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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WEATHER AND THE POETS

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Babbage, the mathematician, according to a well-worn tale, criticized Tennyson's couplet,

"Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born."

The second line, he suggested, might better read "Every moment one and one-fourth are born;" which, he said, though not strictly accurate, would be near enough for poetry! The literal-minded meteorologist might be equally critical of some of the meteorology found in poems.

Wordsworth makes a cloud "float on high o'er vales and hills," but clouds do not float. They are heavier than air and sink slowly in it, as a rule.

The lover in the song who is "coming when the dewdrops fall" will not turn up in the near future if he waits for that miracle to happen. Dew does not fall. Shelley thought it did when he wrote in "The Cloud":

"From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one."

Again, Shelley's "million-colored bow" is one degree worse, as a description of a rainbow, than the old stereotyped statement of schoolbooks that the bow shows seven colors. Rarely can one distinguish more than three or four.

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