

The Aurora Borealis.

Closely following the earthquake, we have been visited with an auroral display of an unusual and beautiful character. The exhibition, which has been widely observed throughout the country, has continued for several nights, but was most brilliant in this vicinity on Monday night and Tuesday morning. In some places it has been diversified by meteors, one of which is reported at Concord, N. H., on Sunday morning. This passed over the town of Enfield, from north-east to south-west, and is described as having been larger than a cart-wheel, and to have been of most vivid colors. It dropped into what is called Shaker Pond, and the spectators say that its sulphurous trail was visible for fifteen minutes after it fell. Reports from Cleveland and Cincinnati, dated Oct. 24, announce a splendid display of aurora at both cities, on the same morning, at 5 o'clock.

The peculiarity of all these displays, like that at New-York, consisted in the bright crimson hue of the spurs or brushes of light. Sometimes, indeed, the coloring changed to a uniform dull red, as if it had been the fringe of a vast but distant conflagration; but the ruddy spears of flame would soon return, and easily realize to the imagination the fears of by-gone generations, who saw in the fellows to these strange sights—

“Fierce, fiery warriors fight upon the clouds

In ranks, and squadrons, and right form of war.”

The spectacle, too, precisely recalled the earliest account we possess of such phenomena—that by ARISTOTLE—who speaks of it as “resembling flame mingled with smoke seen on calm nights, or like burning stubble seen afar off, and presenting purple, bright red and blood-colored hues.” It likewise brought to mind the memorable sights once seen over Jerusalem, and which CROLY, in his *Salathiel*, so powerfully amplifies from Holy Writ.

Modern science has suggested, without conclusively proving, various causes for the aurora, but the frequent and harmless recurrence of the displays, their common characteristics, and the explanation of other once mysterious natural phenomena, prevent the “northern lights” from longer exciting fear. Of the various solutions, that of Prof. OLMSTEAD is, perhaps, the most plausible. He considers the aurora to be due to nebulous matter, like that which furnishes material for meteoric showers, or the zodiacal light. The light, he thinks, is caused by the friction of the earth in plunging with its atmosphere through this matter, which, being partly metallic, thus gives rise to the concurrent magnetic phenomena. Like other theories on the subject, this is open to objections, although possibly to fewer than the rest. A theory which shall be accompanied by absolute demonstration, is yet to be discovered.