

**SHOOTING STARS AS
OBSERVED FROM
THE "SIXTH
COLUMN" OF THE TIMES**

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Shooting stars as observed from the "sixth column" of the Times by W. L. Alden

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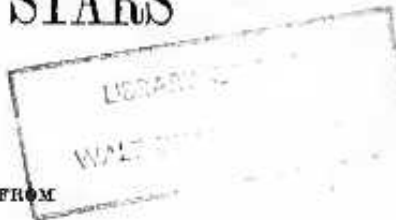
W. L. ALDEN

**SHOOTING STARS AS
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THE "SIXTH
COLUMN" OF THE TIMES**



THE LATEST CASE OF HAZING. (Frontispiece.)

SHOOTING STARS



AS OBSERVED FROM

THE "SIXTH COLUMN" OF THE TIMES

BY

W. L. ALDEN

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SHOOTING STARS.

FROM time immemorial the shooting star has ministered to the happiness of lovers. When two hearts that beat as one, with, of course, the usual accompanying organs, limbs, and clothes, are seated on the piazza in the quiet of a summer evening, a kiss may properly be exchanged whenever a meteor is seen. Upon this point all the authorities from ANACREON to the *Sun*, are unanimous. SOCRATES, indeed, went so far as to hold that nature provides shooting stars and bridges for the sole benefit of lovers, for in the eighteenth book of the "Memoriabilia," he is reported to have said to ALCIBIADES, in the course of an argument for the existence of the gods, based upon the evidences of design in

nature : " You, yourself, O, **ALCIBIADES**, know that if you or I cross a bridge while sleighing, or discover a meteor in the firmament, we consecrate a kiss to Zeus. Why, then, did Zeus create bridges and meteors unless in order that you and I should —" At this moment, as **XENOPHON** informs us, **XANTIPPE** entered, and the sage, suddenly recollecting that he had an appointment down town, abruptly dismissed his class in philosophy. We do not, however, need the authority of the ancients to prove the existence of a custom familiar to us all. This custom has naturally trained the youth of both sexes to great skill in the detection of meteors. It is not very long ago that a young lady of Oshkosh, while sitting with her betrothed on the back piazza, pointed out to him thirty-six meteors in the course of a single hour, and subsequently permitted her astronomical enthusiasm to lead her to insist that the flashes of a lantern in the hands of a brakeman engaged in coupling together a long freight train, were so many additional meteors of a peculiarly interesting type.