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Paignton Devon

4 March '96

Dear Fitzgerald, When the servant gal puts on her Missis's bonnet & smirks before the glass, she is as satisfied for the time as if it were her own. I am in the position of the gal when I read your most flattering remarks. I only hope that the grateful Country will not (like the person of Lally, for instance) want to know what it has to be grateful about! — I suspected from Perry's last that he was the worker, because he did not include himself as such. It is remarkable that people should be so kind and friendly.

As regards my last, I am afraid you must have thought it rather ill-conditioned. But if I can only get a decent sleep (I have usually to be satisfied with 4 to 5 hours; I should say diminished) there is plenty of Mark Tappley in me, & I can see the comic side of the inconveniences of being a fish out of water. Here are one or two comic incidents: — I am sitting in my room engaged in writing immortal works (or a treatise), when in comes a man in his shirt-sleeves with a pail. He does not knock at the door, He leaves it open. He says nothing, but goes to the window & throws it open. "What are you up to?" I say. "Going to clean the window" all one word, is his reply. "No, you are not," I say, "you must not intrude in this way." "Miss Enside says I was to clean the window." "Now you know what I say. Leave the room." He does not go, but staves & begins again "Miss Enside says I was to clean the window." I then repeat my order & get him to go at last, still going on about Miss Enside says. This happened a second time, & I had to get the servant to instruct him in elementary matters. He didn't mean

anything. He is employed by the ^{surrounding shops} ~~shops~~ ^{to do} odd jobs, & I suppose takes his ^{He is quite wild now, and calls me Sir!} ~~time~~ ^{time} from them - ^{And Miss} Eviside is one of the best girls in the world, but would probably tell me I was silly if I ~~talked~~ "meddled" the matter.

Here is another one. I take something to a shop to be repaired. Only a little job, half an hour or so. Don't ^{by tomorrow} call for certain, if I will call. Call. Not done. Call again. Not done, more excuses, more assurances. At end of a week call again, & see myself the machine in corner, nothing done. So I desperately venture to remind him of his last promise, (to say nothing of former ones) "Oh! did I?" he says. "Yes, I believe I did." Then I bring the matter to a point and enquire if he had any special reasons for not doing it. (A little irony there, but he didn't see it). He considered for a moment. ^{and then drawled out} "Oh, yes, I remember now. A little while after you left, a gentleman came, who wanted something done at once; so of course I had to - - -". Was that clever irony at my expense? Not a bit of it. Only a thickhead. I told him it was something to put in Punch. He didn't see that. The real meaning of it all was the tradesman means getting business.

Yours sincerely
Olivier Heaviside

Pray don't trouble yourself to reply. You have plenty to do.

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P.S. I have been much interested in the discussion about the Kin. Th^y in Nature, though not understanding it all, especially about the H theorem. Is there any up to date book on the subject? I have only the 1st Ed. of Watson, in wh. I made ^{a long time ago} marginally the most awfully disparaging remarks! Fancy a Treatise about the Kin. Th^y of Gass wh. has nothing to say about Conduction of Heat, Viscosity & a lot of other things; & put in the form of a lot of Mathematical Propositions! I have been looking up the book, & I see that I rejected the Equal division of Energy amongst any n^o of variables as a ridiculous affair. My marginal example was a set of ^{hollow} spherical molecules with ~~an~~ one large number of little ones inside them. That the energy sh^d practically nearly all go to the little ones is obviously absurd. It is clearly a matter of probabilities, (a most insecure theory in applications). That a mol. has 3 degrees of translational freedom, & that T of each sh^d be equal, is an obvious matter. There is no directional preference in space, & exchanges of energy in all directions are equally likely. But it is not the same with all sorts of miscellaneous coordinates. I don't see that exchanges of energy between the big mol. and the little internal additions are on the same footing at all. But, in view of what Boltzmann says in his remarkable letter in Nature, I sh^d like you to tell me whether I am to understand that given time enough, and given a large enough n^o of complex molecules of the kind above imagined, ~~it can be~~ the energy will all divide itself equally amongst the degrees of freedom; if so it could be made to be all internal, or nearly so.

Yours sincerely
Olin Hoaride.

I do not write as an expert, of course.

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