

XIV. *An Account of several Meteors, communicated in a Letter from Thomas Short, M. D. to the President.*

Honoured S I R,

Sheffield, March

18. 1740-1.

IF this Account of the following Meteors can either be of Use or Entertainment to the Members of your most Learned and August SOCIETY, I shall be glad. I am,

Honoured S I R,

Your most obliged,

obedient humble Servant,

Thomas Short.

THE Whole of 1737. having been the most irregularly constitute Year of any in my Time; not one Month but what had the Weather of all the Seasons in it, and that not by gradual Transitions, but by sudden Jerks; Summer was dry, *August* was as cold as Winter, *September* full of great Changes; hence that sudden and general *Catarrh* in *October*; succeeded in the latter End of the Month, and all *November*, by a fatal *Diarrhæa* among the Poor. From *November* 29. to *December* 5. was mild and warm, cloudy and clear mixt, like Spring Weather; the Wind daily veering from South to North-west, and every Night falling back to South-west or South. *December* 5. at Five o'Clock at Night, the Sky round

round the Horizon was very cloudy, and clear in the *Zenith*; the West Quarter was all of a deep Blood-red Colour, with Streamers of a very beautiful light red, not running or dancing with sudden Occursions and Mixtures, like the *Aurora Boreales*, but waving like Vapours, toward the *Zenith*, by North-west to North: All the Clouds in the interim were of a very dark red Colour, except that in the West, which was of a deep Blood-red. After it had continued some time there, the same appeared in the North. Under the Clouds, from whence these Streamers came, was a Brightness superior to that of a Full Moon. Then both North and West sent forth their Blood-like Streamers, one toward the other, which passed one another, and came to their opposite Funds before they were quite spent. Between Seven and Eight at Night, the Scene shifted East; then that in the West was exhausted, and that in the North weakened: None of them sent their Streamers beyond the *Zenith* to the South; only the Clouds in the South were of a very opaque Red. Lastly, it removed South-east, where the Remainder was spent: All was over about half an Hour after Ten. I had no Instrument to take its Altitude.

The chief Remarkables of this Meteor were,

1. From whatever Quarter these Streamers came, they issued out of a thick, deep-red Cloud, under which was hid so luminous a Body, that I could have easily read on a large Church Bible.

2. These Streamers differed from those of all preceding *Aurora Boreales*: 1. That they were not white and clear, but a bright Red, like the Surface of
ar-

arterial or pulmonary Blood. 2. They were not small or narrow, but broad like the milky Way in a frosty Night. 3. They did not dart or fly swiftly from the Fund, or luminous Cloud, but moved slowly; then stood still some Space of Time; then sent out thin red Vapours, through which the Sky and Stars were visible; these quickly spent themselves, and vanished. 4. Not only were their Funds red, but the whole Clouds were thick, and of a deep fiery Red.

3. They were above the Region of the Winds; for, though the last was South-west, yet they moved from North to West, as quickly as from West to North.

4. Whilst the Sky on the *Zenith* was of the common azure Blue, that in the South, on the Opening of the Clouds, was a deep bluish Green, like Grass.

5. The whole Time was attended with an extraordinary Heat of the Air for the Season; for I was obliged to strip to the Shirt, though abroad in the Air all the time.

6. This Meteor was seen at *Venice* at the same time; and, over *Kilkenny* in *Ireland*, it appeared like a great Ball of Fire; which burst with an Explosion that shook great Part of the Island, and set the whole Hemisphere on Fire; which burnt most furiously, till all the sulphureous Matter was spent.

7. This Meteor put an End to the Remains of both the *Catarrh*, and watery *Diarrhœa*; and restored general Health, till the next epidemic *Catarrh* among Infants in *February* 1738. Two Months after.

The next Meteor was on *August* . 1733. a clear, calm, excessive hot Day, at Nine at Night, a frightful Glade of Fire, or *Draco Volans*, from East to West.

October 1. 1736. Day cloudy, Wind SW. clear Evening, Six at Night, fell a great Ball of Fire out of the Air to the Earth, no Rain 15 Days before, and only a few Drops Two Days after.

August 28. 1738. Five *p. m.* Wind SW. Sky clear, the Sun bright shining, a fiery Meteor appeared NE. ran North, like a Spear of Fire, with a great round Head, which burst like a Rocket, spread about in a large Fire, and vanished suddenly. This was a great Drought, which continued without Rain to *September 7.*

The next was *December 2. 1739.* Six at Night, Wind North, Sky clear, a white Frost, a great *Halo* about the Moon. This Meteor appeared like a large round Body of Fire, of about a Foot and a half Diameter; seemed very low, therefore could not be observed far, though it went all over this Country from North to South, pretty sharply, but nothing near so quick as a Glade of Lightning, was succeeded instantly by a most dismal Sound in the Air, like Carts, Drums, and Groans mixt: It kept the Tract of the Meteor, but in an opposite Course, *viz.* from South to West. This was a most frightful Time of Rains, Snow, Storms, &c.

As to *Auroræ Boreales*, the most remarkable were,
1. That of *September 14. 1736.* Wind North-west, Sky clear, next Day very rainy. This exactly resembled a Crown nobly adorned with the richest Jewels; its concave Side facing the West, and its convex reaching near the *Zenith*.

2. *September 3. 1737.* Wind NW. the Day was very rainy, and the Night a clear Frost. About One in the Morning, was another *Aurora Borealis*, like a Crown, its

its concave Side full of Streamers, several times red, had very swift Motions; but the splendid Crowns stood steady and fair Two or Three Hours. We find an Instance of the like over *Bohemia* in the *Philosophical Transactions*.

The common late *Auroræ* were, 1736. *October* 16, 17, 18. Wind South, all Three Days showery, the Nights bright and clear. *March* 10. 1737. Wind West a Day and Rain, South at Night and clear. *September* 16. Wind West, clear Night. 17. Wind West, a Shower in the Day, and clear at Night. 19. 20. 21. Wind West, all fair, some little Frost. *October* 13. 14. Wind North, clear Days, frosty Nights; the 15th was much Rain. *March* 7. 1738. Wind South-west, Streamers reddish, Day cold and cloudy; the 8th was rainy; 30th, Air temperate, Wind NW. Day drizzling, next Day fair and clear. *February* 4. 1739. Wind North-west, Day and Night clear; next Day snowy; 23, 24. both Days clear, Wind West; the next Day good. *March* 1. Wind West; that Night frosty, the next after clear and good. *September* 13, 14, 15. Wind North-west in the Morning, and South-west by South at Night; all Three Days showery or drizzling, Nights clear; 18, 19. Wind East, cloudy fair Days. *October* 22. at Night, Wind North, cloudy; appeared a frightful fiery Dragon, seen over all *England*. This Month was the only good Weather from the 6th Day to the End, that this Country had that Harvest. *November* 25. Wind North-west, cloudy Day, with a Shower, clear frosty Night, with *Auroræ Boreales*. The next I saw was on *October* 6. 1740. Wind West North-west-by-west; Day clear, a small Shower, a frosty Night. *February* 28. 1741. Wind North-west.

March 5. Wind South. 6th, Wind West, then North.
9th, Wind South: All droughty Weather with small
Frosts.

To these Meteors I might add our Hurricanes, Storms of Thunder and Lightning, with Hail or Rain; but such as keep Journals of the Weather, and read the public News, are no Strangers to these: I shall only add, that our Northern Lights have been much seldomer, and fainter, both in Appearance and Motion, than formerly; and whether they will dwindle away and vanish wholly for some Years, or whether they have had their former periodic Returns, is not certain: Nor is it less dubious, whether they affect our Weather, Seasons, and Animal Bodies, or not. Were it not too tedious, I might here subjoin a List of all the Chasms or Burnings in the Heavens, recorded in our Annals.

**XV. Mercurius a Venere *sublatus* Maii 17.
1737. Grenovici in Observatorio Regio
*observatus, per J. Bevis, M. D.***

Horolog. Syder.—Horolog. Solare.

4. 20. 21.—	:	:	:	Limbus Solis præcedens
				Merid. transit.
22. 37.—	:	:	:	Sequens limbus transit.
34. 00.—	0.	13. 25.		
35. 00.—	0.	14. 25.		
5. 58. 48.—	:	:	:	Limbus præcedens Ve-
				neris meridian. transit.
				Centro a vertice di-
				stan. { 25. 46. 30. } Mer-
				{ 25. 46. 41. } curium