

AURORA AUSTRALIS.

MAGNIFICENT DISPLAYS.

SEEN IN SIX STATES.

During Saturday night and the early hours of Sunday morning beautiful displays of the "Southern Lights," or Aurora Australis, were seen by observers from Perth to Brisbane. The Government astronomer at Perth describes the Aurora as the finest ever seen in Western Australia. From several of the Victorian country districts the reports speak of splendid shafts of coloured light between the hours of 11 o'clock and 1. In many cases people left their beds to watch the sky.

The Aurora seems to have been seen later in Melbourne than elsewhere. The watchers at the Observatory were rather unfortunate, as the sky was clouded at the time when the display occurred, shortly after half-past 2 o'clock. The moon also militated against the Aurora as a spectacle, as it was very bright and in one of the clear spaces of the sky. The Observatory account is therefore less enthusiastic than that of the observers in other districts. The Aurora, to watchers in Melbourne, appeared as a band of light over the city, about seven times broader than a rainbow, low down, and parallel to the horizon, and stretching from the suburb of South Melbourne towards the north. It was of a pale greenish colour, and only showed through rifts in the clouds.

Mr. P. Baracchi, Government astronomer, did not see the display, but states that it was undoubtedly the Aurora Australis. "It is an infrequent sight," he said. "I do not remember any other occasion upon which it was seen, as this one is reported to have been seen, over practically the whole of Southern Australia. The extent of its visibility depends upon its height."

Other Melbourne observers, who appear to have had a better view of the Aurora, state that it was flickering in the southern sky from about 3 to 4 o'clock on Sunday morning. It changed from red to yellow, and spread from a point over South Melbourne in rays like the crepuscular rays of the sun. The lights faded out to the west-

the sun. The lights faded out to the westward into a greenish glow. The streamers were not steady, but glowed for a while and then flickered out, as though puffed out by wind. Then they grew again and shot upward towards the zenith.

The most noticeable effects of the electric disturbance which accompanied the Aurora were those upon the electric circuit of the telegraph wires. On Saturday the lines began to show the interference of Aurora at about 10 o'clock, and the working of the country and interstate lines was so badly affected that at times it was impossible to get messages through at all. The feature of the interference was its intermittent nature. At one moment the wires were dead, and a few minutes afterwards the messages could be transmitted. This state of affairs lasted until the night staff went off duty at 2 o'clock.

METEOROLOGICAL BUREAU.

Mr. H. A. Hunt (Commonwealth meteorologist) reports:—"On Saturday night an Aurora Australis was visible along the southern coast of the continent, being reported from Breaksea, Coolgardie, Eucla, and Adelaide. At Adelaide the display was the most magnificent ever seen there, and it lasted from shortly after 10 p.m. till dawn."

CROWDS WATCH THE SKY.

BEECHWORTH, Sunday.—The Aurora Australis made its appearance last night at about 11 o'clock, and at 1 o'clock this morning was at its greatest brilliance. The phenomenon was witnessed by hundreds of people.

BENALLA, Sunday. — From 11 till half-past 11 o'clock last night the heavens wide illuminated. Waves of snow-white light, with narrow linings of red, green, and blue, rolled across the sky from north-west to north-east, while a small area of white cloud developed into an immense wave of brilliance, and sped across the heavens with almost the speed of a shooting star.

CASTLEMAINE, Sunday.—Great interest was aroused by the appearance of the aurora on Saturday night. Crowds congregated in the streets.

CHILTERN, Sunday.—There were remarkably brilliant lights in the sky on Saturday night at about 11 o'clock. They are supposed to have been the Aurora Australis. For an hour great crowds of people watched the illumination of the heavens.

watched the illumination of the heavens.

DIMBOOLA, Saturday.—A most extraordinary phenomenon was witnessed here about half-past 11 o'clock last night. Immense shafts of light broke through the cloud and flashed in varying brilliant hues. The eastern sky was a beautiful deep rose red and purple colour. So brilliant was the illumination that it was possible to read out in the open. Very many residents left their houses to view the spectacle during its brief duration.

DUNOLLY, Sunday.— At about 11 o'clock last night attention was attracted by the southern sky being beautifully illuminated with the Aurora Australis. The sky at short intervals was lit up with varied shaped and coloured lights, travelling in different directions, sometimes quickly and sometimes slowly. It was as if a large number of war-vessels were engaged in search-light practice. The spectacle will long be remembered.

NAVARRE, Sunday.—A phenomenal electrical disturbance was seen at Navarre between 10 and 11 o'clock last night, when a large ball of fire appeared in the west, and seemed to burst, sending beautiful circles of coloured light to the south and west, forming a magnificent rainbow.

PORTARLINGTON, Sunday.—A fine spectacle was witnessed here at midnight on Saturday. When the moon became obscured by clouds, long rays of light shot across the sky. The rays were first of a pink tint, and changing to red, and then to purple. In the south-east was a luminous mass of milky whiteness. It is thought here that the lights were caused by some action on the Antarctic snowfields.

SHEPPARTON, Sunday.—The chief topic of conversation to-day was the magnificent display in the heavens last night. Some people thought the end of the world was at hand. At about 11 o'clock strange moving lights were observed issuing from what seemed to be a dark mass extending half way across the sky like a pall, from east to west. The moon was shining brightly at the time on the western dip, but the lights overshadowed its radiance. The display was most brilliant about 1 o'clock, after which the southern sky was wonderfully tinted with aurora-like colours. The phenomenon was witnessed by a large number of people, who were fascinated and awe-stricken by the grandeur of the spectacle.

ST. ARNAUD, Sunday.— Last night, at 11 o'clock, a strange light was seen in the heavens. A fleecy cloud rose in the eastern sky, and passed to the west, and on its

sky, and passed to the west, and on its journey, which lasted an hour, a peculiar light played through it intermittently. The sky to the south was also alight with something resembling an aurora.

WARRNAMBOOL, Sunday. — Much curiosity has been aroused in the minds of a number of residents concerning a remarkable display of iridescent lights in the sky from half-past 10 o'clock on Saturday night, and continuing through the early hours of Sunday morning. The luminous manifestation was first seen in the south, and subsequently went round to east, and afterwards to north and west. The effect resembled spreading rays of searchlights right across the heavens. A peculiarity of the spectacle was the presence of a very bright spot or patch of light remaining steady in the north-east during the greater part of the night.

OTHER STATES.

SYDNEY, Sunday.—The weather conditions in Sydney last night and early this morning were not favourable for the display of the Aurora Australis, but a fine view of the phenomenon was obtained at the Red Hill branch of the Sydney Observatory. The display was at the height of its splendour shortly after 4 o'clock this morning. The last display was seen six years ago, but was very faint.

ALBURY, Sunday. — An extraordinary series of illuminations in the sky last night caused considerable excitement. The night was perfectly clear and bright. From about 9 o'clock smoke-like masses curled about the sky, while every few seconds streaks of coloured light swept across from east to west. At about midnight the whole southern sky resembled a curtain of crimson light, the effect being similar to that produced by a gigantic fireworks display. A brilliant meteor was seen to fall from the square of Pegasus. Hundreds of citizens viewed the display, and in some places people were so alarmed that they stayed up the greater part of the night.

BROKEN HILL, Sunday.—On Saturday night, at about 11 o'clock, a steady bright reflection lit up the south-eastern sky. This was followed by a succession of ever-moving bright flashes, starting in the east and crossing the sky almost to the west. These flashes were similar to Morse code signals from a lighthouse or a war-ship. The distant southern sky assumed the appearance of breaking dawn. Hundreds of people watched the phenomena in wonder.

people watched the phenomena in wonderment.

WAGGA, Sunday. — A magnificent manifestation of the Aurora Australis was wit-

nessed here between 11 o'clock and midnight on Saturday, and excited intense interest. People got out of bed in hundreds to view the spectacle, the weird transformations and exquisite colouring of which had an awe-inspiring effect upon the majority of people. At first, before the lurid glow and shafts of light in the south-east were observed, the materialisation and rapid development and disappearance of filmy clouds, with blazing olive-green and purple tints, startled and bewildered the spectators, as they could not realise that these bodies were illusionary.

ADELAIDE, Sunday. — The Aurora Australis last night was one of the most sensational and beautiful spectacles ever seen in these low latitudes. The phenomenon created great excitement, and was the topic of discussion throughout to-day. The southern portion of the sky was filled with light until midnight, and the rosy glow in the south was again conspicuous at 4 o'clock in the morning. The University authorities are preparing to make electrical investigations at the Observatory, in expectation of a recurrence to-night.

PERTH, Sunday. — A splendid example of the Aurora Australis appeared in the southern heavens last night. Early in the evening the colour was a soft phosphorescent yellow, which spread in streaks towards the zenith. Subsequently there were recurrences of the aurora in different prismatic colours. Just before 11 o'clock there was a splendid display, the tint being rosy pink, while towards the horizon there was a lovely transparent pale green. The Government astronomer (Mr. Cook) stated that this was the most magnificent aurora he had ever seen or heard of in Australia, and that it had come much further north than usual. He thought that it was due to some condition of the earth's magnetism, but could not determine this point at once.

BRISBANE, Sunday. — For an hour before midnight on Saturday, and for some hours afterwards, the sky over a great part of the Downs was brilliantly illuminated by a reddish glare resembling that of a great conflagration, and occasionally giving place to other colours. So remarkable was the appearance of the light that out towards Warra and Mitchell residents inquired at

Warra and Mitchell residents inquired at the railway stations if anything had happened at Toowoomba. A Dalby message states that the phenomenon was watched with considerable excitement. It was first seen in the south-west; then it gradually moved east, changing colour from red to purple, with white spaces in the centre. It is 30 years since the Aurora Australis was last seen in Queensland.

HOBART, Sunday. —The southern lights, seen in this state on Saturday night, were very brilliant.
