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A Science Service Feature

! WHY THE WEATHER !

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WEATHER SIGNS OF THE HEAVENS

"But when the clear light from the stars is dimmed, though no thronging clouds veil, nor other darkness hide nor moon obscure, but the stars on a sudden thus causelessly wax wan, hold that no more for a sign of calm, but look for storm." Such a paling of the stars is caused by a thin high sheet cloud which we now call cirro-stratus and is often properly considered a precursor of bad weather.

Dr. E. V. McCartney of the University of Michigan, who furnishes the above has made a special study of classical weather lore. The ancients lacking weather instruments, and weather maps, scanned the heavens most attentively for their forecasts. They believed that "the flashing of stars means winds from definite directions; but if they flash in different places, they announce uncertain winds and from all directions". Meteors or shooting stars were held to be signs of wind or rain coming from the same direction, while comets or "long haired" stars indicated wind and drought if they were frequent. The position of the moon or major planets in the 12 signs of the Zodiac furnished material for extensive lists of weather indications suggestive of our own almanacs.

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