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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed December 13, 1929

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology

A SOLAR LABORATORY

There are several solar observatories, but the only institution in the world calling itself a "solar laboratory" has just been established at the University of Kentucky. In honor of the New York banker who endowed it, the new institution is known as the Percy H. Johnston Solar Laboratory.

Though striking progress has been made in recent years in the knowledge and control of "indoor weather," it appears that one important element has been neglected. We know that certain combinations of air temperature, humidity and wind are conducive to comfort. The American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers has published a number of "comfort charts" for the guidance of those who design and install ventilating and air-conditioning systems. These charts show the values of the elements above mentioned that, in combination, are most comfortable for persons stripped to the waist, fully clothed, idle, slightly or actively employed, etc. The same society and other agencies have learned much about atmospheric pollution and means of reducing it.

The element that still needs more intelligent regulation indoors is light. The new laboratory is designed especially to study the effects of light on animal and plant life. It is an eight-room building, equipped with the latest types of air-conditioning apparatus. Daylight is admitted through a glass roof, but there are also devices for providing various kinds of artificial light and the program of investigations is much broader than the title of the laboratory indicates. The director is F. P. Anderson, dean of the College of Engineering at Kentucky University.
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