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'? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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DEATH VALLEY SANDSTORMS

The plains of India have their "devils," the Sudan has its "haboobs," but the sandstorms and "sand-augers" of Death Valley, California, are probably as striking as any of their congeners throughout the world. A sandstorm playing in this valley is a wonderful sight. The "augers" rise like slender stems, reaching thousands of feet aloft and terminating in a sort of bushy cloud. They travel hither and yon until they gradually fade from sight.

"But if strange from within," writes Spears in his "Sketches of Death Valley," "what shall be said of the sandstorm as seen from the top of one of the higher mountains that border the valley? The whole space between the ranges was filled with smoky billows, rugged and torn and tossed about, and rising up till all the foothills and half the heights themselves were covered. Sharp squalls plunged down the canyons and gulches, and there gathering the dusty forms in their arms went whirling away in gigantic waltzes. It is no wonder that the Arabs of the desert country, the Piutes, believe in witches and supernatural powers in the air.

"It is a marvelous spectacle when a sand-auger travels down the valley. Astonishingly slender in form, it rises, writhing and twisting, sometimes a mile in the air. With a faint puff of cloud at the top and a slight spread at the base, away it goes, sagging and swaying hither and thither, until somehow it all unexpectedly vanishes out of sight. I saw two such augers. Both were more than 2,000 feet high. Neither journeyed a mile, but when they faded away there was no sign of a falling cloud or a thickening of the dust in the air where they had been. They simply disappeared ghost-fashion as I was looking at them."

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