

Jackrabbit Offers Fight to Six Men

Zoology

Yellowstone National Park offers the season's best rabbit yarn—incredible, yet solemnly attested to by six good men and true.

Park Ranger Fred T. Johnston tells it:

"It was late in June. Six of us were traveling in and on top of a truckload of beds and supplies, over a road evidently seldom used.

"During our journey we overtook a very young jackrabbit—in fact, one so young that it barely had its eyes open. He was exerting every effort, however, to scramble out of the rut he was in, but seeing that he was bound to fail, we stopped to assist him.

"Our intentions were undoubtedly misunderstood, because as soon as he was picked up he squealed as only a scared rabbit can squeal, but he ac-

complished his purpose. It's hard to believe that a rabbit would attack six men, but by the word of the six who were attacked, that's just what happened.

"The young rabbit 'knew his squealing' and so did his mother, or at least we gave the rabbit that came galloping out of the brush the credit of being his mother. And galloping is the word to express her progress in our direction on the second squeal from her complaining offspring.

"She appeared from a distance of a hundred yards or so away, and was standing in the center of a circular group we had formed before any of us could realize the truth of what we say. I was truly thankful that I was not the one who was holding the infant rabbit. There she stood among the aforesaid six of us, eyeing every-

one with bulging eyes that meant only one thing—rage. She was poised on her hind legs at the very feet of her infant's captor, apparently ready to spring at his face.

"Speech was impossible, and how long we stood there, dumbfounded, none of us attempted to say. I actually believe the young rabbit saved the situation, because his squealing stopped with the appearance of his mother, and she finally hopped off a short distance and waited. This act was not to be misunderstood, so the young rabbit was released immediately and left to the very capable and astonishing protection of his mother.

"To be attacked by a bear when molesting her young is natural, but a rabbit—well, even a bear seldom attacks six men."

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A Shocking Omnibus

Physics

Prof. Charles Vernon Boys, eminent British physicist, was about to board an omnibus near his home on Victoria Street in London. As it came to a stop, he reached for the rail. When his hand came near the metal, he felt an unmistakable electric discharge from the rail to his hand, giving him a very noticeable shock.

Being a scientist, he did not pass it by as merely a curious happening. Instead he stopped to consider what the cause was. Also, as it was apparently a phenomenon that had never been observed before, he reported it to the scientific world through the pages of *Nature*.

"In all cases where the omnibus came along at a brisk pace and pulled up quickly I received a sharp prick from the spark," he said. "In one case a second application was rewarded by a second spark. It was at a time when the sun was shining down the street and all was as hot and dry as could well be. No doubt, it was the scuffling of the rubber tires on the polished asphalt that gave rise to the electrification. In intensity, the shock, if such a term can be used, was two or three times as strong as that obtained after stroking a cat by the fire on a frosty night, when a visible spark may be obtained from the cat's nose."

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A large proportion of the lichens and mosses found in the Antarctic are also found in the Arctic.

Cancer Increase and Cosmic Rays

Speculative Physics

The cosmic rays, that continually bombard the earth from outer space, may now be much less intense than they were in past ages, and that may be the cause of the present world-wide increase in cancer.

This is the suggestion of a prominent Irish physicist, Dr. J. Joly, of Trinity College, Dublin, expressed in the British journal *Nature*. Dr. Joly admits that his ideas are "certainly at present purely speculative."

"There seems to be no sure ground for believing that the penetrating radiations are uniformly distributed throughout space," said Dr. Joly. "If they are not, and if considerable variations in the strength of those reaching the earth have occurred in the past—possibly referable to translatory movements of the solar system—then serious effects upon organic evolution may have taken place. Millikan estimates their present energy as equal to about one-tenth of that reaching the earth from the luminous radiation of the stars. At present, therefore, the penetrating rays are probably without positive effects upon organic life. It does not follow, however, that a recent decline in strength would be without serious effects."

Dr. Joly expressed the belief that the effect of such radiations such as penetrating rays and X-rays upon living tissue is due to the rays being absorbed and changed to beta rays, one of the three kinds of radiation

emitted from radium. Medical researches, he said, show that such rays have a selective influence. The same rays that destroy diseased tissue may actually have a healthful and stimulating effect upon neighboring health tissues. Thus, X-rays are used in the treatment of cancer.

As there has been a marked increase in cancer throughout the world in recent times, Dr. Joly suggested that it might be due to recent reduction in the intensity of cosmic rays, which formerly destroyed the cancerous tissue nearly as fast as it was formed.

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