

JAZZY AURORA SNARLS WIRES, DAZZLES CITY

Electrician of Sky Stages Big Show.

A. Borealis, prominent in solar circles, was a visitor in our terrestrial midst last night, his mischievous mission consisting in cascading us with a few trillion electrons, which not only impaired telegraph and telephone service over all the country but caused Chicago to become afflicted with goose-neck from gazing at the stars.

Sartorial styles along the milky way apparently haven't changed since the war, because the visitor's vestments were just about the same as when he last dropped in on us in March of 1918. These, viewed from the roof of a downtown skyscraper, inspired one with the impression that some celestial genie had opened a magic parasol and dropped it over the loop.

Like Celestial Cathedral.

Bending upward from the earth in a cathedral beauty of line and arch, the segments of this parasol—gossamer green they seemed at times in their ethereal tenuosity—converged at the great white planet Jupiter, almost directly overhead. Sometimes luminous streams of light played up and down the segments.

That was the picture part, caused, astronomical experts explain, by an abnormal volume of electricity emanating from the sun's gases. This volume, separating into vagabond streams of electricity, is hurled willy-nilly through space. The earth sometimes encounters one of these streams. The Aurora Borealis is the result.

Gives Thrill to 5,000.

That this had happened last night was first made known by telephone inquiries to THE TRIBUNE. These began coming in soon after 7 o'clock. People wanted to know "what's the great light in the sky?" The inquiries increased rapidly, as news of the phenomenon traversed the city. Altogether the telephone company and the newspapers answered more than 5,000 inquiries.

Also, early in the evening wire trouble developed. The telephone company was unable to reach Pittsburgh by long distance at 7:50 o'clock. Then one by one other lines ceased functioning.

Chicago by 8 o'clock was severed from long distance communication with New York, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Denver, Des Moines, Omaha, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco. The service had not been resumed at an early hour this morning.

Telegraph Lines Hit.

Similarly the Western Union and the Postal Telegraph companies reported wire trouble on the same lines. However, the telegraph service was not suspended completely. It was possible to get messages through, but with long delay. No effect of the phenomena was felt in the city or between here and towns within a twenty-five mile radius, either in telegraph or telephone service.

The electrons, it was explained, caused a ground or short circuit to be established on the wires. Seaboard cities also reported that cable terminals were hard hit. Wireless stations proved difficult to handle, but it was possible to get messages through.

Visible in Southern States.

Reports from the south stated that the aurora was visible throughout that section for the first time in years. As far south as Montgomery, Ala., a remarkable view of the phenomenon was reported.

Throughout North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Virginia great bands of light flashed across the heavens, and in Washington the display had the appearance of beams from giant searchlights.

Blames Sun Spot.

Prof. Philip Fox, astronomer at Northwestern university, saw a large spot on the sun centrally located and visible to the naked eye on Sunday. He said last night this no doubt had much to do with the aurora's flickerings.

"The Northern Lights," he said, "are seldom observed so far south, and it is unusual for them to remain visible for such a length of time."

"There is no doubt the magnetic disturbance in the sky upset electrical conditions on the earth."