

IS ANOTHER WORLD WATCHING US?—Part 9

WE MAY WORRY MEN

ON MARS

IF the solution of the flying saucers mystery is that the inhabitants of another planet are watching us, the question naturally arises, Why do they come NOW?

But can we be sure that they haven't been paying periodic visits just to give us a look over?

For years a student of science worked painstakingly through the special papers of the various learned societies.

This student, Charles Fort by name, finally col-

Fort by name, finally collected enough material to fill four large volumes.

Part of his great study deals with strange "air-ships" viewed before man had any.

There are references going back to the 18th century. During the 19th they continue and become more numerous. By the last quarter of the last century they had come to be not infrequent.

Twice in 1870 sky ships were seen.

On August 1, above the Riviera, very high up and seeming to move slowly, there passed a globular body that must have been of great size.



The September before, on the 26th of the month, something was seen high up at night, an elliptical body that for half a minute was watched crossing the moon's face.

It seemed to have some kind of fan at its stern, or a rudder.

"Nature" reported in 1880 bright luminous globes moving high up in the sky—much the same as seen to go on now.

The Bermuda Royal Gazette in 1885 saw an unidentifiable

"thing" high in the skies over the islands.

Then, in the same year, Adrianople, in European Turkey, was looked down upon by a "disc."

The observers gauged its size from that of the moon. Though sailing high it looked several times larger than the disc of the moon.

New Zealand had a fast-moving oval to report in 1888.

In the early 'nineties the Dutch East Indies were inspected—by what seem to have been cones.

So on they go, like the slow drip of a tap.

A disc with a rudder or fan was reported by a British battleship in 1894, and in 1895 triangular high-sky objects were seen by many in England and Scotland, and, of course, dismissed as illusion by officials and experts—who hadn't seen them.

The year of Victoria's Diamond Jubilee gave parts of the United States a sky show.

In April, a "ship" made a tour of the Middle West. It was

In the final instalment of his absorbing discussion of "flying saucers," GERALD HEARD asks: Have creatures from another world been watching us for centuries? Has man's development of the atom bomb seriously worried them?

watched through telescopes by

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From their accounts—cigar-shaped, with short wings at the side—it may have been the "tube" model that has given such remarkable demonstrations of its performance recently to air pilots.

The tube, too, as we know from those today, emitted strange lights.

In this 1897 case the colored beams wove such patterns, and ranged from red to white and on to green that it was thought the ship was signalling.

It moved to the Atlantic States, and the Virginia town of Sisterville was roused to see that it was being scanned by searchlights that wandered over the countryside.

The red and green lights showed along the sides of the ship which seemed 200ft. long.

Another cigar model in the summer of 1907 sailed over Vermont, and after it was gone an explosion took place in the sky.

In 1910, on a January morning, a cigar of silver cruised about over the State of Alabama.

Two years after, "Popular Astronomy" carried a careful report of a black object crossing the face of the moon.

So we realise that these visitors have been seen before. We may add another interesting fact — they first paid more attention to Europe and then increasing attention to the United States.

We may close with an obvious

United States.

We may close with an obvious deduction: That they were first interested in Europe because it was, a generation ago, still leading industrially; they are now more interested in the U.S. because it has taken world leadership in industrial production.

We may perhaps add a rider: They may be coming at certain



times (as well as hovering over certain places or countries) because they fear what our industrialisation seems to lead to—rockets, atom power, to the capacity not only to destroy ourselves but to make into a kind of cosmic bomb "the great globe itself, yea, all it doth inherit."

Seriously, we must ask, are we a peril to them?

We are all, on our planets, like men on small craft in a big ocean. We ride the tide but we have to be "sea-shape" to do so.

do so.

The precise balance and poise of a planet as it rides its orbit and spins on its axis and rocks on its poles are necessary to life.

Could we tip our axis by

firing off a bomb! We must remember it is a risk. For when the deep-sea firing of an atom bomb was suggested as part of the Bikini experiment, a Yale professor emeritus of chemistry wrote begging that this should not be done.

He felt that it was clear to all geophysicists that if an atom bomb were exploded in the depths of the Pacific Ocean close to the Equator this would give a maximum provocation to the earth to make a "heel-over."

For the weight of water that lies in the great troughs of the Pacific, the greatest oceanic depths in the world, is so great that if it were suddenly raised or partly lifted, the ocean floor, already (or at the same time) having been given a tremendous blow, might buckle.

If the bomb at Bikini had been made a depth bomb and had lifted that mass of water, it must have caused a rota-



tional rupture that could have sent us on to another spin,

on to another spin, another slant.

Whether this scientific adviser

was right or not, we may never know for sure. But that his advice was sufficiently weighty we may judge. For the project was abandoned.

Would Mars be concerned because we might reel over and lie like a drunken man?

There is, however, another danger which really might inconvenience Martians. We might blow up.

The earth's rind of rock (the lithosphere) may not be at all thick. It may be possible with our modern atom power explosion to burst through it.

Then, quite likely, out would come our molten insides.

Martians might well have strong views about planets that explode themselves.

For, turning ourselves into a dust belt, filling our entire orbit with a thick mist of fragments, we might cut off a dangerously large amount of the all-too-little sunlight they now get.

Just at the very time, that we chose to fire off our atom bombs the sun itself chose to "act up."

We know that the largest sunspots that have ever been seen on the face of the sun did appear just at that time. Was that just chance association?

Sunspots are no joke. They

Sunspots are no joke. They are problem No. 1 in celestial forces.

Is it not possible that the Martians, who have so much to fear from sun-trouble, may have read these signs?

Even if the sunspots had



not raised the alarm, they must have seen our fatal signal.

When we twice struck Japan and then, not to slaughter but to astound, made the Pacific spout — when we, time and again, sent up great super-thunder heads of smoke, spray, and the wreckage of human industry and human bodies, right up into the stratosphere, then we put out a finger to beckon attention on any watching fellow planet that we were the little fellow out for trouble, and able and itching to give it.

They could hardly have failed to see that defiant, wanton signal.

Does that close the question?

—THE END.
