

Home Field, Torquay.

3.1.21.

Dear Bjerknes, I have rec^d yr paper and letter of Dec. 25. with pleasure -
I understand now the meaning of a quotation from my letter ^{to you} I saw in The Times
some time ago, referring to Einstein's great joke. He is an international Bolshevik,
and a few, I was informed by a follower of his doctrine. I never see any
of the scientific journals now. ... I don't think you quite hit the mark in your
Relativity remarks. It is not a question of logic, I believe, but of physical
reality. That 4th dim. is unreal. The trouble is, and always has been, not
with space, but with time. Even the great Thomson & Tait, who brought out
the proper meaning of Newton's laws of Motion, muddled themselves a little
over the measure of time. Mathematicians can imagine ^{or think they imagine} all sorts of spaces
to fill up the natural space, real or imaginary, and make the most fearful
transformations. They may be useful sometimes, ~~but~~ to pass on other abstractions
and if they take account of the finite speed of light, there is the opportunity
for Einstein & his followers, ~~to~~ the delight of metaphysicians who don't
know anything about ~~the~~ physics. The way the old boys at the Roy. Soc.
abused themselves before the "Revolution in Physical Ideas", and "Newton's
overturned," etc. etc. was rather comical. I may have said this in
my last letter. As for logic, Lord Rayleigh (late) quite agreed with me
that "logic ~~is~~ the very last thing". So if Oscar's criticism is only logical,
it might not go very far. As far as I know, experiment has not gone
~~deep~~ ^{deep} enough yet to determine the electromagnetic meaning of gravitation,
introducing a very small correction to Newton's calculations or that's
enough about Relativity at present. ...

As regards myself, I was very ill indeed after writing to you, &
had great financial trouble as well, & had to borrow many hundreds of
pounds to pay the bank & others, to avoid being sold up, and being left
homeless. I got long credit from the Gas Co., but they tired of that, and
began their "cutting off the gas" threats again. A legacy of £155 came
in just in time to help, and I paid up at Sept 30. Now they are
at me again, & I have just managed to settle again. The affair I
rigged up in the kitchen goes excellently, & gives no trouble, provided I
can get enough gas. It warms and dries all the house, ~~and~~ when the
snow temp. outside is not below 40°F. The price was 2/6 per 1000 cu. ft
before the war. Since July! it has been 6/-, and is, of course, very inferior
low pressure gas; better than the industrial gas trade, but with a lot of