

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE AMOUNT OF RAINY WEATHER

If you want to know the average amount of rain that falls at a certain time of the year in some part of the world, this information is usually easy to obtain, since no other element of climate has been so extensively measured and recorded as rainfall. There is also a vast fund of information concerning the average number of days on which rain falls in each month of the year at places throughout the world. On the other hand, the average duration of rainfall in hours has been published for very few places, though there are abundant statistics concerning the average hours of sunshine. Climatologists seem to have adopted as their motto the one so often seen on sun-dials: "Horas non numero nisi serenas" ("I count only the sunny hours").

Roscoe Nunn, in charge of the U.S. Weather Bureau station at Baltimore, writes on this subject: "Is it not just as interesting and important to know how much of the time rain falls as to know how much of the time the sun shines brightly? Is it not true that falling rain or snow or sleet is of more concern to outdoor operations in general than is the presence or absence of bright sunshine? How does the number of rainfall hours at Baltimore compare with those at Boston, New York, New Orleans, Denver, Chicago, Cleveland or any other station?"

Mr. Nunn has set a good example in working up statistics of rainfall hours for Baltimore, from which it appears that, ignoring mere "traces" of precipitation, the average number of hours of rain or snow for each month in that city is as follows: January, 64 hours; February, 59; March, 63; April, 57; May, 44; June, 29; July, 32; August, 40; September, 31; October, 34; November, 42; December, 60; for the year, 557.

It is rather surprising to find the frequency of "falling weather" so much greater in winter than in summer.

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