

XIV. *An Account of the Effects of a Storm of Thunder and Lightning, in the Parishes of Looe and Lanreath, in the County of Cornwall, on the 27th Day of June, 1756. Communicated to the Rev. Jeremiah Milles, D.D. F.R.S. in two Letters, one from the Rev. Mr. Dyer, Minister of Looe, and the other from the Rev. Mr. Milles, Vicar of Duloe, in Cornwall.*

Read Feb. 24,
1757.

ON Sunday the 27th of June last it grew on a sudden as dark as a winter evening: soon after, the lightning began to flash, and the thunder to roar. The claps were near, and extremely loud; and the lightning was more like darting flames of fire, than flashes of enkindled vapour. Happily no damage was done to the town of Looe, which lies very low; but at Bucklawren, a village situated on the top of a hill, about two miles from hence, a farm-house was shattered in a most surprising manner. The house fronts the south. The windows of the hall and parlour, and of the chambers over them, which are in the front of the house, are fashed. The dairy window is the only one on the west side of the house. The chimnies are on the north side; and at the south-west corner there is a row of old elms on a line with the front, the nearest of which is ten feet distant from the house. The lightning seems to have had a direction
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from the south-west to the north-east. It first struck the bevelled roof of the south-west corner, near the eaves of the house; made a large breach, and tore up the floor of the garret, near the place where it entered, and descended by the west wall, in oblique lines, into the chamber over the parlour; but not having sufficient vent that way, it darted in a line from S. W. to N. E. against the north wall of the garret, where meeting with resistance, it broke down the floor near the north wall many feet wide, and carrying the ceiling of the parlour-chamber before it, ran down by the wall of that room in direct lines. Where it descended on the west and north walls it made large and deep furrows in the plaster, and even tore out the stones and mortar. A large splinter was struck off from the bed-post contiguous to the north wall, and the bed was set on fire. The chimney-piece was broken into many parts; the window-frame was moved out of the wall, every pane of glass was broken, the under sash was torn in pieces, and a large piece of the chimney-board was thrown out of the window against an opposite garden wall, about 20 feet from the house. As the lightning shot thro' the window, it found a small cavity between the wall and the slating with which the wall is covered, where it burst off the slates as far as it continued in a direct line downward, and threw them at a great distance from the house. Notwithstanding this dreadful havock, the force of the lightning was not spent; the window gave it not a sufficient discharge. From the chamber over the parlour, it descended by the north wall to the room under it, which is wainscotted, tore off the cornice the whole breadth of

the room, and some mouldings from the wainscot ; broke the glasses and Delft ware in the beaufet ; shivered the shelves of a bottle-room ; and, ripping off a small stock-lock from the door, burst it open, and made its way chiefly thro' the window, the frame of which was moved from the wall, and the glass shattered to pieces. Near the bottle-room there was a hole struck in the partition-wainscotting, which divides the parlour from the hall, about eight inches long and an inch broad : through this crevice the lightning entered the hall, which serves at present for a kitchen, and meeting with some pewter in its way, it flung it from the shelf about the room ; threw down a large iron bar, that stood in a corner, and which seemed to have a trembling and desultory motion ; carried the tongs into the chimney, and threw a tea-kettle, that stood there, into the middle of the floor ; moved a large brass pot out of its place, which was under a table ; and then darted thro' the windows, carrying away a pane of glass intire out of the upper sash to the distance of many feet. The mistress of the house and her son were sitting at this window. They were the only persons in the house, and providentially received no hurt. Some part of the lightning found a way between the door and door-case of the hall. The door is pannelled : and the lightning, in passing thro', penetrated into a close mortise, and split off a large splinter from the outside of the door, close to the tenon. In its course it left a smoaky tinge on the wall and timber, like that of fired gunpowder. A sulphureous smell remained in the house many hours. Another (or probably a part of the same) flash of lightning struck

struck the dairy window, melted the lead, and burnt the glass where it penetrated, and set the window-frame on fire. From thence it darted in a line from S. W. to N. E. downward, made a large hole in a plastered partition near the floor into the barn, shattered a large paving rag-stone in pieces, and tearing up the ground, sunk into the earth. The elms were affected with the lightning, particularly that nearest the house, from the top of which to the root appeared large furrows in the moss, which grew on the bark, in some places in an irregular spiral, but for the most part in a perpendicular line; and from the root of it the ground was torn up in furrows, as if done with a plough-share, about six feet long, the furrows gradually lessening according to their distance from the tree. All this was done instantaneously. How amazingly swift, subtle, and powerful is the force of lightning! I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

James Dyer.

A Letter from the Rev. Mr. Milles on the same Subject.

ABOUT four of the clock on Sunday afternoon, the same day that the lightning struck the farmhouse at Bucklawren, it fell upon another house called Pelyne, in the parish of Lanreath, about six miles distant. The house fronts the east. The chimney, which is at the north end, is cracked, and

opened about two or three inches wide, from the top to the roof, where it entered the slating thro' a small hole on the eastern side; forced its way thro' the upper chamber, where it melted an old copper skillet, a pair of sheepshears, and some odd brass buckles and candlesticks that lay on the wall; consumed the laths adjoining, and then made its way thro' a small crevice in the upper part of the window. Another and more severe part of the same lightning descended the chimney; struck two women down, who were sitting on each side of it, without any further hurt; overturned a long table, that was placed before the window in the ground room, upon two men, who were sitting on the inside, with their backs towards the window. One of these men was miserably burnt in his right arm. The lightning seems to have struck him a little above the elbow, making a small orifice about the bigness of a pea: the burn from thence to the shoulder is near an inch deep. His right thigh was likewise burnt on the inside, and the outside of his right leg, from a little below the knee, quite over the ankle to his toes. Both knees were burnt across slightly, and his left thigh. His shirt-sleeve, and the upper part of his waistcoat, were reduced to tinder: the buckles in his shoes were melted in different parts, and in different directions. He has not been able to use his arm since; and is under the care of a surgeon, who has reduced the wound to a hand's breadth, which was in the beginning advancing fast towards a mortification. The other man was but slightly wounded. The lightning afterwards found its way thro' the window in three different places; melted the glass, leaving a smutty tinge, like that of
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fired gunpowder. A boy, about ten years old, son to the under-tenant, was also struck down, as he was standing at the door, but not hurt. The father and his daughter felt no ill effects; but saw the lightning roll on the floor, and thought the room was on fire.

XV. An Account of the Peat-pit near Newbury in Berkshire; in an Extract of a Letter from John Collet, M. D. to the Right Reverend Richard Lord Bishop of Oflory, F. R. S.

My Lord, Newbury, Decemb. 2, 1756.

Read Feb. 24, 1757. **N**OW I am mentioning the peat, I beg leave to assure your Lordship, that tho' some persons have asserted, that after the peat has been cut out, it grows again after some years; yet this is not true of the peat found here, none of the peat-pits, which were formerly dug out, and have lately been opened again, affording the least reason to justify such an opinion; but, on the contrary, the marks of the long spade (with which they cut out the peat) are still plainly visible all along the sides of the pits, quite down to the bottom; and are now as fresh as if made but yesterday, tho' cut above fifty years ago: which shews also, that our peat is of too firm a texture to be pressed together, and to give way, so as to fill again the empty pits: which perhaps may be the case in some of the mosses, where the pits are found after some years to be filled up again. The: