

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SOME UNFAMILIAR WEATHER LORE

In Burma the inhabitants have a custom of holding a tug-of-war to bring rain. A rain party and a drought party pull against each other, the rain party being allowed the victory, which, according to popular belief, results in rain.

In Scotland the rule for household fires is that they are needed in all the months with an R in them.

In France there was once a custom of setting twelve onions in a row on Christmas day, to represent the twelve months. On the top of each onion was placed a pinch of salt. If the salt had melted by Epiphany, the corresponding month was expected to be wet, while if the salt remained it was a sign the month would be dry.

In Greece, when it thunders, people say the prophet Elias is driving his chariot in pursuit of demons.

In Shropshire there is a stone called the Devil's Chair. According to local superstition, if anybody sits on it a thunderstorm immediately arises.

In Ireland there is a saying that putting the cat under the pot will bring bad weather. This is sometimes done in jest to prevent a guest from departing.

In some parts of America the edge of the Milky Way that is brightest is supposed to indicate the direction from which a storm will come.

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