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December 17, 1930

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed December 10, 1930

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

"FROSTIANA"

A most entertaining old book devoted to a variety of cold weather themes is entitled "Frostiana; or a History of the River Thames in a Frozen State, with an Account of the Late Severe Frost, and the Wonderful Effects of Frost, Snow, Ice and Cold in England and in Different Parts of the World; Interspersed with Various Amusing Anecdotes. To Which is Added the Art of Skating." It is dated 1814 and the title-page informs us that it was printed and published on the ice of the River Thames during the "frost fair" of that year; the last of these fairs held for many centuries whenever the river was frozen over.

To mention only one item of the extensive bill-of-fare provided by this book, one chapter tells of the "frozen market at St. Petersburg," held in a vast open square containing the frozen bodies of thousands of animals piled in pyramidal heaps, together with butter, eggs, etc. We read:

"The fish are attractively beautiful, possessing the vividness of their living color with the transparent clearness of wax imitations. The beasts present a far less pleasing spectacle, most of the larger sort being skinned and classed according to their species. Groups of many hundreds are seen piled upon their hind legs against one another, as if each were making an effort to climb over the back of its neighbor. Had an enchanter's wand been instantaneously waved over this sea of animals during their different actions they could not have been fixed more decidedly. Their hardness, too, is so extreme that the natives chop them up for the purchasers like wood."

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