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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
Secretary, American Meteorological Society,
tells of:

"RAINBOW IN THE MORNING"

"Rainbow in the morning, sailors take warning,
Rainbow at night, sailor's delight."

This old jingle tells a weather truth. The sun shining from the east in the morning throws the rainbow on raining clouds in the west, which is the direction from which showers usually come. Therefore, it is highly probable that foul weather is immediately at hand, and sailors who see the morning rainbow know they are about to have rain.

But the significance goes farther. As is implied in the similar proverb, "Thunder in the morning, sailors take warning", morning showers or thunderstorms usually occur only with warm humid air flowing under cooler, drier air, through which nocturnal radiation has been sufficient to cool the top of the layer of humid air to a point where its increased weight causes it to descend, violently overturning the warm air below. Such showers and thunderstorms, marking as they do the presence of warm, humid air, may open a period of showery weather. The "rainbow at night", which we take to mean at about sunset, indicates clear skies to the west and shower clouds to the east, a condition usual just after the passage of showers and at the onset of a period of fair weather. But even if there is no change in general conditions the late afternoon shower responsible for the rainbow indicates that it took the maximum convection of the day to give the storm, hence that the atmosphere is rather dry and general rains improbable.

(Tomorrow: The Motor in a Thunderstorm)

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