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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed January 5, 1934

PAINTINGS OF CLOUDS

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

Among outdoor objects painted by landscapists, clouds appear to be the greatest stumbling-block. A number of years ago the English scientific journal Nature inaugurated the custom, still kept up, of sending a scientific representative to inspect and report on the landscapes in the annual exhibitions at the Royal Academy. J.S. Dines, a well-known meteorologist, was the critic of the 1918 exhibition, and his report on the cloudscapes ought to be read by every landscape painter.

"It might be thought," he wrote, "that in landscape scenes artists would devote at least as much attention to the sky and the clouds above as to the hills and valleys below. That this is not the case will be painfully evident to the meteorologist, or even to the ordinary intelligent observer of nature, who visits the Royal Academy and makes but a cursory examination of its walls. Let it be granted at once that there are notable exceptions, but the conclusion cannot be resisted that to many artists the clouds form a very subsidiary part of the picture and are put in to produce what to the artist's eye is presumably a pleasing effect, without the least regard to natural truth."

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