact which is usually assumed to indicate nearness to our system. An attempt to find its distance was made by Prof. Henderson in the years 1832-33. Using a mural circle with a telescope of 4 inches aperture, and a transit of 5 inches, he obtained an absolute parallax of 1.14 seconds of arc, with a probable error of one-tenth of a second, indicating a distance from the earth about 181,000 times the distance of the sun. It may here be explained that the "parallax" of a fixed star is an apparent change in the place of the star due to the earth's orbital revolution round the sun. It is one-half of the total displacement of the star as seen from opposite points of the earth's orbit, or in other words, it is subtended at the star by the sun's mean distance from the earth, or the radius of the earth's orbit. The "absolute parallax" is the actual parallax of the star. A "relative parallax" is the parallax with reference to a faint star situated near the brighter star, and which is assumed to lie at a much greater distance from the earth.

Further measures of Alpha Centauri made by Henderson and Maclear in the years 1839-40 with two mural circles of 4 inches and 5 inches, yielded an absolute parallax of 0.913 of a second indicating a distance of about 226,000 times the sun's distance from the earth, or about 21,000,000,000 miles. A rediscussion of these measures afterwards gave a parallax of 0.976 of a second. From observations in 1860-64 Moesta found with a transit circle of 5 inches aperture, a parallax of 0.38 of a second. From a new determination the same astronomer found a smaller parallax of 0.521 of a second. Elkin and Maclear in 1880, rediscussing Maclear's results, found a parallax of 0.512 of a second. Dr. Gill in 1881-82, using a heliometer of 41 inches aperture, obtained a relative parallax of 0.76 of a second, with a probable error of only 0.013. Dr. Elkin, using the same instrument in the years 1881-83, obtained a relative parallax of 0.676. The difficulty attending the measures of an absolute parallax are so great that relative parallaxes found for Alpha Centauri are now considered the most reliable. Assuming that the small comparison stars used in determining the "relative" parallax are at such a distance that their parallax is inappreciable, we may assume that the relative parallax is practically the same as the absolute parallax. Dr. Gill's result of 0.76 for Alpha Centauri is now almost generally accepted as the most reliable. This places the star at a distance of 271,400 times the sun's distance from the earth, or about 25,000,000,000 miles—a distance which light, with its great velocity of 186,300 miles a second, would take 4.287 years, or four years, three months and thirteen days, to traverse.

Wheat taken from a mummy vase in Egypt 2,000 years ago was planted and some of it grew.