

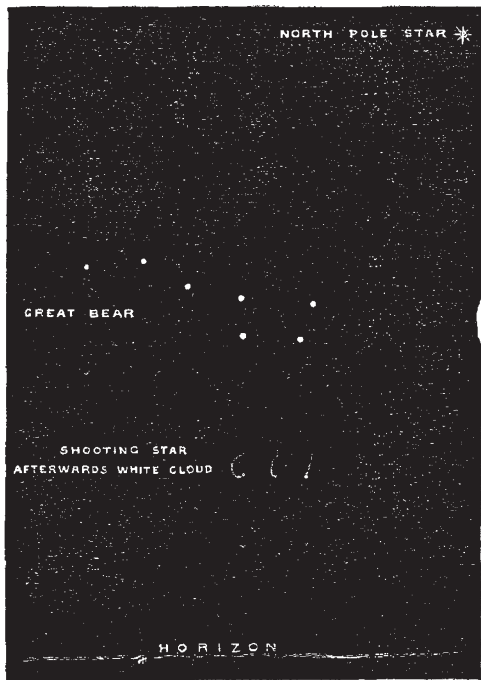
He is also the author of two works in German, "The Basin of Cabul" (Vienna, 1851), and "Cashmere and the Empire of the Sikhs" (Stuttgart, 1840).

For many years he continued to take a very active part in all the scientific progress of his native country and of Italy. At the time of his death, in his seventy-fifth year, he was Austrian Minister at Brussels.

THE METEOR OF AUGUST 15

WE have received descriptions from several correspondents of the remarkable meteor seen on the evening of August 15 over the north of England and Ireland and south of Scotland, to which we referred in our last number.

A correspondent from Portrush sends the following description and sketch:—"At 8.50, on August 15, when stars of first magnitude were only faintly visible, a shooting star was seen in the north-west. I have shown its position in the heavens in the accompanying sketch. It was observed to leave behind it a white thin cloud which



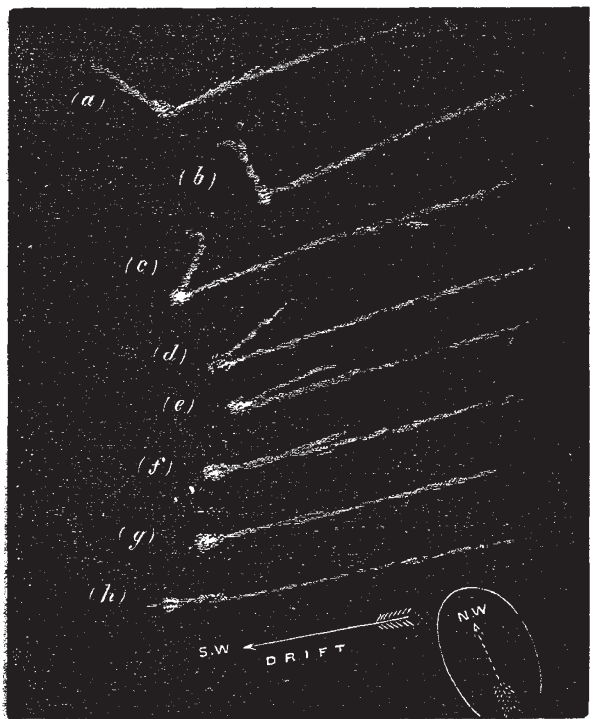
Shooting star, 8.50 P.M., August 15.—N. N. W. 25 deg. above the horizon, left behind it a streak of white cloud, which was clearly visible for ten minutes, drifting with the wind.

drifted a little to the west, and altered its shape from a straight line to a crescent. It was evidently illuminated by the light of the setting sun, and disappeared gradually in ten or fifteen minutes. Was the white thin streak of cloud, vapour, or dust? I observe by the newspaper that this cloud was seen in the neighbourhood of Belfast some forty miles distant, from which I infer that the phenomenon took place at a considerable altitude."

At Dunbar it is described by an observer in the following language:—"A remarkable atmospheric phenomenon was witnessed at Dunbar on Monday night. The phenomenon was first seen about a quarter before nine o'clock, and at that time it was more than half-way up the northern horizon. When first observed it had the appearance of a ball eight or ten inches in diameter, of a bright sparkling white colour tinged with blue, hanging suspended in mid-air. The colour, indeed, throughout was much the same as that of a star of the first magnitude. From the

head or ball there issued a tail of the same bright colour, apparently three or four yards in length, and pointing in a north-easterly direction. By-and-by, however, a second tail seemed to branch off from the middle of the first one, at an angle of forty-five degrees, thus giving to the tail of the figure a cleft or forked appearance. This second tail seemed to come and go, being occasionally detached for a few seconds, sometimes indeed being lost sight of altogether, then suddenly coming into view, and appearing to unite again. The phenomenon lasted with little variation for fully twenty minutes, and then proceeded very slowly in a south-westerly direction."

At Kirkbank, near Burntisland, it presented the following appearance:—"A brilliant shooting-star appeared in the north-west on a bright evening sky, and darted out of sight northwards. Its path was precisely that of a body obliquely reflected from an air-cushion. It left a trail like a nebulous haze. At the point of reflection a vivid spot remained, and fainter trails before and behind; corresponding to head or ball and tails noticed at Dunbar. The nucleus drifted towards south-west, and the branches gradually folded together behind, all disappearing as a



faint streak. Duration estimated fully ten minutes, terminating about 9.5 P.M., as Dunbar notice has it." The successive aspects were sketched by the writer and annexed.

And at Arran the appearance presented appears to have been very similar:—"On Monday night about half-past nine o'clock, there was a peculiar manifestation of what appeared to be electrical agency in the sky, at Whiting Bay. At that hour a bright light was seen to flash out from the north-west, near the horizon. It suddenly spread upwards in the form of a long ribbon, the upper half of which afterwards doubled down, when the whole assumed a horse-shoe form, and then gradually faded away. The sky was at the time perfectly clear, and a number of stars were visible, but the brightness of the meteoric appearance completely outshone them."

We should be glad to receive further descriptions of this remarkable meteor from some of our astronomical correspondents.