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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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RECORDS OF FOREIGN CLIMATES

A member of an English-Speaking race who goes to a big scientific library for the purpose of looking up statistics of climate is often dismayed to discover that a large part of the literature on that subject is in languages other than English. Even the leading general work in this field, applying to the world as a whole, is Hann's "Handbuch der Klimatologie", in German, and the statistical portions of this work have never been published in any other language. It goes without saying that the bulk of the literature on the climate of France is in French, that most climatographic literature relating to Spanish-American countries is in Spanish; and so on.

This barrier of language was formidable enough before the world war, but it is far more serious now, thanks to the fantastic craze for "self-determination" in language as well as politics that prevails in Europe. For example, in ante-bellum days works published in Russia on climate (or other scientific subjects) were very commonly in French, English or German, or, if they were in Russian, an abstract in one of these three other languages was generally appended. Now a much larger proportion are wholly in Russian -- and that is not the worst of it! Russian scientific works are frequently published nowadays in White Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, and half a dozen other languages prevalent in various parts of the U.S.S.R.

A flourishing meteorological institution at Barcelona, Spain, publishes exclusively in Catalan. Several other minor European languages have similarly invaded scientific libraries.

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