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! WHY THE WEATHER !

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HOW CLOUDS GOT THEIR NAMES

Strangely enough, the astronomers of the ancient world, Arabs and Greeks, who named so many of the stars failed, so far as we know, to make any attempt to name or classify clouds. C. Fitzhugh Talman, librarian of the U. S. Weather Bureau, says, however, that there seems to be some basis for the belief that the ancient Hindus used an elaborate classification, comprising over 100 types.

In 1801, the French scientist, Lamarck, proposed a descriptive classification with terms such as "clouds in flocks", "clouds in bars", and "cloud sweepings", which, however, received little attention. Two years later, Luke Howard, an Englishman, proposed the system which is still the basis of the present International Classification. He employed Latin names for his three fundamental forms - "Cirrus", feathery clouds, "cumulus", clouds with rounded tops, and "stratus", sheet clouds. In addition to these, he employed the term "nimbus" for rain cloud, and compounds such as "cirro-cumulus" for intermediate types. Howard's classification was soon adopted, and it is said Goethe was so pleased with it that he wrote about it and about each type of cloud.

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