large space of the heavens, rush about from place to place with incredible velocity, and finally almost cover the whole sky up to the zenith, and produce an appearance as if a vast tent was spread in the heavens, glittering with gold, rubies, and sapphire."

The aurora is not so common in this country as 't was about the year 1800; but when it does appear, it is generally in the spring and autumn seasons, and after a continuation of dry weather. The most beautiful that was ever seen in England was that described by Mr. Dalton, in a very minute and interesting manner: "Attention was first excited by a remarkable red appearance of the clouds to the south, which afforded sufficient light to read by at eight o'clock in the evening, though there was no moon or light in the north. Some remarkable appearance being expected, a theodolite was placed to observe its altitude and bearing. * * * From 9½ to 10 P. M., there was a large luminous horizontal arch to the southward, almost exactly like those we see in the north, and there was one or more concentric arches northward. It was particularly noticed that all these arches seemed exactly bisected by the plane of the magnetic meridian. At half past 10 o'clock streamers appeared very low in the southeast, running to and fro from west to east; they increased in number, and began to approach the zenith, apparently with an accelerated velocity, when all of a sudden the whole hemisphere was covered with them, and exhibited such an appearance as surpasses all description. The intensity of the light, the prodigious number and volatility of the beams, the grand intermixture of all the primitive colours in their utmost splendour, variegating the glowing canopy with the most luxuriant and enchanting scenery, afforded an awful, but, at the same time, a most pleasing and sublime spectacle. Every one gazed with astonishment; but the uncommon grandeur of the scene only lasted one minute; the variety of colours disappeared, and the beams lost their lateral motion, and were converted as usual into the flashing radiations; but even then it surpassed all other appearances of the aurora, in that the whole hemisphere was covered with it."

The aurora is evidently an electrical phenomenon, and may be readily imitated by ordinary electricity. When electricity is passed through a vacuum, beautiful streams of light are produced, which vary in colour and intensity, according to the