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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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BALL LIGHTNING REPORTS

Since the recent issue through the newspapers of his appeal for reports and descriptions of ball lightning, every mail has brought letters on the subject to Dr. Humphreys, of the Weather Bureau. Some of the cases reported date back many years; others are recent. A thirteen-year old girl, Hency Terman, living at Jamaica, Long Island, reports a case she observed last April. There had been distant lightning and low rumbles of thunder. She was in the dining room, when a flash of lightning came. "I saw," she writes, "a yellow piece of flame about two inches in diameter travel on the linoleum from one end of the room to the other. It went slowly along, as a golf ball rolling. As it disappeared it rose slowly up about a foot, and it faded noiselessly."

Miss Sara E. Branham, senior bacteriologist in the Public Health Service, was one of a group of children assembled many years ago in the hall running through the center of a country house near Atlanta, where they had sought shelter from a storm. Miss Branham's aunt was reading a story to the youngsters, when a sharp click attracted their attention and they saw a small luminous ball enter the front door. It floated through the entire length of the hall, moving in jerks and so slowly that one of the little boys rose from his seat and snatched at it, but missed it. A strong smell, probably of ozone, was noticed. The ball passed out the back door, struck a tree opposite the door, and disappeared. The tree was not injured.

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