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Does this life come from another world?

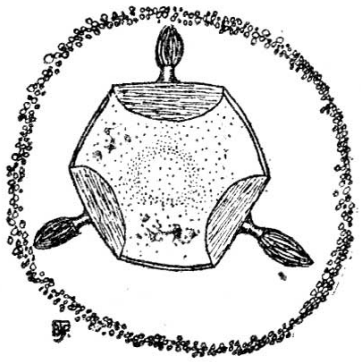
MY picture shows what may well be a living organism from another planet—a genuine "Space Traveller." The diagram is a reconstruction made from drawings of microscopic remains found in meteorites.

This is not the metallic form that usually falls on to the earth, but a rocky type of much rarer occurrence.

Microscopic examination of some of these carbonaceous meteorites showed that, deep inside them, there were several tiny rounded particles very similar in appearance to microscopic organisms found on earth. But analysis of them showed that they are composed of different materials.

This discovery was made at an American university last autumn and was, without doubt, the most exciting discovery made in 1961.

Several types of the "algae" were found, several of them being vaguely similar to types



we know occur on earth; but there are important differences in structure.

In size they are not impressive, being about as big as the average living cell. The specimen reconstructed here is approximately one-thousandth of an inch in diameter; over 30 of them, laid edges touching, would about stretch across a full-stop.

But in spite of their diminutive size they are discoveries of the greatest interest and could hardly fail to arouse curiosity.

Meteorites, as you know, are the "shooting stars" seen at night and, as I said above, most are metallic and contain iron and so on. But a few of these "rocky" carbonaceous specimens have been found.

What proof is there that the lumps in which these specimens were found were actually meteorites—why could they not have originated on earth and the organisms inside be previously unobserved species?

Well, the structure of the meteorites is distinct from any terrestrial rocks, so it looks as though they have a separate existence—are from another world, in fact.

However, it cannot definitely be proved that the organisms themselves belong to the meteorites—but, in view of where they were found, this seems reasonably certain.

At any rate they are quite similar to a group of earth plants — the algae — which form the green colour in stagnant water, on trees and on damp walls.

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