

**Description of a Famous Meteor.**

The meeting of the astronomical department of the State Historical Society, in St. Paul a few days ago, an extremely interesting paper on meteorites read by Professor E. J. Thompson, of the State University. The following extract from this paper relates to a meteorite that fell across the southern line of Minnesota, near the town of Jackson: "May 10, 1879, was a bright, clear, cloudless day. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon, in full sun shine, this meteorite passed through the air, exploded and fell in the town of Erteville, Emmet county, Iowa, about ten or twelve miles below the southern boundary of Jackson county, Minn. All agree essentially in giving the facts connected with its explosion and fall. The noise accompanying its flight was described as rumbling, cracking, crashing, similar to that produced by a train of cars crossing a long bridge; then came a very loud report, immediately followed by two distinct reports in quick succession, though not so explosive or loud as the first. It struck the ground in separate masses, together with smaller fragments scattered over an area of three or four miles. Two large pieces fell about two miles apart, in a direct northwest line, both at an angle of nearly eighty degrees. The impression of those who saw the meteor in the air just at the time of the explosion was that still another large mass fell not far distant. This has been confirmed by the recent finding of a piece weighing one hundred and fifty pounds in a paper named Robert Pietz. The largest mass, weighing four hundred and seventy pounds, now at Keokuk, penetrated a hard blue clay soil with water to the depth of twelve feet. The mass weighing one hundred and twenty pounds, now at the State University, fell on a dry grassy knoll and penetrated to the depth of five and a half feet. A few rods from the largest mass a fragment weighing three pounds, a school-boy picked up a fragment weighing three pounds a little way from the largest. These fragments of the great body of the meteorite are few in number. There was no appreciable difference between the explosion and the fall on the earth. The form of all masses is like that of rudely detached fragments from a quarry, or ejected from the crater of a volcano. The mass in the collection at the university has an irregular outline, about 15 or 18 feet long, and when first obtained was covered with a black crust. The largest mass is ragged, and bristles with points of nickeliferous iron. Professor Heinemann of the Iowa State University pronounced it the more valuable of the two masses; but full analyses will probably determine them to be one and the same. While the nickeliferous iron seemed to be present in the largest, the crystalline masses are far more numerous in the smaller. Observers saw the large mass strike the ground, and state that it was surrounded by a great sod and gravel and dirt, and for a moment the air was filled with flying stones and all masses of earth. The largest struck at a school house, the smaller within twenty or thirty rods of a dwelling, much to the terror of the inmates. The language of the good old lady sitting by the window at the time in a measure describes their fright: "My soul! I thought the end of the world had come, and I fell on my face and waited." The concussion produced by its passage through the air was so great that glass was broken in the windows, and in many instances where men were working in the field their horses were completely stunned with fright. "I should judge its height to have been, before the reports were heard, from thirty to forty miles. As the time of the explosion it must have been very much less.

From a partial and yet unfinished computation it is thought its velocity was between two and four miles per second." —*St. Paul Minnesota, Pioneer Press.*

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