

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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Authority on Meteorology.

RAINFALL GEOGRAPHY

It is a well known fact that rainfall is strikingly uneven in its distribution over the globe. This is well brought out in figures lately compiled by C. E. P. Brooks and Theresa M. Hunt, in England, showing the average annual rainfall of each 5-degree latitude zone of the earth's surface. The writers say of these data:

"For most of the land areas the figures are reasonably trustworthy, being derived from good rainfall charts, while much of the area for which satisfactory charts are not available is desert and may be assumed to have a rainfall below 10 inches. For the oceans the charts are far less reliable, and in places are not far removed from guess-work.

"The figures for the land bring out some interesting points, notably the extremely large proportion of the land between 30° and 20°N. which has a rainfall below ten inches and the general heaviness of the rainfall in the equatorial region between 10°N. and 10°S. The storm belt between 50° and 60°N. has a generally moderate rainfall, while between 60° and 70°N. 89 per cent. of the area receives less than 20 inches a year. South of 20°S. the percentage areas with low rainfalls again increase, but beyond 40°S. the land areas are small and the 44 per cent. below ten inches in 40-50°S. lies almost entirely in Patagonia. The data for the oceans are less reliable but serve to bring out the general moderateness of the amounts, except near the equator.

"The figures for the land areas as a whole show that more than a quarter of the whole land surface has a rainfall below ten inches, and more than one-half has a rainfall below 20 inches, while only one-thirtieth exceeds 100 inches. On the other hand less than one-quarter of the sea surface receives less than 20 inches, and as much as one-fourteenth exceeds 100 inches, though the latter figure especially is very doubtful. The average annual depths of rain over the land and sea have been computed as 25.9 inches and 43.6 inches respectively."

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