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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed April 11, 1934

WHALES AND WEATHER

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England has been suffering with a severe drought, and as usually happens when the weather is strikingly abnormal, all sorts of wild suggestions have been flying about as to the cause of the abnormality. That long-suffering scapegoat the Gulf Stream has come in for its share of blame. Then there's radio. Ever since broadcasting became common it has been suspected of doing dire things to the weather and why shouldn't it cause droughts? The most brilliant hypothesis of all, however, is one that has come to the notice of Lt. Col. Ernest Gold, of the Meteorological Office, who makes haste to lay it before the learned world.

"It is well known," he says in the Meteorological Magazine, "that rain in England is mainly derived from evaporation from the Atlantic Ocean, and further that evaporation from spray is much more effective than evaporation from a water surface. A most effective producer of spray is a spouting whale, but there has been so great a reduction in the number of whales in the North Atlantic that this source of rainfall has been nearly cut off. Hence the drought,"

To avoid danger of a misunderstanding, let me add that Colonel Gold is one of the ablest of meteorologists. He can be quite serious on occasions, but "dulce est desipere in loco," or, in other words, a little nonsense now and then is relished by the best of men.

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