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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
Secretary, American Meteorological Society,
says:

BEWARE THE BAROMETER

Immediately after Torricelli invented the barometer, three centuries ago, men discovered that before and during stormy periods the liquid sank, while with the onset of fair weather the liquid rose. In fine, settled weather the liquid was generally higher than usual, while in wet periods it was usually lower than the average stand. The variations were usually within a range between 29 and 30.6 inches of mercury at sea-level, 29.9 or 30.0 inches being the average. The barometer became invaluable in local weather forecasting, and it is still considered the most important instrument for this purpose.

But the barometer's indications are not so simple as the "Fair", "Changeable", "Rainy", and "Stormy", indicated on the various portions of the scale of the aneroid barometer. A high barometer is not necessarily a sign of fair weather, nor is the fact that it is low a sure sign of foul. The significant point is, is the barometer rising or falling? No single reading can tell this. If, however, the hand on the common aneroid barometer, which has a clock face, stands at the low point of 29.5 inches (as set for sea-level) at 8 o'clock and has risen to 29.6 at 10 o'clock, it is pretty certain that the center of the prevailing low pressure area has passed and that good weather may be expected. If, on the other hand the reading is high, say 30.4 inches, and an hour later it is 30.35, then it is a "falling glass", as the sailors say, and bad weather may be approaching.

(Tomorrow: Why Stars Twinkle.)

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