

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt  
but intended for use  
June 12, 1934

† WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed June 5, 1934

MUD-RAIN AND FRUIT

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,  
Authority on Meteorology.

Dust blown up from the Sahara Desert is not infrequently washed down by rain in southern Europe. The showers of mud thus produced were once regarded as prodigies and were often supposed to be showers of blood, on account of the reddish hue of the desert soil. Nowadays these showers do not arouse superstitious terror -- but they are still unwelcome because they defile and damage things on which they fall. A case in point has just been reported from Sicily.

In the middle of last April a rain of mud of Saharan origin fell in the important citrus-growing region about Palermo. "The results," says a consular report, "was that in the course of an hour practically all first-class fruit had been changed to third quality, because it was next to impossible to get the dirt out of the pores. Some exporters are endeavoring to clean off the fruit with dry rubber sponges, for keeping quality would be affected through the use of water." It is expected that the dirt will grow into some of the unripened fruit and thus have lasting detrimental effects.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

-----  
SCIENCE SERVICE  
21st and Constitution Ave.  
Washington, D.C.