

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

METEORS AS MESSENGERS

English Investigator Gives Some Further Data, Supporting His View That Other Worlds Have Sought to Communicate With Us

To the Editor of The New York Times:

A letter of mine, published in THE TIMES on Aug. 31, 1924, upon data which indicate that there have been attempts in other physical worlds to communicate with the inhabitants of this earth, brought so many replies from places as far apart as Lovelock, Nev., and Middlesex, England, that I have reason for thinking there is considerable interest in this subject. Some of my correspondents asked me to keep them in touch with such developments.

There has been an occurrence in England. It may be an additional datum in this investigation.

In The London Evening Standard of Sept. 25 was published an account of a spherical iron object, not a meteorite, which was said to have fallen from the sky on Sept. 22, during a thunderstorm, to a point near the British broadcasting station at Bournemouth, Hampshire. In investigating this reported occurrence I have received a description from L. Everett, a member of the staff of the station, 72 Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth. He writes:

"It consists of cast iron and is the size and shape of a small cricket ball, but exactly midway between the two halves of the sphere there is a mark which seems to indicate that this is a casting, the mark denoting the joint in the box. Also, on top there is a flat portion of crystalline structure, which points to where the runner or riser was cut off by the fettlers after casting. It seems to me that the whole thing is a matter of coincidence, this object being found only two feet six inches deep."

The objection that something that had fallen from the sky would probably penetrate deeper than several feet is not supported by data upon meteorites. Sometimes meteorites have struck the ground with very little penetration; the stones that fell at Hessle, Sweden, Jan. 1, 1869, alighted upon a frozen lake without breaking the ice. As to coincidence, Mr. Everett expressed the conventional explanation that only by chance had lightning struck and dug a hole where an iron object was buried. Other explainers would say that a buried iron had attracted lightning.

But there have been other instances. Some of them will not conform to this way of dismissing a subject. In The London Times of Sept. 18, 1852, was published a letter by a chemist of Andover, Hampshire, telling of an iron sphere, about the size of a cricket ball, which had been found in a garden in Andover after a thunderstorm. It was found on a path, "within six yards of the house." Presumably it had not been in that garden, unnoticed, for any long time.

In Symons's Meteorological Magazine,

Vol. XVIII, Page 57, J. Rand Capron, the astronomer, tells of a sphere of iron that was found after a thunderstorm in Guilford, near London, in April, 1883, in a heap of refuse bark that had been thrown from a stable. The object was found at the bottom of a hole that had been burned ten inches deep in this heap. It was a charcoal-smelted cast-iron ball, probably of considerable antiquity, as charcoal furnaces have long ceased to exist.

Mr. Capron explained in the conventional way that this sphere, thrown from the stable, never having been noticed upon the premises before, had probably attracted lightning, which had burned down to it. If, more likely, it would have been noticed if it had been there before, one thinks that this object fell from the sky, intensely heated, burning its way through the refuse. I notice that this object, though of cast iron, had been manufactured by a process not prevailing in England.

Unless lightning has some special affinity for cast-iron spheres of use and origin unknown, our data indicate that manufactured objects, all of one type in form and composition, have fallen from the sky, shot, perhaps in volleys, from some other world in an attempt to communicate with us. My own idea is that projectiles from some other inhabited world have reached a region superjacent to this earth, in which, despite all that we think we know of gravitation, this earth's attraction is unaffected, and have been dislodged and brought down by atmospheric disturbances. For the idea that they may be containers of messages I have no data.

There is another way of arguing against the lightning explanation. Stones do not attract lightning. I know several dozen records of carved stones which are said to have fallen from the sky, sometimes in thunderstorms. For a reproduction of a photograph of a stone cylinder said to have fallen at Westerville, Ohio, late in the year 1910, see Popular Mechanics, XIV, 801. In Notes and Queries, Feb. 3, 1892, is an account of a carved stone which was said to have fallen from the sky to a plantation in Dutch Guiana, whence it was sent to a museum in Holland. The Conservator of the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum, Leyden, Holland, sent me two photographs of this stone. It is clearly an artificially rounded object.

I should like to hear from anybody who is interested in this investigation. We may be able to take it up and unearth more data in the United States.

CHARLES FORT.

39(A) Marchmont Street, W. C., London, England, Oct. 2, 1925.