

views due weight, I have cited them at some length in the foot note. My own impression is that Mr. Belt and Sir Sidney Saunders have given, between them, the true explanation of the rhythmic exhibition of light, and that apart from the aesthetic realization in nature of this plan of making night glorious by the wonderful brilliancy of such insignificant objects (upon which idea this is neither the time nor the place to discourse), it is primarily a defence of the insects against danger, and is secondarily caused by that tendency to act in concert or imitation which operates upon all sentient beings. This tendency may be equally observed in a flock of sheep following its leader, a school room of hysterical girls, a political meeting, a spiritistic séance, or a hyper-sentimental religious assemblage. And I regard all these occurrences, however differing in the importance of their final results, as individual instances in a large class of similar phenomena, caused by aggregated sympathy.

I would therefore agree with Sir Sidney Saunders and Mr. Meldola in quite rejecting Mr. McLachlan's view that it is produced by a change in position of the insects caused by currents of air, or even voluntary movements in direction of flight.

To recur to the process by which the light is produced, I would add to what I have said in the beginning of this essay, that the chemical processes possible in the bodies of Lampyridae can be scarcely if at all different from those which take place in neighboring and closely allied tribes. We may therefore infer from the observations of Mr. Meldola that the ordinary metamorphoses of tissues, by the aid of some slight modification of composition and cellular structure, are capable of evolving light, which belongs to the upper end of the spectrum, such as is generally significant of the highest temperatures.

It is therefore the more extraordinary to find in these insects light of a high order not dependent on elevation of temperature, and consequent

---

by sexual influences, amid vast hosts instigated to combine therein, and act in unison. He would rather attribute this phenomenon to an inherent tendency to emit their light from time to time, requiring a certain amount of repose to recruit their powers; and when any thus surcharged felt intuitively inspired to take the initiative, the others—prompted to obey a corresponding influence—followed such suggestion in responsive sequence." Ibid, p. viii.—"Mr. Meldola stated that Mr. Thomas Belt (Naturalist in Nicaragua, p. 320) had expressed his belief that the luminosity of the Lampyridæ played the same part as the bright colors of many caterpillars, *i. e.*, that it served as a danger signal, warning nocturnal foes of the inedibility of the species of this family, which he had found to be generally distasteful to birds, &c."