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Science Can Wait

by RAY CUMMINGS

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Of course the criticism and abuse that have been heaped upon young Professor Egbert Hale are justified. You can't blame the scientific world or the general public either for being irate at Egbert. Here *they* are, like Tantalus, and there is Egbert—and no one can do a thing about it. On the other hand everything has two sides. Nobody cares about Egbert's side. But Egbert does and that's the trouble.

*Was Egbert Hale a nonentity
—or a genius?*

To look at Egbert you'd never have believed it of him. His mild blue eyes seemed to gaze helplessly through his spectacles as though he couldn't quite cope with the rushing world around him. His manner was shy, deprecating. His earnest smile seemed naive. Undoubtedly he always wanted to please and everybody used to like him.

Egbert had his Ph.D. and was in the Government Research Laboratories well before he was thirty. He didn't have to work. He could have been a spending wastrel, because he had inherited a fortune from his father, who was the late Professor Albert Hale. If you don't remember Albert Hale, you should.

From earliest adolescence Albert had been very worried over atomic bombs—A or H or any kind at all—and it was he who finally demonstrated (strictly on paper of course but incontestably mathematical fact) that so far we had been very abnormally lucky because there was one chance in 11.5 when you started a chain reaction that you would blow up the world. So except for Albert you very probably wouldn't be here now.

Egbert's father had been dead about two years when late one afternoon—momentous event—just as Egbert was leaving his laboratory building the fates decreed that he meet Millie. On the surface it was haphazard. Millie, walking on the third-level pedestrian ramp, was abstracted, was absorbed with the idea of trying out the new belladonna Eye Sparkle guaranteed to strew your past with heartbroken victims.

Egbert by nature was always abstracted and as he popped unheralded out of his office onto the ramp, he and Millie forcibly collided and Millie landed sitting down.

"Oh—terribly sorry," Egbert gasped. "How awful of me."

What Egbert saw as he picked her up and set her back on her feet was a small brown-haired girl whom nobody would call a beauty—but certainly a girl very shy, sweet and appealing-looking. Or so she appeared to Egbert—and vice versa.

To Millie the stammering Egbert looked just darling. That was obvious because when, after exhausting his apologies, Egbert startled himself by suddenly suggesting that this stranger have supper with him right then at the near-by Skyline Terrace Restaurant, Millie shyly accepted.

They soon found that they had everything in common. Completely devoid of relatives young Professor Hale was living alone in a nasty little cubbyhole in New York. Millie too was lonely. She was a novice-worker in the Government Office of Internal Revenue, Surplus Income tax Department. Her only relative was her mother, who lived in Chicago.

It was a marvelous evening. Millie taught him to dance the new five-step Sling. They took a jet-taxi to Boston in mid-evening, where Billy Bates—the crooning bandleader who had originated the Sling—was currently appearing. They danced for two hours. Egbert had never tried to dance before. It was inspiring, holding a girl in your arms.

Rosy-fingered dawn was struggling with the Neon lights on the Eastern terraces of New York when finally Egbert took

Millie home. Clotho and her sisters never had spun a neater thread of human destiny. Egbert and Millie were in love. Engagement, marriage, honeymoon, followed in due time as a matter of course. Nothing could have stopped the inevitable sequence.

To Egbert it was all a blurred fantasy, something he never could have believed would happen to him. But here it was. Unavoidably, from the moment he met Millie, he had neglected his work. That bothered Egbert, but it didn't get him into any trouble with his Chief at Government Research. This rich young son of the famous Professor Albert Hale was, so to speak, a privileged character.

Within the limits of public criticism, because after all he was drawing a salary, Egbert could do what he liked. In truth nobody actually had much idea what he was doing in his little research lab. Nobody figured he could achieve anything important. The son of a rich and famous man almost never does.

But despite the distractions of Millie, Egbert's conscience occasionally twinged. Near the end of the honeymoon particularly he noticed it. He mentioned it to Millie. "Just think, only three nights more and I'll be back at work."

"I know," she sighed. "Oh, Egbert, everything's been so wonderful." They dropped their little aircar down into Pago Pago for an overnight stay. On the balcony of the hotel room, with moonlit palms spread below them, he held Millie on his lap.

"My work's important, Millie. You don't realize it—nobody does."

He had never talked of his work to Millie before. As a matter of fact he never talked of it to anyone. It was his own private affair, his and his father's. Albert Hale had worked for years to achieve a great ambition. He had died without reaching his goal but he had passed all his knowledge on to his son, Egbert. For his father's sake if nothing else Egbert wanted to succeed.

"It's a really important project, Millie. I promised father I'd finish it up for him and I will. Look, if I let you in on it you don't have to gossip about it, do you?"

"Of course not, darling." She was thrilled. "Tell me."

"I guess it'll be the biggest advance that science could make," he declared.

"Oh Egbert!"

"It's a thing the whole world's thinking and talking about right now. Matter of fact, hundreds are working on it—but I'm the one who's going to do it. The Conquest of Space, Millie. See, father figured out a new angle. Everybody's thinking in the wrong direction—all off on a wrong premise."

"Are they, Egbert?"

"Of course they are. It's just like the way they started with flying. Birds flapped their wings, so everybody figured a flying machine ought to have wings flapping like a bird's."

"Did they, Egbert?"

"Sure they did and every contraption crashed. Same now with space-flight. Everybody figures on ram-jet rockets and such, shooting for the Moon. All they can think of is a self-propelled projectile, breaking loose from Earth's restraining gravity, hurling itself into space. That's an entirely wrong line of thought, Millie."

"Oh," Millie said.

"Totally wrong, Millie. The attainment of an initial velocity sufficient to carry a projectile beyond the hampering gravity-field of Earth is a difficult and complex problem."

"Oh, Egbert, I should think so!"

"It is. To say nothing of the reverse—the landing problem. Now what I'm after is very different. Gravity itself is a mysterious force, but father learned a lot about it. What I'm after, Millie, is a counteracting force—a gravity nullifier, so to speak.

"That, and a force repellent to gravity, which in effect are the same thing, merely intensified. Don't you see, once you get that all your space-flight problems melt away. The rest is just routine technology—our commonplace devices for high-altitude air-flight, adapted for Space-flight. That part's very simple."

"Oh Egbert, darling, you're just wonderful."

It seemed nice to talk to Millie about his work, a safety valve, because he was always seething inside with it.

Egbert and Millie flew back from their honeymoon and arrived in Great-New York late on a Saturday evening. They had a charming little home all set up—a cubby-suite on the 47th floor of the new palatial Rivermore Dwellings.

Complete with perfumed, irradiated bath, radarange and full electronic cooking, it was very nice. From the tiny railed balcony outside the living room you could glimpse the Hudson Ramp, far down in the slit between the opposing buildings. There was also a slit of sky overhead.

All that next day—Sunday, so his conscience couldn't twinge—Egbert loafed around the house. Millie was very busy, as befits a competent housewife despite all the gadgets of modern science designed to make her a drone.

Millie loved it all. "Darling, we're going to be so happy."

"You bet."

Egbert felt then that he was singularly blessed. Work that was inspiring, an adoring wife, no money worries and a little home—what more could a man want? That Sunday morning and afternoon were heavenly. So was the first part of the evening. Then the door-chimes sounded.

Egbert opened the door.

"*Mother!*" Millie squealed.

"Oh," Egbert said.

"Mother darling—we got back last night." Now Millie was in her mother's enfolding protecting arms. She looked very small, because Mother Van Rant was the big gaunt type.

"We—we were going to phone you," Egbert said.

"I know you were," Mother said grimly.

The 47th Corridor here was cluttered with assorted luggage and four public porters stood waiting to be paid. Egbert paid them and struggled inside with the luggage while Mother efficiently directed where each piece should be put. The suitcases were large, capacious. It was gruesome to Egbert, contemplating how much they would hold.

Mother had come for a Visit.

No man should expect a completely serpentless Eden. But Egbert had. Vaguely it had seemed to him that a marriage in which the combined total relatives of both husband and wife equalled only one—and that one a thousand miles away in Chicago—surely was off to a good start.

Unfortunately he had underestimated Mother. During the engagement and marriage she had been on hand, of course. That was fair enough. In all the dazed whirl, Egbert hadn't noticed Mother's efficiency, her superb judgment.

He should have taken warning but he didn't. He should have realized that Mother would have made a play to accompany them on their honeymoon except that she had a phobia against flying and didn't dare try it. She never had flown and never would.

But instinct warned Egbert now. He went to work that next morning but somehow the problems of space-flight, the enigma of gravity, seemed remote and unimportant beside the problem of Mother. And when he returned home that

evening all his worst fears were confirmed.

It was incredible what improvements had been made in his home in just one day. The furniture had all been rearranged. The drapes were different. The temperature was colder, which of course is more healthful.

The clubby little dinner for three was constrained. Mother talked a lot and Millie listened and Egbert sat mutely thinking things which of course were not sayable.

"Now we'll have to be careful what friends we have here in Great-New York, Millie," Mother explained. "A woman of the social position you must strive for—when I meet your friends I can tell you quickly enough who is socially acceptable."

"Yes, Mother, of course. I—I haven't very many friends here in New York."

The Government had transferred Millie temporarily from Chicago and she had only been in New York a month when she met Egbert. Since then, absorbed in each other, she and Egbert had ignored everybody.

"But Egbert has lots of friends, haven't you, Egbert?" Millie added.

"Yes, I guess so," Egbert said.

"Oh—*his* friends!" Mother's tone was faintly contemptuous. It was obvious that Egbert's friends weren't going to make the grade. "And you and Egbert," Mother said, "have got to be careful where you go and what you do—got to be seen in the right places, do the right things. So many young couples with no one to guide them—"

"Yes, Mother. I know."

No one noticed that Egbert ate very little. It was partly because he was so mad and partly the improved menu. Obviously Mother's digestion was very good and she liked peculiar things. Egbert's digestion at best was ticklish and what he ate of Mother's cooking made him feel queasy all evening.

Tuesday was the same. Wednesday was worse. Egbert waited a full week, just on the chance in a million that Mother might name a departure date. Then he mentioned it to Millie. They were in their bedroom. Mother had decided that it was time for everybody to go to bed.

"Look," he said, "I was thinking—when do you suppose Mother's planning to leave for Chicago?"

"Oh," Millie said. "I don't know. Why?"

It was an incredibly obvious question to answer. Egbert stopped undressing and stared at his wife, who was seated crosslegged in the middle of the bed, looking very appealing in her blue lace negligée.

"Why?" Egbert echoed. "Why should she go home? Well, anyway—couldn't we—well, just sort of hint, Millie? I mean—if she'd just give us some idea."

"Oh, Egbert—and hurt her feelings? Darling, you don't realize—she's awfully sensitive!"

"We've got to get her out of here," Egbert said.

"Egbert!"

Really, despite what the world now thinks, Egbert Hale never wanted to be unreasonable.

At Millie's hurt look, her shocked reproachful tone, contrition swept him.

"Well anyway—oh; well—" He dropped it. But when the light was out and he was trying to go to sleep he was still muttering to himself. "We've got to get her out of here."

Some problems are soluble by human endeavor and some are not. The enigma of gravity at least was something with

which Egbert could cope. Now, naturally enough, he began working evenings. It was so inspiring to be making real progress that once in awhile he would work nearly all night, sneaking in at home quietly, very pleased that Millie and Mother were asleep.

Egbert's work thrived but the results at home were not altogether good. There was one night—Mother's visit had run about a month now—when Egbert came in and was shocked to find his bedroom empty. The coverlet of the bed wasn't even turned back.

Shoelessly investigating Egbert found that Millie was asleep on the couch in Mother's room. Quite naturally Egbert didn't mention the event next morning nor did Millie and Mother. But they didn't let him fail to learn that he was the third and guilty party in this triangular household.

Egbert worked very hard again that day. Things in the lab went fine. Yet somehow, all day he was depressed. Maybe he ought to feel a little guilty? Mother's opinion of him—which daily he had sensed was steadily deteriorating—had some slight justification. Or at least Millie had reasonable cause now to think so. He hurried with his work through the evening.

He got home promptly at ten o'clock, full of the laudable determination to make Millie realize how much he loved her—how really hard he was working and with wonderful promise of success too. He told himself he would ignore the problem of Mother. He greeted Mother and Millie graciously when they came in from the theater about midnight. His heart missed a few beats when Mother retired to her bedroom but fortunately Millie didn't follow her.

Timing is important. In the lab if you add a chemical a fraction too soon you can cause a nasty explosion. Egbert waited until he and Millie were ready for bed.

"Well," he said, "this is nice, Millie dear. We haven't been seeing so much of each other lately, have we? I've missed you."

He sat beside her on the bed and put his arms around her. There was some opposition but he managed it. "Been pretty tough on me, Millie, this night-work." He sensed that this was a bad start. "I mean—well of course, tough on you too. On both of us. Anyway I'm going to ease up now—things are going just grand."

"Are they?" Millie said.

"You bet they are. Wait'll I tell you. See, it's becoming more obvious to me every day that the force of gravitation can be nullified by contra-electronic vibrations which—" Vaguely Egbert was remembering Millie's entranced awe when he talked like this, that night in Pago Pago.

But women are chameleon creatures. This was a different Millie.

"Good," Millie said. "Put out the light—I'm going to sleep."

It was a dash of liquid air in his face but he persisted. "You don't seem to realize, Millie—I've almost got it, the biggest thing ever happened in the scientific world, opening up all the vast realms of interplanetary space—interstellar space—the whole universe of the stars, all made accessible. It'll be a new era for mankind, Millie—the Age of space-travel."

Egbert paused for breath. Millie should have been awed but she wasn't. Her gaze at the enthusiastic earnest Egbert was one of aversion.

"Mother's right," Millie said. "You're not a man, you're an adding machine—a robot—a chemical reaction."

Nothing could have been nastier. Especially when Egbert had been so graciously determined not to mention Mother.

"Oh, so that's what she said, is it?" Egbert's embracing arms dropped down and he sat back, stung.

"She says no wonder I resent—"

"Oh, she does, does she?" All Egbert's good resolutions fled. He flung caution down the garbage chute. "Well you let me tell *you* something, since you insist on bringing your mother into this."

"Egbert—don't shout so loud. You—"

"Why shouldn't I shout? I want to shout!"

"Egbert—" Obviously, Millie was startled. She certainly never had seen Egbert anything like this before. "Egbert stop. I didn't mean to—"

"I told you to get your mother out of here," Egbert said. "I told you that a long time ago. We didn't have to fight before she came, did we? Everything was lovely then, wasn't it? Remember our first day here after the honeymoon. I thought we were having fun. I thought—"

"Oh, Egbert!" Very probably Millie would have burst into tears and the triumphant Egbert would have grabbed her and all would have been fine. But as one might suppose, attracted by the shouting, Mother couldn't help but listen. To her it couldn't help but be obvious that reinforcements were needed and she was not one to shirk a duty.

"Well!" Egbert exclaimed as the door burst open and Mother loomed on the threshold. "Well—"

"So," Mother said, "this is what goes on behind my back, is it?"

"You get out of here," Egbert said.

Nothing could have been sillier than expecting Mother to retreat. She stood with a withering gaze, then she advanced to the bed.

"Well!" Egbert said. At the appearance of this new adversary he sat back against the headboard, embattled. Mother's aspect was formidable to say the least. Her eyes glared. Her tall gaunt figure was wrapped tightly in a red dressing gown. She had put her blue-gray hair into springy wire gadgets that bobbed and weaved as she advanced, snaky-headed. Medusa at her worst had nothing on Mother now as she strode into battle.

"So this is the way you treat my daughter, is it?" she demanded. "If you think I'm going to stand around and see my daughter abused you can think again, young man. Millie, darling—"

"Abuse her?" Egbert said. "*Abuse* her!"

"A brute," Mother said. "I might have known—a sullen sneaky brute. No wonder—"

"Brute?" Egbert said. "Now look here—"

"I might have known. Sneaking out all hours of the night—pretending to be working—"

"Working? *Pretending* to be working?" It was confusing, being attacked in so many directions at once. Egbert, helpless as Echo, had the feeling he was getting nowhere. "What you mean, pretending?"

The new line of thought stung Millie into action. She exploded into tears. "Oh—and he was pretending stuff a-about his work and he even—"

"*Hah!*" Mother said. "Sly and sneaky and brazen—"

"Oh, M-mother—you don't think—" Egbert said.

"My poor little Millie!" Mother's arms were protectingly around the sobbing Millie now. "Don't cry, Millie."

"Now you look here," Egbert said.

"You—you're just a b-brute," Millie said. Her brimming eyes flashed at him and then she buried her face again against Mother's broad chest.

"Come on, Millie, dear," Mother cooed. "He isn't worth it."

"Look here, you two—" They were at the bedroom door when Egbert pulled himself together enough to issue an ultimatum. "You come back here, Millie. If you go out that door you'll be sorry."

The door slammed. The battlefield held only Egbert, sitting on the bed telling himself he was victorious, which of course was idiotic.

Alone in bed, ready for sleep with the light out, all the snappy things he could have said to Mother came readily into his mind. The trouble had been that there was something hypnotic about Mother. That, of course, was Millie's trouble. Egbert was a logical man. He could see it all now, clearly.

The whole pattern of Millie's life had been utter dependence, her gaze turned trustingly upward to the Oracle. Completely appealingly feminine, Millie naturally was not an independent thinker. Her very qualities of sweetness, shy helplessness and dependence, which had so appealed to Egbert, were now working against him.

At dawn Egbert fitfully slept and dreamed of Medusa—and it wasn't Perseus but Egbert, who sneaked up on Medusa while she slept and cut off her head.

The quarrel got patched up, of course. Egbert apologized. Millie wept and came back to the bedroom where she belonged. But somehow it seemed a hollow victory for Egbert. Mother's protective instinct had now been fully aroused and three days later two of her trunks arrived by air-express from Chicago. Certainly Egbert couldn't miss feeling that domestically his efforts were in bad shape. The great problem of Mother unquestionably was further from solution than ever.

Then, like a miracle, Egbert had a stroke of luck. What he could do about Mother became crystal clear. It was his work that suggested it to him. His work now needed a change of locale. Gravity had yielded up almost its last mystery. He needed now a large and secret laboratory-workshop. That wasn't practical here in New York and obviously he'd have to move somewhere else. What could be nicer, killing two birds with one stone?

Egbert went to his Chief. "I'm taking an extended vacation," Egbert said. "I've been working too hard."

"Swell," his Chief said. "Have a good time."

"Without pay, of course," Egbert said.

It was convenient that Egbert had plenty of money. He transferred an even two million from his bank to the Mt. Everest National. Anyone can do things with neatness and dispatch with the help of money.

After a week of telephoning, and the full-time labors of the Director of the Mt. Everest Bank, Egbert had located what he wanted—a nice isolated little house with plenty of empty land where the workshop-lab could be built.

Mt. Everest, of course, with its Astronomical Observatory and all, was too populous. This was a neighboring peak in the more secluded Himalayas—and it had just the one little empty stone house on it. Already Egbert's materials were winging their way there. His skilled technicians were hired, sworn to secrecy and preparing to go.

There was a minor crisis at home even though Egbert distorted the facts a little as he explained that he was taking Millie with him on a brief three or four-day trip out to California and back on Government business. But he finally put it over.

Millie went and Mother stayed in the 47th Floor cubby-apartment, busy with new improvements, which she'd have ready to show them when they returned. Egbert agreed very graciously to pay the cost of the improvements.

Millie was entranced by the gorgeous view as they flew over the towering Himalayas. It reminded her of their honeymoon.

"Sure does," Egbert agreed. He landed their aircar on the wild crags of the rocky peak. "And look at the little house that's here, Millie. Just for us, nestling in the clouds. We're spending a night here—just like the honeymoon."

"Egbert, you darling!"

But naturally, after two or three nights, Millie couldn't help but notice Egbert's chartered planes constantly arriving. Loaded with his technicians and raw materials they came winging in through the clouds almost hourly. Across the crags a quarter of a mile away a veritable beehive of building activity was springing up.

Millie was puzzled. "Egbert, dear, what's going on?"

Then Egbert told her. "My work needs me, Millie. We'll be here quite a time. Can't tell how long right now. Nice—eh, Millie?" He held her in his arms and kissed her, which is always good technique when you impart startling news.

"Egbert!" Millie gasped. "Why, you—you've practically abducted me!"

"Well—yes," Egbert admitted. "How could I help it? I love you so much." He kissed her a lot more to prove it. That sort of thing is always apt to go over big. Especially with Millie, it did.

"Oh, Egbert, you—you're just darling."

It was nearly two hours before Millie thought of Mother. "She might want to visit us," Millie said. "She's deathly afraid of airplanes. I guess it must be a long trail up the mountain. How'll she come—by palanquin?"

"There isn't any trail up the mountain," Egbert said.

What more could a man want? Work that was inspiring, a loving wife who was a good cook, a little home minus Mother. It was heavenly. And now Egbert's work progressed more speedily than ever. In a few weeks, yielding to his determined, final attack, the last mystery of gravitational force was dispelled.

Then presently Egbert was beginning to dismiss the workmen. They were sworn to secrecy but at most they knew only the routine technological stuff. Egbert installed all the anti-gravitational apparatus himself.

Of course, weeks earlier when the radiophone had just been connected, Millie had called New York to inform Mother that she and Egbert were still alive. What Mother said wasn't important. Egbert never bothered to ask.

Everything was lovely and soon the world would ring with praises of young Professor Egbert Hale—the greatest scientist of his day beyond question. Egbert was telling the awed Millie something like that one night when the door buzzer sounded, which was surprising because all the workmen now had gone.

Egbert opened the door upon a tall, gaunt and angular figure—a parka-clad nemesis standing there, grimly smiling with secret triumph.

"Mother!" Millie squealed.

"Hello, Millie, dear—hello, Egbert," Mother said sweetly. "I always thought I was afraid of airplanes, wasn't that silly of me? The trip was wonderful."

Mother had come for a Visit.

Many a man of genius has been inspired by the lash of desperation. Egbert's final and greatest inspiration came to him now, came like a bolt of glowing electrons, rushing out of the darkness of his despair. He didn't take any chances by waiting. When Mother was asleep that night he crept with the wondering Millie out of the little stone house.

"Egbert, dear, where are we going?"

"Something I want to show you, Millie. A present for you. Wait'll you see. You'll love it."

It was all equipped, ready and waiting in the center of the big laboratory-workshop.

"A space-flyer, Millie. See, I wanted to show the world the big advantages of my anti-gravity method over the conventional rocket-style stuff—so I made mine as different as I could."

It was certainly different. Under an enclosing, transparent pressure-dome, set upon a half acre of metal slab, a little cottage stood complete with a tiny garden around it.

"Oh, Egbert, how cute!"

"You bet."

It was wonderfully equipped. Millie of course wasn't interested in the pressure and ventilating systems, the air-renewers, the tiny lab where water and foods could be synthetically made, in addition to the fresh vegetables which even now were sprouting in the garden.

Egbert concentrated on the vitamized, irradiated bath, the radarange, the tasteful furnishings. Indeed, domestically, the 47th floor cubby back in New York had nothing on this. Millie was entranced as they inspected it. "Oh, Egbert, it's just darling!"

"You bet. Let's take a little trial spin in it. Let's go up a mile or so just to be sure everything works all right."

Everything worked fine. Egbert rolled back the laboratory roof, disclosing the sparkling panoply of stars in the Himalayan sky. With the space-flyer's pressure-ports closed, the anti-gravity plates faintly hummed underneath the little house and garden—anti-gravity force thrusting downward and normal Earth-gravity pull maintained in the dome-space above.

They stirred, lifted, smoothly, silently slid up and up and up. At fifty miles up, looking out through the enveloping transparency of the dome, the view from the easy chairs on their little front porch was beautiful. At a hundred miles up it was even finer.

The trial spin was obviously a great success. "Maybe we'd better be getting back, don't you think?" Millie said at last. They were now about five hundred miles up.

"We're not going back," Egbert said. He demonstrated every word with a kiss. "We're going to travel around for quite a while, Millie."

"Egbert, you—you've abducted me again!"

"You bet," Egbert said. "A nice long honeymoon because I love you so much."

"Oh, Egbert, you darling."

Of course it's a horrible feast of Tantalus for the world of science. Earth has two satellites now—the Moon and Egbert. With even a moderate size telescope you can see the tiny dot sometimes as he goes past. He's about a hundred and twenty thousand miles out—roughly half as far as the Moon.

With power shut off, just coasting, his orbit has stabilized and astronomers have calculated its elements. He goes around the Earth once every nine days. His axial rotation is approximately seventy minutes.

Beyond informing the world that all is well, Egbert's heliograph mostly has been silent. Frantic imploring messages from the scientists often flash out to him, of course.

"Come back and tell us how you did it. Come back here!"

Once Egbert answered. "Not on your life," he helioed.

It will be nice when the world of science has the secret of space-flight and adventurous mankind can go exploring. Science is impatient. Naturally it wants Egbert back but now it finds itself on the horns of a nasty dilemma.

Medicine has been making great strides, especially in the last few decades, in staving off the ravages of old age, the promotion of longevity. If Science keeps on like that Mother could live a long time.

[The end of *Science can Wait* by Ray Cummings]