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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed October 4, 1930.

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WHEN MIRAGE STOPPED A BATTLE

Mirage, which is very common over the hot plains of Mesopotamia, frequently interfered with military operations in that region during the world war. G. E. Hubbard, in his book "From the Gulf to Ararat," records the following episode of the fight between Fao and Basrah during the earlier stages of the conflict:

"Our men, after a particularly courageous attack across the open desert, which at the time was such a sea of mud that they had to advance at the walk, reached the Turkish trenches and put the Turks to flight. The enemy was now in the same predicament that the British had been in just before and provided a splendid target for our artillery. A gunboat was lying in the river and the men in the tops were watching the proceedings when they were surprised to see our guns suddenly stop firing, although the Turks were still within easy range. It transpired later that, to the eyes of the gunners on the desert level, the target disappeared into the mirage."

The British official history of the war mentions several more or less similar occurrences during the Mesopotamian campaign. In one case it is recorded that Turkish detachments took flight when a mirage greatly magnified the apparent size of the attacking force, while in another case Turkish prisoners stated that the attack in which they were captured had been a complete surprise owing to the fact that mirage concealed the advancing British troops.

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