

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt  
but intended for use  
January 2, 1933

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed December 23, 1932

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JANUARY WEATHER

A poem by Frank Dempster Sherman suggests that the fickleness of January's skies may be the result of naming the month after Janus - the two-faced deity of Roman mythology - but modern meteorology can furnish a better explanation. Examine a file of daily weather maps of this midwinter month, and you will see that the lows that bring us our ups and downs of temperature, alternations of clouds and sunshine and other atmospheric vicissitudes are in rapid movement across the country. They have no tendency to halt and stagnate, as they are inclined to do in the summer months. Statistics show that, on our continent, these traveling weather systems move at a higher speed and hence appear in more rapid succession at any given place in January than in any other month of the year. They also then reach their largest average size and many of them sweep far to the southward, so that a vast area of North America is affected by them.

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