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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University

"A RED SKY AT NIGHT.."

"A red sky in the morning

Is the sailor's warning

A red sky at night

Is the sailor's delight."

A recent tabulation of sunrise and sunset colors near London confirms this old proverb. Prevaillingly red sunrises are followed by rain or snow within 24 hours over 60 per cent. of the time, while red sunsets, especially in winter, more frequently betoken fair weather. After a yellow sunset, the chances of rain or shine before the next sunset are about even. But yellow sunrises, particularly in summer, indicate fair weather is probable for the next 24 hours. It may be noted that red sunrises are much more common in winter than in summer, when yellow predominate.

The most brilliant red sky colors occur shortly after great explosive eruptions when the high levels of the atmosphere carry much fine volcanic dust. After the explosion of Krakatoa in 1883 remarkably fine sunsets and sunrises persisted for two or three years. Less enduring series followed the eruptions of Mont Pele and Santa Maria, in 1902, and Katmai, in 1912.

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21st and B Sts.,
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