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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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CLASSIFYING RAIN

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Meteorologists have long been accustomed to classify rain as "orographic," "cyclonic" and "convictional," according to the kind of cooling process involved in its production. Orographic rain is formed when moisture-bearing air expands and cools on account of upward deflection in striking hills and mountains. Cyclonic rain results from the circulation of air, involving upward movements, in a barometric depression, or cyclone. Convictional rain occurs when moist air rises by a chimney-like process, as a result of being heated below, as in a heat thunderstorm.

A different classification has recently come into use in connection with the new method of "air-mass analysis," devised in Norway and now regarded as a valuable adjunct of weather forecasting. In the identification of air masses and "fronts," the forecaster notes whether the precipitation recorded at any point on the weather map is "drizzle," "rain" or "showers." Drizzle is recognized by its very small and relatively numerous droplets; rain by its steady fall and its larger and decidedly less numerous drops; and a shower by its relatively large drops and brief duration.

The introduction of the term "rain" as the name of a particular kind of rain, as distinguished from other kinds, appears to the present writer to be a piece of unmitigated stupidity!

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