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PRICELESS POLONIUM.

New Metal Which Is More Wonderful Than Radium Is Really the Discovery of the Famous Mme. Curie.

Polonium, the new metal which has been exploited in a series of most interesting experiments by Professor W. Markwell before the chemical congress in Berlin, is really the discovery of Mme. Curie, one of the most learned women in the world and one who is to-day recognized as among the truly great pioneers of chemistry. Married to a Frenchman, she is a Pole by birth, and it was patriotism that led her to give to her new discovery the name polonium.

Scientists as yet understand too little of the marvelous properties of this new element to venture more than vague predictions of what spheres of future usefulness it may fill, but it is not improbable that it may be found to perform the present functions of the so-called Röntgen rays far more powerfully and without the cumbersome apparatus now essential to their use.

In a much higher degree even than radium it possesses the property of shining in the dark, and although it is known that actual particles, infinitesimally small, are being shot out from it continually—a fact which is proved by magnetic experiments—this strange substance does not seem to exhaust itself nor lose its luminous powers with the passage of time. Here, therefore, is a hint at least of the future possibility of a constant and brilliant illuminant generated without heat or combustion.

Polonium is more valuable than radium, and Professor Curie himself, who has a chemically pure specimen of radium not larger than a buckshot and weighing less than half a grain, would not sell it for \$30,000. Strangely enough, the substance from which these precious grains of polonium are extracted is pitchblende, a sort of hyproduct of a Bohemian mine operated by the Austrian Government. As Professor and Mme. Curie were enterprising enough to obtain control of all of it that was in sight before others knew its rare possibilities, there is little polonium to be had even in Europe except through them.

Radium also is the discovery of Mme. Curie. What radium will do she herself believes polonium will do to a far greater degree. If, as Dr. Lunden, a German scientist, is reported to have said in Berlin, he has proved by experiments that rays reflected from radium enable the blind to go more or less clearly, then radium and polonium may yet be destined to work veritable modern miracles.

Two Compliments.

When the present King of Portugal was a youth of seventeen he visited London, and there met Sir Edwin Landseer. Being very fond of natural history, the young King was delighted to meet the great animal painter, and said so.

King Carlos spoke English very well, said the author of "Some Eighteenth Century Men of Letters," but like all persons who have learned a language by grammar and dictionary, he used words in an equivocal sense.

"I am so glad to make your acquaintance, Sir Landseer," he said, with much enthusiasm. "I am so fond of beasts!"

Landseer accepted the compliment as it was intended, and always protested that with one exception it was the greatest he had ever received. The "exception" came from a dog-seller who was walking along a London street with a terrier under his arm. Landseer, as always, was attracted by the bright little face.

"His ears are not cropped," he observed.

"No, sir," replied the dog-seller. "Landseer says ears ought not to be cropped."

A Wonderful Child.

The most precocious child known to history, one whose story has been well authenticated, was born in the German city of Lubbeck 182 years ago. At the age of 10 months, Christian Heinecker could repeat any word that was said to him, when 12 months old he knew by heart the principal events narrated in the Pentateuch, and in his second year he learned to repeat the greater part of the Old and New Testaments. In his third year he seems to have known rather more history and geography than an average Cabinet Minister, and before he was four he was well read in church history and theology.

It was at this tender age that Christian went to the Court of Denmark, where he was hailed as a wonder. On his return home writing lessons commenced, but this ordeal was too much for him, and at the age of 4 1/2 years he died. It is said that he showed but little uneasiness at the approach of death.

A "Coughing Plant."

Recently botanists have been giving special attention to the "coughing bean," and tell some very interesting things about it. It is a native of warm countries, and objects most emphatically to dust. When any particle of dust settles on the branching pores in the leaves of the plant and chokes them, a gas accumulates inside, and when it gains sufficient pressure there comes an explosion with a sound exactly like coughing and the dust is blown from its lodgment. And what is stranger still, the plant flushes a vivid red through this spasmodic effort.

Made From a Farthing.

A Dublin workman has produced a novelty in the shape of a kettle, cup, saucer, and spoon made out of a farthing. He hammered the bronze coin till he had obtained a very thin sheet of metal, from which he fashioned a complete and workable kettle, with a swing handle, removable lid, etc., together with a cup, saucer, and spoon. He can heat water through the miniature internal and pour it in the spout. The weight of the kettle, cup, saucer, and spoon is thirty grains. The weight of a farthing is forty-eight grains.



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THE STORY OF CALIFORNIA SCENERY.

As long as there remains the love of beauty in the human soul so long will the glory of California scenery and that of the whole Pacific coast prove a source of inspiration to the poetic mind. Descriptive verse has been from the beginning a marked feature of the literature of this region. In fact, the term "landscape poets" may be properly applied to this bevy of song birds which seemed to the late Maurice Thompson to have taken "complete possession of the entire western seaboard." Suffice it to say that if a volume of verse were written by a Californian which reflected nothing of the state's scenic beauty or its warmth of color it would not only come as a surprise to most reviewers, but the loyalty of the poet might be seriously questioned. While all this display of local color may seem to have an effort on the part of Californians to place upon their work the stamp of a definite locality, and may be considered by some a cheap form of art, it is this very sensitiveness to beauty and grandeur with which nature has clothed the west that offers the most promise of its rapid literary advancement—a sensitiveness, moreover, that will become more and more acute with the cultivation of the higher faculties through increasing educational growth.—Herbert Bashford in Atlantic.

All Have an "Itch" in Them.

"Speaking of Serbian names," said an observant man, "they are not so bad when you once get used to them, nor are they so hard to pronounce. You no doubt have noticed that all Serbian names end with a syllable having some resemblance to the English word 'itch.' Some of the names end in 'ies' or just with 'ic.' Sometimes it is 'ich' or 'ic' or 'isch,' and so on. It makes no difference how the name ends, you will make no mistake if you give the sound of 'itch' to the last syllable. That will be the proper Serbian sound, for Petrovich or Petrovich would be correct, and in both instances the word would be pronounced in the same way, by sounding the 'itch.' Serbian names are all right when one gets used to them, but they are strange and shocking when put into the columns of English newspapers."

Goats That Fight.

A species of the wild goat, the Capra ruppell, haunts the rocks of the Abyssinian highlands and manages to hold its own as to fight against all enemies, with the exception of the fleet footed jackal, an adversary whose co-operative tactics and keenness of scent make flight unavailing and have led the capras to the conclusion that under certain circumstances valor may be the better part of discretion. The yelp of an approaching horde of jackals is therefore a signal for instant rally on the part of the goats. The nannies crowd around their kids, and the bucks rush forward en masse, butting away with a rage that lays out a velpet at every spring and makes the survivors stand back howling and cowering.

Influence of Laughter on Digestion.

The efficiency of laughter as an aid to assimilation and alimentation has passed into such a common physiological truism that no one of ordinary intelligence needs to have the principle upon which it works elucidated for his understanding in these days of widely disseminated dietetic knowledge. The average person who is not continuously "in the dumps" knows from experience that laughter is good for digestion, says What to Eat. It should be borne in mind that mirth and good cheer need not express themselves in convulsive laughter in order to induce digestion. An amiable, contented, calm and equable temperament has marked influence upon the digestive processes without laughter.

A Silver Riddle.

English tram car companies use in counting the money taken in what is called a "silver riddle." Four or five frames are placed on the top of each car, and a given quantity of mixed silver is emptied in on to the topmost. Shake the latter and all the pieces except the half crowns will disappear through the wire net arrangement on to the frame below. Shake frame No. 2 and everything goes through except the florins, and thus the coins are eventually exhausted down to the three-penny pieces.

A Desperate Character.

First Henpecked Husband—Well, sir, I've been gone and done it. My wife wouldn't give me the hatchkey again this morning, so I took it by force—by force, do you hear me?

Second Ditto (admirably)—Say, old man, don't let my wife hear that. She'll never let me go out with you again.

One He Couldn't Lose.

Peddler—Want to buy an umbrella cheap, boss?

Merchant—No; what's the use? Whenever I buy an umbrella somebody steals it.

Peddler—Well, this one ain't worth stealing.—Exchange.

The Reminder.

"Mamma," said Bennie as there came a brief pause in the conversation on the part of the callers, "Isn't it time for you to ask me what I learned at the kindergarten today? If you don't do it pretty soon I'll forget what you told me to say."

Wouldn't Show.

Mistress (greatly shocked)—Is it possible, Mary, you are making bread without having washed your hands?

New Girl—Lor', what's the difference, mum? It's brown bread.

You Can Buy **B**