

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.

To most observers the outstanding feature of the phenomenon was the slow, majestic motion of the bodies; and almost equally remarkable was the perfect formation which 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 of several miles. The flight of the meteors has also been compared to that of a flock of wild geese; to a number of men or horses in a race, and to a school of fish, startled and darting off in a single direction. These and many others interesting details will be found in the reports of observations printed below.

Just as the bodies were vanishing, or shortly afterwards, there was heard in many places a distinct rumbling sound, like distant thunder or like a carriage passing over rough roads or over a bridge. In some cases three such sounds, following at short intervals, were heard; while a number of people felt a shaking of the earth or of the house.

As to the number of bodies there is great diversity of statement. The usual estimate is from 15 to 20 but some say 60 or 100, while some say there were thousands. Various reasons can be assigned for the discrepancy between these numbers. Those giving the small numbers probably refer only to the chief bodies, and as some people have better eyesight than others, where one would see a single body others would see its

different parts. Those who report the large numbers undoubtedly included fragments of the larger bodies and also the many red stars bringing up the rear. The only person that I have heard of who viewed the meteors with any instrumental assistance was Master Cecil Carley, a pupil of the Trenton High School, who used an opera glass. He says: "There were about ten groups in all and each group, as seen through the opera glass, consisted of from twenty to forty meteors."

The entire time occupied by the display cannot be determined accurately, but is given below as perhaps 3.3 minutes. This is an extraordinarily long time for such a phenomenon, but there is good evidence that it is not an exaggeration.

The stretch of country over which the display was seen is also unprecedented. In September, 1868, a fire-ball was traced from over the Black Sea to France, about 1500 miles; and on December 21, 1876, such a body first became visible in Kansas and disappeared near Niagara Falls, thus covering a distance of over 1000 miles; but in the present case persons living 2500 miles (one-tenth of the earth's circumference) apart saw the same bodies. Moreover the description furnished by observers in Bermuda, in Ontario and in Saskatchewan do not materially differ.

In all ages comets and meteors have excited popular interest and in some cases alarm. Their appearance, entirely unannounced, their varied and extraordinary forms, as well as their almost inexplicable motions are well qualified to inspire terror to those unlearned in scientific matters. We are therefore not surprised to learn that some who saw this weird and unwanted spectacle were deeply impressed. One of my Toronto correspondents wrote: "It was a most beautiful sight. There were a number of us on the street watching them in the sky, and a remark from one of the ladies standing near me and who appeared to be in great distress, was that some dire calamity was coming to the earth. Another remark was, that they must be souls going to heaven, and so on, and a more or less serious impression was for the time being upon us all." Dr. Robert