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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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A MOONLIGHT RECORDER

Moonlight, though second only to the sun in importance as a natural source of light, has not received its due share of attention by meteorologists. Perhaps this is because weather men do not care about something which apparently has nothing to do with the weather, proverb-makers to the contrary notwithstanding. But when the moon is up it can be serviceable in recording night cloudiness in the portions of the sky traversed.

The ordinary type of sunshine recorder, where solar heat is the activating principle, is hardly available for a source of heat but a millionth as strong as sunshine. In the case of an instrument, however, where the focussed rays of the sun burn a path on cardboard, the focussed rays of the moon can affect photographic paper. The glass ball, or Campbell-Stokes sunshine recorder at Blue Hill Observatory has been used by Prof. Alexander McAdie for recording moonlight by night. The observer slips the day's burnt card from its groove, and as twilight ends substitutes a strip of photographic paper. He must be up at crack of dawn, without fail, however, to take out the moonshine and put in the sunshine card.

While the lazy observer prefers the automatic Pole-Star recorder for night cloudiness, those who discuss or use the records much prefer the less prosaic moonlight record.

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