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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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LIGHTNING ODDITIES

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Queer displays of lightning are reported from time to time in scientific and other journals. A number of such cases are described in the current issue of the Marine Observer (London). The S. S. "Elpenor" in the East Indies on the night of June 19, 1927, recorded flashes of full red lightning occurring once a minute during sixteen minutes. The S. S. "Inkum" in the West Indies, on the evening of August 18, 1927, observed a thin streak of lightning, not very bright, pass upwards rather slowly until it was overhead, when it scattered like a rocket. This flash may have been more or less horizontal, appearing to move upward on account of perspective, though there are a number of cases on record in which so-called "rocket lightning" is supposed to have actually shot up into the sky at the approximate speed of a skyrocket.

On July 6, 1929, the S. S. "San Salvador" experienced a severe thunderstorm on the Pacific coast of Central America, during which a flash of lightning struck the sea about 100 yards from the ship. The lightning "appeared as a stream of molten metal being poured from a height into the sea and of about one to two feet wide. It first made a most peculiar shattering noise (as a china plate would make if dropped on a stone floor), then, as it broke up, the noise changed to a sizzle. On breaking up it appeared as a disjointed spinal column."

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