

trace the path of the meteors with considerable accuracy and to determine various other facts connected with their flight.

My inquiries also revealed the fact that during a few hours before and after the great display several other striking meteors were observed, though I have not a complete enough record of the fireballs to enable me to compute their paths.

I propose to give, first, a brief general account of the display and then a statement of the conclusions I have reached regarding the path of the meteors, their height above the earth, their speed, the sounds heard, the duration of the display and the size of the bodies. After this I shall refer to other meteors seen within a few hours of the main display, and at the end I shall add extended extracts from many communications sent in. The reports regarding the great display, which extended from Saskatchewan to Bermuda, are printed first, the places from which they were received being arranged in alphabetical order; those referring to the other meteors appear together at the end. Along with the reports are reproductions of sketches sent with the letters. These were for the most part hastily drawn by people who have no particular talent for drawing, but they well illustrate what the text describes and are printed without any attempt to turn them into works of art.

The reader will be interested in examining these extracts from the letters. He will also see that intelligent people can differ widely in describing a phenomenon, and will be able to appreciate the difficulty I have had in discriminating between very discordant observations.

The numerous communications which I have received regarding this peculiar natural phenomenon have afforded me much pleasure, especially those sent by the boys and girls; and the readiness to respond to my requests for further information has been very gratifying.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

[AS SEEN IN WESTERN ONTARIO]

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, it was like the illumination from a search light; to others, like the stream of sparks blown away from a burning chimney by 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 in its course, without the least apparent sinking towards the earth, it moved on to the south-west where it simply disappeared in the distance.

As we all know, most shooting stars are visible for but a very short time, and the brilliant ones very generally descend rapidly towards the earth, seemingly (as one of my correspondents remarked) "in a mighty hurry to reach their destination"; but here were bodies moving leisurely along, giving ample time for the fortunate observer to make several wishes if he were so inclined. Some report that just before disappearing this body burst, leaving behind it a trail of stars.

Before the astonishment aroused by this 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