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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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OCEAN WEATHER RECORDS

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The great work of collecting and compiling weather records for the oceans, begun before the beginning of the last century by Matthew Fontaine Maury, goes on apace. It is estimated that fully 4,000 shipboard observers, who take regular weather observations once or oftener every day, send the records of their observations to official meteorological establishments, where they are variously utilized in the preparation of statistics. This small army of observers provides an abundance of information concerning the weather and climate of the more frequented portions of the oceans but there is, of course, a vast amount of additional information contained in ordinary ships' logs and not now reported to scientific institutions, with the aid of which it would be possible to extend the survey of ocean meteorology to areas where shipping is scarce.

Probably the largest corps of organized marine weather observers is that cooperating with the U.S. Weather Bureau, comprising at present upwards of 1200 active observers of many nationalities. A recent Civil Works Administration project of the Bureau has consisted of putting into usable form the results of more than five million observations taken at sea from Maury's time to the end of 1931. Records of more than two million, taken from 1912 onward, have been transferred to punch-cards, similar to those used in compiling census returns, while upwards of three million older records have been sorted by regions and months and thus made available for ready reference. About 240 compilers have been engaged in this work, and some of them are still employed.

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