Philosophical trans-actions, giving some account of the present undertakings, studies, and labours of the ingen-ious, in many consider-able parts of the world [serial]. London: C. Davis, Printer to the Royal Society of London, 1677. Rare Book Collection. The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
same time: As, not only in Oxford and Oxfordshire, but also in Northamptonshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Somersetshire, Devonshire, Hampshire,Sussex, Surrey, Kent, Essex, and (particularly) by the Water-men on the Thames in their passage between Gravesend and London. In how many other parts of England, or in what parts out of England it might be seen; I have not yet heard. But this is a great breadth of ground, and too much for an ordinary Meteor in our lower region of the Air to be seen in at once: Yet (for ought I hear) it is agreed by all to have been seen at the same time, between seven and eight at night the same day, in the dusk of the Evening. Which argues, that either it was higher than they imagined, (though the light of it reached the Earth) or else, that it had a very swift motion. This made me then conjecture, (what in those Letters I signified,) that it might be some small Comet, whose linea trajectory passed very near our Earth; or upon it. And I therefore enquired from you, what news might be heard of it from beyond the Seas; or in parts of England further off, and what more particular account thereof you might have from the variety of your Correspondents. For I judged it not improbable, that it might, when further distant from us, appear in the form of a Comet. That Comet, which hath now appeared, in this and the last month, confirms me in the same opinion; which I conjecture may be the very same which passed by us in September last. Why it was not sooner seen, I cannot tell; save, what is the common fate of most Comets, that they are seldom observed till after their nearest distance from us: And, perhaps, it may have been so near the Sun (as to its visible place) as not to be much above our Horizon save in the day time. And for the like reason it may be, that in September last, when it passed by us, it was not more seen abroad in other parts; it might pass them in the day time, being but in the Twy-light with us; and, had it been one hour sooner, the day-light would have hindered us from seeing it. Which way its motion was when near us, I cannot conclude, so as to satisfy my Self. Formost that saw it, being suddenly surprized, took little more notice of it than that it suddenly appeared and was suddenly gone, but saw it so little time as scarce to mark which way. By the account I had from one in Northamptonshire.
(§ 65.) It should seem to have moved there towards the South-west. By the account I had from one who saw it in Hampshire (between Winchester and Southampton) it should seem to be towards the South-east; from others I have nothing of certainty, and therefore can conclude nothing. (Its motion might then seem to us the swiftest, if its proper motion were then one way; and the Earth's motion here, at the same time, contrary to it. And it is not impossible, that its dashing against the Earth might disturb its motion; as when Clouds, in their passage, meet with Mountains.) By this time I suppose it may be gotten so far from us that its apparent motion is very little. And so late it was before we heard of it here, and it is now so small, and so near the Sun, and the weather hath been so cloudy, that I (and some others who would willingly have seen it) have not had the hap to see it at all. My conjecture upon the whole, though perhaps but a conjecture, hath at least so much of probability in it, as to deserve some consideration: and may serve (if true) to give us some light into the nature of Comets; which perhaps will seldom have been found to come so near us, as this seems to have done. I add no more, but that I am

Yours, etc.

John Wallis,