

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed September 12, 1932

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UNAVAILABLE DATA OF CLIMATE

The published statistical data of the world's climates fill a good-sized library -- but the unpublished climatic data would fill another equally large or larger. A few kinds of data are always found in climatic tables. These include values of mean monthly temperature -- the practical applications of which are almost negligible! -- and average monthly totals of rainfall. Some other kinds of data are fairly universal, but there are many that occur in abundance in records for certain parts of the world but are completely lacking in those for other parts. Thus there is a conspicuous scarcity of snowfall statistics for several European countries where snow is common enough to be of great economic importance.

Still other important data of climate are not available on a general scale for any country. Solar radiation, in its various manifestations, is of vital concern to mankind, yet the only statistics relating to it usually found in climatic tables are records of the duration of sunshine. Statistics of atmospheric electricity, which may eventually turn out to be of much climatic importance, are hardly ever included in such tables. In recent years science has discovered that the cooling power of the air -- quite a different thing from temperature -- has a number of practical relations, and instruments for measuring this element directly have been devised, but no data relating to it have yet been compiled for any extensive area of the world.

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