

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt  
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June 27, 1935

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed June 20, 1935

THE TALE OF A PROVERB

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Authority on Meteorology

In his valuable book "Weather Proverbs and Paradoxes," the first edition of which appeared in 1923, Dr. W. J. Humphreys, of the U. S. Weather Bureau, introduced a few "proverbs" of his own invention. They are little jingles, in proverb style, which embody old popular beliefs concerning weather signs but which owe their form to Dr. Humphreys, who acknowledges their authorship in his book. One, relating to certain effects of humidity that foretold a storm, runs as follows:

"Curls that kink and cords that bind ---  
Signs of rain and heavy wind."

Now, a dozen years after its manufacture, this "proverb" turns up in the book "Stars Fell on Alabama," by Carl Carmer, where it is included in a long list of "superstitions" said to be current in the Alabama mountains; though of course it is not a superstition, but a fairly trustworthy rule for weather prediction. How come, Mr. Carmer? Did you actually take down this rhyme from the lips of a primitive mountaineer? Or did you take it on trust from a waggish colleague at the University of Alabama?

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