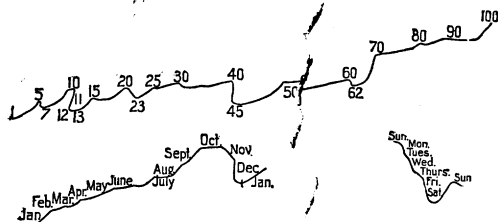


In committing prose or verse to memory, the positions of the paragraphs fix themselves in my mind so firmly that when I recite I almost read the words from the air before me, unless I have learned them by ear, in which case there is no illusion at all.

THATCHER T. P. LUQUER.

Bedford, N. Y., Sept. 28.

The matter of forms in series of numbers, months and days seems of considerable philosophical interest. Is there not herein a hint that, although the broad features, the great principles of mental states and operations are every where the same, yet the minutiae may be utterly incongruous and irreconcilable; and hence, that in the minute analysis of these things philosophers must always in a measure fail, because the assumption on which all philosophy is built, that minds act alike, proves to be not wholly reliable? What seems a necessity of thought, or at least a constant accompaniment of thought to one, seems ridiculous and unthinkable to another. Such forms have existed in my own mind from my earliest remembrance, yet I never thought of them as other than naturally common to all, till within a few years,



finding them entirely wanting to some minds. The annexed diagrams show that, while the numbers and the months take in general an ascending direction, the days of the week have a steep grade downwards to my mind.

Southbridge, Mass.

Some notes on color in *Science* recently recalled a study made by me when in Chicago a few years since. I was made president of the Kindergarten association when it was formed in 1875. This gave me occasion for several very curious lines of inquiry. Only one of these will be appropriately recalled now. A casual remark of that able teacher, Mrs. Putnam, led me to ask her which gift the children under seven first chose. She answered yellow. I said, "What, in preference to red or blue?" "Yes," she repeated, "with only one exception, invariably yellow." I then inquired of Miss Eddy, whose fine powers of observation were unequalled, and her answer was yellow. I could hardly believe it; but from every teacher there; or elsewhere, I have received the same answer, a few adding that they have had in charge a few children who were exceptions. This tallies with my recollections of my own childhood, and is confirmed by others. If it be an established fact, which I will not aver, to what shall we attribute it? Is it improbable that there is an unconscious relation between the growing child and the ray most concerned in growth, as there seems to be between old age and the red ray? We certainly outgrow at an early age our preference for the yellow.

E. P. POWELL.

Clinton, N. Y.

### Ball of electric fire.

MR. J. V. WURDEMAN says that a ball of fire, as large as a child's head, came into his room at Leavenworth, hopped across the floor like a soap bubble rolling on a carpeted floor, went out through the side of the house at the corner opposite to where first seen, with a sort of explosion, or rather puff, not nearly so loud as a pistol shot nor so sharp, and tore off the rain pipe of tin. It looked like an electric brush, not brilliant nor like the electric spark. His son, a little child, was playing on the bed; his mother snatched up the boy and was half way down stairs before the ball disappeared. The ball seems to have been like the St. Elmo lights, which I have seen on a vessel's yard arm, in the Gulf of Mexico, a pale brush of light, spherical in form, like the brush issuing from a metallic point in the prime conductor of the frictional electric machine.

M. C. MEIGS.

### Voss-Holtz electrical machine.

A few days ago I accidentally received a pamphlet on the theory of the Voss-Holtz electrical machine, by E. B. Benjamin, dealer in physical apparatus, New York City.

The article states that "no perfectly satisfactory explanation of all the phenomena manifested by this machine has yet been made public in this country," and then gives the theory that was published in *Science*, for June 20, 1884. In many places the sentences are the same, almost word for word, except that he has lettered the parts of the machine, and used the letters for the names of the parts.

Mr. Benjamin gives no credit either to *Science* or to the author, and further copyrights, by itself, the part of the pamphlet containing the theory, the date of the copyright being 1885.

H. W. EATON.

Louisville, Ky., Oct. 2.

### Carnivorous habits of the striped squirrel.

As the carnivorous habits of the musk-rat and other rodents have been under discussion during the past year, I wish to record a rather remarkable instance, which came to my notice in New Hampshire, May 27, 1883, in case of the striped or ground squirrel, *Tamias striatus* (L.) Baird.

The chipmunk is usually regarded as a harmless vegetarian, living chiefly, if not wholly, upon nuts, fruits, and the seeds of grain and various plants; but this is probably not the whole truth of the matter, at least in the following case, for an account of which I am indebted to the Rev. F. M. Gray, of Plymouth, N. H.

On the morning of the day in question, he was in the woods, and stopped to listen to some bird, when his attention was called to a white-footed or deer mouse (*Hesperomys leucopus*, (Raf.) LeC.), which ran hurriedly past, carrying something in its mouth.

Suddenly a chipmunk, which had watched proceedings from a stump near at hand, pounced down upon the mouse, caught up what she had carried in her mouth, but had dropped through fright, and returning to his stump began to devour it greedily.

The captured prey could now be seen to be a young mouse, which the squirrel ate as he would a nut or a piece of apple, in this case beginning with the head.