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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE RESOURCES OF THE ATMOSPHERE

Our forefathers know only a few uses for air. Today we look upon the atmosphere as a field for exploitation quite as important as the ground beneath our feet. The modern industrial chemist mines the air on a vast scale for nitrogen and oxygen, and to some extent for its rarer gases. Argon, extracted from the air, is used for filling electric light bulbs. Neon, from the same source, is used in a kind of electric lamp that gives an orange-colored light adapted for electrical advertising signs and other purposes.

The "fixation" of atmospheric nitrogen in the form of ammonia and other compounds has relieved the once critical shortage of these products. Most of the oxygen used in the industries for cutting and welding metals and other purposes is obtained by the process of liquefying air at low temperatures. Compressed air is a wonderfully efficient means of transmitting and applying power, almost vying with electricity in the number of its applications. On account of its elasticity air is the best of shock-absorbers, and hence is used as a cushion in pneumatic tires, door-checks and elevator shafts.

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