

SIGNS AND PORTENTS

Sunday, 29 October 1643 [OS]

Being the Lord's day, from nine o'clock at night till five o'clock the next morning (the moon shining not that night) there was seen by diverse great flashes of fire in the sky, north-west, like to the giving of fire of ordnances. And all that night was very light, almost as light as noon-day, that many say the like has not been seen.

Out of Suffolk they write that at that time that evening after sunset was extreme dark till about eight of the clock, then it began to grow light on the sudden and was so light that they could plainly see to read a great print, and could easily discern written letters and words; and yet there was no moonshine, for she rose not until about five of the clock the next morning. It was a quiet and calm light round about, and more than usually when the moon is at her full and that the stars were rather dimmer than ordinarily they are. Some clouds appeared in the north and east with some streams of lightsomeness in them. And those that watched all night to see the event affirmed that it held so light even almost till morning.

At Norwich also they saw the very same light; only this some persons of credit that sat up and watched have added that about three o'clock in the morning they saw a star fall, longer than any star that ever they saw, and it fell leisurely, a long time before it vanished; they had time to discourse together from the time it began to fall to the time it ceased. What these things portend God only knows. In the Scripture, light is always taken in the good part, and signifies prosperity and joy.

And we have heard some affirm that are lately come out of Surrey that at Mitcham in that county they saw that night strange apparitions in those white illuminated clouds towards the north, and amongst the rest a battle, as if it had been between two armies, which no doubt threatens a continuation of wars amongst us, but will end in a glorious and happy peace, as some authors have written.

Nehemiah Wallington, *Historical Notices of Events Occurring Chiefly in the Reign of Charles I* (London: Bentley, 1869), II:149–150.
[modernized]

Wednesday, 1 November 1643 [OS]

We must handsel¹ the beginning of this week with the observation of what was seen the night before, which was a most unusual light, which continued all the night and by the attestation of a thousand witnesses was nothing inferior to that Diaphanum when the Moon shines forth in her perfect orb. That such a light should be seen in the absence of the two great luminary bodies is so near a miracle that I believe the most exact meteorist can neither according to reason nor philosophy define the cause. No conjunction of the planets could effect it, nor any union of the stars, should all the stars (which is impossible) crowd themselves together to make all one hemisphere, but one Milky Way. Nor could it be an exhalation, for every exhalation that takes fire in the air, as it is clear, so it is sudden and violent; but this was beheld to continue in the same degree of light all the time of the night. We must therefore look upon a higher cause and, taking comfort to ourselves, believe with comfort that God will not forsake us, Who extraordinarily has pleased to afford us light in a land of darkness.

The Weekly Accompt 9 (1 November 1643). [modernized]

¹ **handsel** — to do or use for the first time; to greet with a ceremonious gesture or gift.