

RED MAN'S IMAGINATION

Those majestic objects?

phenomenon to have occurred over Cairo, Egypt, in 1200 A.D.

Probably the most comprehensive account of the phenomenon given is that of Prof. Chant himself:

"At about 9:05 on the evening in question there suddenly appeared in the northwestern sky a fiery red body which quickly grew larger as it came nearer, and which was then seen to be followed by a long tail. Some observers state that the body was single, some that it was composed of two distinct parts and others that there were three parts, all travelling together and each followed by a long tail.

"The front portion of the body appears to have been somewhat brighter than the rest, but the general color was a fiery

red or golden yellow. To some the tail seemed like the glare from the open door of a furnace in which is a fierce fire; to others like the stream of sparks blown away from a burning chimney by a strong wind.

"The first suggestion which occurred to many who saw the body was that someone had set off a great sky-rocket. In the streaming of the tail behind, as well as in the color, both of the head and the tail, it resembled a rocket; but, unlike the rocket, the body showed no indication of dropping to the earth. On the contrary it moved forward on a perfectly horizontal path with peculiar, majestic, dignified deliberation; and continuing on its course, without the least apparent sinking towards the earth, it moved on to the south-east where it simply disappeared in the distance.

OTHER BODIES

Before the astonishment aroused by his first meteor had subsided, other bodies were seen coming from the north west, emerging from precisely the same place as the first one. Onward they moved, at the same deliberate pace, in twos or threes or fours, with tails streaming behind, though not so long nor so bright as in the first case. They all traversed the same path and were headed for the same point in the south-eastern sky.

"Gradually the bodies became smaller, until the last ones were but red sparks, some of which were snuffed out before they reached their destination. Several report that near the middle of the great procession was a fine large star without a tail, and that a similar body brought up the rear.

SLOW MOTION

"To most observers the outstanding features of the phenomenon was the slow, majestic motion of the bodies; and almost equally remarkable was the perfect formation they retained. Many compared them to a fleet of airships, with lights on either side and forward and aft; but airmen will have to practice many years before they will be able to preserve such perfect order. Others again, likened them to great battleships, attended by cruisers and destroyers. Should these bodies strike the earth they might prove destroyers indeed; Still others thought they resembled a brilliantly lighted passenger train, travelling in sections and seen from a distance.

Were they, in fact, meteors? Or is there perhaps a less mundane explanation of their origin? From this point in time it seems unlikely that we will ever know.