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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

SMOKE FROM FOREST FIRES

The mud rains and daytime darkness that diversified the dull routine of everyday existence on April 13 in a portion of the province of Quebec, including the city of Quebec and the Saguenay River district, were apparently the result of smoke carried by westerly winds, some distance above the earth, from the great forest fires raging at that time in Wisconsin and the states farther west.

Forest fires are the most frequent cause of "dark days" and dirty rain in North America. That these things are relatively common in the northeastern United States and eastern Canada is explained by the fact that the great majority of barometric depressions, or lows, crossing the continent, pass, with their attendant indraft of surface air, down the St. Lawrence valley or not far therefrom on their way to the ocean, usually becoming intensified and sharply defined in that region.

The smoke from a fire anywhere on the periphery of a low is likely to be drawn toward the center of the depression along more or less converging lines and at the same time rises to a considerable altitude. Eddies in the circulation of the low will result in a dense accumulation of the smoke in places, and this may happen above the level of the lower clouds, which thus mask the cause of the resulting darkness. If showers occur during one of these occurrences, a large amount of soot is brought down. In a more superstitious age such an event was sometimes supposed to be a shower of "ink."

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