

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed February 7, 1933

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A WEATHER OBSERVATORY IN MID-SAHARA

The network of weather stations reporting their observations regularly by radio is spreading apace over the globe. For some years it has included the most northerly and most southerly permanently inhabited spots on earth. Five stations in Central Asia were added to the radio weather map as a result of Dr. Sven Hedin's recent journey in that quarter. A more recent addition to the list is a village on the southern border of the Ahaggar plateau, upwards of nine hundred miles south of the Mediterranean shore, in the heart of the Sahara. On some maps it is called Tamanrasset and on others Tamanghasset.

A few years ago neither the village nor its name was of the slightest interest to anybody in the civilized world except a few geographers. Nobody but semi-savage Tuaregs lived there, and if the place had been wiped out in a raid by neighboring tribesmen the news might have taken months to trickle out of the desert. Times have changed. The name Tamanrasset is now "on the air" every day in radio broadcasts reporting the state of the weather at this place. Readings of the barometer, thermometer and other instruments at Tamanrasset are promptly entered on charts drawn a thousand miles away and contribute their mite to the making of correct weather forecasts for northern Africa and the waters adjacent. The instruments are installed in a first-rate observatory opened last year by the governor-general of Algeria, who traveled to this spot, once almost inaccessible to Europeans, by automobile.

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