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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE FREQUENCY OF DROUGHTS

No part of the United States or Canada is entirely exempt from drought, and no agricultural season passes in which it does not afflict some parts of these countries. There has never, however, been a drought over the whole or the greater part of temperate North America at one time.

Among the numerous elaborate climatic charts in the great "Agricultural Atlas of the United States," issued by the United States Department of Agriculture, there are two showing, for all districts, the frequency of dry spells of specified intensities during the 20-year period 1896-1914. Whoever consults these charts is likely to be astonished at the high incidence of drought in the humid regions of the United States east of the Mississippi.

Southern New England, for example, with a normal annual rainfall of about 40 inches -- double the minimum amount required for ordinary crops -- experienced every two years on an average, during the period mentioned, a dry spell of at least 30 days' duration, during which no day brought as much as a quarter of an inch of rain.

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