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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed July 15, 1930.

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THE DRY FOG OF 1783

Dust from volcanoes is supposed to have caused the remarkable dry fog, or dust haze, that prevailed over great areas of Europe, Asia, Africa and North America in the summer of 1783. There are many references in the literature of the period to the persistent character of the haze and the peculiar appearance of the sun.

Gilbert White, in his "Natural History of Selborne," says that in England the haze began on June 16 and lasted two months, "during which period the wind varied to every quarter without making any alteration in the air. The sun, at noon, looked as blank as a clouded moon, and shed a rust-colored ferruginous light on the ground and floors of rooms, but was particularly lurid and blood-colored at rising and setting. All the time the heat was so intense that butchers' meat could hardly be eaten the day after it was killed; and flies swarmed so in the lands and hedges that they rendered the horses half-frantic and riding irksome."

Cowper, in "The Task," alludes to

"Fires from beneath, and meteors from above--
Portentous, unexampled, unexplained."

the word "meteors" being here used in the old sense of atmospheric phenomena in general. The monks at the Great St. Bernard told De Saussure that the haze observed in the Alps was smoke.

The haze had in some places a peculiar smell and was irritating to the eyes

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