A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed July 12, 1926

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University

DIRTY RAINS

The recent occurrence of dust storms in the Mid-West and mud rains in Ohio the same day can hardly have been simply a coincidence. When after a dry spell a heavy squall precedes the downpour of rain characteristic of a thunderstorm there is commonly a great cloud of dust raised from streets and cultivated fields. Some of the dust picked up by the squall is likely to find its way into the storm and later to descend as dirt in rain, for as the squall rushes out it elevates and sends the air it enters, including some of its own front, back into the rain cloud.

Special types of black rain, occur at times near smoky cities, London, England, for example, or near an oil fire, as in California this spring, when black rain fell as much as 90 miles away to thenortheast.

More widespread dirt rains sometimes accompany general storms after a particularly strong wind in a dry sector has raised great quantities of dust and carried them toward the center where rain or snow was being formed. Dirty rains give us tangible evidence that air from the earth's surface is involved in the formation of rain.

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SCIENCE SERVICE,
21st and B Sts.,
Washington, D. C.