

## TAP 701- 3: POEM by G M Minchin

Distant scintillating star,  
Shall I tell you what you are?  
Nay, for I can merely know  
What you were some years ago.

For the rays that reach me here  
May have left your photo-sphere  
Ere the fight of Waterloo –  
Ere the pterodactyl flew!

Many stars have passed away  
Since your aether-shaking ray  
On its lengthy journey sped –  
So that you perhaps are dead!

Smashed in some tremendous war  
With another mighty star –  
You and all your planets just  
Scattered into cosmic dust!

Strange, if you have vanished quite.  
That we still behold your light,  
Playing for so long a time  
Some celestial pantomime!

But, supposing all is well,  
What you're made of, can I tell?  
Yes, 'twill be an easy task  
If my spectroscope I ask.

### **External reference**

Published in *Nature*, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1898