A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

BREAKING A DROUGHT

In his book "Rain Making and Other Weather Vagaries," Dr. W. J. Humphreys explains the ways by which nature makes a drought and the corresponding ways by which man, if he had the power to do so, might bring one of these visitations to an end. He should need, according to circumstances, (1) to put into the air in the course of a few hours, at the most, water vapor far in excess of the amount required for the desired rain (since much vapor would be dissipated by winds); (2) to change the direction, for half a day or longer, of the prevailing winds; (3) to force back a displaced or overgrown semipermanent area of high barometric pressure; (4) to dislodge a stalled anticyclone; or (5) to cause an adequate shift of the storm tracks.

"But," Dr. Humphreys adds, "we cannot, in short order, get into the air where we want it the millions of tons of water vapor essential to adequate rain after a drought over even so small a territory as that covered by a single city. Neither can we, by any means whatever, put forth the enormous power that would be necessary within a week to change the direction of a prevailing wind, or to dislodge the thousands of billions of tons of air in a stagnant, drought-producing anticyclone." Nor is it possible for humanity to perform the other miracles suggested.

Unfortunately the meteorologists and physicists who see clearly the utter futility of all the suggested schemes for making rain have not yet solved the problem of getting the elementary facts on the subject into the head of the average man.

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