

## June Skies

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has gone to Fagernes, in Norway. With him is Dr. Harlan T. Stetson, of Harvard University.

In England, the coming eclipse has attracted tremendous popular interest, just as the one of January, 1925, did in the United States. It is the first eclipse that has crossed the British Isles since 1724, and the last until 1999, so a large portion of the British population will be concentrated along the path of totality for the half-minute that the eclipse will last. In Norway, it will last a few seconds longer, and the sun at the time will be higher in the sky. Both of these factors are advantageous to the astronomer, and are additional reasons for the choice of Norway.

### Comet Nearby

The comet which makes such a close visit to the earth in June is really of more scientific than general interest. It is a rather small comet, as comets go, and on previous visits has never showed a tail, which most people consider one of the earmarks, or perhaps "tailmarks," of a comet. Its only interest at this time is found in the fact that it is coming so close, and will be only about 3,500,000 miles away on June 27, or about fourteen and a half times as far as the moon, and much closer than any other astronomical body ordinarily comes.

However, it is the close approach of a comet to the sun that excites it to brilliance, and when closest to that body, on June 21, it will still be nearly a hundred million miles away. At the closest position to the earth, it will be in the constellation of Aquila, near the bright star Altair, which, this month, is directly south about 3:00 a. m. With a small telescope, it will be easily visible as a faint patch of light, and may even be visible to the unaided eye, as it will be just about at the limit of brightness required for naked eye visibility, about the sixth magnitude.

The comet is a historic one, despite its small size. First discovered by a French astronomer, named Pons, in 1819, at Marseilles, it was then lost until Winnecke, a German astronomer at the University of Bonn, found a comet in 1858, which proved to be the same one. Its period, or the time between successive returns to the neighborhood of the sun, is a little over six years, and since Winnecke rediscovered it,

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## PSYCHIATRY

### Missing the Feeble-Minded

The pathetic picture of the unrecognized feeble-minded child, struggling along in school, with dull face and open mouth, having tonsils out, adenoids out, eyes tested, all to no avail, was presented before the recent meeting of the American Association for the Study of the Feeble-Minded, at Cincinnati, by Dr. H. H. Ramsay, superintendent of the Mississippi School and Colony for Feeble-Minded.

Medical schools give such limited courses in the brain and nervous system that doctors often do not recognize signs of inherited abnormality, Dr. Ramsay pointed out.

The physical basis of feeble-mindedness is well established, he said: "On post mortem examination, the brains of feeble-minded persons show three distinct features as compared to normal brain. First, imperfection of the cells; second, numerical deficiency of cells; third, irregular arrangement of cells.

"Furthermore, we are now certain that actual brain pathology of inherent character is translated into social pathology. As examples, there are the feeble-minded prostitute, the feeble-minded criminal, the pauper, the psychopath, and many other abnormalities due to subnormal intelligence or to an inherently unstable nervous system."

The physician cannot ignore this problem, and he has a great service to render in reducing these inherited abnormalities, Dr. Ramsay said. One scientist who studied family histories of 200 feeble-minded individuals found that 80 per cent of them were descendants of individuals with pronounced nervous disease. Syphilis is found to play an important part in producing these defectives.

"With the passing of the old order of things and new teaching, with ample clinical material at hand," said Dr. Ramsay, "the physician of the present and future should be better prepared to advise his clientele accurately concerning these varieties of defect which in the main are innate and not amenable to cure or even treatment by drugs or gland extracts. These instead are subjects for proper training, suited to their ability, or life-long care and supervision."

How a large group of girls whose minds have stayed like those of very little children are being successfully taught to dress themselves, to take care of themselves, and to make use-

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## SEISMOLOGY

### Quake Possibly in China

Months may elapse before details of the earthquake which was felt by seismograph instruments throughout the world on Sunday, May 22, are known, even though it was one of the most severe quakes on record and thousands were undoubtedly killed. According to Commander N. H. Heck, in charge of the earthquake investigations of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, after studying reports from seismograph observatories gathered by Science Service, the quake was about 35 degrees north latitude and 100 degrees east longitude, which places it in western China or eastern Tibet. It occurred at 5.33 P. M., eastern standard time.

This region is one that has been visited by destructive quakes in the past, for on September 16, 1920, there occurred the Kan-Su earthquake in the same region, named after the province of China in which it occurred. At this time, though the damage was severe and an estimated total of 100,000 persons were killed, it was three months before the outside world knew about it.

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## ARCHAEOLOGY

### Derrick Saves Totem Poles

The Dominion Government Totem Pole Preservation outfit has arrived at Skeena Crossing, B. C., with a flat car load of hoisting gear, including the huge derrick used for erecting fallen poles. This gear came from the totem pole village of Kitwanga where the government work of totem pole preservation was carried on during the past two seasons to the great interest of the tourists who are allowed to walk through the Githsan Indian village while the trains stop for water.

This year the work of totem pole preservation will be carried on at Gytsegyuela, a village about a mile below Skeena Crossing, where there are eighteen huge totem poles close to the river bank plainly seen from the railroad car windows for over half a mile on the opposite side of the Skeena river. The northern end of the Pacific highway is at present within four miles of Gytsegyuela so that automobile parties from many parts of the United States can now come close to this remarkable collection of totem poles and in a few weeks the road gang will resume work on the highway and push it on past Skeena Crossing, Gytsegyuela and well towards Kitwanga during the present season.

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### Chinese Earthquake

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According to Commander Heck, the quake on May 22 appears to have been at least as severe as the one in 1920. In some respects this country resembles California, for the fault lines, along which the quakes occur when the two parts of the ground slip over each other, tend to run east and west. The damage that was done by the quake may have been in Tibet, as well as in the Kan-Su province of China. Much of the damage done by quakes in this region is due to landslides, caused when the loose soil is shaken. These may also bury whole villages, which may never be heard from again.

The reports upon which Commander Heck's determination was based were gathered from the seismographic observatories of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey at Cheltenham, Md., and Honolulu, T. H.; that of the U. S. Weather Bureau at Chicago; the University of California at Berkeley; Georgetown University, Washington; St. Louis University, St. Louis; Regis College, Denver, Colo.; the Dominion Observatory, Ottawa, Canada, and the Meteorological Observatory at Victoria, B. C.

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### Feeble-Minded

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full articles, so that they no longer sit about vacantly and unhappily, was described before the specialists who are trying to improve the condition of this almost hopeless and helpless class of human beings.

"The mentality of an idiot girl is so simple that one seems to be baffled by the thought of teaching her," Dr. George J. Veith of Thiells, N. Y., said in addressing the American Association for the Study of Feeble-minded. "The best type of instructor understands how these girls live, and their needs. She must possess patience to a marked degree. She must be willing to get down to the level of the idiot child and to become an actual part of that child's world."

Dr. Veith reported on the difficult enterprise of training of 139 girls whose real ages range from six to 45 years, but whose minds are all below the six year level, and some even below two years. All 139 have learned the simplest practical finger tasks of buttoning and unbuttoning clothing and tying bows. Ninety-one have learned to dress and undress themselves. The attempt was made to teach 90 of them to recognize their names in print, and 82 have succeeded in learning this, so that they can pick out their own labeled clothes and possessions.

In the occupational field, 129 of the girls learned to sew carpet rags. Forty-two learned to make Persian rugs; 24 learned to knit; 29 learned to crochet; 11 can now sew on the machine; 19 can make hook rugs, and so on with other industrial tasks.

The 30 months' training has given these social and industrial misfits something to do, and it has contributed a large collection of sweaters, gloves, mats, laundry bags, toweling and other articles for the use of the institution, Dr. Veith said.

"The group plays with a better spirit," he reported, "showing a kindlier feeling to each other and to those in charge, and taking a larger interest in surroundings. Not only do these girls keep themselves looking neater but they help themselves in their cottages. They are cleaner and have come out of their world of inferiority, earnestly endeavoring to imitate the brighter girls. They are less of a burden to themselves and others."

Teaching these idiot and imbecile children to use their hands has not improved their low intelligence level, Dr. Veith reported.

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and its present compound name was attached to it, it has been seen in 1869, 1875, 1886, 1892, 1898, 1909, 1915 and 1921. Some of its returns have been missed, because it has not approached close enough to the earth to be seen with the telescopes then in use.

#### The Planets in June

June also brings a better evening display of planets than we have enjoyed for many months. Most conspicuous of all is Venus which shines high in the west shortly after sunset, and is so bright that it can be seen even in the bright twilight, long before any of the other stars have appeared. As it is the brightest object in the evening sky, except for the moon, it is easily recognized. It sets below the western horizon three hours after the sun.

The other of the two planets which revolve within the orbit of the earth, Mercury, the nearest of all the members of the solar system to the sun, will also be seen for part of the month. On June 22, it will be at greatest eastern elongation, which means that it is the farthest distance east of the sun, as seen from the earth. On that day, at sunset, it will be low in the western sky, about 17 degrees, or as high as a stick 7 inches long held at arm's length, above the horizon, and a little less than that, about 15 degrees north of the point of the horizon directly west. It is too low to be shown on the maps. As the twilight lasts long at this time of year, Mercury will have set before the sky is really dark, but if one knows where to look for it, it should be picked up without difficulty in the gathering dusk. Look for it from about the 15th to the 27th.

Saturn, also, the famous ringed planet, has come into the evening sky, and is shown on the map, in the constellation of Scorpio. It is in the southeast, a little above the red star, Antares. Mars is also still in the evening sky, near Venus, but low in the west after sunset, and as it has now diminished in brightness to a par with the Pole Star, it is rather hard to see.

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In India rickets is more prevalent among high caste Hindu children who are kept indoors than among low caste children who play in the sun.

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