

---CORRECTION---

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
April 15, 1932

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed April 8, 1932

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"NOW THAT APRIL'S THERE"

The English poet whose repinings over being in Italy instead of England in the month of April are immortal doubtless had a clear picture in his mind's eye of the normal state of vegetation and animal life ⁱⁿ on his native land during the month ^{round} in question. He could write with assurance about the brushwood sheaf ~~around~~ the elm tree bole being in tiny leaf, and about the chaffinch singing on the orchard bough, because he wrote from personal observation. But what about the untraveled American who wants to write a poem or a story with April as its time and England its setting? How is he to find out what plants are blooming then - what birds singing?

Such information can be found - and it is a pity more of our writers don't realize it - in the voluminous records that have been collected for years by a large corps of English phenologists, attached to the Royal Meteorological Society. Such records, moreover, have been collected in a good many other countries - including, long ago, the United States, though phenology has been sadly neglected in our country for many years. Tables and charts have been published for several parts of the world showing the average dates on which all the common plants come into leaf and into blossom, when the common migratory birds return, and when various other seasonal phenomena of the living world take place. Such data are a valuable adjunct of the study of weather and climate.

Phenological records can save writers from committing egregious faux pas with respect to the matters above mentioned; but, alas! few writers outside of scientific circles know that such records exist.

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