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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THUNDERSTORM GUSHES

It has often been noticed that heavy gushes of rain follow unusually loud claps of thunder. Some have concluded that explosions or loud noises can somehow shake the cloud particles together and produce raindrops and have therefore advocated the use of explosives to break droughts. As a matter of fact, however, the heavy precipitation and heavy thunder are both indications of unusually violent overturning in the thundercloud aloft. A local excess of raindrops broken up by air currents causes a local excess of electrification. As Dr. W. J. Humphreys points out, mass, sound, and light then all start for the earth at once from about the same level. Light travels so fast that the lightning is seen almost instantaneously, next comes the thunder at about 1100 feet per second, and finally the rain which rarely falls faster than 30 feet per second. The lightning, apparently preceding the thunder, is correctly interpreted as its cause, but the rain is, in a sense, the cause of both, although it comes last.

(Tomorrow: Corn and Temperature)

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