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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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RODS VS LIGHTNING

Lightning rods used to be greatly in vogue and then fell into disfavor. Now they are coming back. The Bureau of Standards says that lightning rods reduce the fire hazard from lightning by 80 or 90 per cent. in the case of dwellings. Buildings with metal frames and roofs are well grounded and require no rods. Lightning rods provide good conductors by which lightning can reach the earth without damage and also furnish points for a continuous flow of electricity. The value of the latter function in the protective action of rods is not known, though a high authority, Dr. C. T. R. Wilson, states that "a considerable part, possibly the greater part of the current between a thundercloud and the ground must be carried by trees and other natural lightning conductors".

Lightning conductors frequently carry off a brush discharge from the earth's surface. The "St. Elmo's fire" sometimes seen at mast heads is a brush discharge of electricity. Even steers' horns, a man's upward extended fingers, or blades of grass have been found capable of acting as point dischargers to a small extent.

(Tomorrow: Danger From Lightning)

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