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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
Secretary, American Meteorological Society
Discusses:

DROUGHT AND NATURE'S WATER SUPPLY

In a period of drought the earth may become dry to such a depth that only copious, long continued rains can drench the soil down through the arid stratum which lies between the surface layer and the water-retaining floor below. Occasional showers, even though they give a heavy rainfall, cannot do it. In ordinary seasons this subterranean reservoir in a gravel stratum lies below dampened soil. The surface layer may become dry, but not so deep that the water of ordinary rainstorms does not penetrate it to the existing moisture, and seepage downward is renewed and quickened. Therefore, the wells and such springs as are fed from the upper levels of the underground storage remain full.

In a drought however, the subterranean reservoir, no longer replenished from the surface gets lower and lower, and wells and springs which depend upon it give out in turn, according to their depths. They do not benefit from rains until the intermediate dry stratum has been penetrated and the seepage stream again is flowing. Most of the cold "boiling" springs, however, continue to flow, with practically unabated vigor, even in a severe drought, for they are fed from water stored so deep in the ground that it would be last to give out.

(Tomorrow: Travels of Smoke)

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