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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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The sandstorm of the desert, or its milder counterpart, the dust storm of semiarid regions, is quite different from the dust whirl. The dust whirl is a whirl of rising air, while the sandstorm is a more or less straight blow of descending air. A very strong dust whirl, however, may become a sandstorm through the reaction sometimes occurring after a thundercloud has been formed high up. Rain descending from such a cloud is likely to evaporate before it can reach the ground, but its cooling effect on the air is such as to provide a heavy body of cool air which will descend and strongly blow up the sand and dust. If there is a general wind, such a descending body of air will come down at an angle, and will travel with a well-defined front - an intensely black wall rushing across the country. Such an advancing dust and sand cloud seen from the side has the outline of half a parabola.

Under such circumstances, the weather sharp's prediction for a Texas town may be "Sand tonight." It is said, however, that such storms are becoming less violent in the southwest as agriculture moves westward, but this is more likely the real-estate man's hope than a fact, for on windy days his "Fine farms for sale" may be identified from afar by the magnificent clouds of dust rising from them.

Sometimes a thunderstorm from which rain falls to the ground may send out a heavy dust-raising squall many miles beyond the limits to which rain extends. Usually such winds are cool, but when they blow over heated sand or dust their heat may be so great as to cause death by heat-stroke to the unprotected man. Such a hot sandstorm is the simoon, a dreaded local storm of tropical deserts in the Old World.

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