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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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A HIGH-AIR DUST STORM

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Airplane pilots flying out of Dallas, Texas, often run into dust storms, but the one that prevailed over northern and central Texas March 24-25 of this year was of quite exceptional character, according to M.C. Harrison of the Weather Bureau station at the Dallas airport, who describes it in the Monthly Weather Review. Usually during a dust storm visibility is poor on the ground as well as aloft, but in this case the lower air remained clear while the dust was so thick at ordinary flying levels that some pilots were forced to turn back and others to seek clear air above the dust cloud..

"Pilots," says Mr. Harrison, "reported the dust as being very fine and white in color, while ordinary dust storms over this area are composed of a heavy dust or sand of a yellowish or reddish-brown color. One pilot stated that the dust gave him a choking sensation and at times he was unable to read his instruments; another, en route from Fort Worth to Dallas, flying at an altitude of 600 feet, had to search diligently for the Dallas airport, where the surface visibility was 10 miles. Other pilots were experiencing the same conditions elsewhere over north and central Texas, all groping about more or less blindly, flying by instruments in a sea of white dust, with the stars dimly shining above and the ground stations reporting visibilities which seemed to belie the conditions aloft. One veteran pilot, who had previously made his customary call at the local Weather Bureau office before departing on his flight, returned within a few hours and asked what was the matter with the weather. He was plainly baffled by this mysterious element, which he had failed to recognize as dust, owing to its white color."

The dust is believed to have been blown up from dry "alkali lakes" both west and east of the Rockies.

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