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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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A GOOD AND BAD WIND

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

The winter months bring to the shores of the Gulf of Guinea and their hinterland, in West Africa, that famous wind the harmattan. It blows toward the coast from the Sahara; hence its extreme heat and dryness, which would, however, be even more intense on the coast if the wind did not cross a considerable tract of rank vegetation before arriving there. The harmattan has both good and bad qualities, as noted in the following description by Alexander Knox:

"It is a dry parching breeze, bringing with it a profusion of impalpable dust, sufficient to cover the furniture in the houses, entering through every crevice, even coating papers on one's desk, while, by its extreme dryness, it curls up corners of books, and, strangely enough, sometimes causes glasses to crack and fall to pieces as they stand upon the table. The occurrence of this wind is eagerly looked forward to and welcomed. So long as it lasts, agues disappear, constitutions are for the time being renovated, and among the older residents it has become known as 'the doctor.' Among the newly arrived, however, the effects are less favorable, causing heat and dryness of the surface of the body and, in some instances, inflamed eyes and attacks of fever, though of a milder nature than those of the rainy season."

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