

The Moon and Its People.

The Lunarian Professor

and

His Remarkable Revelations Concerning

the Earth, the Moon and Mars

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.....While I was still gazing in that direction I suddenly became aware of a strange looking object coming through the cut and around the curve. It was a four wheeled vehicle something like a hand car, but it was not being “ pumped” nor were there any handles for propelling it in that way. The idea suddenly came to me that this car like the first I had seen, was propelled by a storage battery concealed somewhere about its anatomy. But the interest created by the car was quickly eclipsed by that inspired by its occupant ; and a more remarkable creature I never read about or dreamed about. He sat bolt upright on the seat at the rear end of the car and while he was at a distance, I took him for a rather stiff dignified and odd specimen of a man. But as he approached and I got a better opportunity for observing details, I directly came to doubt if he could be a man at all. When I first saw him, I observed what seemed to be a large fan-like appendage projecting from his back, which I then took to be some peculiar garment streaming out behind. But as he approached, this appendage separated into two, and spreading out to the right and left acted like brakes against the wind and rapidly checked the speed of the car, reminding me of the action of the wings of a bird, when it alights. In short to my great astonishment it turned out they were wings. I instinctively stepped back two or three paces to allow this strange apparition to pass, but to my surprise the car stopped directly opposite to me and its occupant with a slight flutter of the aforesaid wings, hopped lightly out of it and stood beside the track so near to me, that I could have touched him. For a moment or two he busied himself with some arrangement about his car, the nature of which I did not observe, as my attention was absorbed chiefly by himself.

In the description, that I shall now give of him, will be included a number of details that I did not observe at first, but which showed themselves during the progress of our interview. The large wings mentioned above were at least six feet in radius, and each was nearly a semi-circle. They could be folded like a fan and when in that position they lay down along his back from his shoulders to his heels and when fully extended reached from his heels to a point nearly five feet above his head. They were of a soft semitransparent, but thick and tough membranous material, full of veins and nerves and supported by stiff elastic ribs, radiating from their articulation at the shoulder to the circumference.

Besides these wings, he had two other pairs similar in texture, but much smaller. One pair was attached just in front of the principal pair and ordinarily they were directed upward beside his head and reaching above it. But he could also extend them laterally, so as to cover his face, as well as the back of his head and did so repeatedly while he was with me, apparently to shield himself from the rays of the sun. The other two were attached just below the main wings and extended downwards alongside of the body to the feet. But they too were extensible laterally and could be made to cover the entire lower half of the body. In short, these four minor wings were equivalent to clothes, and the numerous nerves by which they

were traversed, indicated that they were also delicate organs of the sensations of heat and touch.

In addition to these wings, there were six other limbs, two of which were legs and two were arms, in much the same position in which they occur in man. The third pair of limbs were attached to the thorax between the arms and legs, and were ordinarily folded across the thorax. I came to the conclusion these limbs could be used either as hands or feet as occasion required, but while he was with me he made little other use of them than to occasionally give me a sly poke with one of them—usually the right—in the side—usually the left side—about the position of the second rib from the bottom. As these gestures always came about in connection with some humorous or ludicrous idea, it occurred to me in a whimsical way to call these limbs his jokers. His head was immense, possessing, I should say double the capacity of the largest human head. The top part was globular, and the lower part, which might be called the face, was long and wedge shaped, tapering down to the jaws. The jaws were strong and well set with teeth and worked laterally instead of vertically as with us, and the slit forming the mouth was vertical and in the middle. There was no chin. The eyes were placed just above the mouth and at the base of the upper dome shaped portion of the head. They were of enormous size fully two inches in diameter, half globular and set far apart, forming as it were the corners of the face. They were not movable as ours are, because every part of the surface of the eye was equally good to see with ; and their position enabled their owner to see three-fourths of the horizon without turning his head. The face had not one particle of expression or mobility to it, but this was compensated a hundred times by the expression of the eyes. Their usual expression, when at rest, was one of supreme kindness and benevolence with a slight element of humor. But when the mind was in activity, the eyes beamed with good natured wit, were suffused with tender sentiment or flashed with intellectual brilliancy to a degree I would never have imagined possible. Under each of the wings there was an opening leading into the body, those of the middle wings being nearly three-fourths of an inch in diameter, and the others very much smaller. All were protected by movable lips. I soon discovered that these were for the purpose of breathing, the air being constantly inhaled and exhaled through them. I have no doubt the lining membrane of these breathing tubes was sensitive to odors and was therefore an organ of smell. As to ears, there was one plainly to be seen on the upper part of each arm, and I observed him move his arm in the proper directions to catch the sound. In the long conversation I had with him I cannot say that I heard any articulate voice. There was a slight humming noise, rising and falling in very agreeable musical cadences, and these appeared to accompany the enunciation of his ideas and thoughts when he addressed me. When I spoke to him, I used articulate words in plain English and he appeared to hear in the ordinary way. But his thoughts came to me like waves or pulsations and appeared to be injected bodily into my brain without any distinct sensation of hearing them. In short I directly came to perceive that it was a case of the telepathic transfer of ideas, experiments in which are known to most people, but which was in this case vastly more complete and perfect than I had ever imagined possible. In the report of the conversation between us that I give herein it is to be understood that I do not quote his language, but give the impression of his thoughts upon me in my own language, and the best I have been able to do, I am sensible, forms a very inadequate dress in which to set off the beauty of his sentiment or the strength of his reason.

When my visitor had finished whatever arrangement he was making with his car, he turned partly around and I saw he had in his hand a small spool of copper wire, two strands from which connected with the car. Next he performed some slight manipulation with his coil of wire, the nature of which I could not make out, but which produced the surprising result, that the car slowly rose from the track continuing upward till stopped by the wire, then my visitor drew it gently to one side and pushing a stout iron pin into the ground, he attached the

spool and coil to it and left it there, picketed out, precisely as a cow-boy pickets his mule, except that the car floated in the air gently pulling on its tether. I had for some moments been casting about in my mind for some appropriate manner in which to address my singular visitor. The more I observed his actions, the higher my opinion rose of his character, abilities and position in the scale of existence. Royal and aristocratic titles, such as Your Majesty, My Lord etc., are very awkward in the mouth of an American and seemed by no means sure to be appropriate in this case. Then I thought of our American titles. General, Colonel, Major, Judge, Squire, Governor, none of which of course would do. But the surprise and curiosity excited by this performance of picketing the car in the air would in another minute have overcome the tension of diffidence and doubt and I should have addressed him as something, even if no better title than plain Mister occurred to me.

But he saved me this necessity, by opening the conversation himself. He seemed to know what I had been thinking of.

“A title of address”, said he, “should be significant of facts. It is ridiculous to call a man Honorable, because you have sent him to the legislature, or to congress, or another person ‘Majesty’ whose understanding is below mediocrity. You may call me, ‘Sir,’ which title as you know means simply an older person and I will call you by some title, that means young—if it means *quite* young, it will still be very appropriate, eh?”

This was accompanied, by a queer, but decidedly jolly and good natured expression of the eyes and a gentle poke with his right middle hand described above.

“Then,” said I, “you think you are the older. The fact is, I am so well preserved, that almost everyone rates me ten or fifteen years younger than I am, and perhaps you do.”

“I am nineteen,” he said.

“Why,” I exclaimed, “I am more than three times that old.”

“Nevertheless, I am very much older than you,” he replied.

“You talk in riddles,” said I, “I don’t understand you.”

“Well, I will explain. You understand, that every race is made by its environment and the same is true of each individual of the race.”

“Certainly, that is my pet theory.”

“Well, the environment of the race is in reality, the environment of every individual in it, for every individual inherits the impress made upon the race during all past ages. For this reason a human infant just born is a being of far greater experience than a mature elephant; the experience of the race is his and it is expressed in the structure of his brain and body. In like manner an individual of our race has the long life of his race behind him and is older at birth than a human being is at 80, because our race has a vastly longer history and experience than yours.”

“Your idea is ingenious, but yet it must be admitted that a mature elephant knows more than a new born human infant.”

“ That depends on what you mean by knowledge,” he replied. “ The most knowing person has no knowledge when he is asleep, but he possesses the potentiality of getting it when he wakes up, and when he is awake, his knowledge extends only to the things about which his brain is active for the moment, while as to other things, the most that can be said is that, he may possess the potentiality of knowing them when the activity of his brain is directed to them, by appropriate stimulations. In like manner the potentiality of all the knowledge belonging to his race, slumbers in the new born infant ; and as he gradually wakes up in the process of his growth and development, this knowledge, upon proper stimulation of the brain, flashes into view. Therefore everything depends upon the race to which one belongs. Our race had already reached a high degree of cultivation before your’s was distinguishable from four footed beasts.”

My disposition to generalize, unwittingly influenced no doubt by my early Sunday School education, here led me to make an observation, that a moment later I perceived to be crude and ill considered. It was to the effect that this great age to which his race had attained, had made their superior mental development possible and had given the time necessary for their physical evolution through and from the human form.

His answer to this was a loud and prolonged, ha ha ha ! That is to say, I heard nothing quite like that, but was impressed by a sensation that his mental state exhibited in human expression would be laughter loud and long.

Said he ; “ the conceit of the human race is the laughing stock of all our people, but you are a very young race and you will know a great deal more when you get older. Individuals of our race and kindred races have visited the earth, and allowed themselves to be seen. And descriptions of them have been attempted by some of your ancient seers.”

The human race having become dominant on earth, they have entirely overrated their importance and not only fancy that they will some day own the rest of the solar system, but imagine that they will sprout wings and develop into beings like us ; but any of you that have studied natural history and your new theories of evolution, ought to know that beings having twelve limbs could never be evolved from a race having but four. The only possible evolution by which your race could ever possess wings, would be the conversion through use and habit of your arms into wings, which has actually occurred in the case of your bats and birds.

The families on earth that are related to and resemble us are the insect tribes. In fact we trace our origin back to an ancestry, which according to many of our best scientists is exactly parallel with that of your insects, and they alone of mundane inhabitants could ever expect to evolve a posterity at all like us, and they never will, for the conditions on earth will forever keep them in a subordinate position to the present dominant race.”

During this speech, notwithstanding its intense interest to me I was becoming impatient and nervous with the apprehension that he might leave me without telling me where he was from and how he made that car of his disregard the law of gravitation. In the solution of this last riddle especially I could readily see a utilitarian outcome of overwhelming importance. I am afraid that my questions were put with an undignified eagerness and precipitancy, which no doubt he observed, for he first proceeded to say that he had much information to communicate to me and was glad to see me desirous of receiving it.

“ You understand the law of the *attraction* of gravitation”—I nodded assent—“ but you know nothing of the repulsion of gravitation.” Indeed I did not. I had never heard of such a thing.

He continued : “ All polar attractions are accompanied by repulsions. This you see in magnetism and in electricity, and it is equally true in gravitation. The force with which bodies fall toward each other consists merely of the difference between the attractive and the repulsive force. Ordinarily the attractive force takes hold of the near ends of the molecules of ether contained in solid or fluid bodies, and the repulsive force affects only the further ends of the same molecules, so that by reason of the difference in the distances over which these two forces operate the attractive force always over-powers repulsion. But we have discovered a way by which the action of these forces is reversed, so that the work of repulsion is performed on the near end of the molecules and attraction on the further end, and then attraction being the weaker of the two, the body, as a whole, is repelled. We imitate in fact the action that takes place when the attraction between two electrified bodies turns to repulsion. Repulsion also takes place between the sun and the tails of comets. The comet’s tail is attracted toward the nucleus of the comet and at the same time repelled from the sun. We have not been able to make bodies discriminating like that in their attractions.

“ But,” said I, “ it must take as much power to make this change as the changed condition yields after it is made and I cannot see where you get the power ; you cannot make something out of nothing.”

“ Very true,” said he, “ but the resistance to the change is in reality—very small, and it is accomplished, even by neuro-magnetism in a wonderfully simple manner. The proportion of force required to do it is no greater than that required to move the slide valve in the steam chest of one of your steam engines, by which the enormous force of the steam is alternately shifted to first one end and then the other of the cylinder. We can generate the force required for this, in our own tissues and it accumulates in electric organs possessed by us similar to those of your electric eels. I will show you.”

With that he reached out and touched me on the mouth. There was a flash and a sensation as if a coal of fire had touched me, and a smart shock passed through my limbs. I was easily enough convinced that he possessed large electric storage capacity, and he told me he could give me a shock 100 times as strong as the one I had received. I was willing to take his word for that. But I was by no means satisfied with his explanation of the reversal of the forces in gravitation. It seemed to me to involve a mechanical fallacy and I half suspected he purposely avoided giving me the true explanation. Although I have since given the subject considerable thought I have not been able to clear it up. Theorize as I might however, there was the fact that gravitation was somehow suspended, in the case of the car.

I said to him earnestly, that I would give anything I possessed to be able to understand and apply these principles as he did.

“ I have no doubt at all of that”, said he, “ but it is our secret, and I could commit no more heinous act of treason against my people or our planet, than by divulging it.

“ For goodness sake,” I exclaimed, “ tell me what planet you inhabit, and what harm could result from giving this invaluable information.”

“ My home is the moon,” he said quietly, “ and I have ever since wondered how I came to receive the announcement without the slightest degree of surprise as if it were an every day occurrence to meet people from the moon.

“ The discovery you wish me to reveal to you, was made by our ancestors over a million years ago,” he went on, “ the population of the moon was then as great as the planet would support in comfort, and its regulation and maintenance had been reduced to a strictly scientific basis. It was seen at once and soon experimentally proved that our people could by the use of this principle easily visit the earth, and if the discovery should be communicated to the earth people, there would be nothing to prevent flooding the moon with an undesirable horde of adventurers, who would like a swarm of seventeen year locusts proceed to lay claim to everything in sight and seriously disturb the lunar peace and prosperity. And so the communication of this secret was forbidden on pain of the terrible punishment of projection.”

My inquiring look showed that I did not understand this, and he continued.

“ Projection is the extreme penalty of our laws. In it the criminal is locked up in a spherical shell of cast iron having two small glass windows and famished with compressed air in alumina flasks, and food sufficient to last from a few days to two years according to the severity of the sentence, the larger amount of food going with the more severe sentence. After he is fastened in, the repulsion of gravitation is turned on and the ball instantly projects itself into space bounding off at a terrific speed. Yet no matter what direction it takes it can never come into collision with any body whether planet or sun, but whenever it approaches one it is instantly repelled, and thus it continues to be hurled from one to another forever, and the longer the criminal lives to perceive and reflect that he is an outcast from all worlds, the greater his punishment is supposed to be. Is it a theory of some of our scientists that a projected person continues to be repelled from sun to sun till at last he reaches the edge of creation and is hurled completely out of the universe. However this may be, the friends of a projected person never know where he is.”

“ I hope,” said I, “ that you are not often under the necessity of inflicting such a terrible punishment as that.”

“ No one has been projected for over forty years, but 500,000 years ago the punishment was frequently resorted to.”

“ In traversing the space between the earth and the moon, I suppose you will first move by repulsion from the earth ?”

“ Yes, I use repulsion for the first part of the journey. This gives me a rapid send off from the earth. My speed constantly increasing till I reach the distance of 216,000 miles from the earth, at this point the repulsion of the moon—which by the way is exerted against me from the time I leave the earth—is just equal to that of the earth, but the momentum acquired by that time carries me almost home, the moon’s repulsions constantly diminishing the speed and at last bringing me to a stand still or sheering me off to one side. It is then necessary to turn on attraction, which causes me to approach the moon with a speed which is easily checked and regulated by using repulsion when necessary.”

“ The terrific speed with which you travel or fall, as we might say, from one planet to another, I should think would overpower you— take your breath away.”

“ We have to guard against this, while we traverse the atmosphere, both at this and at the other end of the journey, but once clear of the atmosphere we fall through empty space without the slightest sensation of motion and realize that we are going only by the rapid decrease in the apparent size of the globe we are leaving and increase of the one we approach. It is impossible to conceive a more thrilling experience than is conveyed by the perception of the growth in a few hours of your earth from a ball six feet in diameter as it appears to us at the start, to the vast and illimitable expanse of variegated beauty it gets to be before we reach it.

On the journey, it is necessary to guard against the blistering heat of the sun’s rays upon the side on which they fall, and the intense cold which we encounter on the shady side ; and we must look out that neither ourselves nor any of the loose articles we carry in the car such as our flasks of compressed air, our food etc. are repelled from the car and allowed to fall to earth or moon by their ordinary gravity, for the change to repulsion only applies to the iron part of the car and not other things. It cannot be applied to wood or to animal or vegetable tissue etc. We guard against all these contingencies by having a stout cover over our ear, supported by steel hoops, when we are on an intermundane trip. When we travel on the ground, this is folded up and not used."

Then I suppose the wheels of your car come into use when you travel on the ground, for I can see no use for them in your “ intermundane” journeys."

“ That is true. This car I have with me is my ordinary carriage at home. It is a railroad car as you see by the flanges on the wheels. Railroads with us are public free highways, built and maintained by the state. They have from four to twelve tracks. Every person who is qualified by his education and training to manage a car is furnished with one by the state. The propelling power is nothing but gravity either in attraction or repulsion, the former being used on down grades and the latter on up grades, the car having rollers that hook under a flange at the top of the rail to prevent the car from rising bodily from the track.

The surface of our planet is very rough, but still the grading for roads is light, as it is possible to ascend grades of 100 per cent or even steeper. Level grades on our roads are always avoided, and in districts where this cannot be done, we use electric roads.

The cars are so constructed that different parts are electrically insulated from each other, by which means a part of the car can be placed under the influence of attraction and the rest under that of repulsion. This is done on down grades. The weight of the load and of part of the car pulling down and the weight of the rest of the car holding back. It is always arranged to have the car heavier than its load, and the driver can regulate the force used by balancing one against the other, so that a car of many tons shall press on the rails with the weight of only a very few pounds. Thus the wear and tear on road beds and rails is almost nothing and the roads are practically everlasting.

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“ I am amazed” said I, “ to learn that the moon is inhabited and by a race apparently more advanced than our own. Our astronomers have assured us that the moon is a desolate played out barren world without air or water ; totally unfit for inhabitants.”

“ The astronomers could only report what they could see, and the side of the moon visible from the earth is as they describe it, but they have never seen the further side and never will, for that side is always turned from the earth. But the population of the moon is not far from

half that of the earth and the people live in greater comfort. But there is no population living on the surface on the hemisphere facing the earth—I see this puzzles you,” he said.

It certainly did. “ Do you mean that the Lunarians live under ground ?” I inquired.

“ I will explain. The moon is a much lighter body than the earth bulk for bulk, a cubic yard of it containing on an average only six tenths as much matter as an average yard of earth. The reason of this is that a very large part of the moon’s bulk is made up of interstices, caves and openings. Now it is a remarkable fact that the hemisphere of the moon facing the earth is much lighter than the further one, so much so that the center of gravity is 33 miles further from this side of the moon than from the further side. This fact has been suspected by some of your astronomers. The consequence of it is that the sea has all gone to the further hemisphere, and the near hemisphere is in the highest place, about 33 miles above the level of the sea. It is much as if a concave cap, the material of which is 33 miles thick at the center and tapers to zero all round the rim, were fitted on to a sphere. This rim is at the edge of the moon, as seen from the earth. Our atmosphere like yours, gets lighter as we ascend and is too thin to support life at a height of five miles, so that the great plateaus of our hither hemisphere are over 20 miles higher than any appreciable atmosphere. So you can see the impossibility of life on the hither surface of the moon if you reflect a moment what the conditions would be on a mundane plateau 33 miles above the sea level. Your highest mountains are only between five and six miles high, and you know the impossibility of either vegetable or animal life at even that altitude. On the earth such elevations are regions of perpetual snow, and the hither surface of the moon would be such a region if it possessed water and an atmosphere. But while the surface on this side is uninhabitable, there are immense tracts of underground space, that have been converted into habitable territory. This underground country lies so far below the surface that it is practically near the sea level throughout. It is approached at all parts of the rim of the cap just described, and there are many thousands of tunnels entering it all round this rim, especially in the equatorial parts of the moon. A great amount of labor has been expended, not only on these entrances, but on the internal cavities to which they lead ; but compared with the work performed for us by nature, our own labor is but an insignificant item—hardly so much as the labor of your race in fitting up the earth for your residence. The entrances are all volcanic craters, and the vast cavities to which they lead, were excavated long ages ago by volcanic action. The material blown out of the volcanoes, mostly fell upon the hither side of the moon increasing the bulk of the cap ; most of the volcanoes being on this side. But even the material thrown from the lateral regions was drawn this way by the attraction of the earth and after describing a longer or shorter curve, fell on the hither side of the moon.

Nearly all the moon’s volcanoes are on the hither portion, the volcanic region occupying about two-thirds of the whole surface of the moon. The weight of bodies on the hither side is appreciably less than on the further side. These facts are supposed to be due to the earth’s attraction neutralizing that of the moon and having resulted in building up the vast protuberance or table land (of light and porous material) on this side, the latter is often called, by us the “ Mundane Hump”, in recognition of the earth’s instrumentality in its formation. The interior continent is often spoken of as the “ Pocket” by the people on the further side ; or sometimes as the “ Chest”, and the “ Hump” is called its Lid.

The further side of the moon is called the Exterior Continent, but often humorously designated by the people of the “ Pocket”, as the Out-door Continent.”

“ But,” said I, “ what a strange life it must be in those underground cavities. I suppose of course you can have nothing better than artificial light there ?”

“ True,” he said, “ our light is mostly artificial, but it is made as bright as we can bear it. It is electric light, but it is regulated to be quite equal to sun light and it never goes out. There is no night in the underground country, as there is outside.”

“ This is wonderful !—But where do you get the power to furnish this light ? Have you got waterfalls and coal beds down there ?”

“ We have many waterfalls, but do not utilize them to any great extent for their power and we have a considerable amount of coal, which however we do not use for fuel, but reserve for food purposes, to be drawn upon as may be required.”

“ Is stone coal what you have to eat then?” I here broke in. “ With exasperating deliberation, he gave me an admonitory poke with his right joker.

“ One thing at a time—one thing at a time. You wanted to know where we get power to turn into electric lighting. It is the power of gravity. If one of your perpetual motion cranks understood the secret of the use of the repulsion of gravitation, he could contrive a perpetual motion in an hour and a half. We have many forms of such machines that have been in use for ages. One of these is the pendulum machine. This consists of a pendulum weighing from a few pounds to many tons and so contrived that when it reaches the lowest part of its swing it automatically turns on the repulsion of gravitation, which reinforces its momentum on the ascending part of its arc, enough to compensate for the work done by it and the friction of the machine. Another machine is the oscillating balance. This consists of weights at each end of a beam balanced in the middle and so governed by an automatic shunting apparatus, that one of the weights is under the influence of attraction while the other is under that of repulsion. When the former has reached the bottom of its oscillation and the latter the top, the force is reversed in each and so the motion is perpetual.

Another machine is the Automatic hammer, which is a literal hammer though it may weigh many tons. The end of its handle is confined by a stationary wrist, while the hammer rises and falls under the effect of repulsion and attraction automatically alternated by shunting apparatus. Then we have the vertical parabolic railway ; which consists of two steep inclined tracks, meeting each other at the foot. A car runs alternately down one and up the other on much the same principle as the pendulum machine. There are numerous other machines, but they all operate on the same principle, just as you have many forms of water wheels, all operated by the weight of water. So you see our power costs us nothing at all after the machine is built, except for the oil for its lubrication. As these machines have been known and used by us for many thousands of years, you may readily perceive what changes we have been able to make in all those conditions of our planet, that relate to our comfort and general purposes. You may add to this, that any exertion we make relating to the movement of heavy bodies, is ten times as effectual as the same exertion made on earth. “ Water and air with us are only one-sixth as heavy as on earth, and the average soil and rocks one-tenth as heavy ; so that our laborers handle wheelbarrows holding a cubic yard of material as easily as yours do their little barrows containing two or three cubic feet.”

Here I interposed again. “ You speak of your atmosphere being only one-sixth as heavy as ours. That agrees with what our astronomers have told us, and they have pointed out that even if there is such an atmosphere, on the moon, animal life like ours is not possible there, because the air is too thin.”

“ Your astronomers do not consider that animal life and activity depend, not on the amount of air the animal is surrounded by, but by the amount of it he can use. The fishes in your

waters have less air to the cubic foot of space than we have, yet are active, but if you take them out of the water and surround them with ten times as much air as they had, they nevertheless die, because they have not lungs suitable for breathing it. But furthermore it is not the amount of air that is of such consequence to animal life, but the amount of oxygen. Your air consists of about 21 parts of oxygen to 79 of nitrogen, and mixed with it is a considerable amount of carbonic acid and other impurities. In our air the proportions of nitrogen and oxygen are about reversed, and there is a far less amount of carbonic acid gas. There is also a much greater quantity of ozone, which as you know, is a concentrated and more active form of oxygen. And so on the whole, when I take a breath of air here on your earth, I get but a slightly greater quantity of oxygen than at home.”

“ Then you are not greatly inconvenienced in being transferred from lunar conditions to those of earth ?”

“ Well, not with respect to breathing, but when we are at the surface of the earth we are greatly oppressed by the weight of your atmosphere and by our own increased weight as well. Ten or fifteen minutes is as long as we can stand it at one time. But we can get speedy relief by ascending ten thousand miles or so, and when we have come to earth to make extended studies of things here, we are compelled to interrupt them by frequently going up and remaining awhile.

I had become not only intensely interested in the extraordinary information communicated by my visitor, but greatly fascinated by his person and presence ; and his last speech made me painfully apprehensive that I was about to lose his company, and so I expressed the wish that if he felt obliged to go up stairs to recover himself, he would return and continue the interview as soon as possible. He replied that he would be compelled to return home as soon as he left me, but added that he would remain with me for a considerable time longer, observing that he felt exceedingly glad to impart information to so willing a listener. I could not at the time reconcile his intention of remaining a considerable time longer with what he said about not being able to remain at the earth’s surface more than ten or fifteen minutes at a time, as I thought he had already considerably exceeded that. But not wishing to lose time by having him reconcile his observations, I hastened to get back to the thread of his discourse, by asking what sort of food the lunarians live on.

“ The Lunarians are exclusively vegetarians and live chiefly on grains and grasses and leguminous plants in some degree resembling those on earth, but of an entirely different habit, for they all or nearly all, mature in the period of one-half of a lunar month or about fourteen of your days. But this will not seem so surprising, when you reflect that we have continuous sunshine without night during the whole time. Of course this observation applies only to the exterior continent on the further half of the moon. Our plants were all developed on that side and became adapted to the seasons there, and they generally retain their habits of growth since their introduction to the interior continent, or Pocket. But in many cases, by changing the conditions of nourishment, new varieties have been developed, having a longer or shorter period of growth. Much more than half of our food products are produced under extremely artificial conditions. The artificial heat we require for cooking, for warmth etc., is produced by means of electricity and so is our artificial light ; moreover, we do not allow any organic matter, such as dead bodies, dead trees or vegetables or any sort of refuse or excrete matters, to rot either in the open air or in the ground, and the manuring of the soil is strictly forbidden. Our air therefore is very poor in carbonic acid as, (or carbonic dioxide), which constitutes almost the sole food required for the growth of plants. In fact about all that the air gets of this gas is that thrown off from our lungs in breathing. To use this up, we cultivate various air plants that grow with little or no roots and yet cover the ground with an agre-

eable carpet. Some of these are eatable. All organic matters, when they become refuse, are carefully collected in great air tight and powerful tanks, in which they are heated under an enormous pressure until their original organization entirely disappears. The dimensions of the tanks are reduced during this process by the gradual forcing in of the walls, which are made movable for that purpose, and when the contained material has become reduced to about the consistency and constitution of your ordinary lignite or soft coal, it is forced through a number of cylindrical holes on one side of the tank, by which it is moulded into round sticks of coal, and is then ready to be used over again. The whole process is an imitation of that by which mineral coal is produced in nature, both on the earth and the moon, except that it is accomplished artificially with us in about 50 hours, while nature takes thousands of years for it. The fluids and nitrogenous and other volatile substances pressed out, are secured and saved by proper absorbents. These together with the coal are used by our food growers in producing their plants.

The planting is all done in vats or chambers with air tight roofs. The bottom of a vat is covered with a few inches of soil specially prepared and appropriate for the plant intended to be sown. After the seeds germinate the vat is covered and the inside is brightly illuminated with electricity and filled with carbonic dioxide, obtained by burning a proper quantity of coal in a retort, which is also accomplished by electricity. All the conditions necessary for rapid growth are supplied to the plants and they are forced forward to maturity without any pause or delay, such as takes place in the growth of plants on earth, through the intervention of cloudy or stormy weather, too much or too little moisture, too much or too little heat, the darkness of night etc.

The same method of cultivation prevails to a great extent on the exterior continent, although as the sun shines on that continent about 350 hours at a time, which constitutes the length of the day there, the vats are often merely covered by air tight glass roofs and the sun is the growing power instead of electricity.”

“ I understand now,” said I, “ what you meant by saying you reserved your mineral coal for food purposes. You draw on it only when the steady supply of artificial coal fails ?”

“ That is correct.”

“ But if you rigorously save every particle of your organic matters to be reconverted into food, I don’t see why it should ever fail unless your population increases. But you have not informed me on that subject.”

“ The control of the reproduction of the population has been in the hands of the state from the remotest antiquity,” said he ; “ and no increase in the total number has ever been permitted unless there had already been an increase in the means of supporting the population by the discovery of improved methods or new appliances. The tendency and policy has always been to allow the population to keep up near the limits of the means of support, and occasionally it has crowded a little too close. Then there are occasional losses by fire and a more or less steady unavoidable waste of food materials in their ordinary handling. Some are lost in the sea. But as long as there is a store of mineral coal to draw upon, no such losses can entail more than a temporary inconvenience. One thing that has a considerable effect on the food supply, is the change in fashions, that often takes place in a manner that the authorities cannot foresee or provide for.”

“ Then fashion holds sway in the moon as well as the earth ! “ Well, I am surprised ! But as your clothes appear to grow on you I don’t see how fashion can interfere very much, or how it could affect the question of food.”

“ Fashion with us has nothing to do with dress. As you say, nature has provided us with a dress at once suitable and beautiful. Whatever faults we have, personal vanity is not among them. Our attention is but little absorbed in ourselves, but is constantly directed to others and to the service of the community. If anyone should betake himself to personal frills and ornaments, I fancy he would be told he was getting like the Earthlings, and, he would be advised to go up and live on the Hump, so he could be near the people he was trying to ape.

But there is muck variety and change of fashion with us in the construction and ornamentation of our buildings, grounds and resorts, and the fashion prevailing in relation to the transmutation of the dead is making a steady inroad upon our total food supply.

I wondered what he could mean by the transmutation of the dead—but said nothing, awaiting his explanation.

“ You may have thought,” he went on, “ that our dead were utilized and turned into lignite like other effete organic substances.”

“ Certainly,” I said, “ that disposition of a useless body is preferable to any method that prevails on earth. Here as soon as a man dies his presence becomes so intolerable to us, that we are obliged in self defense to consign him to earth. Even then the corruption resulting from dissolution is disseminated through the soil contaminating the water supply and starting epidemics of diphtheria and typhoid fever, besides occupying room that sooner or later is begrudged to him. Cremation is certainly an improvement on inhumation, but even that is a considerable expense, and when it is over, we have only a handful of raw mineral ashes left. The best part of the man has gone off in smoke and we have not three or four pounds of good coal left to show for him as you have. And then it ought to be a source of gratification to the defunct himself if he could know it, that his ‘ corpus ’ was turned to some useful account.”

He here turned his vast eyes upon me with such a deep expression of mild and sorrowful reproach. that I instantly felt as if I had made an exceedingly flippant speech and had said far too much or much too little, but he gave me no time to amend it.

“ We are much more sentimental than that,” he said ; “ our dead are not cremated in the manner practiced on earth, but are totally disintegrated by electricity, and turned into their component elements. No portion of their substance is lost or dissipated, but the material is all conserved and caused to form a new organism. The fashion originated many ages ago, to use the materials to grow some common sort of a plant or shrub from the seed, such as something resembling your grass or fern or some cereal. This was done in the garden vats I have described to you. Plants grown under these circumstances or any circumstances for that matter, very often sprout or grow into forms differing slightly from the normal. Taking advantage of this, our botanists have produced food plants having a wonderful concentration of nourishing qualities in small compass and accompanied by the least possible quantity of waste products. And in like manner our undertakers have developed a great variety of plants to be grown from the constituent materials of the dead. It was formerly the fashion to preserve only a portion of the plants, thus grown. A few leaves were distributed among the friends of the deceased and pressed in herbariums for preservation. But the growing veneration for ancestors and consideration for each other together with the prevalent belief among us that

we are formed in the very image of the Deity, finally brought about the practice of preserving entire, the plants produced by transmutation. Thus there is already a vast accumulation of these vegetable representatives of deceased Lunarians, and our economists point out that if this goes on, we will be compelled to constantly draw on our natural food reserves, and that finally these will all be consumed and everything eatable will at last become transmuted into these sacred and inviolable forms. In short the living race will finally become transmuted into dead dry plants. These arguments of the philosophers have as yet had no effect on the people and their priestly leaders. They denounce the philosophers as being unfaithful to the religion and traditions of the race, and as advocating cannibalism.

They say : ‘ you would reduce us to the level of the neerophagous Earthlings, who from time immemorial have consumed the elements of their ancestors and friends and enemies alike, with beastly indifference’.”

“ But,” I interrupted ; “ you know they are mistaken in this opinion of us. Only a few savages on earth are man eaters.”

“ True,” said he, “ but what they mean is, that from your manner of disposing of the dead, when they become decomposed, their elements are dispersed in the air and absorbed by the soil from which they pass into plants and finally become your food. I have heard a Lunarian say he would starve rather than eat a grain containing a molecule of nitrogen or carbon, that had once formed a part of one of his ancestors.”

“ Well, I think that is the culmination of scrupulosity. I am glad such phenomenal squeamishness does not exist on this planet.”

“ I do not defend it nor approve of it,” he replied, “ any more than you do. But still I think your complacent congratulations of your own race rather out of place. You are quite as much under the dominion of indefensible ideas as we. For example, you have an ancient book whose doctrines and precepts you think you must accept and obey whether they are agreeable and suitable or not, although the men who gave them, have been dead two or three thousand years, while scarcely two of you agree as to what the precepts are and each generation has a different interpretation of them. You have a sect that believe that your Deity is mortally offended with all who do not submit to be immersed under water, while others think he will be satisfied with their having a few drops sprinkled on the face. You have sects that believe your Deity is greatly displeased to see people hopping around on their legs, or dancing as you call it, while one sect employ dancing as the most satisfactory mode of worshipping him. You have a sect that believe that pictures, music and ornaments, and coats with collars that turn down are offensive to the Deity, and who think he is best pleased with silent worship, while others think he likes to be flattered in loud speeches and louder songs addressed to himself, and that he is indifferent whether coat collars stand up or lie down. You have a sect that believe that buttons on the clothes are offensive to him and who therefore fasten their clothing with hooks and eyes. All these sects and many more equally absurd, get their various contradictory notions from the same book, and they adhere to them with such tenacity that in many cases they would die rather than give them up and would if they dared, murder other people for not accepting them, and in times past have done so in thousands of instances. In former times it was a common opinion, that your Deity had an arch enemy called the Devil, who opposed, bothered and thwarted him in the most provoking manner, and among other things inspired and aided thousands of unattractive old women to turn them-selves into wolves, cats and other beasts and to become witches, and in these conditions to attack and injure their neighbors and bring strange diseases upon them. For these offenses these old women were judged by your sacred books and were burnt by the thousand. And yet many of

the men of this generation, while still holding to the sacred books, have not only repudiated witchcraft, but even the devil himself, and an attempt to burn a witch would now be met by an insurrection. Then you have a sect, or a nation rather, of people, who claim that they are the peculiar favorites of your Deity, who chose them from among all the nations and set them apart as his own, and ordered them to practice a certain peculiar mutilation on the bodies on their children as an evidence and seal of his promises to them. No one of these people would consider himself entitled to hold up his head if it were not for his mutilation. Notwithstanding the claims of these peculiar people are admitted by the rest, no people on earth have been so despised, persecuted and maltreated as they. For over 2,000 years they have been kicked and cuffed about the earth, robbed, driven repeatedly from one country to another, and have never in all that time possessed the sovereignty of a single township. Then again your race believe they are made and formed in the very image and likeness of your Deity, yet you conceal that likeness with garments as if ashamed of it, and such are your notions of propriety that if a man should show this divine likeness in public, naked or even half naked, he would be sent to prison, or a mad house. And then consider the fashions of these garments. Those whose business it is to make clothes, constantly demand changes in the fashion, so as to secure more employment and profit for themselves, and whenever certain ones, who have appointed themselves to be the leaders, say the word, everybody feels obliged to procure new clothes of such sort as these leaders require, notwithstanding those they already have may be good, useful and becoming, and that those prescribed, may be hideous, unsuitable and unhealthful. Many of you are actually so infatuated with this bondage, that if you could not comply with its requirements, you would regard life as of no account.”

During the delivery of this tirade, the flashing eyes of my visitor showed how much his feeling was enlisted in the subject and during the whole time I continued to reproach myself for having started him off on such a rampage, by an unlucky, if not impertinent remark of my own. I was made to recall the adage that people who live in glass houses, should not engage in throwing stones ; and it was forcibly shown me how very much “ human nature” the Lunarians possess, since while he was willing to point out, criticise and condemn the follies of his own people, he would not allow an outsider to do it. I was greatly relieved when he paused and gave me an opportunity to change the subject, which I did with a precipitancy, that evidently amused him and brought back the good natured expression that habitually possessed his eyes. In fact I believe that the change I had observed was due to intellectual activity and was not accompanied by any real feeling of resentment or passion. Said I, “ One of our wise men has expressed the opinion, that the people of the earth, are “ maistry fules,” and I believe that most other wise men agree with him. So I beg you will waste no more of your precious time in arraigning our race, but go on with your intensely interesting and instructive account of your own race and your remarkable planet.” He thereupon good-naturedly resumed.

The Lunarian professor and his remarkable revelations concerning the Earth, the moon, and Mars : together with an account of the cruise of the Sally Ann (1909)

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