

A SPECIAL FEATURE OF INTERESTING ODDITIES
by MORT WEISINGER

EARTH'S AVOIRDUPOIS

EARTH is perpetually increasing its weight!

The Earth's mass is constantly being augmented through the accumulation of the numerous meteors that land on its surface, attracted by our gravity.

We gain about one hundred thousand long tons a year in weight from



these extra-terrestrial visitors. Large meteors, small meteors, and meteoric dust all combine to make this barrage an annual load that Earth can never shake off!

NO MORE COUNTERFEITS

SCIENCE has a plan for making banknotes proof against the craftiest forger!

It is a known scientific fact that when metal-coated surfaces are subjected to an invisible ray, called "Wood's Light," the surfaces glow with a phosphorescent light tinted differently according to the metal used.

The new banknote proposed to beat counterfeiters is based on this phenomenon. It looks no different from any other, but the paper is covered with a very fine metal spray which shows immediately under Wood's Light.

Each country, a scientist suggests, could have its own combination of metals which would produce an individual color. Counterfeiting would be

almost impossible, because hundreds of thousands of combinations of metals would each produce a different tint, and the spraying process would be kept secret.

STRANDS OF DOOM

THE slender thread of the spider's web is one of war's most indispensable necessities!

Without spiderweb strands, range-finders on warships as well as on land would be useless. Submarine commanders would have to launch their torpedoes by guesswork, if at all. Bomb-dropping from aircraft would lose all its accuracy.

It's all because the so-called cross-hairs in all kinds of optical instruments—gun sights, bomb sights, periscopes, range-finders, navigation instruments, transits, theodolites—are not hairs at all, but crossed spiderweb threads.

If actual hairs were used, even the finest ones would look as heavy as sticks under the magnifying instruments, completely obscuring the object instead of getting an accurate sight on it. Real hairs would also be-



come slack in damp weather and too tight in dry, perhaps snapping and leaving the instrument useless.

Nothing has ever been found to equal spiderweb threads for the making of these cross hairs. Even very fine-drawn platinum wire is too course for the really fine jobs!

PICKING PLANETS

THE planet Uranus was not discovered by Sir William Herschel! Today, Sir Frederick William Herschel is honored as being the discoverer of the planet Uranus. Yet he was not really the first man to see Uranus. Previously astronomers had seen and cataloged the planet nineteen times before Herschel's "discovery."

These earlier discoverers of Uranus



were as much discoverers of the planet as Columbus was a discoverer of America. But the men who saw Uranus before Herschel's time are not credited with the discovery because they mistook the heavenly body for a star and not for a planet. Herschel recognized the body to be a planet, and in so doing he received all the credit.

MICROBES AT WAR

WHEN microbes kill microbes—and save man—it's news!

Complete conquest of disease may be the eventual result of the discovery by bacteriologists, that the soil in gardens and fields contains germs capable of killing disease germs of the gram-negative group. This group includes germs causing typhoid fever, dysentery and cholera.

Another scientist recently reported that disease germs of the gram-positive group—this includes pneumonia and diphtheria germs and the staphylococci—can be killed by chemicals extracted from soil germs. Scientists feel these discoveries herald triumph over germ-caused disease.

THE STARS MOVE

THERE is no such thing as a fixed star!

The belief that there are some stars that never change their position is a fallacy. Although it may take cen-

turies for changes to become apparent to the naked eye, modern observations prove that no star is fixed. The Sun travels at a speed of 170 miles a second for 200,000,000 years to complete a single trip around its orbit, according to Dr. R. J. Trumpler of the University of California. And similarly, this is the case with the stars of the Universe.

COLDER THAN ICE

AN "Arctic powder," colder than ice, may preserve serums, cool X-ray photographic solutions and chill the water for ice bags, in the hospitals of the future.

Recently demonstrated before physicians and surgeons, a few ounces of the powder dissolved in a glass of water dropped the temperature about 40 degrees without forming ice, within three minutes!

Under laboratory conditions, it is claimed, the temperature can be lowered as much as 65 degrees and as far as 22 degrees below zero. Water chilled in this way will remain cool for several hours.

One pound of the chemical, which can be manufactured for about one cent, is claimed to have cooling power equal to four pounds of ice!

OUR INCREDIBLE WORLD

IN his life-time, Thomas Edison patented 1,400 different inventions, but only 400 of these ever worked; no man has as yet beaten his patenting record . . . The blue whale develops five hundred horsepower swimming at twenty-seven knot speed through the water . . . Scientists have calculated that about 8 per cent of the people of white race in the world have eyes which do not match in color. . . .

A substance, compounded from graphite, when applied like paint, makes a plane invisible after it has passed an altitude of 100 feet . . . Some tiny insects can scarcely be seen by the human eye at a distance of a yard but certain birds can see them as far away as a hundred yards . . . Psychologists declare that women's favorite color is red, while men's is blue . . . Gusts of wind have been known to reach the velocity of 231 miles an hour. . . .

MURDER ASTEROID

By EDMOND HAMILTON

Author of "Dictators of Creation," "Captain Future's Challenge," etc.

BURGIN was a better meteor-miner than mathematician, but he knew well enough that a half million Earth dollars was more than a quarter million. That was why there was murder in his heart as he steered the battered little space-cruiser toward the tiny gray asteroid.

Burgin's heavy face was impassive but there was a cunning glint in his eyes as he glanced at his partner. Steve Holt's lean, young form was sprawled in the space-chair, and the youth wore a puzzled frown as he stared into the asteroidal jungle they were traversing.

"I don't see why you want to make a landing on that little planetoid," Holt complained. "There won't be anything on it worth digging. What's a few dollars more, when we've already got such a big haul?"

Holt looked back fondly at the heavy sacks of platinum, tantalum and other rare metals in the main cabin—the fruit of weeks of monotonous, toiling exploration and mining of the Belt's meteors.

"We've been mighty lucky—that metal will bring a half million at least," Steve Holt went on, his gray eyes sparkling. "I want to get back to my family with the good news. Why don't we just head for Ceres spaceport, instead of halting at that cinder ahead?"

"Because," Burgin replied weightily, "there may be a bigger haul on that little planetoid than all we've got now."

Holt looked incredulous. "On that thing? Why, I doubt if there's an ounce

of dense metal on it—it looks like another chunk of aluminum compounds."

"Yes," Burgin agreed, "but you notice its queer, skull-like shape? Well, there's a story that it was on just such a skull-shaped asteroid that old John Haddon buried his loot!"

Steve Holt gasped. "John Haddon, the great space-pirate of a hundred years ago? Why, they say his treasure was worth tens of millions!"

"Sure, and maybe this little cinder is where he stowed it," Burgin declared. "We're going to have a look, anyway."

He glanced at his young partner. His story was going over. Holt, he was certain, had been convinced by his lie. The lure of treasure had got the boy, Burgin thought with a chuckle.

The little space-cruiser throbbed on toward the tiny gray asteroid. It did have a curious skull-like shape—that was why Burgin had invented the story he had just told. The asteroid was very small, though—really no more than a meteor a few hundred feet across.

The cruiser's rocket-blasts as it contacted the tiny asteroid actually sent the minute celestial body bouncing away a little, before the ship's vacuum anchors caught and held.

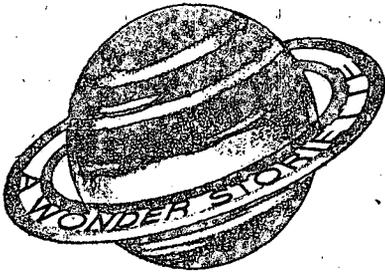
"This planetoid has less mass than our ship, even," grinned Steve Holt. "But if Haddon's loot is buried here—"

Yes, the treasure-bug had bitten quickly and deep. The youth was on fire to get out and search. So the two climbed into their space-suits, grasped their steelite prospector-picks, and stepped out through the airlock.

The magnetized shoes of their suits were no good on this cindery little world of super-light substance. Standing there beneath the star-jewelled sky of the Belt, they looked around.

"If Haddon left some kind of marker—" Holt's eager voice came over the suit-phone.

"There!" Burgin cried, pointing his



You Can Break All Laws Except Scientific Ones!