

"MIGHTY ATOM" IN A MAGIC BOX.

BERLIN SCIENTISTS HOAXED BY ALLEGED NEW SOURCE OF ENERGY.

BRITISH SYNDICATE'S OFFER OF A MILLION FOR SECRET—IF GENUINE.

From the "Daily Chronicle" Special
Correspondent, George Renwick.

BERLIN, Monday.

Herr Willi von Unruh, a Leipzig engineer, has lately fluttered the German scientific dovecots as they have not been fluttered since the finding of radium.

He announced a discovery towards which the whole scientific world has for years been earnestly striving, a discovery which would revolutionise the world to an extent almost beyond human imagination.

LIMITLESS POWER.

Herr Unruh said he had found a method of breaking up the atom. What he claimed to have done is what nature does over an infinitely extended period of time, and on an extremely small scale, in the case of radium.

By breaking up the atom, or disintegrating it, and harnessing the pent-up power in it, a boundless source of energy would be tapped.

Such a discovery, as science knows, would open up endless possibilities. Each person could release from among his ordinary possessions enough motive energy to make him his own millionaire.

In his cigarette case he could store enough force to carry him

tionised for a while yet, and Herr Willi will go down in history, with Signor Ulivi, who six years ago played the role of great inventor with an imposture about wonderful "ultra-red" rays.

By reason of his "invention," Ulivi managed to elope with an admiral's beautiful daughter, but Herr Willi has added no such romance to his fraud. He has been mundane enough to make his alleged discovery the means of obtaining a considerable amount of other people's money, it is said, and so it is that his romance ends undramatically in a dull prison cell.

For some time to come certain German professors will be exceedingly snappy on the subject of breaking up the atom.

GEORGE RENWICK.

TESTING THE MIGHTY ATOM IN BERLIN.

BRITISH CAPITALISTS STORY OF A REMARKABLE SCENE.

The "Daily Chronicle" has learned that several well-known British capitalists were interested in von Unruh's supposed wonderful discovery. An offer of £1,000,000 for the rights in Great

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In his cigarette case he could store enough force to carry him in an aeroplane round the world.

Everything, indeed, would be revolutionised to a degree which would make the harnessing of steam and electricity appear by comparison to be the merest trifles.

RUSH OF SCIENTISTS.

Ever since Professor Curie and his wife discovered radium, the breaking up of the atom has been one of the ultimate aims of science. Professor Einstein, world-famous as the author of the developed theory of relativity, told me in an interview, published in the "Daily Chronicle" last January, that he was turning his attention to this tremendous problem.

Little wonder, then, that German scientists rushed in a body, as one might say, to see Herr Willi von Unruh. Was German science again to astound and lead the world?

EASY TO SEE THROUGH.

Herr von Unruh received a large number of savants, and arranged for a demonstration of his wonderful machine.

When a great box was exhibited to those experts, most of them were, according to one professor present, "speechless with astonishment."

There in front of them was an enormous case, into which they could see. There was the curious machinery which broke up the atom, and produced an electric current which kept five lamps, each of 1,000 candle power, burning for hours on end.

Some of the spectators were inclined to fall on each other's necks and weep tears of joy at their good fortune in being present on such an historic occasion. Other experts were a trifle less ready to accept the statement that they stood on the threshold of unthinkable things.

Certainly everything appeared all right. There was no evidence that the electric current was introduced into the case from outside.

Could they examine the case and

talists were interested in von Unruh's supposed wonderful discovery. An offer of £1,000,000 for the rights in Great Britain, France and America was actually made to him, if he could substantiate his claims.

It is quite certain that had von Unruh escaped detection in Germany the fraud would have been quickly discovered in this country, for one of the conditions of the offer was that the invention should be first subjected to a thorough test by eminent British scientists. Von Unruh would then have lived up to the meaning of his name, which, translated from the German, means an anxious or troubled person!

Last night a "Daily Chronicle" representative had a talk with one of the British capitalists who was chiefly concerned in the big financial offer to von Unruh.

A LAWYER'S INTRODUCTION.

"I was first brought into touch with von Unruh," he said, "through a lawyer at Dresden about five months ago. After preliminary negotiations, I went to see him in Berlin.

"Von Unruh is a man about 36 years of age, and of exceedingly plausible manners. He was living in a rather lavish style in a large flat in one of the principal streets in Berlin.

"Attached to his flat were offices which indicated that he was interested in engineering and other projects. He kept several motor-cars, and gave evidence of being in good financial circumstances.

"I went over to Berlin three times in connection with the supposed discovery. At the third visit it had been arranged that a practical demonstration of the discovery should be given.

"Meanwhile I had got into communication with leading German scientists. Von Unruh's claim was so astounding that I was determined to have it thoroughly investigated. Several of these German savants were present at the demonstration.

HIS BOOK OF CLAIMS.

"Von Unruh played his part with the art of an actor. He excitedly recounted the possibilities of his discovery—how the propulsion of ships would be revolutionised, how motor-cars, aeroplanes, trains, and other forms of locomotion could draw from an apparently inexhaustible source of energy. Some of these possibilities were set out in a little book which Von Unruh gave to me.

"At the momentous demonstration we were first introduced to a wooden box, about 4ft. long, 2ft. wide, and about 3ft. high. Round the box were two rows of copper plates, and between them were nine Leclanche batteries, which were connected with the metal plates

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Certainly everything appeared all right. There was no evidence that the electric current was introduced into the case from outside.

Could they examine the case and machine to make quite sure? they asked. Herr Willi von Unruh replied that at that time he could hardly permit such an examination; he had to protect his astounding secret. That was, of course, judged to be a reasonable attitude, and the savants dispersed to ponder over and discuss the terrific discovery.

PRESS EXPOSURE.

Following on this exhibition some Bavarian newspapers hinted there was something wrong with Herr Willi von Unruh's machine. When he failed to reply they declared he was not quite honest. When that failed to draw him they boldly proclaimed he was simply an impostor.

So the scientists came on the scene again. Could they see Herr Willi von Unruh? That was impossible they were told, as he was unwell.

A few days later, when a British inquirer was somewhat more persistent, the grim truth came out:

Herr Willi von Unruh was in gaol.

So the world will not be revolu-

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"Without going into a lengthy scientific description, Von Unruh claimed that by his invention the power of the Leclanche cells was increased to a phenomenal extent.

150 HORSE-POWER.

"From these small batteries he claimed to be producing energy equivalent to 150 horse-power, which illuminated several large electric lamps in the room.

"In order to make a rough and ready test of his bona-fides, I suggested that the box should be removed from its position to another room, but this he declined to do.

"The German scientists present were nevertheless very greatly impressed by the demonstration, and appeared to have no doubt that one of the greatest dreams of scientists had at last been realized.

"On the strength of their representations, I made the £1,000,000 offer, coupled with the condition that there should first be a test in this country.

"To this he declined to submit, and consequently no arrangements were come to between us. I may mention that I had intended, had my offer been accepted, to call in a leading Liverpool professor for his advice and guidance."

Doctors who have attended Caruso, according to a General News message from New York, state that he is suffering from a slight attack of pleurisy.

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'MIGHTY ATOM' HOAX.

MORE STORIES OF THE BERLIN SWINDLE

£150,000 OBTAINED.

WHY BRITISH SYNDICATE HELD BACK.

The story told by the "Daily Chronicle" Special Correspondent at Berlin yesterday of the attempt of the German engineer, Willi von Unruh, to victimise the public was discussed last night with a "Daily Chronicle" representative by a member of the British firm which has examined the proposition.

The scheme was to break up the atom by means of an electric apparatus fitted into a box, and so liberate the world's store of energy.

"Von Unruh," said the member of the British firm, "had been working on electrical inventions for the last 12 years. He had a certain reputation as an inventor, and had a large laboratory in Berlin. And this so-called marvellous invention, he told me, took him five years to complete.

"German capitalists, backed by scientific opinion, advanced him up to three million marks, nominally £150,000, to assist him in developing his project.

CAUGHT IN IMPOSTOR'S NET.

"He was suave, convincing; his manner was admirable; he made a show of scientific acquirements which his known record justified, and it does not surprise me that the capitalists who advanced the amount to finance his scheme were caught in the net.

"Von Unruh is a man with a magnetic personality, strong, dominating, with enormous will power enhanced by

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netic personality, strong, dominating, with enormous will power enhanced by the surroundings belonging to a powerful financial and scientific backing. His methods were convincing in the extreme.

"When I saw the invention he showed me documents signed by notaries declaring that at the time of the experiments there was an electric strike in Berlin, and that by no possibility could electrical power be supplied from outside sources. This document was signed by a number of scientists, lawyers and financiers.

THREE HOURS' EXPERIMENT.

"I myself was present at the laboratory when five lamps of 1,000 candle-power each were supplied by the famous box. These experiments lasted over three hours, and were successful all through.

"To make sure that no wires were attached to the apparatus, either through the floor or otherwise, before the experiment started, I insulated the four legs of the table with glass plates two inches thick, and further put another insulation between the table and the box itself.

FEARED INVESTIGATION.

"In spite of all this, however, I was not convinced of the genuineness of the invention, nor of von Uexkull's bona fides, especially as in explaining his theory he made one slip which satisfied me that he was a good second to Signor Ulivi.

"I suggested to him that I should come to him the next day with the chief engineer of the A.E.G., the principal electric undertaking in Central Europe. He demurred, saying that his invention might be stolen.

"This confirmed my suspicion. I told him definitely that I was prepared to deal with him, but only on condition that he came to England and was prepared to submit to every possible test by a body of experts here.

"I think on this occasion British astuteness proved rather too much for Teutonic guile."