

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed February 14, 1931

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

CHICAGO'S RAIN GOD

Chicago has a rain god. It is one of four, found on the island of Hivaoa, one of the Marquesas, by Dr. Ralph Linton, assistant curator of oceanic and Malayan ethnology at the Field Museum of Natural History. These wooden idols were believed by the natives to exercise control over the rains, and, says Dr. Linton, as soon as they were brought to his camp a tremendous downpour set in, which lasted steadily for twenty-four hours, threatening to wash the camp and the native village into the sea. In order to quiet the fears of the islanders the explorer made a long speech to the idols. He says:

"This speech placated the excited tribesmen and seemingly the idols also, for, sure enough, half an hour later the rain stopped. The native faith had been sustained by a coincidence. There was another coincidence. I managed to get the idols loaded on a schooner and sailed away. Three of them are now in a museum at Honolulu. The fourth arrived in Chicago at a time when the city and all the Middle West had had a drought for weeks. The day the god was uncrated at the Field Museum rainstorms started, lasting several days."

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21st and B Sts.
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