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THE LENGTH OF DAYS

The various little things that are not understood by the average mind often assume great proportions. We have often been perplexed over the problem of correctly figuring time, length of days, etc. The following timely article appeared in "The Pathfinder" of Washington, D. C., not long ago and is so good that we are pleased to reprint it:

Many people have noticed that, while the shortest day of the year is Dec. 21, the afternoons grow longer for some days prior to that date and the forenoons continue to grow shorter for some days after it. Though this has been explained a number of times in the Pathfinder, it is not out of place to recall the phenomenon at this time. For example at Washington the sun Dec. 21 set at 4:42, which was four minutes later than it set Dec. 10; and on the other hand on Dec. 21 it rose at 7:15, which was four minutes earlier than it will rise Jan. 12. In other words the sun continues to rise later and later after Dec 21, until it reaches the maximum about Jan 12, and then begins to go back and rise earlier. On Jan. 12 it will not rise till 4:59, or 21 minutes later than it set Dec. 10. The reason that the afternoons seem so much longer than the forenoons at this season is that they are really longer, as these figures show. Beginning as early as Dec. 10 the afternoons start to lengthen, while, as we have seen, the forenoons continue to shorten until Jan. 12. Dec. 21 marks the equilibrium between the two, and the daylight is then shortest. This apparent discrepancy is due to the fact that sun time and clock time do not exactly correspond. Clock time or "mean" time of course is absolutely the same throughout the year, while sun time varies considerably, owing to the irregularities in