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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE ALL-IMPORTANT MONSOON

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

Nowhere else in the world does a wind exercise such far-reaching effects upon human welfare as does India's southwest monsoon, which gives that country its rainy season from June to December. It is so much more important than the dry northeast monsoon, prevailing the rest of the year, that it is commonly referred to as "the monsoon," as if there were no other. Says E.M. Chapman, of the U.S. Department of Commerce:

"The monsoon is to India what the annual overflow of the Nile is to Egypt. If it is favorable, that is, if the rainfall is plentiful and widely distributed, and not too precipitate, a year of plenty is assured. If it fails, a business depression is sure to follow, as crops will be short, and the large agricultural element, which it is estimated makes up from 80 to 90 per cent. of the total population, restricts its purchases to bare necessities. In days gone by a failure of the monsoon meant famines, in which thousands and even millions died from hunger and pestilence. Such disasters could hardly happen in modern India, as the country's transportation facilities and other agencies are too well organized to cope with such emergencies, but the effect of an unfavorable monsoon is still extremely severe.

"Every walk of Indian life is vitally affected by the monsoon. Every individual, whether farmer, banker, manufacturer, foreign trader, merchant, bazaar dealer, or laborer, watches eagerly for the coming of the monsoon and discusses its progress with the greatest interest. The whole business community remains in a state of uncertainty until the success or failure of the rains is established."

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