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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks  
of Clark University

FREQUENCY OF COLD WEATHER

The striking contrast between the winters of our northern and southern states is brought out by some recent statistics on the frequency of freezing and zero weather in different parts of the United States. Freezing temperatures have been recorded at all mainland stations of the Weather Bureau but are infrequent along the immediate Pacific and Gulf Coasts. In these regions the temperature falls to 32 degrees Fahrenheit usually on less than 5 days during the winter. Compare this with the average of 105 days of freezing weather per year at Boston, 95 at New York City, and 111 at Chicago! In general freezing weather occurs on more than 100 days north of southern Pennsylvania, the Ohio River and the southern parts of Missouri and Kansas, as well as throughout the mountain and plateau districts of the West. Freezing temperatures on more than half the days of the year are not uncommon in the northern interior, the figure for Yellowstone Park being 211 days.

Days with zero temperature or lower, usually do not occur south of the District of Columbia, western Virginia, northern Tennessee and Arkansas, and central Oklahoma. In an average winter the temperature falls to zero on five days as far south as southern Pennsylvania, central Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, and southeastern Kansas. Boston and New York, tempered by the ocean, have averages of only three and one zero days, respectively. Halifax is nearly as favored. The Great Lakes exert a similar effect, for Chicago has 8 zero days and Des Moines, at about the same latitude, as many as 34. In the extreme north, between the upper Lake region and the Rockies, especially in Canada, zero days are quite commonplace; from 40 to 60 may be expected during the year. This central portion of our continent is the coldest large section that is well inhabited. Nevertheless, cities such as Winnipeg thrive.

(Tomorrow: Variability of Temperature)  
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