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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SEQUENCES OF WINTERS

The sequence of seasons has long been known to be not a chance one, for weather types tend to persist rather than to change. European and American investigators seem to have established the fact that a season appreciably above or below normal in temperature is likely to be followed by one to three or more seasons having temperature departures in the same direction.

From year to year the character of the sequence is less clear. Examination of 50 to over 100 years' record at several places in the northeastern United States, e.g. Chicago, Cincinnati, Washington, New York, New Haven, and New Bedford, seems to show that alternations between warm and cold winters, when they occur, are mainly what would be expected from chance combinations, although a unique series of 12 unbroken alternations of warm, cold, warm, cold, etc. winters in the 1870s and '80s seems to indicate some sort of systematic relationship. In 1916-1922 a very similar series of alternations seemed to be starting, but, as is usual with the duration of periodic weather relationships, this was hardly discovered before it stopped. The fact that last winter, December to February, was mild over most of the western two-thirds of the continent, and about average in temperature in the East, therefore appears to have no significance with respect to our coming winter.

(Tomorrow: Indian Summer)

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