to have been easier to enter King's Bay than fjords farther south, but until late in July the pack on the west coast of Spitsbergen more or less met the pack of the Greenland Sea, and on this account it was not easy to reach the open water north of Prince Charles Foreland. Storfjord seems to have been clear of ice in September, and possibly in August. Reports from the Kara Sea are scanty, but the ice conditions there seem to have been bad. No vessel attempted to make the passage in 1917.

RAINFALL IN MYSORE DURING 1916.

[*Abstract reprinted from* Nature, London, May 30, 1918.]

The report on rainfall registration in 1916 in Mysore includes maps showing the actual rainfall for the year 1916, and the average annual rainfall for the period 1870–1915. On June 25, 1916, more than 16 inches of rain fell during 24 hours at Nagar in the Shimoga district; the total rainfall at that place during June was 38 inches, nearly 50 per cent above the normal, although the total fall for 1916 was practically normal at 104 inches. The rains during October and November, 1916, were above the normal on account of an exceptional number of cyclonic storms, which originated in the Bay of Bengal. The rains were on the whole but half of the normal during the cool-weather period, January and February, and also during March, the beginning of the hot-weather period. The deficiency was more than made up during the rest of the year, especially in the northeast monsoon period from October to the end of the year. The tables occupy 58 pages and give the details for the 224 stations under various heads; a notable table is that which gives the distribution in the river valleys.

CLIMATIC NOTES ON PALESTINE, MESOPOTAMIA, AND SINAITIC PENINSULA.

[*Abstract reprinted from* Nature, London, May 30, 1918.]

Weather controls over the fighting in Mesopotamia, in Palestine, and near the Suez Canal is the subject of an article by Prof. Robert DeC. Ward, of Harvard University, in the *Scientific Monthly* (New York, April). Mesopotamia is characterized as "a country of aridity, of intense summer heat, of deserts and steppes, of relatively mild winter, and of cold-season rains." The mean temperature at Bagdad for January is given as 48.7° F., and for August 92.5°; the mean maximum is 119.5°, and the mean minimum 21.9°, which are the mean extremes in the year. Winter frosts occur and snow falls locally. The total mean annual rainfall is only about 8 or 9 inches, and in some years only about half as much. The rain falls between October and May, and the remaining months are practically rainless. February or March is the rainiest month, and the floods come in March and April. The climate of Palestine has been discussed by Exner and Hann, and the article quotes various data. The coast stations have a mean midwinter temperature of between 50° and 55° F., and mean midsummer temperature of 75° to 80°. The hill stations, at elevations of about 1,500 to 3,000 feet, have mean midwinter temperatures from 45° to 50°, and midsummer means from 70° to a little under 80°. In the Jordan Valley the temperatures range from 55° in midwinter to 85° or 90° in midsummer. Jerusalem averages 3.6 days a year with temperature below freezing, and the highest summer temperatures reach 100° to 105°. The annual rainfall at the coast stations ranges from 15 inches to 35 inches, and at Jerusalem it is 26 inches, no rain falling in June, July, and August. The rainy season extends from the middle of October to early in May. In the district of the Suez Canal the complete absence of rain for months together and the exceptionally small total annual fall in places immensely augments the difficulty of transport. Prof. Ward says that winter is the best season for a campaign, both on account of the better water supply and of the lower temperature.

CLOUDS AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

By J. S. D[INES].

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The smoke and haze which commonly obscure the sky in large cities, and the otherwise restricted outlook, allow the town dweller inadequate opportunities for the study of clouds, but to those who live in the country, and to the observant worker in a town when spending a holiday away from his native place, the ever varying cloud effects form quite as attractive an object of interest as the countryside itself. This being so, it might be thought that in landscape scenes artists would devote at least as much attention to the sky and the clouds above as to the hills and valleys below. That this is not the case will be painfully evident to the meteorologist, or even the ordinary intelligent observer of Nature, who visits the Royal Academy and makes but a cursory examination of its walls. Let it be granted at once that there are notable exceptions, but the conclusion can not be resisted that to many artists the clouds form a very subsidiary part of the picture, and are put in to produce what to the artist's eye is presumably a pleasing effect, but without the least regard to natural truth.

The majority of the clouds appearing in this year's exhibition belong to the strato-cumulus or fracto-cumulus type, though, as would be expected, the hard convection cumulus, the most striking of all clouds, is not neglected. Perhaps the most remarkable feature is the almost entire neglect of high clouds of the cirrus and cirro-cumulus types, which produce some of the most beautiful effects in Nature. Cirro-cumulus is shown in one or two sunset pictures, and a not entirely successful attempt has been made in one case to depict the sun shining feebly through an alto-stratus veil; but true cirrus is almost entirely unrepresented. In "The Passing of Autumn" (91) the meteorologist may think that he detects a fragment of false cirrus showing up against a rather fine cumulus, but the remaining clouds in this picture spoil what might otherwise have been a successful cloud study. True cumulus should surely be a cloud type which would lend itself to the artist's needs without any departure from the forms provided by Nature, but in many cases these clouds are given the most grotesque and unreal shapes, which completely spoil the picture to the observant lover of the country.

On the other hand, some of the most successful clouds in the exhibition appear in B. W. Leader's "The Weald of Surrey" (51) and A. R. Quinton's "The Road over the Downs, Sussex" (695), where clouds of the cumulus and strato-cumulus types are both true to Nature and blend admirably with the peaceful scenes depicted. Less peaceful, but with an equally admirable effect, is A. W. Parsons's "Rolling from the West" (196), where similar