

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SOME WEATHER ASSOCIATIONS

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In England people say that St. Simon's and St. Jude's day -- October 28 -- is always rainy. In the United States weather hotter than the average for the season is expected on the Fourth of July. In both the United States and Canada the notion prevails that circus day is generally a "scorcher"; an idea implying a curious conception of the way in which hot waves travel over the country. In some parts of America county fairs are said to be conducive to rain. Professor McCartney, of the University of Michigan, tells me that Freshman Week at that institution enjoys a similar reputation.

That storms occur at the equinoxes is a rock-ribbed popular opinion, handed down from remote antiquity. Caesar tells us in his "Gallic War" how he hastened his departure from Britain because the equinox was at hand and he did not think his weakened ships should be exposed to the storms prevalent at that period of the year. Catullus refers to the "caeli furor aequinoctialis" -- the raging of the equinoctial sky. The belief in the "equinoctial storm" -- alias the "line storm" -- still flourishes in full vigor on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, though we have not preserved the belief of the ancients in "solstice rains."

"Queen's weather" was said to prevail whenever the late Queen Victoria appeared in public, and there has been a similar traditional association of fine weather with the doings of some American presidents; particularly, I believe, with those of Theodore Roosevelt.

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