A Science Service Feature

Released on receipt
but intended for use
March 2, 1928

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed February 24, 1928

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology

MARSHAL BUGEAUD'S RULE

The immortal delusion that the earth's weather is controlled by the moon assumes a great variety of forms and has given rise to numerous "rules" for utilizing lunar phenomena as a basis of weather prediction. One of the latter that has long been familiar in France is called the "rule of Marshal Bugeaud," after a celebrated military leader who firmly believed in it and planned his campaigns accordingly. The belief it embodies is that the weather remains the same during the whole lunation (1) eleven times out of twelve as it is on the fifth day, if the same weather prevails on the sixth day; and (2) nine times out of twelve as it is on the fourth day if the sixth day resembles the fourth. For example, if the fifth and sixth days of the lunation are rainy there are, according to this rule, eleven chances in twelve that the whole lunation will be rainy, etc.

During the world war, when weather often played an important part in military operations, popular interest in this old notion was revived and a French meteorologist, M. Brazier, examined the weather records for the years 1907 to 1916, inclusive, made at the Observatory of the Parc Saint-Maur, near Paris, for a possible verification of the rule.

Out of 123 lunations in the period studied there were 33 to which the rule was inapplicable, because the sixth day resembled neither the fifth nor the fourth. There were 54 which should have been dry according to the rule, but only 23 proved to be so. Of 36 lunations that should have been rainy only eight were of that character.

SCIENCE SERVICE,
21st and B Sts.,
Washingtnn, D.C.