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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed October 7, 1930.

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SOME EFFECTS OF BALL LIGHTNING

Some peculiar physiological effects of ball lightning have been reported by H. Horsfield, of Manchester, England. He was sitting one afternoon during a thunderstorm in a small office building, having a steel frame and a lead roof. Observers outside saw a ball of fire about the size of a man's head pass close to the window at which he sat. The ball evidently exploded though it was not seen to do so. Mr. Horsfield did not see the ball, but he heard a terrific report, instantly followed by a sound resembling the clatter of many plates of sheet iron and of glass crashing on a stone floor. In describing his feelings he says:

"It was as though I was being burned all over, but as though the sense of feeling had just commenced to operate and, before the feeling of pain reached or even approached a climax, suddenly changed its mind and subsided; or as though one had been thrown into a furnace and withdrawn so rapidly that the full effect of being terribly burned was not experienced. Perhaps it could best be described as a consciousness of the presence of intense heat without the acute feeling of pain that one would expect from its presence. There certainly was pain, but of a remarkably short duration. In comparison, the pain of the drawing of a tooth would appear to last centuries."

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