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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THERMOMETER FIRST USED IN GREECE

As early as the second century B.C. Greek physicists used a primitive thermometer which indicated temperature changes, although it did not measure them accurately. Galileo is generally considered the inventor of the first real thermometer, which he is said to have produced in 1592. This thermometer consisted of a glass bulb with a long graduated stem inverted in a flask of colored liquid. The bulb contained air, it was heated, and then the stem was placed in the flask. As the air in the bulb cooled, the liquid rose in the stem; subsequent heating of the bulb would drive the liquid down in the tube, while cooling would cause it to rise. This device was sensitive enough to be used in measuring fever. But its readings were influenced by changes in barometric pressure. Some fifty years later this difficulty was met by sealing the end of the glass bulb.

Soon after 1650 the Academy of Sciences at Florence produced mercury filled thermometers, with a crude scale, ranging from the lowest temperature of winter to the highest of summer. To construct a satisfactory scale, two fixed points were necessary; finally, the melting point of ice and the boiling point of water were selected and others, such as the melting point of butter or the temperature of the body, were rejected. The Fahrenheit scale, devised in 1714, the Reaumur, introduced in 1730, and the Centigrade suggested about 1750 all use the boiling and freezing point but divide the intervals into degrees of different size.

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