

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed December 24, 1934.

THE "MOANING OF THE BAR"

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Authority on Meteorology

The second edition, just published, of Dr. W. J. Humphreys' indispensable book "Weather Proverbs and Paradoxes" discusses a sound that often gives dwellers on seacoasts timely warning of a coming storm. We read:

"Those who live at seaside places, where the water is shoal at some distance out, as along coral reefs and harbor bars, have the advantage of still another warning sound -- the moaning of the bar. Long swells and waves often run far ahead of the storm that produced them; heralds of foul weather,

'For, ere the rising winds begin to roar,
The working seas advance to wash the shore.'
--Virgil.

As these surges cross a bar or sweep over a reef they break into sounding waves that unitedly produce at a distance a confused murmur -- the moaning, one easily may imagine on a dark and gloomy night, of dying fishermen who ventured to sea in the face of the coming storm. Very properly, then, the wise and prudent exclaim with Tennyson,

'And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.'

For often this moaning betokens indeed a tempest too dangerous to dare."

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