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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed March 15, 1930

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,  
Authority on Meteorology.

THE AVIATOR'S WEATHER OBSTACLES

Aviators have achieved a large measure of independence of wind and weather since the days when, during his earliest flights in France, Wilbur Wright would not take the air unless the smoke from his cigarette rose in a straight line. Some atmospheric obstacles and dangers still remain, however. An official of an air transport company in the eastern United States publishes the following enumeration of the ways in which weather still interrupts flying schedules:

"1. By cutting down visibility so that planes may not land and take off safely at airports. The landing speeds of nearly all commercial airplanes are in the neighborhood of 60 miles an hour, so that visibility is a very necessary thing whenever contact is to be made with the ground.

"2. By coating planes with ice, which is apt to set up terrific vibration on the struts and wires, and may even cause structural failure, which would end the flight; or, by overloading the plane with ice and at the same time decreasing its forward speed by increasing its head resistance, so that the plane will actually fall out of the air if the pilot has not been wise enough to land before this moment arrives.

"3. By giving head winds, which subtract from the speed of the plane to such an extent that flying is no longer faster than other means of transportation.

"4. By carrying the plane off its course with cross winds when flying through clouds out of sight of landmarks."

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