



Illustrator: Sir John Tenniel

Alice in Physics Land

by

Richard Conn Henry

(with apologies to Lewis Carroll)

Alice was walking beside the White Knight in Physics Land.

“You are sad,” the Knight said in an anxious tone:
“let me sing you a song to comfort you.”

“Is it very long?” Alice asked, for she had heard a
good deal of poetry that day.

“It’s long,” said the Knight, “but very, *very*
beautiful. Everybody that hears me sing it -- either it
brings the *tears* to their eyes, or else --”

“Or else what?” said Alice, for the Knight had made
a sudden pause.

“Or else it doesn’t, you know. The name of the song
is called ‘**Manifestations of a Wave Function.**’”

“Oh, that’s the name of the song, is it?” Alice said,
trying to feel interested.

“No, you don’t understand,” the Knight said,
looking a little vexed. “That’s what the name is
called. The name really *is* ‘**Quantized Fields.**’”

“Then I ought to have said ‘That’s what the *song* is
called?’” Alice corrected herself.

“No you oughtn’t: that’s quite another thing. The *song* is called ‘**An Observation**’ but that’s only
what it’s *called*, you know!”

“Well, what *is* the song then?” said Alice, who was by this time completely bewildered.

“I was coming to that,” the Knight said. “The song really *is* ‘**42**’: and the tune’s my own invention.”

