

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed October 24, 1930.

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WIND SUPERSTITIONS

Hebrides Islanders were once in the habit of hanging a he-goat's skin to the masthead to secure a favorable breeze. French sailors sometimes flogged a boy at the mast for the same purpose. A German method was to wait until another ship came by, sailing in the opposite direction, and throw a broom before her. According to Pomeranian tradition a broom thrown into the fire will raise a breeze from the direction toward which the handle points.

Sardinian sailors believed they could get a good breeze by sweeping a chapel after mass and blowing the dust from it after departing ships. Breton sailors gathered dust from the Church of the Holy Union, at Roscoff, for similar use.

A Fiji method of getting a wind was to wish aloud for it after taking a drink. It was once a common nautical superstition that cutting the hair or nails during a calm would provoke a gale. Probably the most widespread of all superstitious methods of raising a wind is whistling; which must be done with discretion, as fearful tempests sometimes ensue. This notion is general among European and American sailors, and Bishop Heber tells us that the boatmen of the Ganges cherish the same idea.

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