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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed July 21, 1931

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ASCENDING BALL LIGHTNING

Ball lightning has frequently been reported to have come down from the clouds. A case in which it was observed to travel in the opposite direction was described by Dr. J. W. Tripe, of the Royal Meteorological Society. Dr. Tripe was in his sitting room at Hackney, in northeastern London, on the afternoon of July 11, 1874, during a severe thunderstorm. The windows commanded a view across some fields to a row of houses, beyond which was the Regent's Canal. He says:

"The crashes of thunder were for a short time the loudest I ever heard, and followed the lightning without any appreciable interval. After a short lull, I saw a ball of fire of a pale yellow color rise behind the houses, on the other side of the fields, apparently from the Regent's Canal. The ball at first rose slowly, apparently about as fast as a cricket ball thrown into the air, rapidly increasing its rate of motion until it reached an elevation of about 30 degrees, when it started off so rapidly as to form a continuous line of light, proceeding at first due east and then to the west, rising all the time, and after describing several zigzags disappeared in a large black cloud to the west, from which flashes of forked lightning had come. There were two large black clouds near each other, and the ball when it formed the zigzags moved first towards one and then towards the other. In about three minutes another ball ascended, and in about five minutes afterwards a third, both behaving as the first and disappearing in the same cloud."

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