

III. *A Letter of that curious Naturalist Mr. Henry Barham, R. S. S. to the Publisher, giving a Relation of a fiery Meteor seen by him, in Jamaica, to strike into the Earth; with Remarks on the Weather, Earthquakes, &c. of that Island.*

S I R,

ACCORDING to your Request I have collected what I can remember, relating to a *Meteor* I saw in *Jamaica* about the Year 1700, as I was riding one Morning from my Habitation situated about Three Miles North-West from *St. Jago de la Vega*: I saw a Ball of Fire, appearing to me of the Bigness of a Bomb, swiftly falling down with a great Blaze. As I thought it fell into the Town; but when I came within a quarter of a Mile of the Town, I saw many People gather'd together a little to the Southward in the *Savanna*, to whom I rode up, where they were admiring at the Ground's being strangely broke and plough'd in by a Ball of Fire, which, as they said, fell down there. I observed there were many Holes in the Ground, one in the middle of the Bigness of a Man's Skull, and five or six smaller Holes round about it, of the Bigness of a Man's Fist, and so deep (especially the biggest) as not to be fathom'd by what long Switches or Sticks they had at hand. I did not hear that any was so curious as to make any farther Search: It was observ'd, that the green Grass was perfectly burnt near the Holes, and a strong Smell of Sulphur remain'd thereabouts for a good while after.

Note that we had a terrible rainy Night before, with much Lightning and great Thunder-Claps, which we have

have very frequently in *Jamaica*, often killing Cattle in the Fields. Mr. *Henry Lord*, who lives at *Dry-River*, had two Sons (big Boys) struck dead with Lightning, in 1716, without any Wounds or Appearance of Hurt found about them. And as these Claps are much louder and stronger than any I ever heard in *Europe*, so are our Showers of Rain, pouring down in a most violent manner. We have Lightning all the Year round, but our great Rains are in the Months of *May*, *August*, and *October*. I knew *May* for two or three Years without Rain, which was lookt upon as a great Wonder; and we paid dear for it in our *Indigo*; for a Caterpillar appear'd and wove a fine Silk about the *Indigo-Plant*, and destroy'd it all, hurting nothing else. *May-Rains* us'd to destroy these Worms. *August* and *October* never go out without a Flood, we having then universal Rains, all over the Island, coming from the Sea: For we have often Rains in the Mountains from the Clouds lodging there, when we have none in the Lowlands.

Our Island is full of Mines, and, if search'd into, I question not but very rich. We are very subject to Earthquakes, several happening every Year, especially after great Rains, which fill up all our great Cracks in the Surface of the Earth: For in a very dry Time, we have them so very large, deep, and gaping so open and wide, that it is dangerous to ride over some Parts of the *Savannas*, for fear a Horse should get his Legs into them. Our Earthquakes make a Noise or Rumbling in the Earth, before we feel the Shake; and seem to run swiftly to the Westward. This is all I can inform you of this kind at present, relating to the Island of *Jamaica*, being ever ready to shew how much I am, &c.

Decemb. 19.
1717.

Henry Barham;