

## MIDNIGHT SKY AFLAME.

### Unusual Sight in London.

The Aurora Borealis is such a rare visitant to the latitudes of London that its appearance in the heavens on the nights of June 30 and July 1 excited considerable interest. The brilliant streamers of light associated with the Northern Lights were not observable, but the general change from the first dull glow to a kaleidoscope of color formed a panorama of rare beauty.

Between outbreaks on the sun in the form of sunspots and magnetic phenomena on the earth a connection has been well established by astronomers. Thus, in September, 1859, when sunspots were unusually abundant a magnetic storm of remarkable intensity took place and splendid auroras were seen in Europe and America.

The presence of the Northern Lights manifested on the night of June 30, however, may probably be accounted for by the long spell of remarkably warm weather that continued throughout June in England. At times when solar heat is greatest auroras tend to become more frequent in middle latitudes.

On each evening a very high cirrus cloud of a filmy texture had spread up from the south as an excrescence from a moist thunder disturbance over the English Channel. With the sun but a moderate distance below the northern horizon the light would naturally be reflected a far greater distance than is usually the case. This is suggested as a probable explanation. Should the light have been produced by an aurora, it would have been a display of quite an unusual type and have come at a time of the year when observations show that it has never before been experienced in the south of England and never usually in Scot-

was never before been experienced in the south of England and very rarely in Scotland. The phenomenon was also observed in Denmark and Germany.

Writing from Godmanchester, Huntingdon, to the "Times," under date of July 1, a lady described a "strange light in the sky," seen a little after midnight. "It was in the north-east," she says, "and of a bright flame-color, like the light of the sunrise or sunset. The sky for some distance above the light, which appeared to be on the horizon, was blue as in the daytime, with bands of a light cloud of a pinkish color floating across it at intervals. Only the brightest stars could be seen in any part of the sky, though it was an almost cloudless night. It was possible to read large print indoors and the hands of the clock in my room were quite distinct."

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