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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE BIGGEST BAROMETER

Evangelista Torricelli, the inventor of the barometer, was born at Faenza, Italy, in the year 1608. The three hundredth anniversary of his birth was celebrated by an exposition held in the same town, and the most remarkable feature of this event was the erection, as a fitting monument to the great physicist, of the largest barometer in the world, the construction of which was entrusted to the Rev. Guido Alfani, director of the Ximenian Observatory in Florence.

The original plans called for a barometer having its tube filled with water in place of the usual mercury. Several water barometers have been built, including, first of all, the one that Pascal set up at Rouen in the year 1646. In 1830 Prof. Daniell constructed one for the Royal Society of London, and another was placed in the Tour St. Jacques, in Paris, in 1890. On account of certain difficulties entailed in the use of water, Father Alfani decided to fill the barometer with olive oil. As the specific gravity of this substance is slightly less than that of water, the barometric column stands higher, for any given pressure of the atmosphere, than does that of a water barometer. On account of the gradual expulsion of air and certain chemical changes, the average height of the column diminished somewhat after the barometer was finished. Eventually its height for normal atmospheric pressure became 35.73 feet.

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