

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed January 3, 1935.

INDOOR LIGHT

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Authority on Meteorology

Light is an element of weather and climate, and the supply of natural light is, moreover, greatly affected by other elements of weather and climate.

At the present time the sun is still the principal source of indoor light in the daytime, but there is every reason to believe daylight will be replaced in the next few years by artificial light on a much more general scale, and for a much greater variety of purposes than it has been hitherto. Let us see why.

The light received from the sun is exceedingly variable in quantity and quality, even in the open country where human activities do not interfere with the supply. During half of each twenty-four hours, on an average, it fails entirely. During the remaining hours it undergoes a progressive change, on account of the varying height of the sun, and irregular changes caused by the presence of dust, clouds and other obstructions. Changes in its quality include some particularly striking fluctuations in the percentage of the ultraviolet rays, which play so important a role in relation to human life and health. No sane engineer would dream of installing an artificial lighting system that was subject to such excessive and erratic fluctuations as is this much-lauded light of day. Even the candles and oil lamps of a thousand years ago were far superior light-sources to the sun in one respect -- their light was under control and could be kept reasonably constant.

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