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Sept. 17, 1926

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed September 10, 1926

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WHAT IS A CLIMATE MADE OF ?

Turn to any description of the climate of a place, and you find something about the temperature, and a little about the rainfall. You are presented averages, and sometimes a statement of extremes and the dates when these occurred. In the more complete climatic statements there are statistics also on sunshine, cloudiness, humidity, snowfall and wind. But after perusing these can you answer for yourself the question, "What is the weather like, in fall, in winter, in spring, in summer?" Perhaps you can, but only hazily. Your tables do not tell you what wind there was on the hot days or the cold, or whether the cloudiness came more in the form of totally cloudy days interspersed by clear ones, or simply as partial cloudiness each day. A story is told of a land promoter for the Texas Panhandle who said to a group of his Ohio prospects: "The rainfall there last year was 23 inches, wasn't it, Bill?" "Yes," said Bill, "I was there the night it fell."

Climatologists are beginning, however, to take account of this lack of essential detail and besides some word descriptions of characteristic weather we can now find in special publications some treatment of the frequencies and succession of the weather by types. A pretty graphical method of showing by colored squares the frequencies of weather by types has been devised by the Russian meteorologist, E.E. Federov. Classified by temperature, humidity, cloudiness, rainfall, and wind velocity, the progress of the seasons or the differences between climates stand out as no table or graphs of the separate elements can make them.

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