

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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Authority on Meteorology.

SLOW-MOTION LIGHTNING

A contributor to a French meteorological journal, M. Lardry, reports a curious display of lightning observed at Le Mans, France, Sept. 3, 1929. About 6 P.M. a violent thunderstorm passed south of the town toward St. Calais, where it did some damage. An hour later, when the storm was distant, M. Lardry witnessed the spectacle that he describes as follows:

"The majority of the flashes visible directly, and not by reflection or because appearing between clouds, were horizontal. The greater part of them divided into two branches, or rarely three, the branching being about midway of their length and always toward the south. Especially curious was the fact that all the flashes went from north to south at slow speed, like shooting stars, the effect being absolutely as if one were watching a slow-motion moving picture. The phenomenon went on for half an hour at the rate of about one flash a minute. It was truly curious to see."

This appears to have been a case of so-called "rocket lightning." As a rule such lightning is described as moving up into the sky after the manner of a skyrocket, but previous cases of horizontal movement have been reported.

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