

A Science Service Feature

Released on receipt  
but intended for use  
July 29, 1926

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed July 22, 1926

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UNUSUAL WEATHER

Pity the poor dweller of a land where the weather is steady; where you don't need a daily forecast to tell you what to expect! Yes, there are such places, many of them in the neighborhood of the equator, where the morning breeze or afternoon shower come almost like clockwork, and where the steady daytime rise and nighttime fall of temperature scarcely misses a degree from its appointed limits. So regular is the daily course even of atmospheric pressure that observers say they can tell the time of day by the barometer correct within a quarter of an hour. In comparison, our climate is the height of fickleness, even in summer. To change is to be normal here.

When one goes to a region with more regular weather there is a monotony that grows on him. A New Englander who had resided in southern California for a few years was very much pleased to have a thunderstorm blow a corner of his roof off. It reminded him of his native region. Take away the variety in weather and we lose much of the zest of life. While we enjoy our own record-breaking weather, at least in retrospect, many of us prefer to read about the worst kinds while they are occurring elsewhere. In contrast with our own weather it gives us an uncommon sense of comfort. We have had plenty of opportunities for reading such front-page weather stories recently.

But lest we build too much on the appearance that the weather at present is exceptional a little reading in past records, two years, five, ten, twenty or more years ago, will reveal plenty of weather for comparison, though not necessarily for the same spots. The southern Andes are noted for their deep snows and the Trans-Andine railroad is often blocked. Central Europe has had summer floods before; so has Mexico. Our Pacific cousins hesitate to admit that their hot dry weather is not unique, and in the East we are reminded of the cold spring of 1924.

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21st and B Sts.,  
Washington, D. C.