

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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Authority on Meteorology.

WHEN ANGORA WENT DRY

The ratio of the amount of invisible water vapor in the air to the greatest amount the air can contain at the prevailing temperature is called the "relative humidity" and is expressed in percentage. When the air is fully charged with water vapor, so that a fall in temperature would cause some of it to condense, the relative humidity is said to be 100 per cent.; a common condition, in rainy or foggy weather, etc. If the air contained no water vapor, the relative humidity would be zero; but does this ever happen?

A well-known Hungarian meteorologist, Dr. A. Rethly, who organized a meteorological service for the Turkish government a few years ago, tells us that it happened twice at Angora while he was a resident there; viz, on May 9 and September 30, 1926. Both cases occurred in the middle of the afternoon, with an air temperature of from 68 to 73. The zero readings were shown by a hair-hygrograph, and in each case were verified by observations with a more accurate instrument, the Assmann aspiration psychrometer. The most remarkable fact about these occurrences is that nobody felt uncomfortable in the absolutely dry atmosphere!

A relative humidity of 2 per cent. has been reported from places in northern Nigeria, but the zero readings above mentioned probably stand alone.

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