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September 11, 1930.

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed September 4, 1930

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SHOWERS OF WHAT-NOT

Long is the list of things that occasionally rain down from the sky, or are supposed to have done so because of their sudden appearance on the ground. In many cases, however, these things are identified as being something that they are not. Here is a partial enumeration:

"Blood." This is generally rain reddened by desert dust, which is often carried hundreds and even thousands of miles by the wind. In some cases it is a red fluid ejected by moths of certain species emerging simultaneously in large numbers from their cocoons. Some reputed showers of blood are due to the rapid multiplication in rain pools of algae and rotifers containing red coloring matter.

"Sulfur." This is pollen from trees; usually pines or other conifers. It is sometimes deposited in large amounts many miles from the place of origin. Thus, the town of Lund, Sweden, was once heavily showered with pollen blown from a pine forest 35 miles away.

"Ink." This is rain blackened with smoke or soot. So-called "milk" is rain mixed with chalky earth blown up by storms. The Biblical "manna" was a sugary substance formed by the hardening of a liquid ejected by certain scale insects/<sup>living</sup> on tamarisks. Balls of this substance are still found and eaten in the Sinai peninsula.

Fish and other aquatic creatures are sometimes drawn up by waterpouts and then dropped at more or less distant points. Small animals of other classes, as well as miscellaneous inanimate objects, are similarly lifted and "rained down" by tornadoes.

Mysterious showers that frequently wet the earth or pavement under trees in dry weather consist of honeydew ejected by aphids, scale insects or leafhoppers.

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21st and B Sts.,  
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