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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed October 24, 1933

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WEATHER OBSERVERS

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A famous organization of weather observers was that maintained by the Meteorological Society of the Palatinate, founded at Mannheim in 1780 under the auspices of the Elector Karl Theodor. The chief credit for the epoch-making work of this society is due to its secretary, J.J. Hemmer, court chaplain to the elector. The society distributed standard instruments to its observers, who were widely scattered over the world: viz., fourteen in Germany, two in Austria-Hungary, two in Switzerland, four in Italy, three in France, four in Belgium and Holland, three in Russia, four in Scandinavia, and two in North America (at Bradford and Cambridge, Mass.). The observations, taken three times a day, were more varied in scope than those usually taken at our present-day weather stations, and the results were published in detail in a series of twelve large yearbooks, entitled Ephemerides, Societatis Meteorologicae Palatinae, the latest being for the year 1792.

Although the activities of this society came to an end in the troublous days of the French Revolution, the records it had collected served as the ground-work for fruitful studies during the next generation. It was from this source that the German physicist H.W. Brandes obtained the data from which he was able to draw, about 1819, a series of daily weather maps of Europe for the year 1783; the first synchronous weather charts ever drawn, so far as we know.

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