

Released upon receipt  
but intended for use  
July 23, 1929.

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed July 16, 1929.

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,  
Authority on Meteorology.

RAISING A BREEZE AT SEA

Sailors still keep up the half-serious half-jostling practice of whistling for a breeze, though it is probably not so common today as it was a century ago. Basil Hall, writing in 1811 of a calm/<sup>at</sup>sea, says: "One might have thought that the ship was planted in a grove of trees, so numerous were the whistlers." As to beliefs on this subject in Ireland a later writer says: "In a dead calm you may whistle for wind except in a dangerous place. Crossing from Skibbereen to Clear Island, County Cork, a friend of mine was very nearly getting into a row for inadvertently whistling." In California sailors say that one may whistle softly for a breeze, but that it is dangerous to indulge in loud or thoughtless whistling as it may bring a gale.

Scratching the mast is another superstitious method, not yet extinct, of making the wind blow. Some nautical authorities say the foremast should be chosen for this purpose; others prescribe the mizzen. Still another wind-raising process is to stick a knife in the mast with the handle pointing in the direction from which the wind is desired.

A well-seasoned story tells of the sea captain who resorted in vain to all the time-honored methods of raising a breeze. As a last resort he caused all the matches on board to be collected and thrown overboard, except one solitary match. He then took his stand on the quarterdeck, filled his pipe, and struck the remaining match, which was promptly blown out by a strong wind.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

-----  
SCIENCE SERVICE,  
21st and B Sts.,  
Washington, D. C.