

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
February 14, 1930

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed February 7, 1930

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THEATER WEATHER

Weather effects on the stage were, in a former generation, often crude in the extreme, but in the best theaters today they are highly realistic. The Hammerstein Theater, in New York City, is equipped with an ingenious device for producing the effect of rolling storm clouds by projecting pictures from a lantern. This consists of a large multiple-lens mirror projector, rotating about a center point, the rotation being controlled by a motor. For each lens there is an oscillating mirror, which can be controlled from the switchboard to operate slowly or rapidly. It is these oscillating mirrors that cause the violent rolling of the cloud images.

Light from a 3,000-watt lamp passes through a condensing lens and then through a slide which is an actual photograph of a cloud formation. This slide is one of several, the entire group being mounted in the ring of projectors. A diaphragm limits the projection of the pictures to the sky portion of the scenery.

The same theater has a rain machine, consisting of a perforated pipe mounted just back of the proscenium opening. This is supplied with water under pressure. The water falls into a waterproof fabric trough representing the foreground of the scene. Suitable lighting supplies the effect of depth, so that what is really a thin curtain of "rain" seems to flood the entire stage.

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