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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

ARTIFICIAL WEATHER

He would be a rash dogmatist who should assert that never, no never, will science make the official weather forecaster's job superfluous by taking over from Mother Nature the job of supplying weather to humanity. On a small and local scale, the feat of artificial weather-making is even now accomplished every day. Within the walls of buildings we maintain perpetual spring by heating in winter and cooling in summer. When damaging frosts threaten, we heat the atmosphere of our orchards. By planting trees to serve as windbreaks we materially alter the climate of a prairie farm with respect to wind, moisture and temperature. Sometimes our feats of weather juggling are unpremeditated, as when we carelessly set a forest on fire and the conflagration gives rise to clouds and rain. Since the wholesale regulation of weather is a desideratum of immense importance (consider what it would mean merely to abolish droughts in the agricultural regions of the earth), we may cherish the hope that some day science will solve the problem, though by ways that are quite out of sight.

Sir Napier Shaw, foremost of British meteorologists, once wrote of the absurdity of the weather-making schemes hitherto proposed, most of which utterly underrate the amount of energy involved in natural processes, as compared with that available to mankind for altering them. But he added:

"Many opinions of the futility of human efforts have been proved to be wrong. All awkward corners may be turned by new inventions."

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21st and Constitution Ave.
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