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November 18, 1930

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed November 11, 1930

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A DELUSION ABOUT CLIMATE

That high temperatures necessarily go with low latitudes and low temperatures with high latitudes is one of the most stubborn of delusions. This notion has come down to us from the ancient Greek philosophers, and it has been kept alive to a large extent by the misleading practice of using the astronomically fixed tropics and polar circles as boundaries of what are supposed to be the climatic zones of the earth. It is false even in regard to average temperatures of the year, and it is conspicuously false in regard to the extreme temperatures. By far the worst specimens of hot weather on earth occur in certain deserts well outside of the tropics and the worst specimens of atmospheric fridity are encountered far from the poles.

Some years ago life insurance was refused to a resident of Ketchikan, the southernmost port of Alaska, on the ground that undue risks were entailed by the severe climate of that place. The fact that the whole south coast of Alaska has much milder winters than some of the big cities in the northern United States is as much at variance with popular ideas about the climate of that territory as that summer temperatures over 90 are common in its interior. There are places close to the equator where people suffer less with heat than do the residents of some parts of Alaska in summer.

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