

Released upon receipt,
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August 19.

A Science Service Feature

Mailed August 12, 1930.

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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BALL LIGHTNING.

Displays of ball lightning exhibit a wide range of diversity in their details. As this phenomenon is rare and as a satisfactory explanation is still lacking, anybody who witnesses a display will contribute to scientific knowledge by writing a circumstantial description while the facts are fresh in his mind and sending it to some scientific journal for publication.

These remarks are suggested by a case that occurred on June 18 of this year in England, which was unusual in some respects. Mr. N. H. Smith, who observed it, was motoring in a thunderstorm attended by heavy rain, which brought his car to a stop on the road.

"During this period," he says, "the electrical display was decidedly impressive, and I witnessed for the first time in my life a ball discharge. The ball appeared to be the residual of a flash, and descended at about an angle of 45 degrees to the horizon, finally coming to rest at what appeared to be the height of the top of a telegraph pole some 300 or 400 yards distant. The ball illuminated the district much in the manner one would expect from a large magnesium flare, and remained brilliant for several seconds. It then decreased in brilliance and after a brief period, during which it exhibited a red glow, it died out completely. Several other lightning discharges took place shortly afterward, and, judged by their intensity, they were unpleasantly close."

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