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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE WEATHER IN VERSE

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Enough poems have been written about weather to provide material for a big anthology, and some of these productions have found sufficient favor with men of science to be accorded space in scientific journals. The recent frequency of tropical storms makes it timely to recall a poem called "The Cyclone," describing the career of such a storm, published in the New York Tribune and reprinted in the Monthly Weather Review, the official organ of the U.S. Weather Bureau, for May, 1902. Prof. Cleveland Abbe, then editor of the Review, wrote of this effusion: "The poetry is good, the meteorology seems to be correct, and we cannot refuse a place to these graphic lines." I quote Professor Abbe's opinion without necessarily endorsing it.

William Cullen Bryant wrote a poem entitled "The Hurricane." Charles De Kay has one called "The Tornado," but obviously meant to be a description of a tropical cyclone. Nothing in weather poetry is truer to nature than Whittier's "Snow-Bound." Virgil, in the "Aeneid," gives us an excellent picture of a storm on the Mediterranean. And so on.

Some poems about weather are funny; not always intentionally. I have previously mentioned one entitled "The Weather Man," published a few years ago in the Nation, in which the weather forecaster is described as making his predictions in a revolving turret; apparently an astronomical observatory, of a type unknown to science. Of intentionally funny weather poems the best and wittiest of all is "The Propheteers," by Lieut. A.P. Herbert, originally published in Punch and reprinted in W.J. Humphreys' "Weather Proverbs and Paradoxes."

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