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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SOME RESULTS OF DROUGHT

We usually think of a drought as affecting chiefly the food supply of mankind by causing the failure of crops and pasturage, but it may have a great variety of other serious consequences. Thus during a recent exceptionally dry year in California the immense hydroelectric plants of that state were obliged to use steam to supplement a deficient water-supply, and the same thing has happened elsewhere. Moreover, steam engines themselves require a great deal of water for their boilers and condensers. Thus a severe drought in an industrial region often leads to the shutting down of factories or the restriction of their operations.

Many rivers run low in time of drought to the extent of tying up navigation. A curious effect of the California drought above mentioned was observed along the Sacramento River. On account of the diminished flow of the river salt water spread far upstream. Marine borers thrive in this water and caused extensive damage to piling.

The intimate dependence of forest fires upon the antecedent occurrence of dry spells has been brought out conspicuously in the many studies of "fire weather" made in recent years.

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