

Quantum Sleep

by Professor A.D. Conrow

Restful sleep was as hard to come by "back-in-the-day" as it is today. In fact, I clearly remember that many of my fellow scientists were so sleep-deprived in the late 1920's that we actually formed a working group (a sub-committee of our 1928 conference on Exploring Novel Methods for Concentrating Aether & Other Practical Applications of Quantum Mechanical Actions), to study devices that might induce sleep. (Please refer to my article titled, "Dr. Tesla's Sleep Machine" for the final outcome.)

Back in those days, Dr. Heisenberg was pondering the basis for his Uncertainty Principle, and after sharing his thoughts on the matter with his fellow scientists, he created quite a Quantum Wrinkle among us, to say the least!

Many a restless night was spent trying to make sense of what Quantum Science implied for us Newtonians, and that included Dr. Einstein, as well. Dear reader, as you may well know, Einstein himself didn't lose sleep for very long at all concerning the whole matter, but the rest of us did.

Anyway, to make a long short very short, my friend, Dr. Tesla, was also a very light sleeper, and did some of his best work while in between "worlds", on the verge of sleep. One thing that Tesla absolutely hated was having to get up from his bed and "throw on the light" as we used to say, just to jot down some thoughts or draw a quick diagram or two.

It was Tesla himself that first brought the idea to my attention in the Fall of 1929, shortly after the great Wall Street Crash. Poor Tesla was living in most uncomfortable conditions at the Hotel Pennsylvania, where he was being constantly badgered by the management for past due rent. At this point, Tesla was getting on up there in years, and having a lot of little problems with day-to-day issues, and he seemed even slimmer than the last time I had met him in '26, concerning some secret matters.

"Dr. Tesla I presume," were the first words out of my mouth when he answered his door. This brought a slight, and all too brief, smile to his tired face, as he waved me into the room. He had not yet cleared away the remains of what I assumed was his lunch, when he motioned for me to sit down in a straight-backed chair near the foot of his bed and a small table covered with small electrical items.

"Please, Professor Conrow, do sit down for I have something to show you," said the frail

looking man, in a stiff but polite manner. From a nearby table, Tesla quickly whisked a small object under my nose and said, "Look, my latest invention." I took the apparatus from his slightly trembling hand and began to study it in detail.

What I saw was a small block of wood, a scrap really, with a small rock glued to it, and two terminals attached to the surface of the rock-crystal with what we called "cat whiskers" back in those days. (These looked like the wire part of a safety-pin, where the wire is looped to provide the pressure for holding the device closed.)

I soon recognized the rock as one of the specimens that Tesla had directed me to collect from some diggings at a Zinc mine in Joplin, Missouri, the previous summer. I said, "Oh yes, this is the sample of Greenockite that I sent to you. What on Earth have you done here Dr. Tesla, come up with a new type of wireless detector crystal?"

"No, something much more interesting to the World," muttered Tesla in his thick accent. "Please direct your attention to this setup I have on the table. You see, if I connect the sample of Greenockite that you sent me to a Weston 301 meter, and my resistance bridge... please watch the meter."

I did as he told me, and noticed that the resistance shown on the meter was approximately 3000 ohms. Suddenly, Tesla slipped over to the light switch for his room and snapped the switch off to my surprise. "Okay, now what," I hoarsely whispered, never certain of what kind of science demonstration Tesla had in mind! As suddenly as the room lights went off, a hand-held flashlight soon beamed a faint yellow light on the table, revealing the Weston meter's face.

"Professor Conrow, you will notice that the resistance has increased to over 5000 ohms; am I not correct?" I leaned forward and was astonished to see that Tesla was correct. The meter had "pegged" on the positive side of the scale. "Great Scott," I cried, at once realizing the implications. Tesla snapped the room lights back on and was as proud as any parent would be of their newly born child, his arms folded.

"Conrow, do you realize what this means? No more stumbling around in the night's realm... no more spills & falls," said the great man, as I smiled from ear to ear, "I call it Noctillum". Tesla handed me the wood & rock device, and simply opened the door with one swift motion, and ushered me out of the door without out so much as a goodbye. I am certain that this act would have offended many persons in my position, but that was just Tesla's way. It was understood that I should put the new

device to good use, and that I soon did.

After a two day train ride back to my Boston Mountain shop, I had already planned out the Noctillum light. Its construction was straight-forward:

First, I turned a base out of solid Mahogany wood and painted it an extremely dark brown, as was often done to form an instrument base in those days. Next, I wired a vacuum tube into a circuit that would eventually become what is known as a Phantastron, which applied a series of steady pulses to the Greenockite crystal.

These electrical pulses were next smoothed by a capacitor to form a voltage that could be applied to two small lamps, just large enough in brightness to light a dark room. I fitted two jewels on top of these lamps to give the Noctillum some color, and to make it more interesting to the eye.

So, when the room lights were on (or the sun was shining) the voltage applied to the lamps was too low to light them. However, when the room light diminished to a certain point, the voltage increased enough to light the small bulbs, and consequently light the room softly.

I was so excited that I sent a telegram to Tesla the next day that said, *"My Friend Dr. Tesla (stop) Am Sending Your Noctillum (stop) Worked First Time (stop) Letter To Follow (stop) Best (stop) Professor Conrow (stop)"*

I posted the Noctillum later that day, to Dr. Tesla, c/o The Hotel Pennsylvania, but it was returned a couple of month later. The package said, "No Longer Resides Here". My first thought concerned Tesla's health, remembering his trembling hand during my last visit. It was only after several inquiries that I was to learn his dear friend, Mr. Behrend, had moved Tesla over to the Governor Clinton Hotel and paid his back rent in full.

The point of my story, I suppose, is to remind us that "It is always darkest before the light!"



