

PROGRAM CHATS BY THE WEATHER MAN

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ANNOUNCEMENT: Last Wednesday we introduced the Weather Man who told you how he is able to predict storms and fair weather correctly 90 per cent of the time. We have him on the air -- no attempt at a pun -- again tonight.

I want you to hear a verse I read; -- somewhere. Some unsung bard wrote it. It goes like this:

"What is it molds the life of man?  
The Weather.  
What makes some black and otherstan?  
The Weather.  
What makes the Zulu live in trees,  
And Congo natives dress in leaves,  
While others go in furs and freeze?  
The Weather."

Do you know why everybody talks about the weather? Because it's always different. You can't tell just what the next 48 hours are going to bring. The weather is one of those "mercies of God" that are new every morning.

This has been an unusual Summer, hasn't it? But so was last Summer unusual. And the Summer before that, -- and the one before that. The seasons are eternally unusual. Weather makes them so. Weather is always different. No two days -- nor no two human faces -- are ever quite alike. That is because there are so many things that go to make up differences between days and human faces. One man has brown eyes and a Roman nose. Another may have grey eyes and a crooked nose. Some people are fickle -- so is the weather.

Here are a few of the things that go to make our todays different from our yesterdays. Temperature, rain and snow fall, wind direction and speed, sunshine, cloudiness, and the pressure of the air. These conditions can change much in a short time. Especially in sections where the weather is very changeable.

The weather travels across the county with an average speed of a passenger train. Consequently, the weather can change rapidly. If the wind's right, a storm can travel down upon you from a thousand miles away in from 30 to 36 hours. Many people don't know this, but most people above the age of eight years know some of the signs of storm.

Reading the skies for signs is about the oldest science we have. Three thousand years ago people were quite expert in the art. As the ancient shepards wandered over the hills, -- and studied the stars in their divine course, -- they also took note of the lightning and thunder of approaching storms. They didn't

forget to take written notes and, upon clay tablets unearthed from the ruins of almost forgotten Assyrian cities, may be found descriptions of the eclipses of the sun and moon, the records of winds and rain and other weather conditions that affected their lives.

When Job said,

"Fair weather cometh out of the north,"

he was merely putting into a simple maxim the accumulated knowledge of centuries of observations in his own particular territory. Solomon, the wise man, said,

"The north wind driveth away rain,"

which is about the same thing, -- said differently. Solomon, who was very rich in wives, flocks and herds, and fine raiment, knew the importance of keeping this wealth of his, sheltered from the unkind storms. We, in this modern age, don't worry so much about the approach of rain as the ancients did. We seek shelter in steel-and-concrete buildings and let it rain. And yet we think of the rain. You have heard the famous rain song that swept over America two or three years ago:

"Oh, it ain't gonna rain no more,  
No more --  
It ain't gonna rain no more" ....

and so on. Not quite so dignified as Solomon's.

"The north wind driveth away rain,"

but very modern. And then there's the wistful song that goes something like this,

"Let it rain, let it rain,  
Let it pour," etc.

I was brought up on this famous weather maxim:

"Red night -- shepard's delight.  
Red morning -- shepards take warning,"

and used to scan the skies on the night before the Fourth of July with all the anxiety of the ancient Chaldean shepards.

So we find that the weather has been an absorbing topic of conversation in the tent, at the gate, on the ship, in the market place -- as well as in the crossroads store. Our ancient forefathers watched the skies with all the zeal of the modern farmer and mariner. They talked about the skies as eagerly as we do.

Like the poor relatives, the weather is always with us. For that reason we are apt to take the weather for granted and overlook its great influence on our lives. This is not so much the case in regions where the weather is subject to sudden and violent changes as it is in regions where the climate is more equable. In the Continental interior of the United States the weather is new every morning and of infinite variety. We have cold waves and thaws, thunderstorms and drought:

blizzards and calms, 20 degrees below zero and 100 above, following each other like clowns and elephants and band wagons in a circus parade. The weather parade is one vast, colorful spectacle -- a constant subject for thought and conversation. The march of the seasons brings a succession of occupations:-- In the Spring the plowing of the soil and the sowing of seed, the beginning of building; in the Summer and Fall, the care and harvesting of the crops and outdoor constructive work of all sorts; in the Winter, ice cutting, lumbering, the care and protection of livestock.

Think of the influence of the weather on the kind of houses people live in! In the tropics, the thatched grasshuts are needed only to keep out the heavy rains. In the north, the Eskimo's dome-shaped igloo made of ice and snow, with one small opening, is made to keep out the blizzards and the cold and to keep in the warmth from his body and from the smoky fires of burning fat. On the hot deserts, the houses are usually low and open, with flat roofs and shady, plant-filled courtyards where the residents go to escape the heat. Notice the difference between the degraded life of the Australian Bushman in the loneliness of his hut, or the cheerless life of the fur-clad Eskimo, with the sophisticated life of the Parisian or the Londoner. Isn't the climate the main reason for these differences?

Weather and climate influence land values, crops, the time for shipping goods, the color of our skins, the height of office buildings, the cheerfulness of men, the food we eat, the games we play, our hopes, our fears, -- the length of our lives.

It is little wonder we admire weather, -- fear it, -- talk about it. Many tribes in the dim and shady past of the race worshipped it.

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Next week the Weather Man will go on with his interesting story of Weather, - the oldest thing in the world. This series of talks are furnished under the auspice of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

# **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

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