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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE ETESIANS

The isle of Tenedos lies in the Aegean Sea off the entrance to the Dardanelles. Visit this spot in the late summer and you are likely to find a hundred sailing craft waiting at anchor for an opportunity to pass into the strait, the obstacle to their passage being persistent northerly winds.

So it is today, and so it was more than a score of centuries ago, when these winds - the etesians - reputed to blow annually for forty days from the heliacal rising of the Dog Star, played a not unimportant part in the commercial and political affairs of Greece by dictating one-way traffic on the neighboring seas.

The ancient Greeks, as far back as Alexander's time, knew that a summer breeze, which they called Hippalos, and which we now call the southwest monsoon, was of marvelous aid in voyages across the Arabian Sea to India. They little suspected, however, that this breeze and the etesians of their own coasts form parts of one continuous stream of air, and it would have been worse than "all Greek" to Aristotle himself to tell him that this stream belongs to the circulation of a cyclonic depression, central in summer over the Iranian plateau.

Neither had the ancients any inkling of the fact that the etesians merge to the southwestward into another great air stream, mightier than the monsoon, that extends far

"beyond the sunset and the baths  
Of all the western stars"

toward lands unknown to Strabo. This wind stream of the northeast trades was unknown to Europe until the days of Columbus.

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