

THE BOOK OF THE DAMNED.

BY
CHARLES FORT



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while—going away—coming back some other time—anchoring, as it were—

Azuria is pretty bad, but Azuria is no worse than Neith.

Astrophysical Journal, 1-127:

A light-reflecting body, or a bright spot near Mars: seen Nov. 25, 1894, by Prof. Pickering and others, at the Lowell Observatory, above an unilluminated part of Mars—self-luminous, it would seem—thought to have been a cloud—but estimated to have been about twenty miles away from the planet.

Luminous spot seen moving across the disk of Mercury, in 1799, by Harding and Schroeter. (*Monthly Notices of the R. A. S.*, 38-338.)

In the first Bulletin issued by the Lowell Observatory, in 1903, Prof. Lowell describes a body that was seen on the terminator of Mars, May 20, 1903. On May 27, it was “suspected.” If still there, it had moved, we are told, about 300 miles—“probably a dust cloud.”

Very conspicuous and brilliant spots seen on the disk of Mars, Oct. and Nov., 1911. (*Popular Astronomy*, Vol. 19, No. 10.)

So one of them accepted six or seven observations that were in agreement, except that they could not be regularized, upon a world—planet—satellite—and he gave it a name. He named it “Neith.”

Monstrator and Elvera and Azuria and Super-Romanimus—

Or heresy and orthodoxy and the oneness of all quasiness, and our ways and means and methods are the very same. Or, if we name things that may not be, we are not of lonely guilt in the nomenclature of absences—

But now Leverrier and “Vulcan.”

Leverrier again.

Or to demonstrate the collapsibility of a froth, stick a pin in the largest bubble of it. Astronomy and inflation: and by inflation we mean expansion of the attenuated. Or that the science of Astronomy is a phantom-film distended with myth-stuff—but always our acceptance that it approximates higher to substantiality than did the system that preceded it.

So Leverrier and the “planet Vulcan.”

And we repeat, and it will do us small good to repeat. If you be of the masses that the astronomers have hypnotized—being themselves hypnotized, or they could not hypnotize others—or that the hypnotist’s control is not the masterful power that it is popularly

supposed to be, but only transference of state from one hypnotic to another—

If you be of the masses that the astronomers have hypnotized, you will not be able even to remember. Ten pages from here, and Leverrier and the “planet Vulcan” will have fallen from your mind, like beans from a magnet, or like data of cold meteorites from the mind of a Thomson.

Leverrier and the “planet Vulcan.”

And much the good it will do us to repeat.

But at least temporarily we shall have an impression of a historic fiasco, such as, in our acceptance, could occur only in a quasi-existence.

In 1859, Dr. Lescarbault, an amateur astronomer, of Orgères, France, announced that, upon March 26, of that year, he had seen a body of planetary size cross the sun. We are in a subject that is now as unholy to the present system as ever were its own subjects to the system that preceded it, or as ever were slanders against miracles to the preceding system. Nevertheless few text-books go so far as quite to disregard this tragedy. The method of the systematists is slightly to give a few instances of the unholy, and dispose of the few. If it were desirable to them to deny that there are mountains upon this earth, they would record a few observations upon some slight eminences near Orange, N. J., but say that commutes, though estimable persons in several ways, are likely to have their observations mixed. The text-books casually mention a few of the “supposed” observations upon “Vulcan,” and then pass on.

Dr. Lescarbault wrote to Leverrier, who hastened to Orgères—

Because this announcement assimilated with his own calculations upon a planet between Mercury and the sun—

Because this solar system itself has never attained positiveness in the aspect of Regularity: there are to Mercury, as there are to Neptune, phenomena irreconcilable with the formulas, or motions that betray influence by something else.

We are told that Leverrier “satisfied himself as to the substantial accuracy of the reported observation.” The story of this investigation is told in *Monthly Notices*, 20-98. It seems too bad to threaten the naïve little thing with our rude sophistications, but it is amusingly of the ingenuousness of the age from which present dogmas have survived. Lescarbault wrote to Leverrier. Leverrier hastened to Orgères. But he was careful not to tell Lescarbault

who he was. Went right in and "subjected Dr. Lescarbault to a very severe cross-examination"—just the way you or I may feel at liberty to go into anybody's home and be severe with people—"pressing him hard step by step"—just as any one might go into some one else's house and press him hard, though unknown to the hard-pressed one. Not until he was satisfied, did Leverrier reveal his identity. I suppose Dr. Lescarbault expressed astonishment. I think there's something utopian about this: it's so unlike the stand-offishness of New York life.

Leverrier gave the name "Vulcan" to the object that Dr. Lescarbault had reported.

By the same means by which he is, even to this day, supposed—by the faithful—to have discovered Neptune, he had already announced the probable existence of an Intra-Mercurial body, or group of bodies. He had five observations besides Lescarbault's upon something that had been seen to cross the sun. In accordance with the mathematical hypnoses of his era, he studied these six transits. Out of them he computed elements giving "Vulcan" a period of about 20 days, or a formula for heliocentric longitude at any time.

But he placed the time of best observation away up in 1877.

But even so, or considering that he still had probably a good many years to live, it may strike one that he was a little rash—that is if one have not gone very deep into the study of hypnoses—that, having "discovered" Neptune by a method which, in our acceptance, had no more to recommend it than had once equally well-thought-of methods of witch-finding, he should not have taken such chances: that if he was right as to Neptune, but should be wrong as to "Vulcan," his average would be away below that of most fortunetellers, who could scarcely hope to do business upon a fifty per cent. basis—all that the reasoning of a tyro in hypnoses.

The date:

March 22, 1877.

The scientific world was up on its hind legs nosing the sky. The thing had been done so authoritatively. Never a pope had said a thing with more of the seeming of finality. If six observations correlated, what more could be asked? The Editor of *Nature*, a week before the predicted event, though cautious, said that it is difficult to explain how six observers, unknown to one another, could have data that could be formulated, if they were not related phenomena.

In a way, at this point occurs the crisis of our whole book.

Formulas are against us.

But can astronomic formulas, backed up by observations in agreement, taken many years apart, calculated by a Leverrier, be as meaningless, in a positive sense, as all other quasi-things that we have encountered so far?

The preparations they made, before March 22, 1877. In England, the Astronomer Royal made it the expectation of his life: notified observers at Madras, Melbourne, Sydney, and New Zealand, and arranged with observers in Chili and the United States. M. Struve had prepared for observations in Siberia and Japan—

March 22, 1877—

Not absolutely hypocritically, I think it's pathetic, myself. If any one should doubt the sincerity of Leverrier, in this matter, we note, whether it has meaning or not, that a few months later he died.

I think we'll take up Monstrator, though there's so much to this subject that we'll have to come back.

According to the *Annual Register*, 9-120, upon the 9th of August, 1762, M. de Rostan, of Basle, France, was taking altitudes of the sun, at Lausanne. He saw a vast, spindle-shaped body, about three of the sun's digits in breadth and nine in length, advancing slowly across the disk of the sun, or "at no more than half the velocity with which the ordinary solar spots move." It did not disappear until the 7th of September, when it reached the sun's limb. Because of the spindle-like form, I incline to think of a super-Zeppelin, but another observation, which seems to indicate that it was a world, is that, though it was opaque, and "eclipsed the sun," it had around it a kind of nebulosity—or atmosphere? A penumbra would ordinarily be a datum of a sun spot, but there are observations that indicate that this object was at a considerable distance from the sun:

It is recorded that another observer, at Paris, watching the sun, at this time, had not seen this object;

But that M. Croste, at Sole, about forty-five German leagues northward from Lausanne, had seen it, describing the same spindle-form, but disagreeing a little as to breadth. Then comes the important point: that he and M. de Rostan did not see it upon the same part of the sun. This, then, is parallax, and, compounded with invisibility at Paris, is great parallax—or that, in the course of a month, in the summer of 1762, a large, opaque, spindle-shaped body traversed the disk of the sun, but at a great distance from the sun. The writer in the *Register* says: "In a word, we know of nothing to have recourse to, in the heavens, by which to explain this phenome-

non." I suppose he was not a hopeless addict to explaining. Extraordinary—we fear he must have been a man of loose habits in some other respects.

As to us—

Monstrator.

In the *Monthly Notices of the R. A. S.*, Feb., 1877, Leverrier, who never lost faith, up to the last day, gives the six observations upon an unknown body of planetary size, that he had formulated:

Fritsche, Oct. 10, 1802; Stark, Oct. 9, 1819; De Cuppis, Oct. 30, 1839; Sidebotham, Nov. 12, 1849; Lescarbault, March 26, 1859; Lummis, March 20, 1862.

If we weren't so accustomed to Science in its essential aspect of Disregard, we'd be mystified and impressed, like the Editor of *Nature*, with the formulation of these data: agreement of so many instances would seem incredible as a coincidence: but our acceptance is that, with just enough disregard, astronomers and fortune-tellers can formulate anything—or we'd engage, ourselves, to formulate periodicities in the crowds in Broadway—say that every Wednesday morning, a tall man, with one leg and a black eye, carrying a rubber plant, passes the Singer Building, at quarter past ten o'clock. Of course it couldn't really be done, unless such a man did have such periodicity, but if some Wednesday mornings it should be a small child lugging a barrel, or a fat negress with a week's wash, by ordinary disregard that would be prediction good enough for the kind of quasi-existence we're in.

So whether we accuse, or whether we think that the word "accuse" over-dignifies an attitude toward a quasi-astronomer, or mere figment in a super-dream, our acceptance is that Leverrier never did formulate observations—

That he picked out observations that could be formulated—

That of this type are all formulas—

That, if Leverrier had not been himself helplessly hypnotized, or if he had had in him more than a tincture of realness, never could he have been beguiled by such a quasi-process: but that he was hypnotized, and so extended, or transferred, his condition to others, that upon March 22, 1877, he had this earth bristling with telescopes, with the rigid and almost inanimate forms of astronomers behind them—

And not a blessed thing of any unusuality was seen upon that day or succeeding days.

But that the science of Astronomy suffered the slightest in prestige?

It couldn't. The spirit of 1877 was behind it. If, in an embryo, some cells should not live up to the phenomena of their era, the others will sustain the scheduled appearances. Not until an embryo enters the mammalian stage are cells of the reptilian stage false cells.

It is our acceptance that there were many equally authentic reports upon large planetary bodies that had been seen near the sun; that, of many, Leverrier picked out six; not then deciding that all the other observations related to still other large, planetary bodies, but arbitrarily, or hypnotically, disregarding—or heroically disregarding—every one of them—that to formulate at all he had to exclude falsely. The dénouement killed him, I think. I'm not at all inclined to place him with the Grays and Hitchcocks and Symonses. I'm not, because, though it was rather unsportsmanlike to put the date so far ahead, he did give a date, and he did stick to it with such a high approximation—

I think Leverrier was translated to the Positive Absolute.

The disregarded:

Observation, of July 26, 1819, by Gruthinson—but that was of two bodies that crossed the sun together—

Nature, 14-469:

That, according to the astronomer, J. R. Hind, Benjamin Scott, City Chamberlain of London, and Mr. Wray, had, in 1847, seen a body similar to "Vulcan" cross the sun.

Similar observation by Hind and Lowe, March 12, 1849 (*L'Année Scientifique*, 1876-9).

Nature, 14-505:

Body of apparent size of Mercury, seen, Jan. 29, 1860, by F. A. R. Russell and four other observers, crossing the sun.

De Vico's observation of July 12, 1837 ("Observatory," 2-424).

L'Année Scientifique, 1865-16:

That another amateur astronomer, M. Coumbray, of Constantinople, had written to Leverrier, that, upon the 8th of March, 1865, he had seen a black point, sharply outlined, traverse the disk of the sun. It detached itself from a group of sun spots near the limb of the sun, and took 48 minutes to reach the other limb. Figuring upon the diagram sent by M. Coumbray, a central passage would have taken a little more than an hour. This observation was disregarded by Leverrier, because his formula required about four times that

velocity. The point here is that these other observations are as authentic as those that Leverrier included; that, then, upon data as good as the data of "Vulcan," there must be other "Vulcans"—the heroic and defiant disregard, then, of trying to formulate one, omitting the others, which, by orthodox doctrine, must have influenced it greatly, if all were in the relatively narrow space between Mercury and the sun.

Observation upon another such body, of April 4, 1876, by M. Weber, of Berlin. As to this observation, Leverrier was informed by Wolf, in Aug., 1876 (*L'Année Scientifique*, 1876-7). It made no difference, so far as can be known, to this notable positivist.

Two other observations noted by Hind and Denning—*London Times*, Nov. 3, 1871, and March 26, 1873.

Monthly Notices of the R. A. S., 20-100:

Standacher, Feb., 1762; Lichtenberg, Nov. 19, 1762; Hoffman, May, 1764; Dangos, Jan. 18, 1798; Stark, Feb. 12, 1820. An observation by Schmidt, Oct. 11, 1847, is said to be doubtful: but, upon page 192, it is said that this doubt had arisen because of a mistaken translation, and two other observations by Schmidt are given: Oct. 14, 1849, and Feb. 18, 1850—also an observation by Loft, Jan. 6, 1818. Observation by Steinheibel, at Vienna, April 27, 1820 (*Monthly Notices*, 1862).

Haase had collected reports of twenty observations like Lescarbault's. The list was published in 1872, by Wolf. Also there are other instances like Gruthisen's:

Amer. Jour. Sci., 2-28-446:

Report by Pastorff that he had seen twice in 1836, and once in 1837, two round spots of unequal size, moving across the sun, changing position relatively to each other, and taking a different course, if not orbit, each time: that, in 1834, he had seen similar bodies pass six times across the disk of the sun, looking very much like Mercury in his transits.

March 22, 1876—

But to point out Leverrier's poverty-stricken average—or discovering planets upon a fifty per cent. basis—would be to point out the low percentage of realness in the quasi-myth-stuff of which the whole system is composed. We do not accuse the text-books of omitting this fiasco, but we do note that theirs is the conventional adaptation here of all beguilers who are in difficulties—

The diverting of attention.

It wouldn't be possible in a real existence, with real mentality, to

deal with, but I suppose it's good enough for the quasi-intellects that stupefy themselves with text-books. The trick here is to gloss over Leverrier's mistake, and blame Lescarbault—he was only an amateur—had delusions. The reader's attention is led against Lescarbault by a report from M. Lias, director of the Brazilian Coast Survey, who, at the time of Lescarbault's "supposed" observation had been watching the sun in Brazil, and, instead of seeing even ordinary sun spots, had noted that the region of the "supposed transit" was of "uniform intensity."

But the meaninglessness of all utterances in quasi-existence——

"Uniform intensity" turns our way as much as against us—or some day some brain will conceive a way of beating Newton's third law—if every reaction, or resistance, is, or can be, interpretable as stimulus instead of resistance—if this could be done in mechanics, there's a way open here for some one to own the world—specifically in this matter, "uniform intensity" means that Lescarbault saw no ordinary sun spot, just as much as it means that no spot at all was seen upon the sun. Continuing the interpretation of a resistance as an assistance, which can always be done with mental forces—making us wonder what applications could be made with steam and electric forces—we point out that invisibility in Brazil means parallax quite as truly as it means absence, and, inasmuch as "Vulcan" was supposed to be distant from the sun, we interpret denial as corroboration—method of course of every scientist, politician, theologian, high-school debater.

So the text-books, with no especial cleverness, because no especial cleverness is needed, lead the reader into contempt for the amateur of Orgères, and forgetfulness of Leverrier—and some other subject is taken up.

But our own acceptance:

That these data are as good as ever they were;

That, if some one of eminence, should predict an earthquake, and if there should be no earthquake at the predicted time, that would discredit the prophet, but data of past earthquakes would remain as good as ever they had been. It is easy enough to smile at the illusion of a single amateur——

The mass-formation:

Fritsche, Stark, De Cuppis, Sidebotham, Lescarbault, Lummis, Gruthinson, De Vico, Scott, Wray, Russell, Hind, Lowe, Coumbray, Weber, Standacher, Lichtenberg, Dangos, Hoffman, Schmidt, Lofft, Steinheibel, Pastorff——

These are only the observations conventionally listed relatively to an Intra-Mercurial planet. They are formidable enough to prevent our being diverted, as if it were all the dream of a lonely amateur—but they're a mere advance-guard. From now on other data of large celestial bodies, some dark and some reflecting light, will pass and pass and keep on passing—

So that some of us will remember a thing or two, after the procession's over—possibly.

Taking up only one of the listed observations—

Or our impression that the discrediting of Leverrier has nothing to do with the acceptability of these data:

In the London *Times*, Jan. 10, 1860, is Benjamin Scott's account of his observation:

That, in the summer of 1847, he had seen a body that had seemed to be the size of Venus, crossing the sun. He says that, hardly believing the evidence of his sense of sight, he had looked for some one, whose hopes or ambitions would not make him so subject to illusion. He had told his little son, aged five years, to look through the telescope. The child had exclaimed that he had seen "a little balloon" crossing the sun. Scott says that he had not had sufficient self-reliance to make public announcement of his remarkable observation at the time, but that, in the evening of the same day, he had told Dr. Dick, F.R.A.S., who had cited other instances. In the *Times*, Jan. 12, 1860, is published a letter from Richard Abbott, F.R.A.S.: that he remembered Mr. Scott's letter to him upon this observation, at the time of the occurrence.

I suppose that, at the beginning of this chapter, one had the notion that, by hard scratching through musty old records we might rake up vague, more than doubtful data, distortable into what's called evidence of unrecognized worlds or constructions of planetary size—

But the high authenticity and the support and the modernity of these of the accursed that we are now considering—

And our acceptance that ours is a quasi-existence, in which above all other things, hopes, ambitions, emotions, motivations, stands Attempt to Positivize: that we are here considering an attempt to systematize that is sheer fanaticism in its disregard of the unsystematizable—that it represented the highest good in the 19th century—that it is mono-mania, but heroic mono-mania that was quasi-divine in the 19th century—

But that this isn't the 19th century.

As a doubly sponsored Brahmin—in the regard of Baptists—the

objects of July 29, 1878, stand out and proclaim themselves so that nothing but disregard of the intensity of mono-mania can account for their reception by the system:

Or the total eclipse of July 29, 1878, and the reports by Prof. Watson, from Rawlins, Wyoming, and by Prof. Swift, from Denver, Colorado: that they had seen two shining objects at a considerable distance from the sun.

It's quite in accord with our general expression: not that there is an Intra-Mercurial planet, but that there are different bodies, many vast things; near this earth sometimes, near the sun sometimes; orbitless worlds, which, because of scarcely any data of collisions, we think of as under navigable control—or dirigible super-constructions.

Prof. Watson and Prof. Swift published their observations.

Then the disregard that we can not think of in terms of ordinary, sane exclusions.

The text-book systematists begin by telling us that the trouble with these observations is that they disagree widely: there is considerable respectfulness, especially for Prof. Swift, but we are told that by coincidence these two astronomers, hundreds of miles apart, were illuded: their observations were so different——

Prof. Swift (*Nature*, Sept. 19, 1878):

That his own observation was "in close approximation to that given by Prof. Watson."

In the *Observatory*, 2-161, Swift says that his observations and Watson's were "confirmatory of each other."

The faithful try again:

That Watson and Swift mistook stars for other bodies.

In the *Observatory*, 2-193, Prof. Watson says that he had previously committed to memory all stars near the sun, down to the seventh magnitude——"

And he's damned anyway.

How such exclusions work out is shown by Lockyer (*Nature*, Aug. 20, 1878). He says: "There is little doubt that an Intra-Mercurial planet has been discovered by Prof. Watson."

That was before excommunication was pronounced.

He says:

"If it will fit one of Leverrier's orbits"——

It didn't fit.

In *Nature*, 21-301, Prof. Swift says:

"I have never made a more valid observation, nor one more free from doubt."

He's damned anyway.

We shall have some data that will not live up to most rigorous requirements, but, if any one would like to read how carefully and minutely these two sets of observations were made, see Prof. Swift's detailed description in the *Am. Jour. Sci.*, 116-313; and the technicalities of Prof. Watson's observations in *Monthly Notices*, 38-525.

Our own acceptance upon dirigible worlds, which is assuredly enough, more nearly real than attempted concepts of large planets relatively near this earth, moving in orbits, but visible only occasionally; which more nearly approximates to reasonableness than does wholesale slaughter of Swift and Watson and Fritsche and Stark and De Cuppis—but our own acceptance is so painful to so many minds that, in another of the charitable moments that we have now and then for the sake of contrast, we offer relief:

The things seen high in the sky by Swift and Watson—

Well, only two months before—the horse and the barn—

We go on with more observations by astronomers, recognizing that it is the very thing that has given them life, sustained them, held them together, that has crushed all but the quasi-gleam of independent life out of them. Were they not systematized, they could not be at all, except sporadically and without sustenance. They are systematized: they must not vary from the conditions of the system: they must not break away for themselves.

The two great commandments:

Thou shalt not break Continuity;

Thou shalt try.

We go on with these disregarded data, some of which, many of which, are of the highest degree of acceptability. It is the System that pulls back its variations, as this earth is pulling back the Matterhorn. It is the System that nourishes and rewards, and also freezes out life with the chill of disregard. We do note that, before excommunication is pronounced, orthodox journals do liberally enough record unassimilable observations.

All things merge away into everything else.

That is Continuity.

So the System merges away and evades us when we try to focus against it.

We have complained a great deal. At least we are not so dull

as to have the delusion that we know just exactly what it is that we are complaining about. We speak seemingly definitely enough of "the System," but we're building upon observations by members of that very system. Or what we are doing—gathering up the loose heresies of the orthodox. Of course "the System" fringes and ravel's away, having no real outline. A Swift will antagonize "the System," and a Lockyer will call him back; but, then, a Lockyer will vary with a "meteoric hypothesis," and a Swift will, in turn, represent "the System." This state is to us typical of all intermediatist phenomena; or that not conceivably is anything really anything, if its parts are likely to be their own opposites at any time. We speak of astronomers—as if there were real astronomers—but who have lost their identity in a System—as if it were a real System—but behind that System is plainly a rapport, or loss of identity in the Spirit of an Era.

Bodies that have looked like dark bodies, and lights that may have been sunlight reflected from interplanetary—objects, masses, constructions—

Lights that have been seen upon—or near?—the moon:

In *Philosophical Transactions*, 82-27, is Herschel's report upon many luminous points, which he saw upon—or near?—the moon, during an eclipse. Why they should be luminous, whereas the moon itself was dark, would get us into a lot of trouble—except that later we shall, or we sha'n't, accept that many times have luminous objects been seen close to this earth—at night.

But numerosness is a new factor, or new disturbance, to our explorations—

A new aspect of inter-planetary inhabitancy or occupancy—

Worlds in hordes—or beings—winged beings perhaps—wouldn't astonish me if we should end up by discovering angels—or beings in machines—argosies of celestial voyagers—

In 1783 and 1787, Herschel reported more lights on or near the moon, which he supposed were volcanic.

The word of a Herschel has had no more weight, in divergences from the orthodox, than has had the word of a Lescarbault. These observations are of the disregarded.

Bright spots seen on the moon, Nov., 1821 (*Proc. London Roy. Soc.*, 2-167).

For four other instances, see Loomis ("Treatise on Astronomy," p. 174).

A moving light is reported in *Phil. Trans.*, 84-429. To the writer,