

## FOR A LEISURE MOMENT

### Electrical Progress

"What did the year 1911 contribute to the electrical progress of the world?"

This question, asked of Dr. Nikola Tesla, brought forth the following response:

"While there has been no fundamental discovery announced during the year just past, progress has been steady and continuous. Almost insensibly great changes have been brought about in various departments.

"Probably the most important of these is the extension of electrical transmission lines from hydro-electric central plants. Although the spectre of government restriction has had a deterrent effect on the development of this important industry, it has not inflicted a permanent injury.

"The technical records show that several million horse power have partly been and will soon entirely be harnessed to the service of man.

"Next in importance is the electrification of the railroads, the advantages of which are now thoroughly appreciated, even by the most conservative of railroad men. That which has been achieved in this field has conferred countless benefits on the community.

"Electric lighting has been greatly advanced through the introduction of the new type of incandescent lamp, which has been considerably improved in the last year and offers greater possibilities.

"The storage battery is still waiting for some discoverer who will open up a new path; but while this is true, improvements have been made in the mechanical construction and arrangement of the elements, rendering the cells more suitable for practical service.

"Equally gratifying strides in telegraphy and telephony have been made, both in the extension of distance and improvement of transmission. Greater progress would have been made long ago had it not been for erroneous theories that have taken hold of the minds of electricians.

"Wireless communication has developed and has been considerably extended also, but here, too, progress is still hampered by the hypnotizing effect of the Hertzian wave theory. Some of the most able experts are still laboring under the illusion that messages are transmitted by these waves. As a matter of fact, it is the currents through the ground that affect the receiver. The Hertzian waves are extinguished within a small radius from the transmitter.

"Investigations in radio-activity have also yielded tangible results, though it must be stated that they have been drowned by impossible forecasts.

"Still another branch of applied electricity, electro-therapy—more particularly through the instrumentality of currents of high frequency—has been much enhanced, the most valuable results being the eradication of cancer and like malignant growths."

### Owls Like London

It is astonishing how quickly birds strange to English life can settle down in the neighborhood of smoky London, says the "Pall Mall Gazette." At the present time there are quite a large number of tawny owls seen all over the northern suburbs.

Some five or six years ago a few of these birds were set free from the Zoological Gardens, and they at once settled down in the neighborhood and have thrived exceedingly. Owls apparently find life in London not only tolerable, but pleasant, for some of the "little owls" as the Dutch owls are termed, which were brought to this country some time ago, have taken up their abode in the vicinity of the metropolis, one being caught a few weeks back as near town as Brockley.

Every one remembers the experiment which the Zoological Gardens authorities made of liberating squirrels, but very few people know that at the same time a number of Australian crested pigeons were set free. Unlike the squirrels, which settled down at once in Regent's Park, these pigeons have migrated, though some of them remained in the park long enough to nest. None, however, can be found now nearer to London than Mill Hill.

One experiment of the Zoo authorities was scarcely successful. This was the experiment of setting free a few kites. These birds used to return every day to the garden to be fed in one of the enclosures, but their presence, flying about as they did, where they would, so frightened some of the smaller and more valuable birds in the aviaries that it was necessary to recapture them.

### "Solid Gold"

Commercially speaking, the term "solid gold" is a misnomer, since such gold has not been used for many, many years. Some of the ancient Roman jewellery and some of that of the Renaissance period was, indeed, made of pure gold, worked up by hand with the crudest of tools, but since the old day there has been a constantly increasing employment of alloys, for the reason that jewellers found that the harder the gold was rendered by good alloys the greater its wearing qualities and the more secure, therefore, was the setting of the gems it contained. Nowadays jewellery is of eighteen, fourteen or ten carats, according to the design and character of the article, and it is much more frequently ten than eighteen carats.

### The Quick Lunch

Years ago, when a certain railroad was in course of construction, its progress was a matter of great interest to the people of the region. A farmer who sold provisions to the contractors often reached the place where the men were at work at meal-time. He was greatly impressed at their voracity. The work was hard, and when the dinner-bell rang, every man made a dash for the table, and before one could believe it possible, the food had disappeared.

One day a workman on his way to the table tripped on the roof of a tree and fell. He lay quite still, making no attempt to rise.

The farmer rushed at him in great concern.

"Are you badly hurt?" he asked.

"No," answered the man.

"Well, why don't you get up and go to your dinner?"

"No use," returned the other, sadly.

"It's too late now."

### Mr. Balfour's Wit

As is well known, Mr. Balfour is an enthusiastic motorist, and here is the story of an incident which happened during one of his recent journeys. With him was a friend formerly in the House of Commons, and now Recorder of a certain city. The chauffeur was signalled by a Surrey constable to stop. Mr. Balfour was his own chauffeur. The constable insisted that the speed was over the limit. Mr. Balfour was sure it was not. "Well, look at your indicator," said Mr. Balfour sweetly, "but," with emphasis, "I've got a recorder." As the policeman did not know what this might be, and fearing to show his own ignorance if a prosecution should follow, he withdrew his hand, and Mr. Balfour and the Recorder, all smiles, continued their drive. The constable heard them laugh and scratched his head in doubt, but it was too late to do anything.

### What was Wrong

The late Father Thomas Burke, in one of his lectures told the following story:—A peasant in a remote part of Galway was one day standing at the door of his cabin. He did not look particularly well off, poor fellow, and an English tourist passing stopped to speak to him. As he did so he saw the children inside playing with a pig. The Englishman was shocked. "My good fellow," he said, "why have you that pig in the house? It does not seem right." "Why not, sorr?" answered Pat promptly. "Why not? Sure, an' hasn't the house ivery accommodation that any raysonable pig would require?"

### State of Trade

He was a commercial traveller, and things were going very badly with him—so badly, in fact, that he wrote home in a very melancholy mood concerning the state of trade. Thereupon the head of the firm wired, "Hang it, if you cannot get enough orders to make your expenses, you had better return at once." The reply read, "Orders are very scarce, but am making a lot of expenses."

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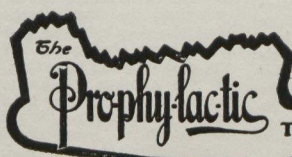
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