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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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LIGHTNING-ROD NOTIONS

We have already told in these notes how, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, when all Europe was agog over Franklin's invention of the lightning-rod, a German priest installed such rods on carts and coaches and even devised one that could be screwed on the end of a cane for the use of pedestrians. Some other vagaries of the same character are recorded in a French work on lightning by Th. Moreux.

The notion prevailed, for example, that a person who was overtaken by a thunderstorm while walking in the open country could protect himself from lightning by drawing his sword and holding it aloft. As carrying weapons was forbidden to the clergy, certain priests asked to be exempted from the rule in stormy weather, so that they might have this means of protection at hand. They were told, however, that, according to Dr. Franklin, letting one's clothes get wet was a good substitute for the use of "points"; a procedure that is usually quite easy to follow in a thunderstorm!

"At Paris," says Moreux, "the ladies would not let slip such an opportunity to modify their toilette. In the year 1778 it was fashionable to wear a hat with a metal wire running around the ribbon and connected with a light silver chain, which hung down to the heels." Moreux's book contains a picture of this fantastic device.

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