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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed January 28, 1930.

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RECORD-BREAKING WEATHER

Nothing connected with the weather is a subject of more intense popular interest than the occurrence of record-breaking extremes. Each year official meteorological establishments receive quantities of letters from people who wish to know the highest and lowest temperatures ever registered in their own countries or in the whole world, what places are most or least blest with rain, or how hard the wind can blow when it tries. The answers to such questions found in reference books are conflicting, chiefly because information on these matters is subject to revision from year to year.

Most statistical records of weather are a product of comparatively recent times. Hence the extremes of bygone years are occasionally surpassed. Thus within the past two decennia the "world record" for high temperature has been successively 127 (at Wargla, Algeria), 134 (in Death Valley, Calif.) and 136 (at Azizia, Tripolitania). The third of these readings has now held the blue ribbon for nearly eight years.

Purely local records are broken at many places each year. No item of news is more familiar than the statement that such and such a place has had "the coldest December" (or "the hottest fourth of July," and so on) "in the history of the local weather station."

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