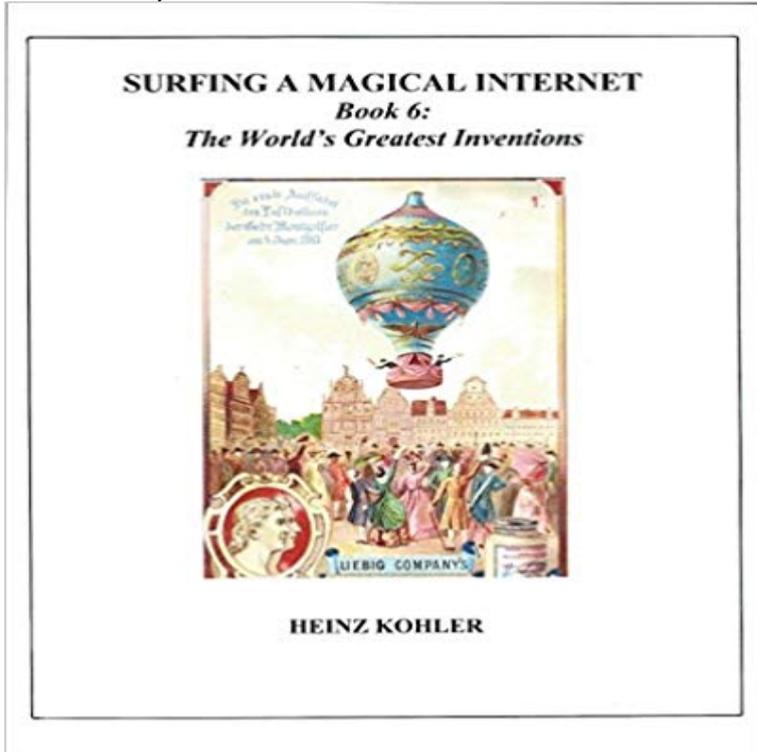


The Worlds Greatest Inventions (SURFING A MAGICAL INTERNET Book 6)



Some 150 years ago, the newly formed Liebig's Extract of Meat Company rewarded loyal customers with gifts of colorful picture cards. Each card was a work of art; before long, thousands of them were circulating. Their beautiful images and associated commentary captivated people and new editions were eagerly awaited. As a group, they told fascinating stories about every conceivable aspect of life on earth and, similar to what the internet might do in our time, came to embody the sum total of human knowledge. Collectors, therefore, could study any subject they liked and as a result, strange as it may sound, the company's most important contribution was not to the kitchens of the world, but to the education of millions of people of all ages who could not go to school or afford books! The author's grandmother was one of them and, many years later, when he was a child, she used her large collection of Liebig cards, as one might the modern-day internet, to satisfy his urge to find out everything about the big wide world. This book resurrects a portion of grandmother's magical internet. Book 6 of the SURFING A MAGICAL INTERNET series explores the history of humanity's greatest inventions from the Stone Age days right up to the early 1900s when the last one of 176 pictures found here was published. All of these inventions clearly improved people's lives and it is easy to see why. Just ask yourself what your life would be like if human beings had never managed to make fire on demand (invention #1), had never figured out how to harness flammable gases to create light and heat (invention #2) or had never learned to produce electricity (invention #3). Similar questions are worth asking as the stories of 14 other inventions are told. Consider how the earth now produces enough food to support billions of people. Have you ever stopped to realize how this feat depends on our ancestors' invention of

the humble plow? In the same way, our own well-being relates to the existence of weights and measures, the clock, a medium of exchange, called money, and our ability to write, read, and print. And it is linked to crucial inventions in such disparate fields as communications, modern medicine, musical instrument making, and transportation. True enough, many other important inventions came after the steamships, locomotives, automobiles, and airplanes discussed here--- penicillin, space rockets, computers, say---but tracing the origins of the earlier ones is enough to provide answers to intriguing questions listed below, along with lots of fun in the process. Do you know, as our ancestors did, how to light a fire with friction or the rays of the sun? With a tinderbox or a platinum or dipstick lighter? Do you know how to harness natural gas or even make gas on your own from hard coal? How to use fire to make beautiful products, such as blown glass, ceramics, enamel, porcelain, or pottery, for example? How to measure time with a sand clock, water clock or sun clock? Do you know that giant round stones have served as a medium of exchange, working just as well as gold bars and coins? That wampum, talking knots, hieroglyphs, runes, and many other scripts can be used for writing just as easily as our alphabet? Could you make paper and print on it? Distinguish medical quackery from scientific, evidence-based medicine? Do you realize how beautiful music depends on a vast array of instruments our forebears made? That the first steam ferry ran in 1807, while steamships first crossed the Atlantic in the 1830s? That the first railway ran in 1825? That a windmill automobile ran in 1460, the steam automobile in 1831, and the first gasoline automobile in 1875? Do you know that the first balloon flight occurred in 1783, the first fully controllable flight of an airship was made in 1884? That the first powered and sustained heavier-than-air flight in an airplane, relying on the modern three-axis-control, was made in 1903?

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