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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology

NAMES THAT WORRY THE WEATHERMAN

The weatherman, in common with people in other walks of life, is harassed by endless diversities in the forms of geographical names. Here are a few illustrations:

For many years the world's record for high temperature was held by a town in Algeria the name of which, according to French spelling, is Ouargla. As the place in question is French territory, this spelling is preferred by most mapmakers, but a good many works in English and in German use the spelling Wargla. The place that has long held the record for low temperature is a village in northern Siberia. Its name, like other Russian names, is susceptible of various transliterations. Greely's "American Weather", published in 1888, calls it Werchojansk, which is properly a German spelling but has appeared in many works in the English language. Nowadays, however, this name is generally spelled Verkhoyansk by British and American writers.

The most important meteorological establishment on the China coast is the one maintained by the Jesuits near Shanghai. In its publications, which are in French, it is called the Observatoire de Zi-ka-wei. A frequent English spelling is Siccawei.

One of the most energetic meteorological services of the world, that of the Ukraine, has its headquarters at a place whose name is variously spelled Kiev, Kiew, Kyiv, etc. There is a celebrated weather observatory in Esthonia (Estonia) at a place we used to call Dorpat, but which the Russians called Yuriev (with half a dozen alternative spellings), and which is now officially known as Tartu.

These are mere drops in the bucket. Ask anybody who has to catalogue meteorological literature!

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