

the equation  $W = 2\pi r \gamma$  when the radius of the tube becomes extremely small, is not by any means conclusive, and does not seem to be supported by adequate experimental evidence. In any case, it could only be proved by extrapolation from a curve, and we should find ourselves involved in an argument as to whether the surface tension is the same for a thin mass as for the bulk of the liquid in all cases. The truth is that neither Harkins nor any one else has ever given a quite satisfactory solution of the dynamical problem of the drop detachment. His way out of the difficulty seemed to me to be somewhat vague and unsatisfactory; but that is only a point of view, and perhaps may not matter very much.

The main point at issue seems to be whether it is worth while checking any further propaganda on behalf of my method as opposed to Prof. Harkins's; and on this matter, of course, I have nothing to say. But I should be glad if Prof. Harkins would point out where my method is "erroneous," as at the moment I do not know what to make of his extremely general criticism, which occupies nearly two columns of this journal, and to which I can only make an equally indefinite reply.

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#### Cirrus at a Lower Level than Alto-cumulus.

IN his letter to NATURE of February 6, 1926, p. 199, Mr. C. J. P. Cave has directed attention to the fact that well-defined cirrus clouds may occur at a much lower level than we generally assume to them, say, under a sheet of alto-cumulus. To support his view he describes a striking observation similar to that made by me on Sunday, June 13, at Strasbourg. During the morning and early afternoon of that day the weather was rainy and the sky covered with alto-stratus and nimbus. The nimbus ceased about 16.30 (G.M.T.) and the alto-stratus merged gradually into a sheet of fleecy alto-cumulus moving from west-south-west. It had a straight edge separating it from a beautiful clear sky.

At 17.30 I saw at an angular altitude of near  $45^\circ$  to the east-north-east a patch of well-defined white cirrus clouds under the alto-cumulus, and detached from them. As at the same moment many cirriform streaks were developing from alto-cumulus and acquiring the form of *cirrus-uncinus*, I believe the cirrus mentioned above may have been similar streaks afterwards separated from alto-cumulus.

Later, in the clear blue sky, some of these streaks were seen that had lost their *cirrus-uncinus* form. I am sure that if any one had observed the sky only at this moment he would undoubtedly have noted common cirrus, and there is no reason, I suppose, to say that they have not the same structure, as we know that in many cases high cirrus clouds are formed by snowflakes.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Cave's observation and my own were made exactly with the same sky aspect; namely, a sheet of alto-cumulus with a straight edge and cirrus seen under it, near the edge. We are thus led to ask: Is all the low cirrus derived from alto-cumulus, and is it always seen near the edge of the sheet? The cirrus derived from the anvils of cumulo-nimbus seems to be an exception. The general meteorological conditions of the days of the two observations as regards cloudiness were also similar, the clouds being placed at the transition of a "corps" to a "traine" of a "cloud system," using the modern French nomenclature. On January 24 a low pressure area was above western Scandinavia and another to the south-west of Iceland. These were fast-moving depressions with well-defined warm

sectors passing over the British Isles. On June 13 a low-pressure area was situated to the west of Ireland, and it commanded in Europe a circular stream of occlusions.

A revision is desirable of the altitudes assigned by the International Classification to the cloud forms, and also of the definitions of these forms, to take into account the new ideas of the structure and formation of clouds.

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#### The Zoological Names *Simia*, *S. satyrus*, and *Pithecus*, and their Possible Suppression.

THE attention of the zoological profession is invited to the fact that the proposition is before the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to re-open the case of *Simia*. In its present form the proposition is for the Commission: (a) absolutely to suppress the generic names *Simia* and *Pithecus* and the specific name *Simia satyrus*, on the ground that retention of these names and the application of the rules to them will produce greater confusion than uniformity; (b) to insert into the Official List of Generic Names, *Chimpansee* Voigt, 1831, 76, for the chimpanzees *Pongo* Lacépède, 1799, type *pygmaeus* 1760, for the orang-utans, and *Macaca* Lacépède, 1799, type *syllvana* 1758, for the Barbary ape.

The argument before the Commission gives an extensive historical review of the subject; this will be published in Bulletin 145, Hygienic Laboratory.

Briefly summarised, the argument maintains: (1) that because of the importance of the Primates in connexion with investigations on infectious diseases, the nomenclature of certain genera has passed far beyond a status in which this subject is of importance only to zoologists in general and to mammalogists in particular; (2) that it is absolutely essential that unambiguous names be adopted internationally for experimental animals used for studies dealing with problems involving the life and death of human beings; (3) that the names *Simia*, *Simia satyrus*, and *Pithecus* are so confused in zoological literature as to preclude hope of reasonable uniformity in their use in zoological, bacteriological, serological, and public health work; (4) that the safest solution is to suppress these names entirely; (5) and that the International Commission should select thoroughly unambiguous and suitable substitutes which will preclude possibility of confusion in interpreting results as reported by bacteriologists and others in different countries—results which deal with human life.

The secretary will delay announcement of final vote until about September 1, 1927, in order to give to zoologists, bacteriologists, and others who may be interested, time to consult the premises formulated in Bulletin 145, and to express their views to the Commission. Application for copies of Bulletin 145, Hygienic Laboratory, should be addressed to the Surgeon-General, U.S. Public Health Service, Washington, D.C.

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#### Names for Companion Stars.

I HAVE been expecting to see some comment in NATURE upon Sir Oliver Lodge's suggestion under the above title in the issue of March 13, 1926, but none seems to have appeared. It is not my purpose to dwell upon the propriety of naming so insignificant and dense an object as the companion to Sirius for