

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The present paper on "The Return of Halley's Comet and Popular Apprehensions" is the outcome of a misunderstanding. A short time ago, the writer was requested by the Executive Bureau to furnish some notes on Halley's comet which would help to quiet the fears of such persons as might anticipate trouble from its approach to the earth. After finishing the task in a great hurry, he discovered that all that was wanted were a few statements denying the existence of danger. It seemed, however, to the staff of the Weather Bureau and to other perfectly disinterested persons that the discussion should be published.

It is said that "history repeats itself" and that "superstitions die hard." If this is true, we may look for all kinds of wild rumors circulated by ignorant or malicious persons, setting forth in glowing colors all the horrors which the "comet" is going to bring upon us poor mortals. It is even stated that these irresponsible mischief-makers are already at work in some sections of Manila.

It is believed that the present discussion of these alleged dangers, if given the widest publicity possible, will help in allaying the nightmares of the timid and furnish material to those who desire to dispel the fears of their neighbor.

This paper is not intended as a deep and broad investigation according to the strictest requirements of modern science. Even supposing that the writer were capable of such work, the hurry in which this treatise had to be written would not have permitted elaborate calculations and deep researches. The only claim made for it is that it is a plain and honest exposition of the groundlessness of fear in regard to comets in general, and particularly as concerns the present return of Halley's comet.