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### The Wise Men of Mars

"June 14, 2270", I mentally printed the date line in my head.

Might as well start it this way. For if it worked, the Record was to go down in history.

What else should I think? It was hard to keep Rose off my mind. But for the Record? No! I must forget her for a while.

Well, I could make a mental review of the "March of Science" since the Nineteenth Century which brought about today's experiemnt. A pilot's account of a very technical subject, incomprehensive, but appropiate for the occassion.

Far away, on Earth, a Brainograph was trying to record the very thoughts which I was now thinking. Would it succeed? Would the vast distance and the mass of the moon weaken or entirely cut off my brain waves? Or would it work out exactly as Dr. Brierton had predicted?

The more pressing question at the moment, however, was "Will I be able to get back there?" True, others had come to the moon, and gone back safely. But just as many had lost their lives in the travel; into the unknown they disappeared, never to be heard of. What happened to them? What was going to be my fate?

One thing was certain, nobody that ever set foot on the moon had been willing to stay on for one extra minute. They were all determined to get out of here as fast as they could, and keep away for good. Now I knew why! There was a chilling lifelessness about the place, giving one the strange hint of having reached end. This mute silence, this absolute solitude. How close to Death it is like when life is shared by none! And I had to park my ship on the far side of the moon, without even the Earth's dim glow to give me consolation. What a ghostly spot to spend even a few minutes!

Now I better got off to a little systematic thinking.

"Transmission of brain waves from one person to another was long recognized even before the Science Revolution of the 19-20 Centuries. Psychologists called it telepathy. The idea was regarded with much suspicion, and was severely ridiculed by many, including some foremost scientists of that time. However, by the middle of the Twentieth Century, contact encephalograph was developed. Brain waves from different parts of the

human brain were electronically recorded as inscriptions on a graph paper in the so-called natural low frequency of the organ. These graphs, with a frequency corresponding to the Low C on the piano, were used to detect certain brain diseases and disorders producing abnormal curves. The very coarse recording showed all healthy brain waves to be identical. Indeed, what information could one possibly make out from a graph that recorded only the biological impulses of a thought!

"There was a long lapse after the encephalograph. Men had since made trips to the moon, split the hydrogen atoms for power, and built cities upon cities in the oceans. But as was always the sad case, men as individual human beings made little or no progress.

"How did we judge a person? From what he told the world, and from what he had already done. But of the truth behind these outward masks, no one had the slightest idea. And as long as a person still retained that impenetrable little chamber of his own thoughts, and knowing well that what he thought could be kept an absolute secret from the rest of the world forever, there was small wonder that mankind had remained the same ignorant, selfish, deceitful, and wretched souls as they were: constantly cheating not only others, but themselves as well.

"But thirty years ago, a young and brilliant scientist had, quite accidentally, begun to re-shape the human society. In investigating the characteristics of wave frequencies above that of the hard X-rays, Dr. Brierton had assembled a machine based upon a very unusual theory. At such high frequencies, he contended, the light mass of the sun would become relatively stationary, and might serve as a transmission medium for a new matter not yet in the knowledge of science. His design was a radical departure from any of the electro-magnetic wave receivers. Really, there was not the least assurance that it would work. And just what the light mass was to transmit, even the inventor had no idea.

"However, within a short time of experimentation, the young scientist made a bold claim: he had discovered the frequency ranges in which human brain waves were transmitted and received!

"What excitement, and what odds the young man had to fight against to prove his theory. To point at a meaningless graph and say it was the recording of a million thoughts mixed together! Absurd! Incredible! People mocked at his assertion that if the already small range in which these waves were found could be magnified a few million times, and its selectivity improved accordingly, individual human thinking could be read.

But in face of the scoffs and derision, Dr. Brierton stood his ground. Finally, the State Science Institute backed him up, giving him all the financial help he needed, and also some of the ablest technicians of that time in the field of ultra-high frequency researches. Thus initiated, it took him no less than fifteen years of hard work, and a thousand trials and mistakes, to complete a machine that actually separated one brain wave from another.

"Then began the work of correlating the graphs with the thoughts. This proved to be nearly as difficult as building the machine itself. The differences in intelligences, the languages, the modes of expressions; each resulted in variations in the waves almost impossible to identify, and experts in many more fields had to be called in for the interpretations. Another ten wearisome years passed, before Dr. Brierton declared to the world that his machine was now able to interpret the thinking within any person correct to over 96 percent. The interferences that caused so much trouble now became a blessing, for distance did not seem to affect the intensity of the brain waves. The machine read thoughts of people from any spot on earth with equal clarity, once the wave was 'tuned in'.

"This has been hailed as the greatest single advancement in civilization since the beginning of history. At long last, man has to face the real facts about himself. He finds that talking and acting like a saint will deceive nobody, as long as he still cherishes the secret evil thoughts which before could only be known to himself. He finds that crime never pays, no matter what the nature or how absolute the secret, for his own conscience will betray him within a few minutes after the machine has been tuned in on him. Why practice hypocrisy, when his own knowledge of his pretenses alone is sufficient to give away the truth? Why try to be anything that is not truly himself at all, when there is nothing to hide? Nothing he could hide?

"Some men, especially those in high power, at first did their utmost to keep their brain-wave frequencies secret. But that proved to be as foolish and impossible a task as the men back in the twentieth century who tried to hide the atom bomb from one another. So, in an amazingly short time of five years, the world, the men's world has changed. We have learned to live in the truth, instead of just telling others the right things to do. We have come to be honest with ourselves. We have stopped pretending to be the impossible. The goodness in heart, and freedom from pretenses, which men have preached through the centuries, have at last come to be a reality.

"Then Dr. Brierton turned his eyes on Mars. Before, men had placed a great deal of hope in telescopes. Every time a bigger one was completed, they thought the puzzle of Mars could

be solved. There was the 200-inch completed in 1947; the 350-inch in 2015; and finally the 600-inch telescope in 2240. But so much humid atmosphere covers its surface that the same mystery has been kept alive to this date: Is there life on Mars? And if so, what are they?

"Yes, if only a Brainograph could be built to receive the thinking, not of men on earth, but out on some distant planet, that would be one way of reaching out beyond the sphere in which we are confined. To accomplish this, another longer, more painstaking, and possibly fruitless research on some other wave lengths, in the neighborhood of human brain frequencies, would have to be launched. The project would take scores of years, and billions of dollars. Would the scientists do the tax-payers justice in carrying out a work of this nature? The 'tragedy' of so much money and so many lives wasted in exploring the moon is still fresh in the memory of many. What did they find? A lump of cold rock, impossible for human inhabitation. Why, people have known that to be so for centuries, even before the invention of airplanes. So, there should at least be proof that the new machine could reach through space.

"And that is why I am here on the moon. If as Dr. Brierton has insisted, the distance would not weaken the brain waves in any appreciable amount, and that it is transmitted through the medium of the light mass of the sun, we would then know the chances of success. To prove further that any mass other than light would not be a function of brain-wave transmission, I am to do my thinking on the far side of the moon, separated from Earth not only by distance, but also the moon itself."

The little green light in the cockpit blinked just now. They had received! For this signal calling me to return could not have been timed so well with a cessation of my thought, unless they had read my thinking word by word. Quickly, I reached for the switch...

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Although Rose and I had been married for over twenty years, the memory of my return from the moon was just as vivid and clear as if it had been only yesterday. I could still see the smile on Dr. Brierton's face as I stepped off the ship. How considerate he had been, "Congratulations, my boy. Rose is in my office, waiting for you... We'll talk about the machine later." Only when I saw Robert, our son, working on his Bachelor's Thesis, did I realize how times had passed. The world had gone on to the younger generation.

Even with the overwhelming success of the expedition, Dr. Brierton still had to put up a big fight to get approval for the new project. He was dead now. And the work had fallen into the hands of Dr. Forrestal, who had been his assistant for nearly twenty years. They couldn't have picked a better man for this job. As his personal friend, I had asked Dr. Forrestal to notify me as soon as anything promising should turn up in the Experiment Station.

The Viso-phone was ringing, I looked up. It was Myers, Cheif Operator at the Station. He appeared to be much excited, "Dr. Forrestal asks you to come over here at once, I think we've connected!"

There had been false alarms before, I told myself as I stepped on to the Belt. Once it was a large sun spot; another time it was traced to an explosion in the Milky Way some twenty-two million years ago. But this time... I seemed to sense the approach of some great unknown, at last unveiling itself.

No one was there to meet me at the entrance, I proceeded straight into the Operations Room. Dr. Forrestal didn't so much as look up as I entered. I took one look at the graph and gasped. This must be it! Indeed, even I could tell that the pattern looked very similar to our own brain waves! What strange mixture of emotions possessed me for one long moment it was hard to describe.

We were not surprised that the waves could not be interpreted right away. The "Men" of Mars could not have the same language or the identical way of thinking as we do. Yet, looking at them, there was no doubt of their coming from a clear and logical mind, of an intelligence at least equal to the best brains on earth.

We left the Station late in the night, heatedly discussing the new possibilities of actually communicating with another planet!

However, the next morning, within a minute after the machine had been tuned in to the same frequency, all of us practically

froze at sight of the graph coming out. In standard English form, it read, "Greetings, Men of Earth! We have waited six thousand years, your years, for you to reach us. Yesterday you made the first contact; now I am thinking in your language to save you the trouble of translating."

The big news was spread around the world in a flash. Men of Mars! Not only there, but thousands of years ahead of us in sciences! Oh yes, we now even needed two calendars to converse intelligently.

How did they find out what was going on in Earth? Six thousand years ago, they had already invented a device very similar to our Brainograph. With that, they had searched the upper and lower ranges of their waves in an attempt to find out about mankind on Earth. As they now knew, the right frequencies were tuned in more than once. Only our thinking then were such an incoherent mess of vague ideas that they thought those to be interferences from unknown sources. Much later, they developed another machine which enabled them to see and hear us through the cloud of cosmic dust trailing after a comet!

The first opportunity was in our year 847 BC, when the Stoneway's Comet got near the solar system, and its cosmic matter served as the transmitting medium linking the two planets. Objects on Earth were dimly visible for five days to them. A rough map of the Earth was drawn then. Imagine the big joke of America being discovered two thousand years later!

By the time the Brook's Comet visited us in 1911, their machine had been perfected to such a degree that it was able to make out conversations between individuals, and sometimes even the facial expressions. These of course were photographed in films and later studied by their men. Without the medium of cosmic dust, the same machine recorded action and sound from Earth through graphs, which, since they had the opportunity to compare graph with real happenings during the comet visits, could be interpreted almost 100 percent correctly.

There was so much we wanted to know. How did they look? From their accounts, they were built practically identical with us, except slightly larger in size, and had retained more of their hair because of the colder climate. Did they know where they come from, and why? No, science did not provide an answer to that question. But they had gone through approximately the same progress as we did: from tree-dwelling half-apes to a thing called civilization, which means dressing not for warmth, but for fashion; eating not for its food value, but to satisfy taste; housing not for shelter, but for privacy; and travelling not out of necessity, but for pleasure. In this manner, the progresses in two planets had the same unfortunate trend towards improvements

in material things alone.

More and more thrilling news came from our new acquaintances. Thousands of sciences' clever applications to make life easier and less active had become the daily things with them. The efficient utilization of energies stored in masses had made rich their land to a state of true abundance.

But all these could wait. First of all, they wanted to teach us to build the same machine as they had, which would enable us to really reach them when Darton's Comet should approach the Solar System in September, 3014. The necessary parts and workings of the machine were carefully "thought" out by Brainy (our nickname for the chief director of this communication in Mars), and recorded in our Brainograph. Even a comprehensive description of the machine would take years to finish!

However, the biggest news at the moment was, about half a century ago, the men of Mars had developed a machine to counteract their brainograph. Brainy spoke of this with resentment. At first, it was just a branch of science research. But too late! Some ambitious men got wise to the idea. They assumed leadership in one community and blocked out the brain waves in that whole district. Secret contrivances began. It spread like uncontrolled plague, every community followed suit. A few fought against it, but to no avail. The honest and creative society such as the one Earth was just beginning to achieve was shattered to pieces within a short time.

Things were worsening every day, Brainy told us. There were troubles all over the planet, no rest anywhere. People had already separated into unfriendly groups, scheming to gain control of the others by force. And one such intention alone was enough to start the whole planet into a wild scramble to preparations for sudden warfare. Not knowing others' true feelings, suspicion bred like fire among dry woods. Even now, every nation was accusing and counter-accusing each other of the intention to destroy her neighbors by sudden invasion. Many secret weapons of the Martians, Brainy said, were powerful enough to blow up the whole planet at the touch of a button. Scientists warned and pleaded with the leaders. But each of them saw so much righteousness in himself, and was so sure of his own weapons that, despite the frantic efforts of a minority, war might come any minute...

One day, when instructions for building the machine were almost complete, the Brainograph went strangely silent, completely dead. What could have happened? Our men checked the parts over and over again, everything seemed to be in good order. Did some one commit the irretrievable blunder, a war?

That night, a million new stars lit up the sky. In its magnificent splendor we perceived the dedication of the Martians. In due time, the exploding atoms will cool off. They shall not be visible for long, and the episode may some day be forgotten, like a story. But the infinitely wise men have found the last answer to their problems. Will we, humble and slow mankind, follow their foot-steps and thereby suffer the ultimate perishment?

- The End -