

Released on receipt
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September 11, 1929

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed September 4, 1929

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A BATTLE IN THE SKY

The "battles in the sky" recorded by mediaeval chroniclers were generally nocturnal displays of aurora borealis, the shifting streamers of which can, with the aid of the imagination, be seen to resemble the spears of fighting warriors. There was a case twenty years ago, however, when an aerial battle was witnessed in the daytime and the participants were seen to be using modern weapons.

One March day the superstitious villagers of Doerzbach and Ober-Ginsbach, in Wuerttemberg, were startled to see a bright red streak appear in the sky. On this could be observed a landscape with field, streams and woods, among which two bodies of troops in battle formation were advancing toward each other, firing volleys. The puffs of smoke were clearly visible.

Much alarm prevailed in the villages until the picture suddenly disappeared. The next day the explanation appeared in the newspapers. A sham fight had been held by the garrison at the town of Mergentheim, twenty miles distant, and its appearance in the sky was due to mirage.

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