

DO NOT RELY ON SIGNS.

THEY ARE FREQUENT FAILURES AS TO THE WEATHER.

Merciless Science Shows that Some of the Most Cherished Omens Are Not Worthy of Consideration—Even the Animals Are Not as Wise as They Are Thought.

Sarcastic and proverbial lore about the weather were cruelly rent in the iconoclastic address on "Weather Fallacies" read to the Royal Meteorological Society at its recent annual meeting in London by the President, R. Inwards, and printed in the last number of the Quarterly Journal of the society. In early times, when the weather had to be studied from cloud, sky, and sea, and from the behavior of animals and plants, men were pardonable for doing what is still often a cause of error, foretelling what they most wished for and putting down as a universal law what was only a coincidence of independent events. One class of prophecies connects the weather with certain seasons of the year, particularly days in the week, or the days of certain saints, which was a convenient way of fixing a date, and even with particular times of the day. We often hear such sayings as "Fine on Friday, fine on Sunday," or "Friday is the best and the worst day of the week," and proverbs like "Rain at seven, fine at eleven." When these sayings come true they are faithfully remembered, when they fail they are forgotten. There is no kind of foundation for such rules, which Mr. Inwards calls "self-exploding," or for the belief that it rains on St. Swithin's day July 15, it will rain for forty days after. That date is very near a well known bad period in wet years, as the terms "St. Margaret's flood," July 20, and "Lamma's flood," Aug., 1, show; the fact that some heavy rains began on July 15 was enough to establish the "law," which every one knows is constantly broken.

Equally unfounded are the scientific superstitions, presented under the shield of astronomy, which base infallible rules for the weather on the relative position of the moon, sun, and planets. These appeal to analogy, to reason, and to common sense. The known action of sun and moon on ocean tides is generally the starting point of such theories, and it is clear to common sense that when the earth is nearer to the sun or the moon to the earth, or both sun and moon are pulling together, there ought to be a tide of atmosphere similar to the tide of ocean which these influences undoubtedly produce. But the facts do not bear the theory out; the atmospheric tides do not ebb and flow, except in an infinitesimal degree. Again, the sun and moon move in planes that are at an angle to each other, so that at times their attraction acts in widely diverging lines, at others almost in the same plane. Here is a clear case: When the angle is greatest, when the moon is "on her back," there must be atmospheric disturbance. Unfortunately the storms do not come, and we must find some other cause for our weather. Hardly a year goes by without a new moon theory to account for it. M. Flaugurges, as the result of twenty years of observations, has found that when the moon was furthest from the earth the barometer averaged 755 millimetres, and when nearest, 754 millimetres, a difference of only one millimetre.

Some prophets have built their faith on cycles, predicting that weather changes would back into the same relative position, which they do in nineteen years, with an error of only an hour and a half. Others advocate a cycle of fifty-four years, but all the cycles systems have broken down when tested, and as far as we know, there is no period within which weather changes repeat themselves. There are plenty of other fallacies about the moon, such as that the full moon clears away clouds; that you should sow beans or cut trees on the wane of the moon; that it is a bad sign if the moon changes on Saturday or Sunday; that two full moons in a month will bring a flood; that to see the old moon in the arms of the new brings on rain. M. Flammarion says that "the moon's influence on the weather is negligible. The heat coming from it would affect our temperature by twelve millionths of a degree, and the atmospheric tides caused by it would only affect the barometric pressure a few hundredths of an inch, far less than the changes always taking place from other causes."

The moon and the weather may change together; But change of the moon Does not change the weather. Even the halo round the moon is discredited; it has been found by observers that it is followed by fine weather as often as by rain. About the sun there are many fallacies, and ever since the discovery that the spots on its surface appear with greater or less frequency, theorists in shoals have tried to prove that they rule our weather. It has been proved that the frequency of sun spots and the variations of the magnetic needle are intimately connected, and that the aurora appears and disappears in some sort of sympathy with the sun spot variations, but this is as far as we can get for the present, as these changes seem to have no definite relation to our weather. Mr. Scott has proved that there are no equinoctial gales. Coming down to earth, we find a long list of statements of the behavior of animals and weather. E. J. Lowe has care-

fully examined a number of well-known signs, and all seem to break down completely. He took the signs of bats flying about in the evening, many toads appearing at sunsets, great quantities of snails, fish rising to the surface, bees busy, crowds of locusts, restless cattle, landrails clamorous, flies and gnats troublesome, many insects, crows flocking and noisy, spider webs thick on the grass, spiders hanging from their webs in the evening, and ducks and geese making more noise than usual. Calling a day fine when no rain was measured in the gauge, he found in 361 observations of such signs that they were followed 213 times by fine weather and only 148 by rain. Even swallows flying low cannot be depended upon, as especially in summer and autumn they almost invariably skim along the ground. Animals probably feel the dampness or darkness preceding wet weather, and this makes them uneasy, but not more than it affects man himself. As to cows scratching their ears and goats uttering cries, they are no more true as signs of rain than the adage which credits pigs with seeing the wind. The leech is believed to be a weather prophet and two books have been written about its behavior. The author of one devised an instrument by which leeches could give audible storm warnings. It consisted of twelve bottles of water, each containing a leech and a metal tube too small for it to enter easily, but into which it would try to squeeze when a thunderstorm came on, according to its nature. In the tube was a piece of whalebone, attached to a chain from which hung a bell, which rang when the whalebone was touched. Twelve leeches were used so as to make sure that at least one would do duty.

Plants are also used as weather indicators, and as they act in sympathy with the dampness, gloom, and chilliness of the air, and these are conditions that generally precede rain, their indications cannot be called altogether fallacious. The pimpernel and the marigold close their petals before rain, because the air is getting damper, and for the same reason the poplar and the maple show the under surface of their leaves. An artificial leaf of paper will do the same. If hard, thin paper is used for the upper side and thicker unsized paper for the lower, the leaf will curl up in sympathy with the condition of the air. So will a slip of ordinary photographic paper. And the slowness that moisture produces in plants applies to insects, some of which can fly only in the sunshine.

In 1892 attention was directed to a plant the Abrus precatorius, a beautiful shrub of the mimosa kind, which has the property of being sensitive in a high degree, so that its pinnate leaflets go through many curious movements, and it was claimed that these form a guide of unerring certainty to foreshow the coming weather. Even earthquakes were said to be predicted by this wonderful plant. If it closed its leaflets upward, after the manner of a butterfly about to settle, fair weather was shown; when the leaflets remained flat, changeable and gloomy weather was indicated; while thunder at various distances was to be foretold by the curling of the leaflets, and the nearer the thunder the greater the curl, until when the points of the leaflets crossed, the thunder storm was indicated as being overhead. Changes of wind, hurricanes, and other phenomena were to be shown by the various curious and beautiful movements of the leaflets and stalks. These movements undoubtedly took place, but the botanists at Kew were unable to find any connection between them and the weather, and found that most of them were due to the agency of light and moisture. At the meteorological office the movements were found to have nothing to do with either cyclones or earthquakes. Yet this sensitive plant had been made the subject of an English patent.

In the country a large crop of hips, haws and holly berries is held to be a sign that a severe winter is coming, and that nature thus provides winter food for the birds. But it is not so. Neither is it true, as Green Christmas, makes a fat churchyard, a Mr. Dine's statistics have shown. It is often stated that the noise of a cannon will produce rain, and in Austrian Tyrol the churchbells are rung to avert thunder; but the notion is a fallacy. The experiments made in America to test whether rain could be produced by exploding a large quantity of gunpowder in the air resulted in nothing but smoke and noise.

Only a selection has here been made of the vast catalogue of fallacies that have grown up about the weather. There are still people, Mr. Inwards remarked in conclusion, who believe that the saints' days rule the weather, that the sun puts out fire, that warm water freezes sooner than cold.

Appearance Of The Musk Ox. The appearance of the musk ox is so odd and striking that when once seen it is seldom forgotten. You see an oblong mass of tremendously long brown hair, 4 1/2 feet high by 6 1/2 feet long, supported upon wide hoo's and very short, thick legs, almost hidden by the body hair. There are also a blunt and hairy muzzle, a pair of eyes, a pair of broad, flattened horns that part like a woman's hair and drop far downward before they curve upward—and that is all. The mass of hair is so thick that as the robe lies on the floor it is about as easy to walk over as a feather bed.

On the loins you will find, if you look closely, a broad "saddlemark" of dirty white hair, shorter than the rest of the coat. Next to the body is a matted mass of very fine and soft hair, like clean wool, so dense that to snow and fog it is quite impenetrable. Over this lies a thick coat of very long, straight hair, often 12 inches in length, and sometimes 20, like the grass raincoat of a Japanese soldier. Sometimes it actually touches the snow as the animal walks.—St. Nicholas.

A WONDERFUL REMEDY.

A YOUNG LADY IN ELGIN COUNTY TELLS HOW IT SAVED HER LIFE.

The Case Baffled the family Doctor and he Gave it up—Relief Came When Hope Had Almost Gone.—Health Again Restored.

(From the Tinsburg Observer.)

Mr. J. W. Kennedy, who resides on the 8th division of the township of Bayham, is one of the most respected farmers in the township. Recently an Observer representative visited his home for the purpose of learning the particulars of the recovery of his daughter, Miss Alice Kennedy, from a severe and trying illness, through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, after the medical assistance had failed. Miss Kennedy now presents the appearance of a healthy and active young woman of twenty, and bears no indication of having passed through an illness that baffled the doctors' skill. To the reporter Miss Kennedy said that in the autumn of 1893 she was taken ill and a physician was called in. Despite all the doctor did for her she continued to grow worse. She suffered from severe headaches, became very pale, rapidly lost flesh, and her limbs were cold and swollen. She suffered great pain and it was with much difficulty she could move about, and would sometimes lie for hours in a half stupor. At last the doctor said he could do nothing more for her, and the family asked his advice as to her using Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. He said he was of the opinion that they would not help her. In spite of this adverse opinion, however, she determined to give them a trial, and before the first box was finished the wisdom of the decision was made manifest. An improvement was noticed and with joy Miss Kennedy continued taking the Pink Pills until she had used fourteen boxes, when she felt that she was completely cured. She has not taken any since the early summer, and has not had any recurrence of her old trouble, and never felt better in her life. Miss Kennedy says that as a result of the Pink Pill treatment she has gained 25 pounds in weight. A short time after she began the use of the Pink Pills the doctor who had previously attended her, called and was much surprised at the improvement in the young lady's appearance, and said that if Pink Pills had caused the transformation by all means to continue their use. Miss Kennedy's statements were corroborated by her father and sister, both of whom give credit for her marvelous recovery to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are especially valuable to women. They build up the blood, restore the nerves, and eradicate those troubles which make the lives of so many women, old and young, a burden, dizziness, palpitation of the heart, nervous headache, and nervous prostration speedily yield to this wonderful medicine. They are also a specific in cases of locomotor ataxia, partial paralysis, St. Vitus' dance, hysteria, neuralgia, rheumatism, the after effects of a grippa, etc. In men they affect a radical cure in all cases arising from overwork, mental worry, or excesses of any nature. They are sold only in boxes, the trade mark and wrapper printed in red ink, at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50, and may be had of druggists or direct by mail from Dr. Williams' Medicine Company, Brockville, Ont., or Schenectady, N. Y.

HANDLING CONSTRICTORS.

The Trick by Which the Great Serpents Are Managed Without Danger.

Snake dealers in South Africa have a fine contempt for their squirming and venomous wares, though ship captains carry them as freight. The snake dealers handle the box constrictors with great deftness. This serpent bites, but his bite is not venomous, so that the chief danger to the handler is from the serpent's enormously powerful muscles. The dealers have learned that the box, to be really dangerous must have a fulcrum in the shape of something around which he may coil his tail.

The box is, in fact, a lever in which the ordinary arrangement is power, weight, fulcrum. Knowing this, the dealers drop a soft hat over his head, that he may neither see nor bite, and then snatch him so suddenly from his resting place that he has no opportunity to brace himself by seizing a fixed object with his tail. After that the essential thing is to see that he is not brought within distance of any such object.

A snake dealer on board a Brazilian steamer the other day was occupied in transferring his boxes from one box to another. He opened the box for an instant, dropped the hat over the head of one of the creatures, snatched it from its fellows,

and, rushing across the deck, dropped it into the other box. The thing looked so easy that a deck hand, waiting until the snake owner's back was turned, essayed to repeat the act. He neglected to use the hat, and with a yell yanked a great snake from the box with its fangs fixed in his fingers. Not daring to let go, yet fearing to hold on, he began whirling the snake about his head, meanwhile darning madly over the deck. The snake man managed to capture the reptile, and box in security. Then somebody expressed concern for the rash deck hand, to which the snake owner answered: "What, him? He's all right. But think of my snake! It's worth twenty of that mug!" New York Sun.

Feared He Had Foundered. Whatever may be the truth or falsity of the stories that are told of the scarcity of funds in a country editor's pocket or the scarcity of food in his stomach, the stories are always told, and neither the progress of education nor the growth and development of the press seems to have any effect upon the crop. One of the latest comes from Kentucky, where a mountain editor, at least, rarely develops into a Cæsar or an Apiculus, and this one is concerning a mountain editor. A subscriber had remembered him very kindly, and a day or two later a visitor called at his office.

"Can I see the editor?" he inquired of the grimy little "devil" roosting on a high stool.

"No sir," replied the youth on the stool. "He's sick."

"What's the matter with him?"

"Dunno," said the boy. "One of our subscribers give him a bag of flour and a bushel of paraters 't'other day, and I reckon he's foundered."—Harper's Magazine.

Servants Who Will Not Take Tips. The servants in a well-ordered Japanese household are the most deferential beings alive. Every time they bring you a cup of tea or come to remove a dish at dinner or breakfast they will kneel and bow until their foreheads touch the floor. Nor will any of them accept a fee. The other night, as we left the residence of a Japanese gentleman where we had been taking dinner, one of his servants piloted us through the grounds to the gate, where our carriage was waiting, and I attempted to give him a small coin. When I offered it, he clasped his hands together, and made a very low bow, keeping his head down until the carriage started.—Chicago Record.

The Plan Always Works. Old Friend—I was surprised to hear that you had married Mr. Sapphead.

Mrs. Sapphead—Well, he persisted in hanging around me wherever I went, and there wasn't a night he didn't call and stay until I was most tired to death. So I married him to get rid of him.

Old friend—Humph? Have you got rid of him?

Mrs. H—Oh, ye; long ago; he has joined two clubs and six lodges.

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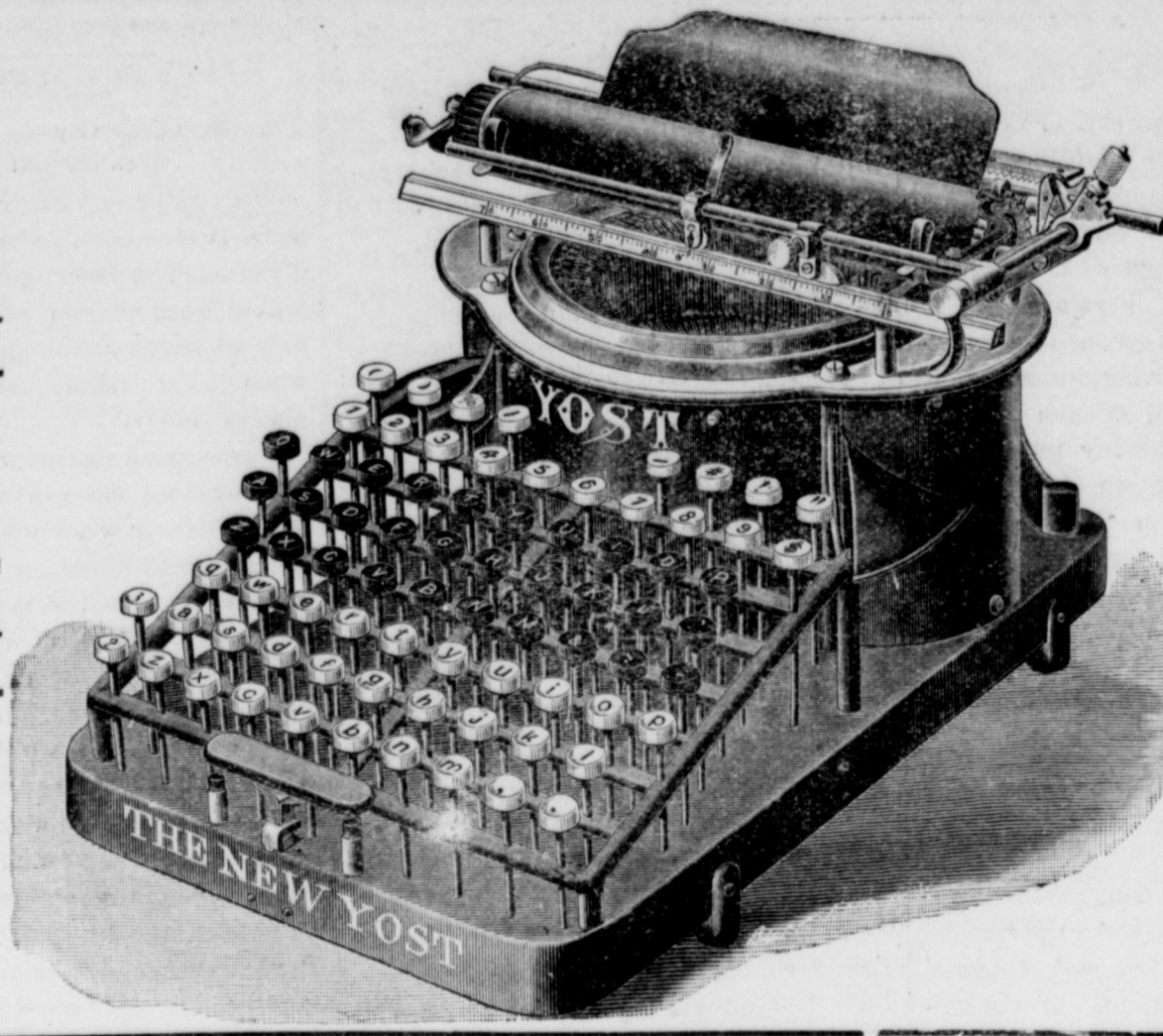
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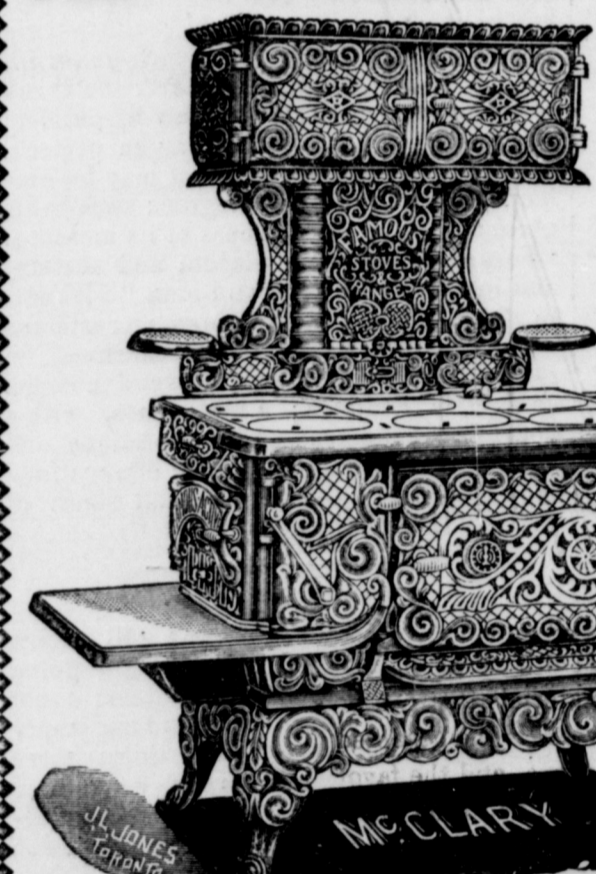
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