

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,  
Authority on Meteorology.

SOME QUEER SHOWERS

During the night of March 8-9, 1930, a singular yellowish brown substance was deposited from the atmosphere over an area of many square miles in the neighborhood of Southport, England. Under the microscope it was found to consist of semi-transparent particles of irregular shape, with adhering particles of soot. The former were identified as algae of a species that grows on rocks in mountainous districts. They are supposed to have been brought by the wind from the Peak district of Derbyshire, some 50 miles away, and to have become mixed with soot during their passage through the air.

On the morning of July 29, 1875, a quantity of hay fell from the sky near Monkstown, near Dublin, Ireland, over an area of more than a mile in diameter, the shower lasting five minutes. There was a dark cloud overhead and the hay was wet, but no rain was falling and the air was very calm.

A shower of gossamer (cobwebs) is described by Gilbert White in his "Natural History of Selborne," falling from nine in the morning without interruption to the close of the day. He says:

"These webs were not single filmy threads, floating in the air in all directions, but perfect flakes or rags, some near an inch broad and five or six long, which fell with a degree of velocity indicating that they were considerably heavier than the atmosphere. On every side, as the observer turned his eyes, he might behold a continual succession of fresh flakes falling into his sight and twinkling like stars, as they turned their sides toward the sun. How far this wonderful shower extended it would be difficult to say, but we know that it reached Bradley, Selborne and Alresford, three places which lie in a sort of triangle, the shortest of whose sides is about eight miles in extent."

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21st and B Sts.,  
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