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M. AND MADAME CURIE.

WHEN the mouse freed the lion, that self-assured beast was never more astonished

than was the scientific world when from an unimportant villa in a dowdy quarter of Paris there sprang a discovery that upset half its preconceived ideas. It stared at M. and Madame Curie in suspicious astonishment. The scientific world differs from the lion in that it does not yearn to be freed from the net of tradition by nibbling investigators.

At the opening of the Paris Exhibition of 1900 you might have seen in a case containing other chemical exhibits, a watch glass filled with a powder marked "Radium, discovered by Madame Curie." It was quickly withdrawn, owing to the audacious pranks it began to play with the older exhibits. A veritable *l'enfant terrible* it proved; so they removed it. But it was many Months afterwards before the world, scientific or un-scientific, discovered the new discovery.

Once the Press printed the facts civilization had radium on the brain. Nor is it particularly remarkable that this should be so. One hundred and ten pounds of radium would give out as much heat as a stove burning twenty-two pounds of coal in twenty-four hours. And the radium would continue to give out this heat—for ever. The imagination shrinks before the fact.

M. Curie comes of a scientific family. His grandfather crossed to London in 1835, practised homoeopathy with success, and now lies buried at Norwood. Madame is a Pole, also of a learned stock. At the Warsaw college she earned great distinction, afterwards teaching in Germany before coming to Paris as a lecturer in a girls' school at Versailles. In Paris Marie Sklodowska, the lecturer, met Monsieur Curie the professor of a small technical college. They fell in love, married, and lived on nothing a year.

Decorations have fallen thick upon them. Their own and foreign countries have united to honour them. But they remain unspoiled. Monsieur is as negligent in his attire as when he starved to continue his experiments. He is thin, tall, slightly bent, rapt in theories, and shy of strangers. He holds worldly matters in scientific contempt. Madame is also impatient of the dressmaker and careless of Society. It was she who suggested the possibility of a new element, he who made the suggestion a fact.

They are a notable pair, a marriage matched by Fate and their child is radium.
