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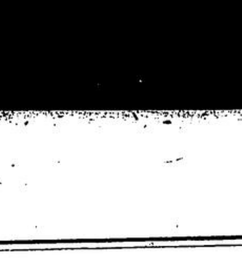

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IN MARS.

A Few Facts About Our Celestial Neighbors.

Sending wireless messages to Mars and Venus, and the possibility of projecting a rocket to the moon are subjects of recent speculation which have excited keener interest in our solar system.

"Mars always challenges interest," says William Joseph Showalter, an eminent scientist.

"Its day is about the same length as ours, but its year is nearly twice as long. Although astronomers generally take less interest than laymen in the surmise as to whether other planets and stars are inhabited, since they, more than laymen, realize that this is a problem that must in all human probability remain unsolved, the question is more often asked about Mars than any other planet.

"Venus was an unusually interesting object in the sky during July of last year. Not again until February, 1921, will it appear as bright and fair in the evening sky. It has phases like the moon, and these can be seen even through a good field glass. Its day is believed to be the same length as its year, which is 224 of our days.

"It is quite generally believed that Mars has ice-capped poles. The telescope reveals white spots at the poles that have every appearance of being like our ocean Polar region. They advance toward the equator in winter and retreat in summer. In the summer of 1916 Pickering, who, with Lowell, has led the school of astronomers who believe they can see canals on Mars, said that he found the white caps stretching farther down toward the equator than he had ever seen them before.

"He said that if there was any connection between the weather of Mars and that of the earth the winter of 1916-17 would be the coldest in many years. And it was. May it yet be possible to do long-range weather forecasting on the earth by studying the waxing and waning of the ice-cap on the South Pole of Mars?

"Perhaps our most graphic picture of the solar system is given by Herschel. Imagine a circular field two and a half miles in diameter in the very centre; 82 feet away put a mustard seed. The globe will represent the sun and the mustard seed Mercury.

"At a distance of 142 feet place a pea, and another at 215 feet. These will represent Venus and the earth, both as to size and distance. A rather large pinhead at a distance of 327 feet will speak for Mars, and a fair-sized tangerine a quarter of a mile distant will stand for Jupiter. A small lemon at two-fifths of a mile will play the role of Saturn, a large cherry three-fourths of a mile distant will answer for Uranus, and a fair-sized plum at the very edge of the field will proclaim Neptune.

Eighty moons would be required to make one earth. A player there could throw a ball six times as far as it can be thrown on a Canadian lacrosse field. A man weighing 150 pounds there would weigh 900 on the earth. The earth receives as much light and heat from the sun in 13 seconds as it gets from the moon in a whole year."

Ludendorff as Xerxes.

Theodore Wolff, writing in the Tageblatt, compares Gen. Ludendorff, formerly chief of the German general staff, with Xerxes, "who, after the destruction of his fleet, ordered the sea to be whipped."

"It does not indicate much strength of soul," he continues, "when Ludendorff repeatedly seeks to make the people responsible for the revolution, which was occasioned only by military failures. He is considerably more unjust than Xerxes.

"The Americans whom he had ridiculed came, and the tanks that he had made fun of arrived also. On June 6 the announcement was made to the German people that the 'proud manoeuvre army of the Entente as such exists no longer,' and five days later came the 'dissolution and complete destruction of the Foch manoeuvre army.'

"Yet all of a sudden, as four years before, the German army had ventured too far—the manoeuvre army was there. The German troops had to give, and in the deception which followed so many lying claims, in the bitterness at the murderous mistakes, and in the recognition that with the ridiculed entry of America Germany's fate was sealed, a four-year-old courage collapsed."

We Should Drink at Meals.

At a recent examination of the University of the State of New York, the question was asked: "Is it beneficial or harmful to drink water with meals?" The following is the official answer:

"It was formerly taught that water should not be drunk with meals, because (it was urged) such a procedure resulted in diluting the gastric juice and that digestion would be delayed or inhibited. But it has now been proved that the drinking of water with meals stimulates the secretion of gastric juice, also that it causes inhibition of the growth of intestinal bacteria, that it produces an improved liver function, that it decreases intestinal putrefaction, and that it enables the food to be utilised more economically; further, the saliva acts more efficiently as an amylolytic agent when diluted with water. For all these reasons we may infer that it is beneficial to drink water with meals."

A Large Wine Cellar.

The most capacious wine cellar in the world is owned by the Roumanian Government. A railway tunnel 2,600 feet long could not be used for the purpose for which it was intended because of inferior construction, so it was leased to a wine dealer, who turned it into a storehouse for wine.

Civilised Blacks.

The Wakamba, the leading Bantu tribe in Uganda, are the most highly civilised black race in America. They had a decimal system of calculation when first discovered by white men.

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ANCIENT SHIPS.

Two Hulks Supposed to Have Paid First Visit to America.

It was nearly a thousand years go that Lief Ericson, setting forth from Iceland to return to his native Norway, was driven off his course by terrible storms and came at length upon a new land, says H. K. Maderwell, of Christiana, Norway. Strange monuments still attest his visits, or those of his followers, to Massachusetts. Ericson, who anticipated Columbus and his Santa Maria by nearly five centuries, is one of the legendary figures with whom every schoolboy is familiar.

But the legend can never be so vivid and marvelous as when one sees in Christiana two of the ships in which Ericson may have made his voyage of discovery. That these ships, preserved from early Viking times, actually carried Lief Ericson to America, there is, of course, no evidence. Indeed, the probabilities are against it, for the craft apparently antedate Ericson's time. But it is certain that Ericson's Santa Maria was a ship of the same general proportions, size and construction as those which the twentieth century can see and touch. And, seeing and touching them, fresh from a luxurious voyage on a first-class, modern American liner, the twentieth century finds this discovery of America more wonderful than ever.

Two ships, which have been completely preserved, one dug up near Oseburg and the other near Gokstad, are supposed to date from the ninth century, A.D. Even for Norway, this is an ancient date. It is earlier than the great period of Norse discovery and conquest, earlier than the foundation of the United Norse kingdom, earlier than the raids, which so troubled the Saxon Kings in England; earlier than the raid into Normandy which brought to greatness William the Conqueror and the present British dynasty, and earlier by far than the times when the Norsemen sailed into Venice and Constantinople and fought with the English and French kings for the salvation of Jerusalem. The years which those ships bring to mind were wholly pagan.

And it is to this fact that their preservation is due. For it was a pagan Norse custom that the warrior ship captain should be buried in the ship which had been his home. The conqueror was to sail into Valhalla in the same craft which had carried him to Iceland, Denmark or Northumbria. With him were his body servants, killed for the occasion, as well as his dogs, his weapons and his armor. The ships were dragged up to the top of a hill overlooking the sea. Within the hill was built a sepulchral chamber, and within this was laid the heroic cargo for its last voyage. Then above the whole ship a mound was raised, with what solemn ritual we do not know.

It was because these mounds were sometimes of potter's clay that their contents have been preserved. Topped with such clay the sepulchre was virtually rendered impervious to air and water, and the preservation was as perfect as beneath the granite of the pyramids or the lava of Pompeii. The Oseburg ship was dug up in 1903. A new farmer had recently bought the mound, began to sputter about it with his shovel. He came upon straggling pieces of black oak, almost as hard as stone. Convinced that he had discovered something unusual, he communicated his discovery to the University of Christiana, which undertook the excavation in scientific fashion.

The ship, it was discovered, had been almost completely preserved, although centuries ago a band of ghouls had plundered the sepulchre chamber of its gold and silver. The movement of the subsoil, however, had broken it into hundreds of fragments. With greatest care the pieces (numbering more than two thousand) were taken out, numbered and shipped to Christiana. Here, in due time, the whole vessel was reconstructed. Only a trivial amount of new wood was required. Two-thirds of the iron rivets are those which stood in the original ship. Although part of the ornamented prow had been lost or decayed, the rudder, the anchor, the mast and most of the oars had been preserved. So the Oseburg ship now stands in a similar house nearby, on the grounds of the University of Christiana—symbols of the rude greatness of ancient Norway.

When one looks at the Oseburg ship the marvel grows that in such craft man could cross the ocean. Yet it is certain that in such craft, or craft very like it, man did. The ship is about seventy feet long over all.

Dumb Soldiers Cured.

Can a dumb man be made to speak merely being told that he must speak?

Impossible though it may seem, cures have been effected by this means.

Lieut.-Col. Sir Frederick Mott, one of the foremost specialists in nervous diseases, claims to have cured several dumb soldiers by suggestion.

Five men who were mutes were sent to him after they had been treated previously, and it had been suggested to them that they were not going to get well. He took the first man into a room and told him that he never left a patient until he had cured him, "even if it took him a couple of hours."

The doctor had recourse to a little galvanism on the man's throat, and asked him to count ten. At first he indicated that he could not, but after coughing his lips began to move. Then he was asked to name the days of the week and to sing "God Save the King." Eventually he spoke; and the other four were also cured by this methods.—Tit-Bits.

Feminine Finance.

"John, do you know that hat I bought yesterday for $20? Well, they reduced them to $10 this morning."

"Then you are out $10 for not waiting till this morning."

"No, dear, only $5. I went downtown to-day and bought another one for $10, making the two of them average $15 each."

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