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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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EX-MIRACLES OF THE AIR

In the middle ages, when reddish dust from the Sahara Desert was transported by the upper winds across the Mediterranean and later deposited in southern Europe mixed with rain, people supposed that blood had fallen from the sky. When the same thing happens nowadays we can readily trace the course of the dust through the atmosphere with the aid of weather maps and determine its true character with the aid of a microscope. The event is no longer a mystery; much less a miracle.

Showers of material once mistaken for sulphur turn out to consist of pollen from pine trees. Snow is red when a certain well-known microscopic organism multiplies in it. Small fish are sometimes whirled aloft by a waterspout or a tornado. If they did not subsequently fall, we should have a real miracle; but they do.

Not all the phenomena of the air that were once deemed prodigious have been satisfactorily explained. Ball lightning, for example, is still a puzzle to science. But nobody with a modicum of common sense and the advantages of a modern education doubts that natural and reasonable explanations of these things will eventually be found.

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