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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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"FINE DAY"

Why do conversations so often begin with comments on the weather? Why does Brown, meeting Jones on the street, remark that it is a fine day -- or some other kind of day? Certainly not because weather is generally uppermost in the thoughts of modern civilized men.

Perhaps the custom has been handed down from the time when the ancestors of civilized men were not civilized; when their occupations were all conducted out-of-doors; and when their prosperity was as much at the mercy of the elements as is that of some backward races today. In India, as the period of the monsoon rains approaches, anxiety about the timely arrival and abundance of these showers eclipses all other thoughts in the mind of the peasant, because a severe drought at this season means dire distress.

When our forefathers lived by hunting, fishing and crude systems of grazing and agriculture, they were, no doubt, equally solicitous about atmospheric conditions that directly affected their food supply. In those days comments on the weather were by no means empty formulas. Men rejoiced together that the day was fine, because it was a circumstance upon which their dinner depended, and the prehistoric equivalent of "What beastly weather!" was probably accompanied by a significant tightening of the belt.

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