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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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MAKING SUNSHINE

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology

Among the superstitious practices of humanity those relating to sunshine-making hold a much less prominent place than do those relating to rain-making, but several examples of the former are known.

Frazer, in "The Golden Bough," tells us that the Melanesians make sunshine by means of a mock sun. A circular stone is wound about with red braid and stuck with owl's feathers to represent the rays of the sun, or the stone is laid on the ground with white rods radiating from it to imitate sunbeams. A white or red pig is sacrificed in the sunshine-making ceremony, while a black one is sacrificed if rain is desired.

In New Caledonia, according to the same authority, "When a wizard desires to make sunshine he takes some plants and corals to the burial ground and makes them into a bundle, adding two locks of hair cut from the head of a living child (his own child, if possible) also two teeth, or an entire jawbone from the skeleton of an ancestor. He then climbs a high mountain whose top catches the first rays of the morning sun. Here he deposits three sorts of plants on a flat stone, places a branch of dry coral beside them, and hangs the bundle of charms over the stone.

"Next morning he returns to this rude altar, and at the moment when the sun rises from the sea he kindles a fire on the altar. As the smoke rises he rubs the stone with the dry coral, invokes his ancestors and says: 'Sun, I do this that you may be burning hot and eat up all the clouds in the sky.' The same ceremony is repeated at sunset."

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