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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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AURORAS AND COOL WEATHER

During the present period of numerous sunspots we are being treated again after an interval of 5 or 6 years, to an abundance of auroral displays. These lights, high in the sky, are visible only when it is not cloudy, and are distinct only when the air is reasonably clear. The best displays are to be seen usually only on sparklingly clear nights, when arches and streamers can be seen clearly for distances exceeding 150 or 200 miles. Since the aurora is not a noisy phenomenon its presence is not likely to be noticed unless it is readily visible; here is an added reason for associating auroras with clear weather.

It is a common saying that an auroral display indicates a cool wave. This is true in so far as thesight of the aurora is contingent on the sky and air in a northerly direction being clear enough. Such clarity is usually found only with northerly winds, which, of course, are either ushering in a cooler spell of weather or have been attending one. If the weather is already cool no one expects a cool wave on top of the existing coolness. If, however, it has just been warm and cloudy, and the sky is clearing, an observation of an auroral display is quickly added to the other indications favoring colder weather. As an independent prognostic an observation of an aurora is apparently of no value for indicating a cool wave at the point of observation, for the auroras occur simultaneously over a wide stretch of longitude, even over large portions of both hemispheres.

To the present time, no clear indication of any cause and effect connection has been established between the aurora and any feature of the weather.

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