

THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

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NEBULA HYPOTHESIS.

One of the Most Interesting Propositions of Science.

WHAT IT ACTUALLY MEANS.

That the Sun, Planets and All Matter Were Once a Vast Mass of Incandescent Gas All Jumbled Together in an Enormous Chaotic Cloud.

Everybody has heard the phrase, the nebula hypothesis, and what is it? In a few words this is the meaning of "nebula hypothesis": That the sun, the planets and all that is in them were at one time in the inconceivably remote past a vast mass of chaotic, incandescent gas all jumbled together in an enormous nebula, or cloud.

To begin with, the first conception that science has dared to make, however, takes us one step further back. Without mentioning the origin of matter itself science conceives that in the beginning all matter was uniformly distributed throughout space—that there were no stars, no planets, no satellites, but that all space was filled with the matter we now have divided up into very fine particles some distance apart. The consistency of such material was so perfect that it included, much more rare than the highest vacuum we can obtain now by our pumps. From this state the nebulous state the theory has a matter link, one that can only be satisfied by supposing divine command, for it assumes, in the words of Professor Todd, that "gradually centers of attraction formed and these centers pulled in toward themselves other particles. As a result of the inward falling of matter toward these centers, the collision of its particles and their friction upon each other the material masses grew hotter and hotter. Nebulae seeming to fill the entire heavens were formed—luminescent fire mist, like the filmy objects still seen in the sky, though vaster and exceedingly numerous." This process is supposed to have gone on for countless ages, faster in some regions than in others. Many million nebulae were formed and set in rotation around their own axes. This happily can be explained by science. Whenever particles are attracted toward a center and are kept from falling directly to this center a whirlpool is formed, rotating in one direction. An example of this, though humble and not exactly analogous, is the rotation of water in a basin when the stopper is pulled out of the bottom. Gravity attracts the water immediately above the hole, which starts flowing out, thus leaving a space to be filled. The rest of the water rushes in from all sides to do this, and the whirlpool is the result.

Now each of these whirling nebulae became exceedingly hot, and each formed what is known as a star or sun, our sun being one. The earth and other planets had not then come into separate existence, of course, as it is supposed that they were thrown off later from the sun.

Our sun in its nebulous form and rotating swiftly on its axis gradually flattened at its poles on account of centrifugal motion. This phenomenon is entirely familiar to those who have seen a ball of clay on a potter's wheel gradually flatten. The motion was so swift and the mass so nebulous that the sun to be took the shape of a disk. As time went on the outer part became cool and somewhat rigid, while the inner part continued its cooling and contracting. Thus the inner part drew away from the outer, leaving a ring of matter whirling around on the outside. This breaking of the ring is supposed to be hastened by the inability of the outside to keep up the swift motion of the central mass, both on account of the slight cohesion and of the centrifugal force. But this particular part of the argument has nothing to stand on if the first law of motion is true.

In the successive stages of the sun's contraction this process was repeated over and over again, until several rings were whirling around the central orb. They would necessarily be on the same plane. Now, these rings, not being uniform in mass or thickness, would each gradually accumulate toward the densest portion until they, too, would form a ball which would subsequently flatten, and if the substance conjoined nebulous and the ball was large enough they would also slough rings.

Of course the rings the sun discarded have become the planets, which, as required by the theory, are all very nearly in the same plane. The rings that the planets formed have become moons or satellites. So we are led to conclude that our sun at one time filled all the space from its present position to the farthest planet in the solar system.

From this theory there is another thing that we have to believe, and that is that every star in the heavens has gone through this same process and has a family of planets sailing around it, just as our sun has. It would be impossible to see these planets, of course, for it is impossible to see a star, even with the greatest telescope, except as a mere point of light.

As regards the proving of this nebula hypothesis, of course it cannot be done. But everything points to its accuracy. Many nebulae are seen even with the naked eye, and these seem to be now going through the delayed process of going through the stages of the nebula hypothesis. One of the most beautiful of our own solar system, Saturn, has three rings, which are probably destined in time to become moons, in the opinion of some scholars.—A. T. Hodge in New York Tribune.

INSECT INSTINCT.

How Bees Treat Intruders That Get Into the Hive.

What does the bee do when some foreigner in the animal world, as, for instance, a heavy slug, invades its hive? Stings it to death, of course. But what then? All the bees in the hive may not be able to drag out the carcass, and yet they must do something with it to keep it from infecting the colony. Move into a new house? Scarcely, for they would abandon their store of honey. No, the workers cease gathering honey and start out after propolis, the red resinous substance with which bees line and fence their hives. This bee glue they spread all over the foreign substance in little fillets until the foreigner is completely embalmed.

So, too, if a snail invades the hive and evades being stung to death they glue him fast in his shell and when he starves to death embalm him with propolis.

But the bee is not the only insect that exhibits a clearly defined intelligence. The maternal nature shows up in some of the meanest insects to a wonderful degree. The pine silkmoth moth tears all the hair and down from its own body in order to make a soft nest for its young and expires soon after. This is to a greater extent than the rabbit, which tears only the fur from its belly for its nest.

Some gall insects even immolate themselves to protect their offspring. As the insect, full for great distension with eggs, expands them gradually till all have been laid and nothing but a hollow shell remains of the mother, she sees that her task has been accomplished and gathers the eggs into a pile, spreads herself over them, fastens the sides of her own body down over them, and thus dies. This, of course, forms an impermeable covering for the eggs till they are hatched. The mother has here paid for the child-birth with her life, and the children are born in the shelter of her corpse.—New York Tribune.

The Hippopotamus.

Next to the elephant the hugest beast in point of bulk and weight is the hippopotamus. One White Nile specimen measured fourteen feet three inches from snout to tip of tail. The crocodile never ventures to attack the hippopotamus, which for its part disdains to attack the crocodile. Although, like the rhinoceros, this monarch of mid-African rivers is not carnivorous, it is very formidable to man, being easily provoked and assailing the object of its resentment with reckless fury. It can upset the largest boat and in one instance perforated with its tusks the iron bottom of a steamer, causing a dangerous leak. The flesh of the hippopotamus is always palatable, and when the animal is young it is delicious. The skin makes excellent turtle soup. The tusks were formerly more valuable than those of the elephant, being in request by dentists because they never turn yellow.

Too Much.

A certain young fellow has got the parrot's complaint—he talks too much. And this is how it let him down a cropper at an important interview. "You love my daughter?" said the old man. "Love her!" he exclaimed passionately. "Why, I would die for her! For one soft glance from those sweet eyes I would hurl myself from yonder cliff and perish, a bleeding, bruised mass, upon the rocks 200 feet below!"

The Young Lobster.

From the eggs of the lobster are hatched creatures not in the least resembling their parents—little fellows that swim with featherlike locomotive organs near the surface of the water. At the end of six weeks they develop legs—unless, as is highly probable, they have previously been devoured by fishes or other enemies—becoming thereupon small lobsters of familiar shape. Having reached this stage of growth, the young lobsters become walking animals, and, sinking to the bottom, immediately seek hiding places to protect them from their foes.

Hard to Suit.

"That editor is certainly getting hard to suit," the author remarked in a discouraged voice, gazing sadly at a heavy envelope upon his table. "What is the matter?" asked a cheerful friend, who gets a regular salary. "Oh, he returns this story with the comment that it is too bald. Last week he wrote that he didn't care for stories of the hair raising kind. What can you do with a man like that?"—Lippincott's.

Something the Wits.

A legal journal tells a story of an Illinois attorney who argued to the court one after another a series of very weak points, none of which seemed to the court to have any merit until the court finally said, "Mr., do you think there is anything in these points?" To which the attorney replied, "Well, judge, perhaps there isn't much in any one of these alone, but I didn't know but your honor would kind of bunch them."

The Neglected Commandments.

General Tondle was visiting in company with a party of tourists his native county of Devonshire, and they were shown over a little old fashioned church. Among the party was a clergyman, who, when the visit was concluded, looked round the church and said to the attendant: "Very nice indeed, but I notice that you have not got the Commandments exhibited. How is that?"

"The man's reply was startling. 'It is like this: We used to have them up one time, but no one about here seemed to take any notice of them, so we took them down, and they are behind that door.'—London Tatler.

Lost His Thumb.

I have reason to remember our visit to the Andamans, for I lost the top of my thumb there—bitten off by a parrot fish. The brute came to the surface after some torpedo experiments, slamming death. I incautiously put my thumb in his mouth, when the creature's jaws shut with a horrid snap, taking off the flesh of my thumb to the bone. Our surgeon dressed the wound. My cockswain picked up the portion of my thumb and, following me should into my cabin, asked what he should do with it. I told him to give it to a parrot fish we had on board the ship.—"Hurrah For the Life of a Sailor," by Vice Admiral Kennedy.

Dante's Fierce Retort.

The secret of Dante's struggle through life was in the reckless sarcasm of his answer to the Prince of Verona, who asked him how he could account for the fact that in the household of princes the court fool was in greater favor than the philosopher. "Similarity of mind," said the fierce genius, "is all the world over the source of friendship."

The Crab.

Students of the crustacea often find the cod a useful assistant collector. Thus the circular crab seems to be a favorite food of cod and rays, and it was chiefly from the stomachs of these fish that some of the oldest naturalists obtained their specimens. Another hunting ground of the naturalist is the sailing ship which has been in foreign parts.

The Salted Thread.

Soak a piece of thread in strong salt water, dry it and repeat two or three times. When thoroughly dry, tie one end to a candle and on the other or lower end tie a ring or some small but not too heavy article.

Lots of Vowels.

In the Hawaiian language every word ends in a vowel. A Hawaiian finds it almost impossible to pronounce two consonants together, and in English he has the greatest difficulty in pronouncing any word ending with a consonant. Mr. Hale in his Polynesian grammar says: "In all the Polynesian dialects every syllable must terminate in a vowel, and two consonants are never heard without a vowel between them. It is chiefly to this peculiarity that the softness of these languages is to be attributed. The longest syllables have only three letters, and many syllables consist of a single vowel." Again, no syllable, as a general rule, in the Bantu family of African speech can end in a consonant, but only in vowels.

A Postoffice Story.

In one month, according to the Journal of St. Petersburg, there have been found in the postoffice letter boxes 332 postal cards and 170 letters and book packages bearing no address. In this respect the independence of Belgium relates the story of a peasant who in writing to his son addressed the letter, "A Mon Fils, Bruxelles" (to my son, Brussels). The authorities did not despair. They placed the mistake in the rack of letters to be called for at the general postoffice. One day a young man appeared at the counter and asked, "Have you not received a letter from my father for me?" The clerk handed him the letter without hesitation. He was the addressee.

A Ship and Its Story.

Coke of Holkham began his great agricultural work about 1776 on an estate where, as old Lady Townshend said, "All you will see will be one blade of grass and two rabbits fighting for that." In fact, it was little better than a rabbit warren. He transformed the bleak, bare countryside by planting fifty acres of trees every year until he had 3,000 acres well covered and in 1832 had probably the unique experience of embarking in a ship which was built of oak grown from the acorns he had himself planted. Between 1776 and 1842, the date of his death, he is said to have spent £300,000 on improving his estate. From "History of English Agriculture," by W. H. R. Cutler.

Lighting a Pipe.

"I consider that one of our most picturesque everyday sights," remarked a painter, indicating the suddenly illuminated face of a man lighting a pipe. "And probably the hardest on the eyes of the picturesque person," returned his companion, a physician. "That close and sudden flaring is harder on the optic nerve than you imagine."—New York Post.

CARAVAN BREAD-MAKING.

Afghans Use Cobblestones, While Turcomans Use Lumps of Sand.

The bread of the Afghan caravan was cooked by heating small round cobblestones in the fire and then poking them out and wrapping dough an inch thick about them. The balls thus formed were again thrown into the fire, to be baked out again when cooked. The bread tasted well there in the desert, although in civilized communities the grit and ashes would have seemed unendurable.

THE ZANZIBARIS.

Dense Stupidity and Amazing Blunders of the Natives.

In the "Autobiography of Sir Henry M. Stanley" the author says of the colored natives of central Africa: "Good as the majority of Zanzibaris were, some of them were unfortunately dense. One man who from his personal appearance might have been judged to be among the most intelligent was after thirty months' experience with his musket unable to understand how it was to be loaded. He never could remember whether he ought to drop the powder or the bullet into the musket first. Another time he was sent with a man to transport a company of men over a river to camp. After waiting an hour I strode to the bank of the river and found them paddling in opposite directions, each leaving the other for his stupidity and, being in a passion of excitement, unable to hear the advice of men across the river, who were bawling out to them how to manage their canoe.

"Another man was so ludicrously stupid that he generally was saved from punishment because his mistakes were so absurd. We were one day floating down the Kongo, and, it being near camping time, I bade him, as he happened to be bowman on the occasion, to stand by and 'seize the grass on the bank to arrest the boat when I should call out. In a little while we came to a flat place, and I cried, 'Hold hard, Kirango!' 'Please God, master,' he replied and forthwith sprang on the shore and seized the grass with both hands, while we, of course, very rapidly swept down river, leaving him alone and solitary on the bank. The boat's crew roared at the ridiculous sight, but nevertheless his stupidity cost the tired men a hard pull to ascend again, for not every place was available for a camp.

"He it was also who on an occasion when we required the branch of a species of arbutus which overhung the river to be cut away to allow the canoe to be brought nearer to the bank for safety actually went astride of the branch and chopped away until he fell into the water with the branch and lost our ax. He had seated himself on the outer end of the branch."

A Bunch of Kicks. "I'm in hard luck!" sighed the steel rail. "Look at me! I get nothing from morning till night but hot air," groaned the pumping engine. "I'm always in hot water," sighed the boiler. "Consider my plight," cried the macadam road, "invariably walked over and trodden under foot."

"I'm used to it, for I'm always up against it," philosophically remarked the wall paper. "You're none of you as badly off as I am," said the furnace, "for, no matter where I go, I'm generally fired."—Baltimore American.

Coercing the Customs. M. Labouchere was once held up by the German customs service and had all the contents thrown out of his trunk. "Put those things back," said he to the men who had emptied his trunk. "That is your affair," they answered. "I stay here until you do," he replied. "But give me a telegraph form." On the form M. Labouchere wrote: "To Prince Bismarck, Berlin.—Regret cannot be expressed for your highness tomorrow. Held here indefinitely." Quick as lightning the officials packed the trunk!

A Reminder. Lady (at railway station)—Now, porter, are you sure I have all my luggage in the carriage? Porter—Yes, ma'am. Lady—Nothing left behind? Porter—Nothing, ma'am, not even a copper, ma'am.—London Fun.

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