A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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OUR CLIMATES

In his recent book on the "Climates of the United States," Prof. R.DeC. Ward, of Harvard, distinguishes five major climatic provinces in the United States. In the large Eastern Province, we must admit, almost any kind of weather may be expected at any time of year. Rainfall is everywhere adequate, storms are frequent. The Gulf Province is still wetter and warmer, though subject to killing frosts. The Plains Province is set off by its uncertain rainfall, most of which comes when most needed for crops, that is, in spring and early summer. Generally quiet, dry weather, with great ranges of temperature, is characteristic of the Plateau Province. Finally, the Pacific Province is noted for its usual steadiness of weather and for its marked winter rainy season and summer dry season.

The Pacific Coast province differs from all the others in that the greatest contrast between north and south is in the matter of rainfall rather than temperature. Move from northern Washington along the shore to southern California and the mean January temperature rises only from 40 degrees Fahrenheit to 50. On the Atlantic coast, however, a trip from northern Maine to southern Florida is a jump from 10 degrees Fahrenheit to 65. The Pacific coast, on the other hand, affords the greatest contrast in rainfall, the winter precipitation varying from 40 inches in the north to six in the south; or, stating the contrast in another way, the transition is from 180 rainy days per year in Washington to 30 in southern California. The Atlantic coast has 130 in the north and 120 in the south.

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