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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE GEOGRAPHY OF THUNDERSTORMS

Nature is very partial in her distribution of thunderstorms over the globe. In general, the torrid zone gets a great many more than the temperate zones, and the land a great many more than the oceans. Beside these broad contrasts there are striking differences within relatively small areas.

Thunderstorms are not unknown in the Arctic. As a rough average it may be stated that at places anywhere north of the Arctic Circle one thunderstorm may be expected in ten years. Apparently thunder has never been reported from the Antarctic continent, though it is sometimes heard on the subantarctic islands, such as South Georgia and the South Orkneys.

There are some extensive regions of the temperate zones in which thunderstorms are quite scarce. Thus the average for the Sahara and the Arabian Desert is less than four a year, and about the same average or less prevails along the whole western coast of North America from Alaska as far south as San Diego. San Francisco has an average of only two a year and San Jose, Calif., only one a year. At the other extreme, for the United States, Tampa, Florida, has an average of 94 a year.

Equatorial Africa, Java, southern Mexico, and Panama are lands that have all the way from 100 to 200 thunderstorms a year. The world record appears to be held by Baliburg, in the former German colony of Kamerun, with an average of 212 a year.

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