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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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ALMANAC WEATHER PREDICTIONS

The almanacs for 1929 are out. Some of them contain prediction of the year's weather, but the proportion of those that do not is much larger than it was a generation ago. It is interesting to find that some of these publications not only omit this once universal feature of almanacs, but take pains to explain why they do not consider it worthy of space in their pages. The following is from the admirable North American Almanac, published in Chicago:

"There are many alleged forecasters who issue predictions for a season and even a year in advance, but these have absolutely no basis. The authors... simply parcel out the various kinds of weather in patches, putting first, for instance, a warm wave, then a little rain, later a cold wave for a few days, with snow, then a blizzard, the usual January thaw, and finally a reasonable amount of fair weather. The order of these conditions could be reversed and the forecast for January and February be transposed without lowering in the least the percentage of verification.

"The quack forecasters endeavor to hoodwink the public under the guise of 'planetary meteorology,' but they might just as well tell us that they feel of the goosebone or consult the groundhog. They pretend to place much dependence upon the mysterious movements of the planet Vulcan, though astronomers unanimously agree that there is no such heavenly body."

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