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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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A CLIMATIC CALENDAR.

Though we have definite associations of certain types of weather and temperatures with the different months we do not have the months named after their climatic characteristics. An interesting calendar in which the months were named for the weather or its results was that of the first French Republic. The era was reckoned from Sept. 22, 1792, when the Republic was founded. Each month was 30 days. Autumn, the first season, Sept. 22, to Dec. 20, comprised the months Vendemiaire (Vintage), Brumaire (Foggy), and Frimaire (Frosty). Winter, Dec. 21 to Mar. 20, was Nivose (Snowy), Pluviose (Rainy), and Ventose (Windy). Spring, Mar. 21 to June 18, was Germinal (Germinal), Floreal (Flowery), and Prairial (Meadow). Summer, June 19 to Sept. 16, was made up of the months Mesidor (Harvest), Thermidor (Hot), and Fructidor (Fruit). The other 5 or 6 days of the year were festival days. This calendar was abandoned after 12 years.

Not the least significant feature of this calendar is its epitome of French climate. The lag of about a month in the seasons for the western as compared with the eastern or interior portion of a continent is at once apparent. "Foggy" is a month after our time of most prevalent land fogs; "Frosty" is likewise about a month late for our most densely populated section. "Snowy," however, is early, a peculiarity of many west European winters. "Hot" centers about a fortnight after our average maximum temperature.

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