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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WET-WEATHER SAINTS

The familiar superstition relating to St. Swithin's Day (July 15) has been discussed in these notes in previous years, and therefore we have not reverted to it this year. We should like, however, to call attention to the fact that, in various parts of the world, there are fully half a dozen other saints whose days, in the church calendar, are credited with the prognostic character ascribed to St. Swithin's Day in England and the United States.

Thus in France rain on St. Medard's Day (June 8) and also on St. Gervais's and St. Protais's Day (June 19), is regarded as a sign of forty days' rain to follow. As the second of these dates comes less than forty days after the first, a literal interpretation of the rule would mean that rain on June 8 is followed by rain every day until July 29; and, as the rule is said to work both ways, dry weather on June 8 would indicate an unbroken drought until July 29.

In Scotland, Bullion's Day (July 4) and in Flanders St. Godelive's Day (July 6) are supposed to furnish the same tokens of coming weather. The forty-day period that figures in these myths is probably due to the influence of the Deluge story in the Bible, while the myths themselves probably go back to very ancient times. Possibly they had their origin in India, where, in connection with the monsoons, long periods of persistent rain and also of unbroken drought are much commoner than they are in Europe, and are also of such vast economic importance that they would be likely to give rise to popular legends.

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