

pened several times, and in one case quite recently; for the great comet of 1843 was seen at noonday quite close to the sun both in Nova Scotia and at Madrid, and before sunset at the Cape of Good Hope.* Of course it is only the brightest part, or the head of a comet that can ever be so seen. The faint light of the tail has no chance of contending against broad daylight.

(4.) Before the invention of telescopes the appearance of a comet was a rare occurrence, because only a small proportion of them can ever be seen by the naked eye, and of them again only a small portion are considerable enough to attract much attention—but since that discovery it has been ascertained that they are very numerous—hardly a year passes without *one*; and very often two, three, and in one year, 1846, no less than eight were observed. Taking only two a year on an average as visible if looked for in a telescope, and considering that at least as many must occur in such situations that we could not expect to see them—in the 6000 years of recorded history there must have been between twenty and thirty thousand comets, great and small. A *great* comet, however, hardly occurs on an average oftener than once in fifteen or twenty years, or even yet more rarely;

* At Halifax, in the first mentioned colony, my informant saw a number of persons—natives of the place—hale and sturdy men, gathered in a group and gazing full on the sun, which, when he attempted to do, dazzled and almost blinded him. He was compelled to desist, and inquire what they were looking at, and how they could do so without being blinded. “Blinded!” was the reply—“Lord bless you, it does not hurt us;—what, can’t you see it—that thing up by the sun?”