

No. 769

A Science Service Feature

Oct. 28

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SALT AIR

People often go to the seashore and enjoy the "salt air". In a heavy wind salt spray from the ocean is blown up into the air and evaporated. The presence of this sea salt in the air can be shown by measurements of the amount of salt brought down in rain. Rainfall contains on the average about eight or nine parts per million of sodium chloride, or common salt. But near the shore, 200 parts are not unusual during a gale. Observations in the eastern United States show a rapid decrease of chlorine in rain water inland. On the Pacific coast the contrast in a short distance appears to be even greater, for sea salts are notably lacking in the interior valleys of Washington.

Besides common salt, sea water contains very valuable iodine salts, which are absent inland. It is now known that deficiency of iodine in food and drinking water tends to produce goiter. Goiter is rare on the seacoast because the soil receives iodine from the sea, carried a short distance inland by wind and rain. People are safe from goiter also wherever sea food is eaten freely, though the soil and water supply may lack iodine. In regions such as our Middle West and interior mountain districts where fish are obtained from the Great Lakes rather than from the oceans and where virtually no sea salt enters the air and rain, goiter is common and special preparations of iodine are required.

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(Tomorrow: How The Atmosphere Is Dried)

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