

NOVEMBER METEORS.

Letter from Prof. Newton, of Yale College, to Prof. Henry, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

YALE COLLEGE, Nov. 31, 1896.
DEAR SIR: You request a brief statement of such facts respecting the probable return of the November meteors this year as are of general interest to serve as reply to inquiries made upon the subject; also, for a statement of some of the points to which the attention of observers should be called.

The fact of a periodic return of the meteors seems shown by the following facts:
On the 13th of November, A. D. 1833, was a remarkable shower, ever to be remembered by those who witnessed it.

A similar display of less intensity was seen over all Europe on the morning of the 13th of November of the year previous. It was very generally spoken of in the newspapers of the day and formed the subject of at least two extended articles in the scientific journals.

On the morning of November 12th, A. D. 1790, a shower very like that of the year 1833 was witnessed in the State of America, and was particularly described by Humboldt, who was then in South America.

He refers to a similar display in A. D. 1768, but the day of the year is not given.

An unusual number of shooting stars was noticed on the 9th of November, A. D. 1698.

The Chinese records state that several hundred shooting stars appeared on the night of the 4th of November, A. D. 1602. (This and the following dates are, for convenience given in the new style.)

Both in China and in Europe large numbers of shooting stars were witnessed on the 3d of November, A. D. 1833.

On the morning of the 31st of October, A. D. 1806, a most remarkable shower was witnessed in Europe.

A similar shower occurred on the morning of October 26th, A. D. 1302.

Falling stars are reported on the 23d of October, A. D. 1101.

The Chinese records speak of thousands of shooting stars on the 20th of October, A. D. 1093.

Both in Europe and in China large numbers of shooting stars were seen on the 19th of October, A. D. 934.

In China they were seen October 21st, A. D. 931.

But one of the most remarkable showers, as well as the first shower of the series of which we have any record, was on the morning of October 18th, A. D. 902.

These years, it will be noticed, show very distinctly a cycle of about the third of a century, while the day of the month has advanced quite steadily at rate of about three days in a century. It should be added that this list is not made up of selections from a large mass of similar records. It includes all the known recurrences of this phenomenon between A. D. 902 and A. D. 1799 that have happened within ten days of the proper time of the year of this shower.

After A. D. 1833, the number of meteors seen on the morning of the 13th of November, though, for a few years, somewhat greater than we see on ordinary nights, were yet inconsiderable, and, after five or six years, no one could claim unusual numbers on that morning. For the last three or four years, however, there have been distinct indications of the return of the November meteors. This was particularly manifest last year, inasmuch as single observers, on the morning of the 18th of November, witnessed about seventy-five meteors per hour. A party of four persons, at New Haven, counted 238 in an hour, and a party at Greenwich Observatory counted 250 in an hour. These numbers are, probably, five or six times as great as would be obtained on ordinary mornings. Nearly all the meteors, moreover, moved in paths diverging from the zenith, which is a peculiarity of the November shooting stars.

We cannot predict with confidence a greater display this year. The thirty three year cycle ends in 1866, rather than 1865, and hence such a display may be looked for.

But we must remember that for many returns of the period since A. D. 902 we have no account of a corresponding shower.

But for the experience of last year, the morning of November 14 would be named as the time to look for the meteors. But their occurrence then on the 13th, and not on the 14th, makes it necessary to look for them on either morning of this year.

They cannot be seen in great abundance until the constellation Leo is above the horizon, that is, until eleven o'clock. In previous displays, the maximum has usually been between 3 o'clock and dawn.

Previous displays have continued several hours, and have been visible over considerable regions. If the time of the shower falls this year between the mornings of the 13th and 14th, it may appear only to those on the outside of the earth. Thus, in 1833, the display was exclusively European, although we had clear skies, while in 1833 this continent alone enjoyed the exhibition. So, in 1799, a grand display was witnessed in America, while in Europe a few meteors only attracted the notice of observers.

Shooting stars appear in the upper regions of the atmosphere. They rarely descend below a height of thirty miles, and probably do not appear at a greater height than one hundred and twenty-five miles. They move with great rapidity, having an average velocity of at least twenty-five miles a second, nearly or quite equal to the velocity of the ordinary velocity of a cannon ball. In 1893 a considerable number of the November meteors were observed simultaneously at the Observatory and Coast Survey office in Washington, and by Prof. Gummere, Mr. Marsh, and others, at Haverford, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia. From these observations the true heights of between seventy and eighty miles have been computed. The mean altitude at appearance was ninety-six miles, and at disappearance, sixty-one miles. These results seem to show that the November meteors are fifteen or twenty miles higher than those of August.

It is generally admitted that shooting stars are small bodies moving in orbits like planets or comets, and that they occasionally are burned up, or are dissipated in the upper regions of the atmosphere. Groups of such bodies moving together, in a common direction, produce the August and November exhibition.

The true November meteors proceed in lines radiating from the constellation Leo, or more exactly from the delta in Leo. This radiation is due to perspective—the paths being all parallel to each other.

The following suggestions and questions to be answered are to be directed to observers:

1. Count the number of shooting stars that are seen in each hour of either night—If several persons count, have them look in different directions, and count aloud to prevent duplication. State the number of persons counting.

2. How many of the meteors seem to move in paths which if produced backward, would cut across the space bounded by the stars in the curve of the sickle in Leo, that is, by the stars Eta, Zeta, and Epsilon?

3. How many of them have trains?

4. How many of the trains are white?—how many yellow? how many red? etc.

5. What differences are there between the November meteors and the ordinary stars? Compare those which radiate from Leo with those which do not.

6. If the meteors are very numerous, count the numbers visible in a telescope in each hour. Direct the telescope to some point at a distance from the radiant—say to the North pole. Report the size of the object glass, diameter of field, magnifying power, direction of the telescope, etc.

THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

RALEIGH, N. C.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1896.

The North-Carolina Standard.

We return our thanks to our friends for the additions they are making to our subscription list.

The terms of the Standard are as follows:
Tri-Weekly, one year, \$2.00
" " six months, 1.00
Weekly, one year, 3.00
" " six months, 1.50

The Weekly will be clubbed as follows:
Five copies one year twelve dollars. Ten copies one year twenty-two dollars. Those who get clubs of five or more, will be furnished with one copy for a year, gratis.

The Legislature and Congress will meet soon, and matters of grave interest will occupy the columns of the newspaper. Now is the time to subscribe.

The circulation of the Standard among Northern capitalists and others, renders it a good medium for advertising lands and other property for sale.

The Exhibition.
A large and respectable auditory were very pleasantly entertained on Friday night last, at the free exhibition for the Deaf, the Dumb and Blind. We can not better express our appreciation of the excellence of the exhibition, and the fine music, than by adopting the account given by our neighbor of the Sentinel:

"The programme was an excellent one, and the performances of the Blind in music, and the exhibitions of the Mutes in the sign language, were highly creditable to them and the Institution. Mr. Palmer, the excellent principal, under whose direction the exhibition was conducted, was entirely at home, and to him are our citizens much indebted for the interesting entertainment."

We would specially commend to the consideration of those who desire cheap instruments for social or Church worship, the Masonic Building Organ, of which Mr. Matthews, now in this City, is Agent. His performances, last Friday night, on that instrument added much to the interest of the occasion."

This Institution, and the Insane Asylum, are noble charities which must be sustained. They are sacred to humanity and Heaven; and no matter what may be our political condition or differences, these Institutions should always have the friendship and good will of all our people.

The adoption of President Johnson's policy, and the enactment of a general amnesty for all past political offences, would hasten at once a millennium of day enterprise, energy and progress, and would so solder the bonds of Union and concord between our people, that they never could be broken!

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First, the President's declaration that no one should be appointed or elected to office in the Southern States who had ever filtered in his allegiance to the federal government.

Second, his declaration that members of Congress from the Southern States should be persons who could take the test-oath. Third, his declaration that it would be advisable, in conducting the work of restoration, to ensure its success, to permit a certain class of colored men to vote.

As to a "general amnesty," that has already been granted. This was done by the President, in his proclamation of May 29th, 1865. Instead of "solving the bonds of the Union," it has had a tendency to snap and destroy them.

We shall have no "Millennium" in this country until "conscious traitors" are made to know their places, and the "unmistakably loyal" are put in control of every thing, from the smallest office to the highest.

It is not for us to say *how* this shall be done. But we have a Congress which will meet soon; and if that body should prove recreant to the hopes reposed in it by the loyal people of all portions of the country, we shall then despair of the Republic, and shall look for the reign of lawlessness, anarchy, and violence.

Death of Hampden S. Smith, Esq.
We are pained to have to announce the death of another of our best citizens. HAMPDEN SMITH, a native of Raleigh, and long known as the Secretary of the North-Carolina Fire Insurance Company, expired at his residence on Sunday morning last, after an illness of several weeks. His health had been feeble and precarious for years.

The deceased, though he never aspired to public place, was nevertheless qualified by his learning and eloquence for any position that might have been assigned him. But he was singularly amiable, modest and unobtrusive, and had no taste for the rough, hard contests of the bar or of public life. He was the only son of that good man, Benjamin B. Smith, Esq., deceased, formerly one of our leading merchants.

THE YARBOROUGH HOUSE.—It will be seen, by advertisement in the Standard to-day, that Mr. W. G. Riddick has taken charge of this spacious and well-known Hotel. Mr. Riddick is a gentleman of taste and energy, and we have no doubt he will render this a first class house.

Wilmington Market.
WILMINGTON, November 9.
TURPENTINE.—No change in prices. Sales of 171 bbls. at \$5.25 for virgin and yellow dip, and \$2.62 for hard, \$2.80 lb.

Spirits Turpentine.—Sales of 365 bbls. at 75 cents, and 109 do. at 74 cents per gallon—the market closing at latter figure.

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Cotton.—A lot of 10 bales sold to-day at 35 cents per lb. for middling.—Journal.

Georgia.

It will be seen by the following despatch from Milledgeville that the Georgia Legislature has rejected the Howard amendment by a large majority:

MILLEDGEVILLE, Nov. 9.—The Legislature rejected the constitutional amendment. The rejection resolution reads as follows:

Resolved, That the Legislature of Georgia decline to ratify the amendment adding the fourteenth article to the Constitution of the United States.

A motion was made in the Senate to postpone the consideration to some future day, but was amended to move the adoption of the above resolution, and this was passed—yeas 30, nays none—a full Senate voting.

In the House the vote stood—yeas 131, nays 2—Ellington, of Gilmer county, and Humphreys, of Fannin county.

The committee reporting this resolution accompany the report with a lengthy argument. The substance is as follows:

1st. That the States of the United States alone are authorized to consider constitutional amendments.

2d. That such amendments must be proposed by two-thirds of Congress, or two-thirds of the Legislatures of the States.

3d. That Georgia was one of the original States, and must always have continued such, unless she reserved the right to secede or give the Federal Government the right to eject her.

The report adduces the legislation of Congress, the proclamations of the President, and the issue made during the war by the Government of the United States to prove it was held by that Government that no State could secede, and the war was only intended to uphold the practical relations of the States thereto, and the suppression of the rebellion was to restore these relations fully, and the Constitution then becomes the supreme law of the land.

The argument then goes on to declare that Georgia and other States are integral parts of Congress, and no constitutional Congress can be convened while such integral portions are forcibly excluded. It says the adoption of the emancipation amendment is no precedent for the adoption of this amendment, the Southern States having at that time no delegates to Congress, as now, to him are our citizens much indebted for the interesting entertainment."

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