

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt  
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December 31, 1932

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed December 23, 1932

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CHEERFUL DECEMBER

"And after him came next the chill December;  
Yet he through merry feasting which he made,  
And great bonfires, did not the cold remember."

Thus wrote Edmund Spenser, yet to him and his sixteenth century contemporaries December brought little of either mirth or warmth. The gloomy days and the long dark nights might be forgotten momentarily in riotous Yuletide feasts, the bitter chill of the air might be tempered briefly by bonfire or hearthfire, but the normal state of human existence in this and the other winter months was miserable. Comfort and gaiety were exceptional.

Not so today! One of the most striking miracles of modern civilization is the transformation of winter from the gloomiest into the gayest season of the year - from the most comfortless into the most comfortable. December nights are as long from sunset to sunrise as they ever were, but inventive genius has turned them into day! The thermometer this month registers winter temperatures out of doors, but perpetual summer reigns in the houses, work-places and vehicles of mankind. Nowadays summer heat causes far more discomfort and downright suffering among us than winter cold.

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