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August 28, 1926

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed August 21, 1926

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RAINY WINDS

When the wind is from the southeast only the most unobservant fails to expect rain. Southerly, easterly and, to some extent, northeasterly, winds share the reputation of the southeast wind. Winds from other directions, particularly northwest, are, on the other hand, generally recognized as harbingers of fair weather.

There have been but few tabulations of the relative raininess of winds of different directions, especially when this raininess is subsequent to the first occurrence of the wind. The most thoroughgoing American study of the prognostic value of different weather phenomena at a place is perhaps that by Thomas Arthur Blair for Dubuque, Iowa. Among other elements he considered wind direction and his results are so closely in accord with popular impressions over much of the Middle West and East that they have value beyond the upper Mississippi Valley. Blair finds for the warm season that the best chances for rain within 12 or 24 hours attend an east wind with falling barometer, the rain expectation under these conditions being 64 and 72 per cent. Northeast, southeast, and south are about equally 50 and 64 per cent. Southwest and west together have prognostic value of 38 and 56 per cent. for rainfall within 12 or 24 hours. Northwest or west are most likely to be dry, even with falling barometer the percentages favoring rain being but 37 and 44. With a rising barometer the rainfall chances are much less, south and southwest coming highest with 29 and 47 per cent, and northwest and north lowest with 17 and 27 per cent.

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21st and B Sts.,
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