

Chamberlin or myself. Ordinarily such conduct justifies the use of strong terms in characterizing it, but in the present case I believe astronomers and others who are familiar with the situation will fully agree with me that these aberrations are more deserving of pity than of censure. F. R. MOULTON  
June 10, 1909

#### COMMUNICATING WITH MARS

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In view of the recent proposals for opening communication with the planet Mars, as reproduced by the European press from American newspapers (with accompanying portraits), no truly patriotic American can fail to feel a thrill of pride and exultation at the thought that it his country that is solving this great cosmic problem. It is time to sound the alarm, however, for there are indications that an attempt will be made to rob us of the honor after all. A distinguished French astronomer has recently published a letter on the subject, in which, while giving a small measure of approval to the American projects, he broadly intimates that the last word has not been said. The Germans are keeping very quiet, but it is rumored that Count Zeppelin is thinking, and in commercial and manufacturing circles there is great though silent activity in the direction of trying to ascertain in advance just what articles now "made in Germany" are likely to be most in demand among the inhabitants of Mars when once communication is opened. Assuming that the planet is correctly named (and it has borne the name for hundreds of years without protest), the great Krupp establishment is looking for a practical monopoly of trade, and to meet the expected emergency it has taken options on all the land adjacent to the present planet. Their engineers are known to entertain the opinion that it will be a comparatively simple matter to send to Mars a 14-inch 70 foot gun, first, of course, hermetically sealing it in the aluminum cylinder. If it should not reach the exact spot where it is wanted it can readily be transported anywhere by canal boat.

Having all this information, which has

only recently come to me, I have decided to protect American interests by making premature publication of my own scheme for signaling to our celestial neighbor, which, for efficiency, simplicity of arrangement and ease of operation altogether surpasses, I think, all will admit, anything hitherto before the public. It is well known, even among astronomers, that as the orbit of the earth lies between the sun and that of the planet Mars, the dark side of the earth must, at regular intervals and for considerable periods of time, be turned toward Mars.

A *hole through the earth* would, at this time, allow the passage of a beam of sunlight, the intelligent interruption of which could be made to appear as a series of signals, using the Morse (E. S.) code or any other that might be chosen.

That is all; the problem is solved in this simple way.

One can readily understand how the system might be also put in operation on the moon, if the lunatics would only bore a hole through which the sun might shine when the dark side of the moon was toward us and then arrange a device for cutting off this beam of light at will. For our immediate purpose of wigwagging to Mars such a hole must necessarily be several miles in diameter. Although some minor difficulties in the way of the execution of this plan remain to be overcome, many of the details are already settled, including the selection of the spot where such an opening might best be made in the interests of mankind generally. T. C. M.

DRESDEN, GERMANY,

May, 1909

P. S. I regret that I have no portrait to send with this.

#### "TYPHOID MARY"

MUCH has appeared in the press of late concerning the unfortunate woman who for two years past has been held a prisoner upon North Brothers Island by order of the board of health. On June 29 she appeared before Supreme Court Justice Giegerich on a writ of habeas corpus, sued out by her attorney to obtain her release. Judging from the evidence,