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TRAVELS.

ON THE HOT WIND OF AFRICA CALLED THE CAMSIN.

“On my route from Suez,” says Ruppel, “I had an opportunity of observing a meteorological phenomenon of a very curious nature, which possibly may lead to some interesting results. In the year 1822, May the 21st, being seven hours distant from Cairo, and in the deserts, we were overtaken by one of these violent winds from the south, about which many travellers have told us such wonderful and incredible stories. During the night there had been a light breeze from the north-east; but a short time after sun-rise it began to blow fresh from the S. S. E., and the wind gradually increased till it blew a violent storm. Clouds of dust filled the whole atmosphere, so that it was impossible to distinguish any object clearly as far off as fifty paces; even a camel could not be recognised at this distance. In the mean time, we heard all along the surface of the ground a kind of rustling or crackling sounds, which I supposed to proceed from the rolling sand that was dashed about with such fury by the wind. Those parts of our bodies which were turned towards the wind were heated to an unusual degree, and we experienced a strange sensation of smarting which might be compared with the pricking of fine needles. This was also accompanied by a peculiar kind of sound. At first I thought this smarting was occasioned by the small particles of sand being driven by the storm against the part of the body that were exposed. In order to judge of the size of the particles, I attempted to catch some in a cap; but how great was my surprise when I found I could not succeed in securing a single specimen of these supposed little particles. This led me to conceive that the smarting sensation did not proceed from the stones or the sand striking the body but that it must be the effect of some invisible force, which I could only compare with a current of electric fluid. After forming

this conjecture, I began to pay closer attention to the phenomena which surrounded me. I observed that the hair of all our party bristled up a little, and that the sensation of pricking was felt most in the extremities and joints just as if a man were electrified on an insulated stool. To convince myself that the painful sensation did not proceed from small particles of stones or sand, I held a piece of paper stretched up against the wind, so that even the finest portion of dust must have been detected either by the eye or the ear; yet nothing of the kind took place. The surface of the paper remained perfectly unmoved and free from noise. I stretched my arms out, and immediately the pricking pain in the ends of my fingers increased. This led me to conjecture that the violent wind, called in Egypt Camsin, is either attended by strong electrical phenomena, or else the electricity is caused by the motion of the dry sand of the desert. Hence we may account for the heavy masses of dust, formed of particles of sand, which, for several days, darken the cloudless sky. Perhaps we may also go so far as to conjecture that the Camsin may have destroyed caravans by its electrical properties, since some travellers assure us that caravans have occasionally perished in the desert; though I must remark that in all the regions I have travelled through I never could hear the least account of such an occurrence. At all events, to suppose that such calamities have been caused by the sand overwhelming the caravans, is the most judicious idea that can be imagined.

“The Camsin generally blows in Egypt, for two or three days successively, but with much less violence during the night than the day. It only occurs in the period between the middle of April and the beginning of June, and hence its Arabic name, which signifies, ‘the wind of fifty days.’”

CALABRIA—TREMENDOUS EARTHQUAKES
Earthquakes have caused many melancholy changes in Calabria—and every thing bears