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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
Secretary, American Meteorological Society,
describes:

THE AURORA

A display of the aurora borealis, or "northern lights" usually begins as a whitish arch of light across the northern horizon. Soon, however, the light brightens and the arch becomes serrated, with straight beams reaching up some distance. Now the beams may move rapidly or slowly westward and change quickly in brightness. If the display brightens, the arch and the beams rising higher in the northern sky take on the appearance of a great curtain the folds of which illuminated, as if by footlights, occasionally move majestically. A reddish tinge may mark its lower edge.

In the most brilliant displays, as the curtain rises slowly, others appear in the distance. Now the auroral beams may be seen reaching the zenith, and soon one is right under the curtain. The essentially parallel beams of which the curtain is composed now seem to converge in the distance, giving the appearance of a crown or even the spreading wings of a great bird. Soon the curtain is fading into the southern sky. In the rare great displays curtain after curtain comes out of the north and passes into the south. Occasionally a vivid red occurs over large portions of the sky. Also, at a certain stage the whole display may begin to flicker, as wave after wave of light rises in a fraction of a second from base to top. The fading stages are usually marked by irregular auroral clouds and bands.

This season and early springtime are the periods of most common observation of the aurora. However, on July 6, 1923, a moderate display was widely observed north of latitude 40. As it is practically certain that auroras are caused by emissions from solar disturbances they are not frequent at present and are not likely to be seen in the South till 1926 or 1927 when the solar activity will again be well on the increase.

(Tomorrow: The Parting Bolt of Lightning)
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