

skilled observations, Opik declared, were based on different methods and 'cannot by any possible means be attributed to ordinary errors.'

"Dr. Opik went on to make a surprising statement: 'If one prefers fanciful explanations, this is a good moment to suggest that the equatorial bulge is hollow, a sort of roof constructed by the Martians who lived—or who still live—beneath it, enjoying perhaps the advantages of an artificially conditioned atmosphere and climate.'

"With scientific prudence, Opik adds that the bulge may be an optical illusion caused by some unusual atmospheric effect, but the observations made by Timpler, Muller and, moreover, by the nine experienced astronomers, seem to rule out this possibility."

Our readers have read for themselves the very terms used by Opik: "If one prefers fanciful explanations." One cannot say therefore that he firmly put forward this daring explanation, however justifiable it may be on paper. We owe it to ourselves to say this. Note, by the way, that when he begins suggesting fanciful explanations, Professor Opik does not stop half-way, for he goes on to consider the possibility that Martians might still be living under the imaginary artificial bulge! Then again, while he does call this explanation fanciful, he by no means states it to be absurd.

Before we had come across the passage which we have just quoted, we had received a letter from one

of our G.E.P.A. members, M. André Boudineau who, finding both improbable and contrived the proposition which we had taken in all seriousness from Professor Opik, sought an entirely natural explanation for the anomaly for which we want to account. The explanation which he proposes—a very ingenious one—has the drawback that it requires that Mars, in the previous course of its existence, should have passed through some pretty fantastic "adventures" which to us seem quite unprovable. According to M. Boudineau, Mars was originally orbiting in a warm region of the Solar System and revolving more rapidly than now, and so could have had the marked bulge which we now detect. But later on, according to this theory, Mars having changed its orbit suddenly, grew colder abruptly, and its mass shrank beneath the swelling, which latter had solidified suddenly. Between this congealed swelling, due to the cold, and the inner mass which was contracting, an almost empty or—at any rate—a spongy area would have been formed, whose abnormally low density would explain the anomaly now found to exist.

To our way of thinking, this ingenious "natural" explanation could scarcely be less extraordinary than the artificial explanation. The optical illusion which Professor Opik invokes would be a better one, but it is very difficult to believe in it, and so Mars still remains most decidedly one of the most puzzling of planets.

An 1880 UFO

By *Lucius Farish*

IT would seem that some of our most detailed and interesting UFO sightings come from those years when thoughts of space visitors never crossed the minds of the persons involved. Although many sightings of strange aerial objects were undoubtedly classified as "meteors", still another popular explanation was the "balloon" theory. We will meet with this theory in the following account taken from the pages of the June, 1964 issue of *True West Magazine*:

Galisteo's Apparition

"Editor's Note: The following story, submitted by Phil Cooke, appeared in the *Daily New Mexican*, Santa Fé, in 1880. Galisteo Junction is now known as Lamy.

"GALISTEO JUNCTION, N.M., March 26, 1880—Tonight soon after the arrival of the train from

Santa Fé, as the operator at this point and two or three friends were taking a short walk before retiring for the night, they were startled by voices evidently coming from above them. At first they supposed it was from some persons on the mountains near here, known as the Sierra Colorada, but on looking upward they were astonished to see a large balloon coming from the West.

"As it rapidly approached, the voices became more distinct but were entirely unintelligible. Loud shouts, in a language entirely unknown to any of the party, were constantly given, evidently with a desire to attract attention.

"The construction of the balloon was entirely different to anything of the kind ever seen by any of the party, being in the shape of a fish, and at one time was so low that fanciful characters on

the outside of the car, which appeared to be very elegant, were plainly seen.

“The air machine appeared to be entirely under the control of the occupants, and appeared to be guided by a large fanlike apparatus. The party seemed to be enjoying themselves, as laughter and occasionally strains of music were heard.

“A few articles were dropped from the car as the balloon passed over the Junction, but owing to the imperfect light the only thing which was found was a magnificent flower, with a slip of exceedingly fine silk-like paper, on which were some characters resembling those on Japanese tea chests. One article which from its weight when thrown from the car, seemed to be a cup or some other piece of earthenware, could not be found tonight, but diligent search will be made for it in the morning.

“The balloon was monstrous in size, and the car, as near as could be judged, contained eight or ten persons. Another peculiar feature of the air machine was that the occupants could evidently sail at any height they chose, as soon after passing the Junction, it assumed a great height and moved off very rapidly towards the east.

“LATER:—The cup thrown from the balloon last night was found this morning. It is of very peculiar workmanship, entirely different to anything used in this country. Both flower and cup are in possession of the operator at the Junction, and can be seen by anyone who desires to see them.

“GALISTEO JUNCTION, March 27, 9 p.m.—This evening a collector of curiosities passed through this place and on being shown the magnificent flower and cup dropped from the balloon which passed over this place last night, offered such a sum of money for them that it could not be refused and he became the possessor of them. He gives it as his opinion that the balloon must have come from Asia, and thinks it

possible it came from Jeddo.’ ”

We will recognize in the above narrative a few similarities between this mysterious airship and those seen in 1896 and 1897 over several sections of the United States. The balloon is described as having the shape of a fish. This would correspond with our present-day sightings of cigar-shaped “mother ships”.

The airship was “apparently guided by a large fanlike apparatus”. The *San Francisco Call* for November, 19, 1896, contained drawings of the airship that passed over Sacramento, California, on November 17, 1896. The drawings clearly show four “fans” or “propellers” on the sides of this aerial craft. UFOs with fans or propellers have also been reported in more recent times.

Readers of the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW will doubtless be familiar with the idea of “infiltration”. That is, in the view of some researchers, occupants of the UFOs are said to be living among us, incognito, for they so closely resemble Earthman that they have no difficulty in escaping recognition. With this hypothesis in mind, let us consider the enigmatic “collector of curiosities.” His role in this story is most important. How conveniently he arrived on the scene only one day after the occurrence! He was easily able to retrieve the “physical evidence” from the scene and implant the “conventional” explanation of a balloon from “Jeddo”. Jeddo is the former name for the present-day city of Tokyo, Japan. When we consider the size and performance of the mysterious sky object, we are forced to conclude that its Earthly origin seems most unlikely. Surely no Japanese inventor of 1880 could build a propelled balloon which could assume a great height and move rapidly, not to mention navigating the Pacific Ocean!

To sum up, we would say that the characteristics and performance of this object definitely brand it as a “true” UFO, while the actions of our “collector” perhaps lend new evidence in favour of the “infiltration” theory.

PRIMITIVE OCEAN ON THE MOON?

A prominent scientist suggested on February 10 that, when astronauts land on the moon, they will find the remains of a primitive ocean, nearly as old as earth. It was also possible that much of the lunar surface was covered with a sandy material with a depth from 10 yards to half a mile.

The controversial suggestions were made by Dr. Harold Urey, Professor of Chemistry at the University of California, at a space symposium in Denver, Colorado. He said the oceanic remains which might smell far worse than the swamps of today, could once have been part of the bodies that became moon and earth. For evidence he referred to meteorites in which had been found what could be biological remains.

—from *The Times* of February 11, 1965