

The disconcerting mixture in the list of "flying saucer" sightings makes the author question their accuracy

Saucers and Psychology

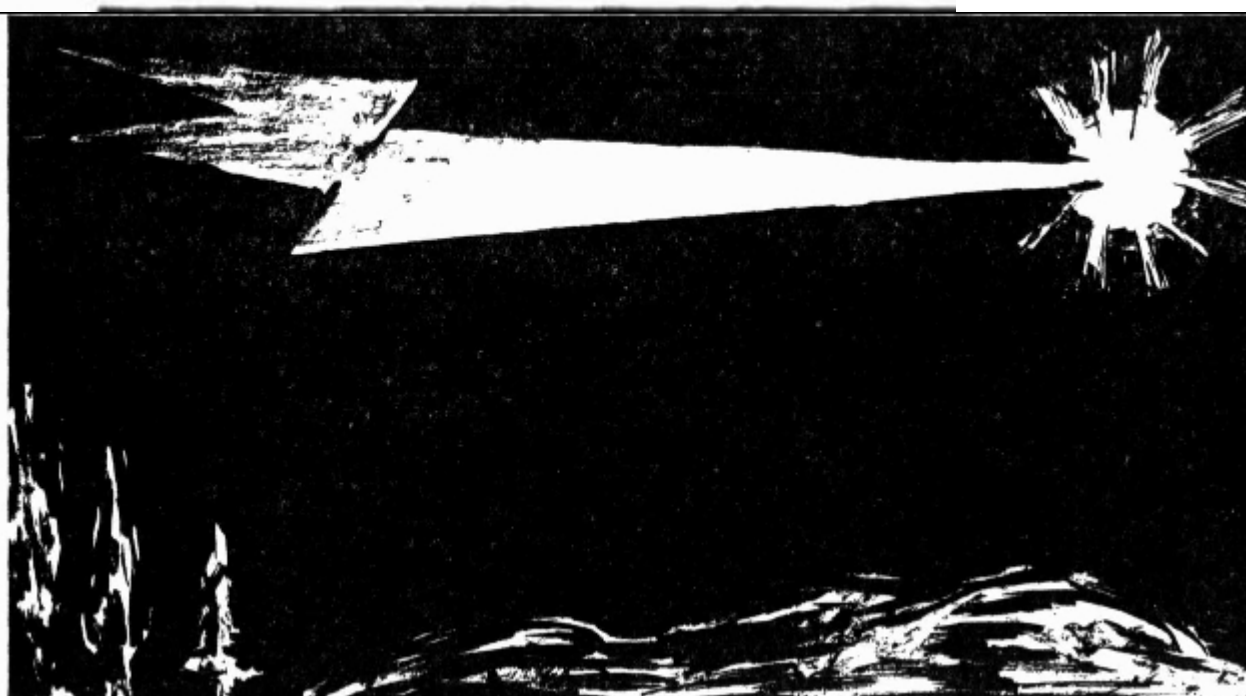
by DR. J. GENTILI

THE first report of "flying saucers" was the one by Kenneth Arnold, on June 24, 1947. The points to be noticed are these: (a) Arnold rose to nearly 10,000ft., a height where some slight physiological trouble may be experienced because of the rarefied atmosphere; and (b) he saw the disks, "smaller than a DC4," and estimated their distance from him at about 20 miles.

The physiological explanation of the apparition of small numbers of disks to people watching a dazzling surface was given some time ago by Professor Cotton, of the University of Sydney. Professor Cotton stated that red blood corpuscles may appear within the field of vision, and their shape is such that they easily create the impression of "double saucers."

Eye Efficiency

AT sea level the air we breathe in contains some 21 per cent oxygen. At 10,000ft. this percentage falls to less than 14, a fall of one-third. One of the results is a rapid increase in the number of red corpuscles in the



EXCEPTIONAL: A slow meteorite which was observed at Constantine, Algeria, on March 24, 1888. It stayed within sight for 20 minutes, and may be regarded as very exceptional because of its brilliant twisted trail and its slowness. Meteorites like this one could well be mistaken for interplanetary spaceships, especially when everyone speaks about "supermen" and atomic energy.

blood, as has been pointed out long ago by research workers in the climatology of high altitudes. The efficiency of sight is affected partly by the shortage

affected partly by the shortage of oxygen, partly by the glare of higher levels, especially if one looks intently at a bright surface.

We should not forget that Arnold rose to a greater height than usual, and that he was looking intently for the lost air transport which was believed to have crashed near Mt. Rainier.

The mountain peaks were snow-clad, and this adds to the probability of glare and eye-fatigue.

The final point is that Arnold estimated the distance of the disks at some 20 miles, according to Gerald Heard's report. What would be the apparent size of a DC4 at 20 miles? This very simple point perhaps disposes of the whole story. The "disks" were weaving their way among the snow-clad peaks at some 1,000 m.p.h. The objective interpretation is

The objective interpretation is that Arnold was dazzled by the snow on the peaks, and his eyes, tired by the glare and weakened by the unusual height, "saw" some red corpuscles.

Accuracy Questioned

THE "disks" seen at Tacoma could well have been weather balloons of the new kind recently mentioned in the Press. The estimated size of some 100 ft. in diameter is in agreement with the size mentioned officially. The "hollow axis" most likely was the gondola carrying the instruments. Whether there was any device for the automatic release of some ballast had

any of the balloons come too

any of the balloons come too close to the ground we can only surmise, but it seems most likely, and is certainly well within the technical possibility nowadays.

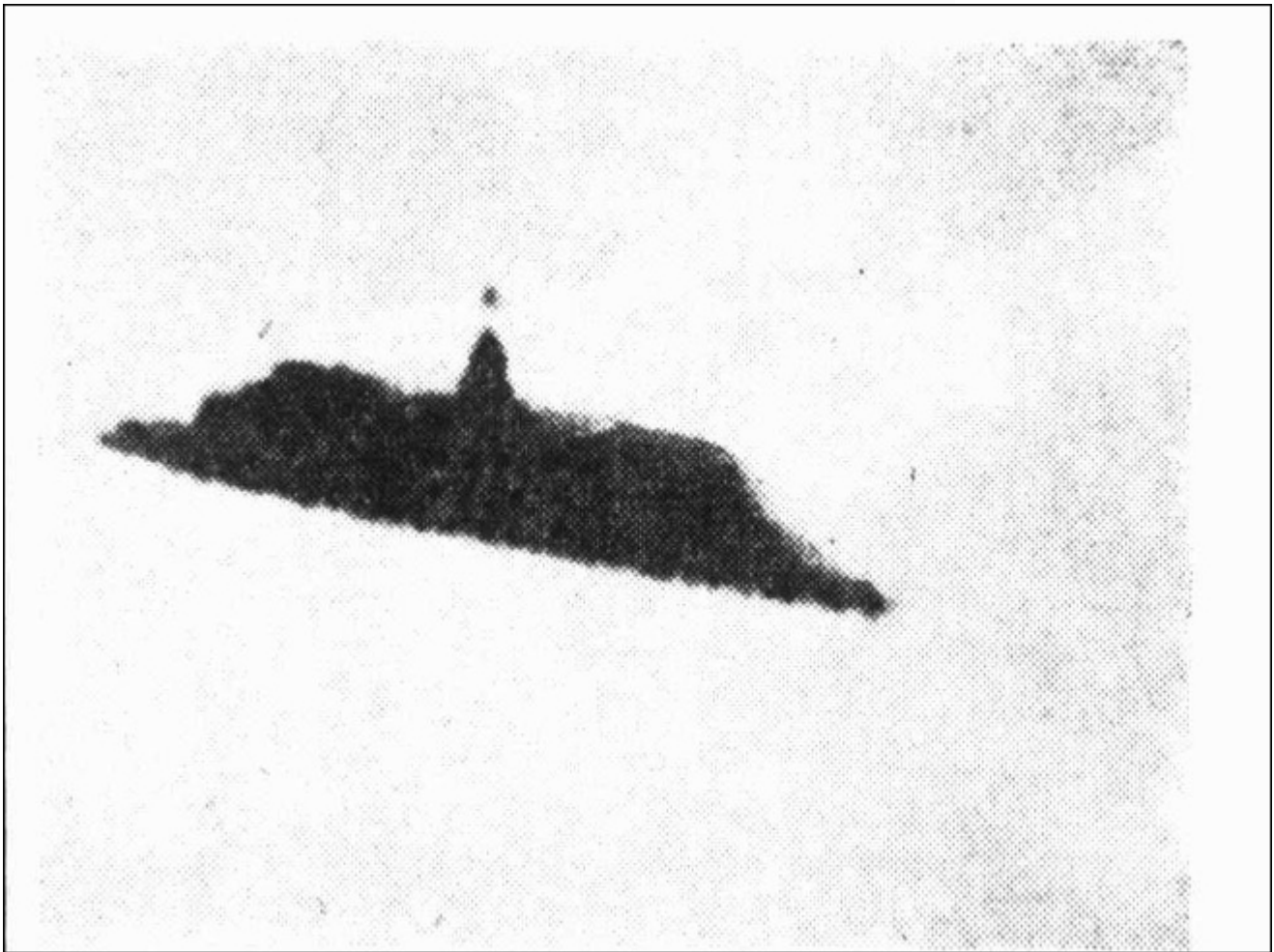
The object dropped by one of these "disks" makes one question the accuracy of the whole report—the "disk" emitted a boom and then dropped first a light-coloured and then a dark metal. Some of the fragments, on touching the water, raised steam. Dahl, the pilot who made the report, gave his superior officer fragments of the "metal" which he claimed had fallen from the sky, but this "metal" turned out to be lava rock.

There are two or three obscure points here. Firstly, the objects released from the "disk" apparently fell into the water, but

ently fell into the water, but Dahl was able to collect one of them, presumably after it had disappeared into the water of the harbour. Secondly, the objects were stated to be metallic, which is something very definite, and not usually easy to say of

anything falling from the sky and disappearing into the water. Thirdly, Dahl collected a piece, believing it to be "metal," and yet it turned out to be "lava rock."

Is it possible that an experienced man may mistake these two substances? Any "flying-saucer fan" may of course persist in his belief that supernatural forces changed what fell from the sky as metal, into a piece of vulgar slag in order to mystify the humble humans, but this sort of belief does not lead anywhere and is just a matter of faith.



TRENT'S PHOTOGRAPH:

"It may very likely show one of
the new-type weather balloons at the last stage of deflation."

Arnold Again

FIVE weeks after his first vision of "saucers" Arnold was flying from Boise, Idaho,

was flying from Boise, Idaho, to Tacoma, Washington. He again had to cross high mountains, again the same Mt. Rainier area where he saw the

"saucers" first. He saw them again. They were only two or three feet across this time, and were light-brown in colour.

It was 7 a.m., and since Arnold had already covered some 350 miles he must have been flying for some two hours at least in his small plane. Could his eyes and his nerves have been a little tired, and could the same type of glare have produced the same effect? It seems most unlikely that some unearthly objects, which only a few people out of many millions have ever been able to see, should twice choose the

same privileged man for their

same privileged man for their witness, and almost at the same place and under similar conditions.

The report by the prospector in the Cascade Mountains is peculiar in this respect. He was able to range a telescope on the disks and notice at the same time that the needle of his compass was "in great agitation" during the amazingly short time of 50 seconds. Actually he could not even count the "disks" and stated that they were "five or six."

These "disks" also could well have been the new weather balloons, and the compass needle might have been "agitated" by the hurried movement necessary to point the telescope at the "disks" and to focus it during the very short time of observation. Unless, of course, there was some iron or steel attachment in the telescope itself, which is not un-

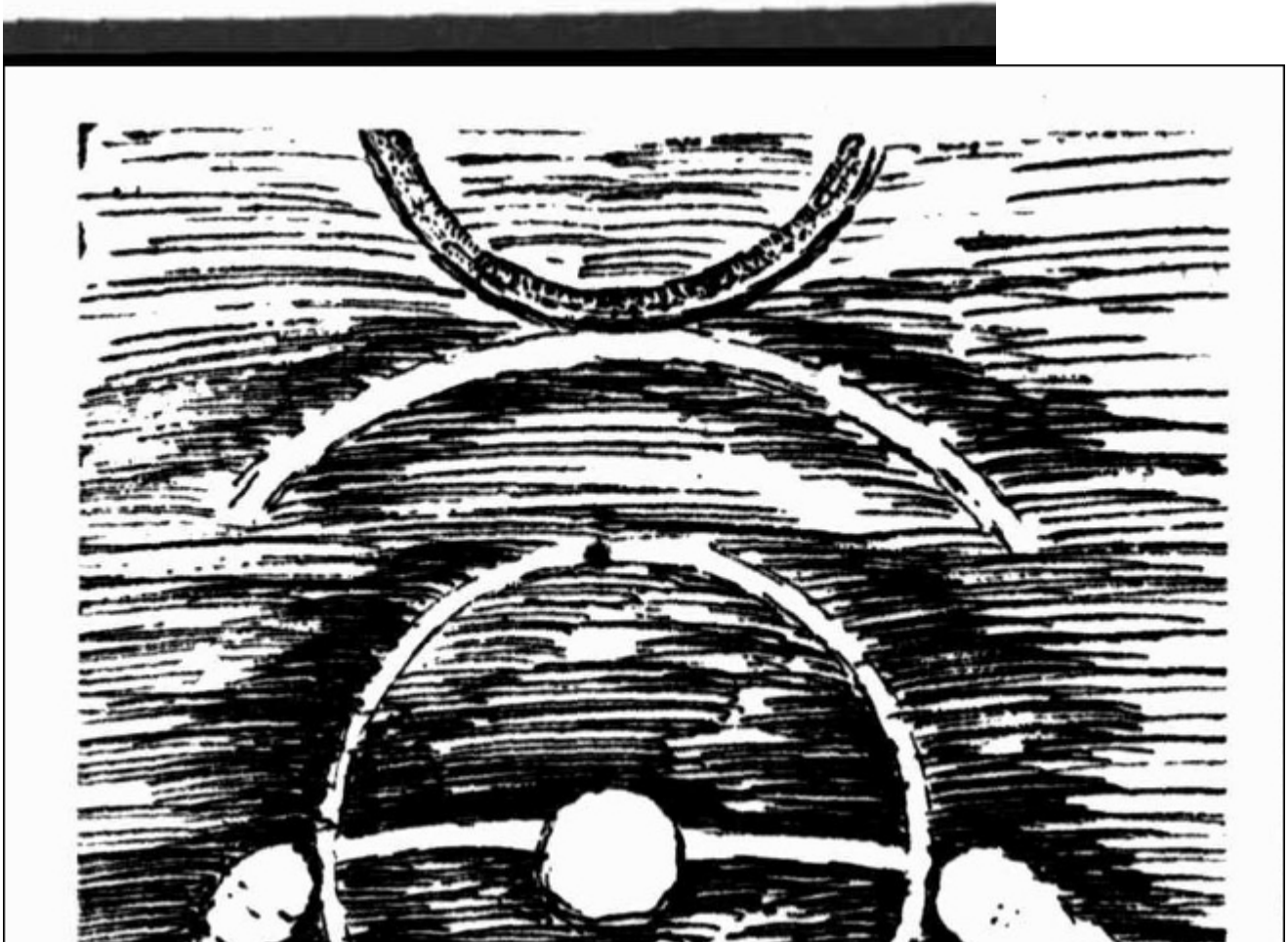
scope itself, which is not unlikely.

Another report worth discussing is the one by Commander McLaughlin's theodolite man. He saw a "disk" about 100ft. across, travelling at a height of some 60 miles. The rest of the crew saw it too. How they could "see" an object 100ft. in diameter at a distance of 60 miles is rather mysterious.

There is another point: the man at the theodolite could estimate the distance of the weather balloon (standard size) which had just been released, because he knew the size of the balloon and the distance from its point of release. But how anyone with a theodolite can at all estimate at the same time both the size and distance of an object "60 miles" away is a real mystery. And of course if size and distance are unknown, no estimate of speed is possible. Had there

speed is possible. Had there been two theodolite observers at fairly distant places, both training their eyepieces on the same object at the same time, things would have been different, and accurate measurements could have been obtained quite easily.

The photograph by Paul Trent is obviously not that of a





AMAZING SIGHT:

This rough sketch shows one of the almost

unbelievable displays that may take place in the sky. It was witnessed by a number of scientists of the United States Weather Bureau, at Washington, D.C., on December 10, 1948. It lasted some 35 minutes, from 10.05 to 10.40 a.m., and reached its climax about 10.25 a.m. The sun is seen at the centre, and is surrounded by a halo of 22deg. radius. There are two false suns, so glary that it was impossible to distinguish their exact outlines, on either side of the halo. Through the sun and the false suns passed a faint circular line of light which continued around the horizon to nearly behind the observers, and was ended by another two false suns (not shown here). Above the sun there was part of a second halo and against this halo was part of a small rainbow, almost overhead, and of a brilliance that was dazzling. The sky was overcast with a thin layer of clouds.

rigid metallic structure. It shows very clearly that the outline of the "cover" is

outline of the "saucer" is badly wrinkled, and that it is not symmetrical. It may very likely show one of the new-type weather balloons at the last stage of deflation. Admittedly, much would be gained from an official statement as to the exact shape of these balloons, but at this stage it is at least obvious that the photograph does not show a "saucer," or any rigid metallic structure at that.

Parts of Rocket

THE "disk" seen by Commander McLaughlin himself could have been the rocket they had just sent up, or a piece of it coming down diagonally because of its shape. This is not unlikely, and the report which followed about a month later seems to show that pieces of the rocket might come loose and be thrust to great heights

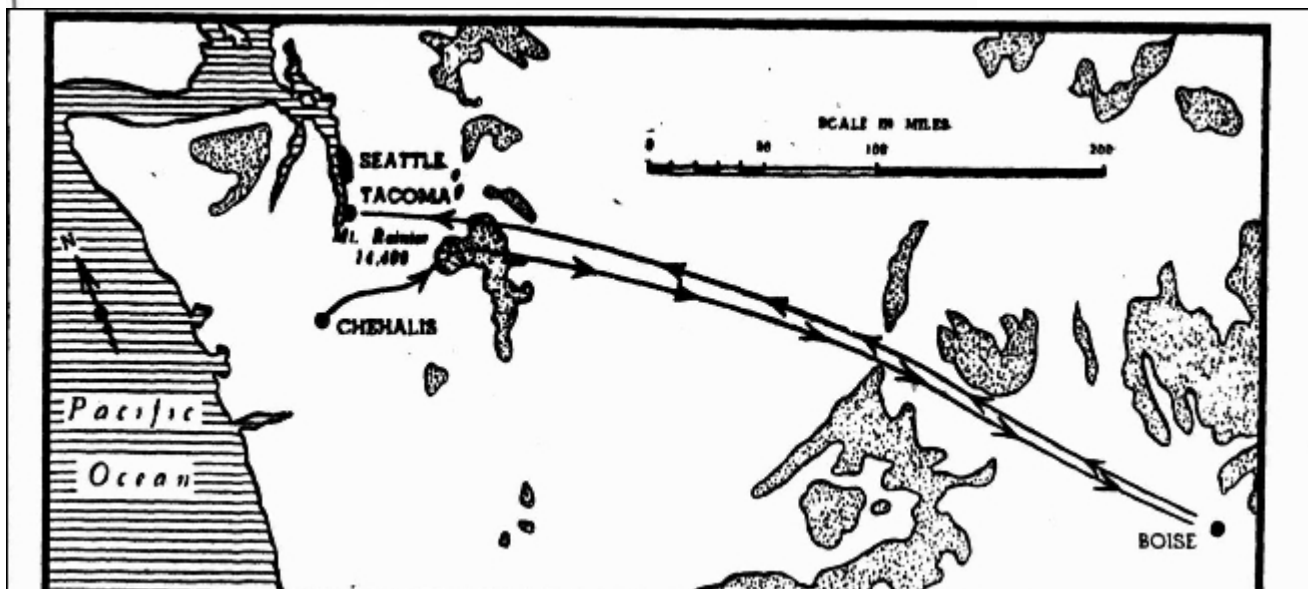
and be thrust to great heights by the same initial impulse that sends the rocket skywards.

The men that sent in this latter report stated that two "disks" were running up alongside the climbing missile and gradually outpaced it. It did not occur to anyone that small parts of the missile itself might have come loose and followed it.

Whether they actually did outpace it remains to be seen, because the missile itself leaves at a terrific speed, visibility around it is not good because of smoke, and if the "disks" whirl edgeways they can hardly be distinguished against the

sky after a very short time. The rocket itself goes at such a speed that it is barely possible for the eye to follow it, and that only for the very begin-

that only for the very beginning of its journey—it soon goes out of sight. How could two



ARNOLD'S FLIGHT PATH:

The map shows the route followed by Arnold on his air journey from Chehalis to Mt. Rainier and home to Boise. Land over 3,000ft. is stippled. It will be noticed that the route from Boise to Tacoma also comes very close to Mt. Rainier, thus forcing the pilot to gain height. A straight line from Boise to Tacoma actually passes through Mt. Rainier itself.

“disks” less than two feet across continue to be visible at any great height?

The “confidential” report from Chile’s Antarctic base mentions two “disks” one above

the other, and turning at tremendous speed. The "security" secrecy concerning this report is not very plausible and the whole report may be considered very cautiously, in the light of the psychological effect of Antarctic solitude and the physiological effect of Antarctic snow. Unless more details are given, this report does not seem very reliable, in the form it has now; it would become very credible if the photographs were released—but why should Chile be so anxious to withhold photographs of an alien, and perhaps even an unearthly, flying machine?—and if they showed a new type of plane or balloon.

Meteorites and Balloons

THE report of some hundred

"discs" ...

“disks” flying over Farmington, New Mexico, with one red “disk” flying very low and going from horizon to horizon in three seconds reads exactly like the description of a stream of meteorites in daylight, with one only low enough to show its red glow. To go from horizon to horizon in such a short time requires an enormous speed, as just such a stream of meteorites may possess.

By the way, at such speeds no details of any kind may be distinguished. For instance, when Captain Adams and First-Officer Anderson saw a “disk” for fully 30 seconds, they claimed to have noticed not only the strangest, strongest blue light that they had ever seen, but also a line of glowing ports or windows “that shone along its side.” It is amazing how so much detail could be noticed and appreciated within such a short time.

within such a short time.

Captain Adickes came across the "red disk" which was flying "on its edge," like a wheel. Could it have been one of the new large weather balloons, high up in the air, and lit by

the last rays of the sun, which are visible hours longer at high levels? A large balloon, seen with a red sunset light sideways, would look like a vertical disk,

At night it is very hard to judge distance and even more so speed. High winds of some 100 to 150 m.p.h. have been recorded at moderately high altitudes, and it is quite possible that the balloon was soon lost to sight merely because a cloud masked it from sight, or a gust of wind pushed it further away.

OF wind pushed it further away.

There remains the gigantic "disk" that caused the alert at Fort Knox, and the loss of Captain Mantell's life. It might well have been a meteorite, because it moved towards the town "at a vast speed." It shot out in the daylight pulses or blasts of red flame, and no plane, no matter how fast, could keep up with it. Could it not have been a meteorite that swooped down on the town, and continued its course? Of three fighters only one kept it within sight, and that for a very short time.

To Sum Up

FROM all these details there emerges one conclusion—that these "objects" belong to different classes. We might perhaps sum it up as follows:

In shape, there are "disks," "balloons," and elongated bodies

"balloons," and elongated bodies like "cigars" or "submarines";

In size, there are very small bodies two or three feet across, some 100ft. or so across, some much bigger, up to 500ft.;

In colour they vary from white to silvery to cherry-red to "dark," some of them with lights which vary from vivid blue to magnesium-flare-like to glistening white to purple, red, orange, and yellow, and some with no lights;

In sound, some rumble along and some move in an eerie silence;

In the nature of the energy emitted, some issue red-hot gas, some give out pulses or blasts of red flame, some issue no light at all but "affect" compass needles.

The only sensible conclusion one may draw from such a list

is that there is a disconcerting mixture in it. Some of these

"objects" differ from some of the other ones. The smallest "disks" are most likely red blood corpuscles seen "inside" the eye, as suggested by Professor Cotton; their erratic movements and the circumstances under which they have been noticed very strongly suggest that. The "disks" that followed the rocket missile are likely to have been fragments of the missile itself. Most of the other "disks," especially those about 100ft. across, must have been the secret new-type weather balloons the existence of which has recently been disclosed by the United States authorities. Most of the other "objects" were meteorites.

"Like to Believe"

NO-ONE can sensibly claim that intelligent beings from any other planet could or ever would send such a diverse team of spacecraft to explore the Earth. Should we accept the hypothesis that some new anti-gravity force is used to propel these objects, then either this force is colourless and noiseless, or it issues red blasts. One cannot have it both ways, or, as Gerald Heard would have us believe, several ways.

There may be secret aircraft about; there have been reports of "flying triangles," "flying hearts," "flying wings," and other most unconventional flying "shapes," all authenticated sooner or later. There may be some aircraft with a new type of engine—just as new as rocket propulsion was only a few years ago—and we cannot exclude

ago—and we cannot exclude even the albeit remote possibility of atom-propelled aircraft, in which case the very hermetic silence kept by the United States authorities may well be understood.

But why on earth bring in unearthly "beings" when the earthly ones and their know-

ledge may explain so much? "I just like to believe" is some people's answer. And there's no quarrelling with that, either.