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: WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WORLD WEATHER AND LONG RANGE FORECASTING

World weather and long range forecasting is a subject of wide ramifications. While it is simple for anyone to make a worthless long range forecast, the meteorologist confesses that he does not yet know how to predict the weather a long way ahead on scientific grounds. We see great areas of high or low pressure in immediate control of our weather, and we find that these pressure areas fluctuate more or less in unison or in sequence the world over. We note that our weather does not occur as if drawn from a grab bag of all different kinds, even though poets may tell us of the fickleness of sunshine and ice storms. Sometimes we find more or less regular repetitions, at longer or shorter intervals.

When we delve into the causes of unseasonal weather, in an attempt to weigh the factors that are making the weather of the future, we find some investigators pursuing solar variability, while others are seeking the effects of the moon. Most hope for success may be held by students of the more immediate terrestrial causes of seasonal weather changes over wide areas: clouds of volcanic dust, changes in the extent of inland waters. Also there seem to be good prospects in thorough-going investigations of the slowly changing ocean temperatures in the great ocean currents and their effects on the weather. There are even lags in land temperatures, particularly noticeable when a deep snow cover delays a rise in temperature for a week or a fortnight or more. Years of investigation in these several lines will be necessary before we can think of long range forecasting through understanding.

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