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Released on receipt
but intended for use
August 29th, 1927

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed August 22, 1927

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology

DAYTIME PHOTOGRAPHS OF LIGHTNING

Nearly all photographs of lightning are taken at night. The shutter of the camera is simply left open until a flash occurs and is then closed. If the flash happens to be in the field of the camera its image will be registered on the plate.

Cassell's "Cyclopaedia of Photography," published in 1911, says: "Lightning cannot be photographed during the daytime, as, however dark the sky is, the sun is behind it and actinic enough to have an action on the dry plate and make the flash invisible."

A year after the above statement was published it was proved to be erroneous by Mr. A. Steadworthy, of the Dominion Observatory at Ottawa, Canada. On July 10, 1912, in the middle of the afternoon, he took several excellent photographs of lightning. He used a combination of aperture and plate that, with the amount of daylight prevailing at the time, would have required 6 seconds to photograph the landscape. If he had given his pictures this exposure the daylight would have obliterated the image of any lightning flash occurring during the interval. He therefore exposed a number of plates about the time he judged, from the average frequency of flashes, that one was likely to occur, and gave each picture an exposure of only 2 seconds. Of seventeen plates, 3 showed pictures of lightning equal in quality to the average photograph taken at night.

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