

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed April 8, 1933

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SPRINGS AS WEATHER INDICATORS

"Springs rise against rain" is a British weather saying, and the idea it embodies is by no means peculiar to Great Britain.

The fact is that some springs, though by no means all, do increase their flow when the weather is propitious for rain, especially when the previous weather has been unusually dry. There are even some small streams that are observed to flow in greater volume before the coming of rainy weather. In such cases the subterranean channels through which water is supplied to the springs and the streams evidently includes or communicates with closed cavities partly filled with water and partly with air. A decrease of atmospheric pressure in the open air, such as commonly precedes the onset of a general rain, permits the air enclosed in these cavities to expand and force more than the usual amount of water to the outlet. A rise of atmospheric pressure outside should have the opposite effect, slackening the flow of water.

On the other hand, many springs do not communicate with cavities containing any considerable amount of air, and cannot, therefore, serve even as rough indicators of coming weather.

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