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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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RAIN BY NIGHT

Do you prefer your rain by night or by day? Would you rather carry an umbrella or have to get up and shut the windows by the light of the lightning? A study has been made of warm season rainfall, from April to September inclusive, to see whether night or day is the wetter. In the summertime, most of the rain occurs in convectional showers, such as thundershowers, rather than in general storms. As the sun's heating starts these showers, they naturally develop by day, though they may extend into the night. In hot, moist regions such as the Gulf States, afternoon showers are frequent, and only 25 to 40 per cent. of the rain occurs at night. In the eastern states generally slightly less than half the rain falls during the night. This is true also in the dry Rocky Mountain region, where the little rain that occurs is somewhat more likely to come by day, usually from 4 to 6, as the result of daytime up-valley winds. On the arid Great Plains, however, over 65 per cent of the rain may come by night. In the daytime the air is so hot and dry that much of the rain is likely to evaporate on the way down, if it starts to fall. The weakening of upward currents that may sustain much of the rain till sunset, and likewise the nocturnal cooling of the upper portion of a layer of moist air, may also help form the nocturnal excess.

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(Tomorrow: Rising Mists)

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