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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University

MOON AND WEATHER

The moon is so conspicuous in the sky and its changes of phase so easily observed, that from early days those who look for signs in the heavens have hoped to find some weather cycle connected with the cycle of the moon - perhaps a particularly bad storm once a month. Some of our friends will not make a sea voyage except under the expected quieting effect of the full moon. But the moon exerts practically no direct control over the atmosphere: the minute atmospheric tide it produces amounts to but a thousandth of an inch variation in barometric pressure. In certain coast regions where ocean tides are very marked, they may possibly be responsible for minute periodic changes in the air pressure, as well as for slight oscillations of the wind and variation in air temperature.

Heat received from the moon is negligible as a weather factor, for the reflected sunlight coming from the full moon has but one millionth the intensity of direct sunlight.

Whether or not the moon has any control over long period weather changes indirectly through oceanic mixing is less clear. Lunar periods are such as to cause particularly strong ocean tides at intervals of, for example 3,8,9, and 10 years. Some of these shorter periods have been shown in temperature records of winters, for instance in the 140-year New Haven record one finds a mild winter almost every 8th year. But the coincidence is not sufficiently striking to furnish a basis for forecasting.

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21st and B Sts.,
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