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March 3, 1933

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed February 24, 1933

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CLIMATE AND TRADE

"Climate," says A. Austin Miller, in his recent treatise on climatology, "limits the choice of crops and therefore the local production of food; and climate determines the site for the cultivation of those other foodstuffs and raw materials of industry which modern life demands; this climatic control of production and requirements is one of the bases of the world's trade. Furthermore climates, in general, change from north to south, and the products of different climates move, therefore, chiefly along meridional routes, although much deflected by economic factors; climate therefore controls the direction as well as the existence of trade routes. The great wind belts, too, are determinants of ocean routes, for steam power has diminished but not removed the obstacle of a head wind and current, and the same clockwise swirl of air and water in the North Atlantic which led Columbus to America on the trades and back on the westerlies still aids much of the steam shipping in these waters; round the world with the 'Roaring Forties' is almost as universal for the steamship today as it was for the 'windjammers' of fifty and a hundred years ago. The development of air lines is insisting again on the importance of air currents, and a dependence even greater than that of the sailing ship is forced on the airplane or airship."

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