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## WINGLESS BIRDS.

**Some Animal Oddities That Are Found In New Zealand.**

An official of the Smithsonian institution was recently speaking of some of the wingless birds of New Zealand. "Those wingless birds have always been of especial interest to me," he said. "Nowhere else than in their native land could they have survived, for that is the only land in which no destructive animals are to be found. Being unable to fly, they could not have escaped from swift hunting animals, if any there had been. And in this connection it is interesting to note that in all probability the kakapo, or great ground parrot, once had the use of its wings, but, being a grass seed feeder and finding no enemies on the ground, it in a process of evolution lost its ability to fly, though able to run very swiftly. These birds are so gentle and so unconscious of having any enemies that if a person sit down near one it will presently tuck its head under its wing and go to sleep. They only breed once in two years, and the mother bird carefully hides the nest from her mate, though why is not known.

"The weka, or wood hen, is another specially interesting species of the wingless birds. These birds mate for life and take turn about in hatching and watching the brood. One of the pair is never absent from the nest, the one on duty being supplied with food by the other. There is something almost human in the sight of a male weka leading his family out for a stroll on the beach when the tide is low.

"Another is the roa, which is distinguished by a remarkable beak, long, slender and slightly curved. The roa, like the kakapo, is a night bird, and its chief food is earthworms. Its sight is very poor, and it may often be seen standing in the moonlight with the tip of its beak resting upon the ground, apparently listening or feeling for the vibrations of a worm's movements. The male of the roa does all the hatching, and the young birds come from the shell with all their feathers, miniatures of their parents and with apparently all their intelligence, as they at once start out to search for food and seem to require no instruction as to the best places to find it."—New York Herald.

## RECORDS.

In the number of his titles the Duke of Atholl, with twenty-three, holds the record.

The record beam for costliness is the vanilla, which sells at $12 a pound retail.

The record for ham sandwich making is a thousand sandwiches in 11 hours 25 minutes.

The record lodging house is one for pilgrims at Mecca, which accommodates 6,000 persons.

The record steam heating apparatus cost $180,000. It is that which heats the 11,000 rooms of the Vatican.

The record soprano voice was Lucrezia Agujardi's. This lady, who died in 1783, could easily strike C in altissimo.

The record for millionaire honesty was held by the late Charles T. Yerkes, who, on recovering his fortune after his failure, repaid the claims of all his old creditors with 6 per cent compound interest.

**Mr. Howells and the Poet.**

A person called upon a certain editor of the Atlantic Monthly of the name of William Dean Howells and, producing a poem and courteous note of declination, indignantly demanded an explanation.

"Do you mean to intimate that this is not a good poem?" he challenged.

"By no means," hastily remonstrated Mr. Howells; "I think it is very good indeed."

"Then why"—in a somewhat mollified tone—"do you decline it? I consider it the best I have ever written."

"Ah, well," said Mr. Howells, "after all, we have very few differences of opinion. Do you know," he added in his gentlest voice, "I have long regarded it as the best that Tennyson has ever written." — George Harvey in North American Review.

**Anchoring a Lightship.**

A very effective method is employed to keep a lightship always in practically the same position. The ship is moored by three anchors which rest in the sea bed in the form of a triangle. When the tide alters its direction the vessel, of course, swings with it, but only to a limited extent. The ship cannot change right over, as it would if only one anchor were used, for the three anchors each fix it in a different position and do not allow it to move more than a few yards.

**Where Mrs. Brown Had Been.**

The Dear Child—Oh, Mrs. Brown, when did you get back? Mrs. Brown—Bless you, dear, I was not away anywhere! What made you think so? The Dear Child—I thought you were. I heard my mamma say that you were at loggerheads with your husband for over a week.—London Answers.

**All Right.**

A man always puts on the left shoe last, and when he puts on the right shoe first—on the right foot—he also puts on the left shoe on the right foot. A man most always puts the right shoe on the left foot and the left shoe on the right foot.—Baltimore American.

**The Early Bird.**

Mrs. Homebody (engaging cook)—Very well, then; you may come tomorrow at 10. Cook—Oi'd sooner come at 8, mum. Thin if Oi don't loike th' place Oi can lave in toime for th' matinay.—Puck.

## PROBLEMS OF SPACE

ENIGMAS THAT SCIENCE IS STRIVING TO SOLVE.

**The Question of an Infinity of Worlds and Their Distribution In an Infinity of Space—Distance of the Nearest External Universe.**

There can be no subject more calculated to impress a man's mind with his own insignificance compared with the overwhelming power and glory of his Creator than the study and contemplation of the firmament in all its boundless infinity. It is not to be wondered at that from the earliest ages the subject has never failed to exercise a fascination over men and that those who by their genius and learning have most nearly succeeded in solving its mysteries have always been reverenced and esteemed to be among the wisest men of their day. More has been done within the last fifty years than in all the rest of the world's history toward the piercing of the veil which shuts off from our eyes the beauties and mysteries of faroff realms, and doubtless by means of the spectroscope and increased size in the lenses of our telescopes we shall be enabled before long to unravel still more secrets of the universe.

The question as to whether space is finite or infinite can never be satisfactorily argued out or indeed even thought of, for the human mind is incapable of grasping the existence of a limit to space, even in its most abstract form, but the question of the infinity of worlds and their distribution in the infinity of space lies more closely within the scope of human intellect, for we have many material facts and calculations to go upon in discovering the probable answer to this most fascinating question.

Only as far back as the seventeenth century astronomers placed the number of stars in the universe as a little over 1,000, but this was absurd, as the real number visible to the naked eye is about 7,000, and perhaps treble that number can be seen by persons with exceptionally good eyesight. When the heavens, however, are examined through a telescope the number of visible stars is enormously increased. In fact, it has been calculated that the most powerful reveals as many as 100,000,000! Yet what is that vast number compared with infinity? It cannot even be likened to a grain of sand on the seashore, and yet if we think the matter out carefully we shall see that the number of visible stars cannot really be infinite, for if they were the heavens would be a complete blaze of light. This, of course, we know is far from being the case, and indeed there cannot be any doubt that in certain parts of the heavens at least the number of visible stars is already known, for even with the very strongest telescopes there are blank spaces which are absolutely devoid of stars below a certain magnitude or even the veriest trace of nebulous light.

These spaces are known to astronomers by the name of "coal sacks." They contain no stars fainter than the twelfth magnitude and, in fact, appear to mark those parts of the universe which are comparatively thin. On the other hand, in other parts of the heavens we have not by any means reached the limit of telescopic resolvability. It is curious, though, that these intensely dark "holes" in the bright empyrean are mostly to be found in those parts of the heavens where most stars abound, notably in the Milky Way.

These remarkable blank spots have been a favorite theme of discussion and argument among all astronomers, for, whatever the real shape or distribution of that universe may be, they point to the almost certain inference that in a particular direction at least there is an actual limit to the number of stars, and if there is a limit in one direction we have every right to suppose that such is the case in others, and that we have only to wait for telescopes strong enough to resolve those parts which are still unresolvable to discover that a point can be reached when all the stars of the universe are unfolded to our gaze.

If, now, we admit that the number of visible stars is limited, the next question to be asked is, What is the order or shape of their distribution? Various astronomers have had various theories about this matter. Herschel was inclined to think that the visible universe was in the shape of a disk, though his views in this direction were considerably modified during the later part of his life. Struve considered that the universe was in the shape of a disk of limited thickness, but infinite length, a theory which is hard to support, as, unless the ultimate extinction of light in space is believed in, that part of the heavens which lay toward the plane of the disk would necessarily shine with the brightness of the sun. Proctor, though finding it impossible to define any particular shape for the visible universe, as a whole, was of the opinion that the brightest part of it—namely, the Milky Way—was in the form of a spiral. This latter theory, however, has many objections to contend with. Other astronomers have had different theories on this question, but all, or nearly all, appear to admit an ultimate limit to the size of the visible universe, or, in other words, believe that the galaxy of worlds which surround us form, in fact, but an islet in the vast infinity of space.

It would appear at first sight that any attempt to solve the question of the existence of external galaxies and their distance was absolutely futile, yet such is not the case. The result of calculation is that the nearest external universe is so far distant that light from it traveling at the speed of 186,000 miles a second would take nearly 90,000,000 years to reach us!—Chambers' Journal.

## THE "HOLY HOUSE."

**Legend of the Home of Mary and the Saviour.**

Let me give the main outlines of the legend. At Nazareth was preserved with pious care the house of Our Lady. The dwelling place in which she received the gracious message of the incarnation, the lowly home which sheltered the holy family for so many years, was a very precious sanctuary. On May 10, 1291, a month after the taking of Tripoli and Ptolemais, this holy house was carried by the hands of angels from Nazareth to a place in Dalmatia between Fiume and Tersatz on the Adriatic shore.

It was a one roomed edifice, built of red square stones, fastened with cement, and bore proof of age and oriental design. It stood without any foundations and had a wooden decorated ceiling. The walls were covered with frescoes; there were a door and a narrow window; inside were an altar of stone, an ancient crucifix, a small cupboard, containing a few vessels of common use; a chimney and hearth, above which was a cedar statue of Our Lady with the Holy Child in her arms. The pastor of the place learned in a vision that the building was the house of Our Lady, the stone altar that at which St. Peter celebrated mass and the statue the work of St. Luke the Evangelist. In proof of the vision he was cured of a serious illness. A deputation of four responsible persons forthwith were sent to Nazareth to investigate the mystery, and they found that the house was no longer to be found.

Measurement and other means taken proved that the house that had suddenly appeared in Dalmatia was indeed none other than that which had as suddenly left Palestine. Three years after, on Dec. 10, 1294, the holy house again disappeard and under the pontificate of Celestine V. came to Recanati, a little town in the march of Ancona, when it fixed itself in a laurel grove belonging to a pious lady called Loreto. It was discovered by some shepherds and soon became recognized and was henceforth a much frequented place of pilgrimage. Eight months afterward the house removed to a small hill, three miles from Recanati, to land belonging to two brothers, who, however, fell out shortly afterward over the division of wealth which began to flow to the new shrine.

To save strife between the brothers the house was suddenly lifted once more and this time settled down finally in the midst of the public way, which had to be diverted in consequence. Here, too, in the course of time a chapel was built, which gave way in time to the present basilica. The famous pilgrimage of Loreto goes on today. Popes, kings and princes have visited this shrine and left great gifts. Later on a festival with liturgical rites was instituted, and in time the feast of the translation of the holy house was extended to many countries. —Fortnightly Review.

**Letters and Pounds.**

I believe the stolidity of the English character and its implicit acceptance of authority are due in a large measure to the fact that long before it leaves the spelling class it is ready to believe anything. And this unquestioning attitude of mind is only rendered the more hopeless when it comes to learn that in one case twelve ounces make a pound, in another case it requires sixteen. Indeed, if we had set ourselves deliberately to stamp out rational instincts and the habit of logical and thoughtful inquiry in the child mind, we probably could not have devised two more fiendish instruments than our scheme of spelling on the one hand and of weights and measures on the other.—London Mail.

**Unstamped Letters In England.**

Many people are unaware of the fact that the sender of an unstamped letter can be proceeded against for the postage. The moment a person posts an unpaid letter he becomes a debtor to the postoffice. If it is refused by the addressee the sender is liable for the postage. An enormous number of unstamped letters are posted every year. No record is kept of the exact number. Many large firms give instructions at the postoffice that unstamped letters are not to be delivered to them. They are then returned to the senders, and in the case of frequent offenders legal steps are taken.—London Lady.

**Her Simplicity.**

A silly little lady had a husband, a lover of gayety, who was inclined to neglect his wife. This lady while spending the winter in Devonshire said one day at the country postoffice:

"Dear me, what a silly mistake you postoffice people have made."

"How, madam?" asked the clerk.

"Why," she explained, with a titter, "here I have just got a letter from my husband, who is working hard in London, and the envelope is postmarked Monte Carlo."—London Queen.

**The Sweet Girl's Way.**

After a girl has worked for six months to get a young man, lying awake nights to think up new schemes of fascination, it is amazing to witness the coolness with which she can look up into his eyes after he has finally proposed and murmur tenderly, "You hypnotist!"—Somerville Journal.

**The Burglar's Jimmy.**

Why does the burglar call the tool with which he opens windows and doors a "jimmy?" No one seems to be sure. Perhaps it is merely a pet name. The French burglar calls his jimmy "Frere Jacques," which is first cousin to "Jimmy."

In prosperity the proud man knows nobody; in adversity nobody knows him.—Duquoin Call.

## THE GUANACO.

**A Patagonian Animal That Seeks Its Own Graveyard.**

It seems from the accounts given by Darwin and by W. H. Hudson that all the guanacos of the southern part of Patagonia must resort when the hour of death approaches to a certain spot in a certain river bed which has become a perfect mausoleum of their bones.

Mr. Hudson notes that it is only the guanaco of the southern extremity of the South American continent that has this habit, a habit restricted to descendants of forefathers who lived in an extremely rigorous climate. Mr Hudson conjectures that among these forefathers the instinct grew up when the stress of hunger and cold was very dire of resorting to this sheltered place in the river bed, where they might find warmth in their own closely collected numbers and possibly food. By a continual survival of those which betook themselves to this place of refuge the race instinct would be formed of resorting thither when they felt the tides of life running low. This feeling Mr. Hudson argues, their descendants are likely to experience now at the approach of the hour of death.

But now it is no longer just a passing spell of extreme cold that leads them thither. The death call has come and they must lay their bones in the common mortuary. It is not "in order to die" that the guanaco seeks this place; it would be nearer the truth if we were to say it was "in order to live."

But the most true account of all is that it is in mere obedience to the inherited instinct that the guanaco resorts to this refuge.

Yet another instance of this mysterious guidance is afforded by the habit of the rattlesnakes in the colder countries to assemble together for hibernation in caves. These snakes on emerging from the caves cover long distances in their wanderings, their young are generally born far away, and yet these young succeed in finding their way to the caves with the greatest certainty —London Spectator.

## FOIBLES OF LITERARY MEN.

Keats liked red pepper on his toast.

Dickens was fond of wearing jewelry.

Daudet wore his eyeglasses when asleep.

Joaquin Miller nails all his chairs to the wall.

Hawthorne always washed his hands before reading a letter from his wife.

Alexandre Dumas the younger bought a new painting every time he had a new book published.

Thackeray used to lift his hat whenever he passed the house in which he wrote "Vanity Fair."

Robert Browning could not sit still. With the constant shuffling of his feet holes were worn in the carpet.

Robert Louis Stevenson's favorite recreation was playing the flute in order, as he said, to tune up his ideas.

Darwin had no respect for books and would cut a big volume in two for convenience in handling, or he would tear out the leaves he required for reference

**New Year's on the Ganges.**

To know whether one will outlive the year is almost universally regarded as a very desirable piece of knowledge, and to acquire it the men and women of different nations resort to various stratagems to compel fate to stand and deliver. The dweller by the Ganges lights a tiny rush candle and fixes it upright on a bit of board, which he launches on the waters of the sacred stream. If it remains alight until he can count 777, the perfect number, he regards his prospects as good for the year. If it goes out the omen is unfavorable. He gives himself the benefit of expedition, too, for instead of counting in prosaic fashion—one, two, three, four—in the old slow style, he counts by leaps and bounds—five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty—and thus takes advantage of the flickering candle and fluctuating wave and increases his length of days by the glibness of his tongue.—Pittsburg Press.

**Watching the Old Year Out.**

Watching the old year out has been a common custom in many lands. In most countries it assumes with the serious minded the phase of devotion. In many countries where Roman Catholicism is the prevalent form of faith the year is begun with midnight masses. Among the Greek Catholics the same usage prevails. It declined in the Church of England, but was revived by several of the dissenting bodies, the watch night of the Methodists being merely a modification of the once general practice. Among the convivially inclined, however, watch night is taken anything but seriously, and the new year is welcomed with such signs of rejoicing as to one who did not understand the customs would seem to indicate that all men were heartily tired of existence and glad to see their years go by as speedily as possible.

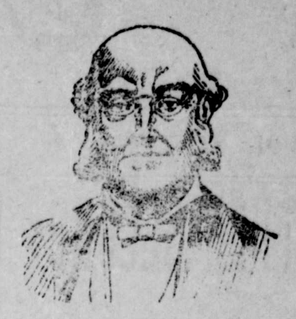
**The First January New Year's Day.**

Caesar selected the feast of Janus, the two faced god of war, as the year's great mile stone, because the statue of this god seemed to look back into the past and forward into the future; hence on New Year's day we are still paying tribute to a heathen god. Prior to the reform of the calendar the Romans observed the 21st day of December, the winter solstice, as the beginning of the year. This date and the summer solstice, the 21st of June, as well as the vernal and autumnal equinoctial changes in March and September, have come in for first place in the year at various times in the history of the world.


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| Dr. Martin's Neuralgia Cure. | Dr. Martin's Whooping Cough Cure. |
| Dr. Martin's Heart Cure. | Dr. Martin's Croup Cure. |
| Dr. Martin's Female Cure. | Dr. Martin's Cholera Infantum. |
| Dr. Martin's Chills and Fever. | Dr. Martin's General Debility. |
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