

It is fitting that the ATHENÆUM should make mention of the recent scientific discoveries by Professor Röntgen of the University of Würzburg, which certainly are among the most remarkable of our time. We quote the New York *Outlook* :— Briefly stated Prof. Röntgen has found certain heretofore unknown rays of light or waves of ether, which he calls the X rays. Though they are not recognizable by the eye these rays affect the photographic plate, and among other peculiar properties they have the marvellous one of passing through some solids and semi-solids like wood, cardboard and human flesh. In a lecture before the German Emperor, Prof. Röntgen photographed objects which were placed behind panels of wood and in wooden and cardboard boxes, the rays which photographed the objects passing through the wood or cardboard. These rays were also seen to pass through water without refraction. Reports are already printed of the application of the discovery to medical purposes, calcareous objects in some of the human organs having been photographed through the body. The human bones, it is alleged, can also be photographed with these rays, which traverse the flesh somewhat as ordinary rays of light pass through glass. Thus "Science" tells us "Röntgen has put his hand between the tube and the dry plate in the closed camera: the photograph shows clearly all the bones of the hand without the flesh and skin, and the gold rings seem to hang in the air." In this country the experiments have been in some degree verified by Prof. A. W. Wright of Yale, and Prof. Trowbridge of Harvard. The former obtained for instance, a dim photograph of coins which were enclosed in a purse, and the latter obtained on a photographic plate impressions of objects concealed in a wooden box half an inch thick. The Crookes tube is a glass tube in which a partial vacuum is created and then an electrical current passed, whereupon the tube is filled with pale light. In performing experiments with these tubes peculiar rays have been noted about the cathode end (that of the negative pole) and it has long been known that these rays would pass through these plates of metal. Prof. Röntgen's rays seem akin to these "cathode rays" but with additional properties. The discovery is said to have been made purely by a chance observation. That it may have an important practical bearing on medical science and lead to a wider scientific knowledge in all directions is quite probable.

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