

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
September 25, 1934

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed September 18, 1934

PIMPERNEL

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

Evidently the American publishers of Baroness Orczy's novel "The Way of the Scarlet Pimpernel" suppose the flower in question to be entirely unknown to the American public. Otherwise they would hardly have adorned the jacket with the picture of a large red blossom no more resembling a pimpernel than an elephant resembles a kangaroo.

The pimpernel, though of Old World origin, is widely distributed in North America. It is found in Canada, the United States and Mexico, and though its blossoms are small they attract attention on account of their distinctive color. Thus millions of Americans have opportunities every summer to test for themselves the time-honored reputation of this plant as a weather prophet. It is known as the "poor man's weather glass," because its blossoms are supposed to close before a storm.

They often do, for the simple reason that they are always closed at night and never open, in any kind of weather, except during the middle hours of the day. On the other hand, I can testify from personal observation that the pimpernel blossom is often wide open not only just before a shower but while rain is falling, if the shower happens to occur within a few hours of midday. On the third of this month I found one open in northern Maryland about eleven in the morning. The sky was then overcast. An hour later rain began falling, and the petals were still fully expanded.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

SCIENCE SERVICE
21st and Constitution Ave.
Washington, D.C.