# WEATHER



A COLLECTION OF PROVERBS SAVINGS & RULES CONCERNATION THE WEATHER

COMPILED G ARRANGED BY RICHARD INWARDS



## WEATHER LORE

A COLLECTION OF

## Proverbs, Sayings, and Rules

CONCERNING THE WEATHER

COMPILED AND ARRANGED BY

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#### INTRODUCTION.

THE state of the weather is almost the first subject about which people talk when they meet, and it is not surprising that a matter of such importance to comfort, health, prosperity, and even life itself, should form the usual text and starting-point for the conversation of daily life.

From the earliest times, hunters, shepherds, sailors, and tillers of the earth have from sheer necessity been led to study the teachings of the winds, the waves, the clouds, and a hundred other objects from which the signs of coming changes in the state of the air might be foretold. The weather-wise amongst these primitive people would be naturally the most prosperous, and others would soon acquire the coveted foresight by a closer observance of the same objects from which their successful rivals guessed the proper time to provide against a storm, or reckoned on the prospects of the coming crops. The result has been the framing of a rough set of rules, and the laying down of many "wise saws," about the weather, and the freaks to which it is liable. Some of these observations have settled down into the form of proverbs; others have taken the shape of rhymes; while many are yet floating about, unclaimed and unregistered, but passed from mouth to mouth, as mere records of facts, varying in verbal form according to local idioms, but owning a common origin and purport.

Many weather proverbs contain evidence of keen observation and just reasoning, but a greater number are the offspring of the common tendency to form conclusions from a too limited observation of facts. Even those which have not been confirmed by later experience will be interesting, if only to show the errors into which men may be led by seeing Nature with eyes half closed by prejudice or superstition. It has seemed to me desirable that all this "fossil wisdom" should be collected, and I have endeavoured in this book to present in a systematic form all the current weather lore which is in any way applicable to the climate of the British Isles.

This work is not intended to touch the philosophical aspect of the subject, but it is hoped that its perusal may lead some people to study

the weather, not by mere "rule of thumb," as their fathers did, but by intelligent observation, aided by all the niceties of the scientific means now fortunately at the command of everyone.

This collection comprises only those proverbs, sayings, or rules in some way descriptive or prophetic of the weather and its changes, and does not for the most part include those in which the winds, sun, and clouds are only brought in for purposes of comparison and illustration—such, for instance, as, "Always provide against a rainy day," "Every cloud has a silver lining," and others in which the weather is only incidentally or poetically mentioned. Some rhymes have been rejected on account of their being manifestly absurd or superstitious, but the reader will see that much latitude has been allowed in this respect, and, as a rule, all those which may possibly be true will be found in these pages. Predictions as to the peace of the realm, the life and death of kings, etc., founded on the state of the weather for particular days, have of course been left out, as unworthy of remembrance.

A few of the rules here presented will certainly be found to contradict each other, but the reader must judge between them, and assign each its proper value. With regard to those from foreign sources, I have only been able to give a few which seem in some measure applicable to our climate, and it will be seen that even these have lost a great deal of their point in the process of translation. A great many proverbs about the weather come from Scotland, very few from Ireland.

have registered the various extracts in the order which seemed most convenient for reference, generally giving precedence to the subjects on which they were the most numerous. Respecting the sources from which they have been derived, I have, of course, availed myself of the collections of general proverbs by Kelly, Howell, Henderson, and Ray. The collection by the latter author, which is usually considered the most complete, only contains, however, eighty-seven adages, which have been transcribed into this volume as weather proverbs proper. A much greater number have appeared in the estimable Notes and Queries, under the head of "Folk Lore," and a few have been gleaned from Hone's "Every-Day Book" and other volumes of a similar class. The rest have, for the most part, come under my personal notice, or have been communicated by esteemed correspondents, who are now heartily thanked. A full list of the various authors to whom I am indebted will be found in the appendix.

The Bible has handed down to us many proofs of the repute in which weather wisdom was held by the ancients, and it is clear that some of the sacred writers were keen observers of the signs of the sky. The writings of Job are rich in this respect, and contain many allusions to the winds, clouds, and tempests. The New Testament also records some sound weather-lore, and in one instance Christ Himself has not thought it unworthy of Him to confirm a popular adage about a cloud rising in the west and foreshowing rain; for after mentioning the saying, He has

added, "And so it is." The Biblical texts referring to the weather have therefore been inserted where appropriate.

In their proper places, too, will be found quotations from learned authors, with Shakespeare at their head. The admirers of that poet "for all time" will not be surprised to find that he has said, in his own way, nearly all that was known on the subject of the "skyey influences" in the age in which he lived. Virgil, Bacon, Thompson, and other less famous men, will be shown to have contributed something to the common stock of information on this subject. Some sound Saxon weather-lore comes also from the mouth of the Shepherd of Banbury, who in the seventeenth century wrote a short list of outdoor signs of coming changes in the state of the air.

The collection of Scottish weather proverbs by Sir A. Mitchell has furnished me with a few of the shrewdest adages from that country, and the list published by Mr. M. A. Denham for the Percy Society has yielded some not met with in any other place.

By courteous permission of Brigadier-General Greely, of the Washington Signal Office, I have been able to incorporate a great number of American and other proverbs, which have been collected for the United States Signal Service by Major Dunwoody.

The late Mr. P. Dudgeon, of Cargen, was kind enough to make many important corrections to the Scottish sayings which appear in this work.

I desire also to acknowledge my great obligation to the Rev. C. W. Empson for many kind hints and corrections, and to thank Mr. G. J. Symons for having kindly allowed me the use of his priceless meteorological library. My many other correspondents are also thanked, and I can only here name some of the most prominent: viz., Mr. H. G. Bridges, Mr. A. Stroh, Mr. H. Southall, Mr. R. J. Lecky, Dr. Singer, Mr. A. Lancaster, Dr. Hellmann, Mr. James Burt of Worthing, Col. J. G. Sandeman, Mr. C. Shapley, Mr. W. F. Stanley, Mr. E. Mawley, Admiral Maclear, Dr. Marcet, and Mrs. Cunnington, while to Colonel Henry Saunders I am indebted for the original photographs which form in combination the frontispiece to this volume.

As it has been impossible to collect all the local weather proverbs current in different parts of the country, I shall feel obliged to any courteous reader who will communicate such as have been omitted, so that a future edition of this work may be rendered more complete in this respect.

It would be strange if all the observations brought in this volume to a common focus did not cast a new ray or two of light on the point to which they have all been directed. Out of so many shots some must hit the mark, though the reader must be warned that even in this "multitude of counsel" there is not absolute safety. These predictions are, after all, but gropings in the dark; and although skilled observers, armed with the delicate instruments contrived by modern science, may be able to forecast with some success the weather for a few hours, yet

with respect to the coming months and seasons, or the future harvests and vintages, the learned meteorologist is only on a level with the peasant who watches from the hilltop the "spreadings and driftings of the clouds," or hazards his rude weather guesses from the behaviour of his cattle or the blossoming of the hedge flowers which adorn his paths.

It is perhaps worth mentioning, with respect to those proverbs concerning the weather of particular days, that, on account of the reformation of the calendar, a great many of these sayings must be held to refer to times a little later than the dates now affixed. Notwithstanding this, I have retained the dates which I find by custom attached to the adages, as it is now impossible to say how long before the alteration of the calendar they took their rise. Of course, the real discrepancy will depend on the date of origin, as, in the case of any proverb having been current in the time of Julius Cæsar, its date would refer to the same part of the earth's orbit as at present, while the "Saints' Day" proverbs which have been concocted in the Middle Ages would require a correction depending upon the error of the calendar which had accumulated at their date of origin. This alone would account for the uncertain value of all this class of predictions.

The list of times for the flowering of plants must also be taken with some allowances, on account of the varying soil and climate of the different parts of the kingdom from which the information was collected.

Should the reader ask, as he naturally may, to what practical result does all this tend, and how from it he may venture to predict the coming weather, I can only recommend him to try and imbibe the general spirit of the rules and adages, to watch the clouds from a high place, to examine the published weather diagrams, and by collating them try to find where similar results have followed similar indications, and by all the instrumental means he can, go on measuring and gauging heat, pressure, rain, wind, and moisture, in the hope that he may some day arrive at the semblance of a definite law, and the certainty that he is pursuing an interesting and ever-improving study.

I have found myself unable to comply with the wish of several foreign reviewers, to give the foreign proverbs in their own languages. The bulk of the work would be so much increased if this plan were adopted.

It has been suggested to me that, in this third edition, I should endeavour to furnish more light and guidance to the reader, in enabling him to select from this wide anthology those sayings and rules which are of any real service to the modern weather student.

Frankly, I cannot do it, for I am deterred by the wholesome fear that, if I attempted such a task, a very scanty troop would be left after weeding out all the halt, lame, and unfit members which have failed to survive examination by those time-honoured tests, experience, figures, facts and common-sense. I may, however, generally state that those adages which have resulted from the direct observation of clouds, winds

and storms are, as may be supposed, much more to be relied on than all the quips, conceits, and guesses of the would-be weather-wise.

As for this book, it aims at no more than being a manual of outdoor weather wisdom seen from its traditional and popular side, without pretending to any scientific accuracy. Meteorology itself, especially as regards English weather, is very far from having reached the phase of an exact science.

RICHARD INWARDS.

BARTHOLOMEW VILLAS, LONDON, N.W.

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#### Meather in General.

HE weather rules the field.—SPAIN.

The almanack-writer makes the almanack. but God makes the weather.—DENMARK.

Almanacks

Weather.

It is the science of the pure air and the bright heaven, its Weather thoughts are amidst the loveliness of creation, it leads the study. mind as well as the eye to the morning mist, the noonday glory and the twilight cloud, to the purple peace of the mountain heaven, to the cloudy repose of the green valley; now expatiating on the silence of stormless æther, now on the rushing of the wings of the wind. It is indeed a knowledge which must be felt to be in its very essence full of the soul of the beautiful.—JOHN RUSKIN (R. Meteorol. Society's Journal, 1839).

'Tis not the husbandman, but the good weather, that makes Good the corn grow.—T. FULLER.

weather.

So it falls that all men are With fine weather happier far.

KING ALFRED (Poems, xii.).

A wise man carries his cloak in fair weather, and a fool wants his in rain.—Scotland.

Weather caution.

Though the weather be fine, take your umbrella.—CHINA.

Umbrella.

When fine, take your umbrella:

When raining, please yourself.—Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

If the weather is fine, put on your cloak; If it is wet, do as you please. - FRANCE.

Husbandry depended on the periodical rains; and forecasts Weather of the weather, with a view to make adequate provision Prophecy. against a coming deficiency, formed a special duty of the Bráhmans. The philosopher who erred in his predictions observed silence for the rest of his life.-W. W. HUNTER.

Those who are weather wise Are rarely otherwise.—CORNWALL. Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell, Pointing to each his thunder, rain, and wind. SHAKESPEARE (Sonnets, xiv.). Weather guesses.

To talk of the weather, it's nothing but folly, For when it's rain on the hill, it may be sun in the valley.

R. CHAMBERS (Popular Rhymes of Scotland).

Weathers.

There are many weathers in five days, and more in a month.

NORWAY.

Weather diary.

John Locke kept the first regular journal of the weather, and published it from time to time in the "Philosophical Transactions" and in Boyle's "History of the Air."—DR. JOHN BROWN (*Horæ Subsecivæ*, vol. i., 42).

Proclamation against weather saints. In the reign of Henry VIII. a proclamation was made against the almanacks which transmitted the belief in saints ruling the weather.

Sunshine.

Better it is to rise betimes And make hay while the sun shines, Than to believe in tales and lies Which idle people do devise.

English climate.

Of Albion's glorious Ile, the wonders whilst I write, The sundry varying soyles, the pleasures infinite; Where heat kills not the cold, nor cold expells the heat, Ne calmes too mildly small, nor winds too roughly great; Nor night doth hinder day, nor day the night doth wrong, The summer not too short, the winter not too long.

DRAYTON.

Is not their climate foggy, raw, and dull? On whom, as in despite, the sun looks pale, Killing their fruit with frowns.

SHAKESPEARE (Henry V., iii. 5).

Scottish climate.

Scotland! thy weather's like a modish wife;
Thy winds and rain for ever are at strife;
Like thee, the termagants their blustering try,
And when they can no longer scold, they cry.

AARON HILL.

Planting weather.

Whether the weather be fine or wet, Always water when you set.

Weather changes.

Weather, wind, women, and fortune change like the moon. FRANCE.

Be it dry or be it wet, The weather 'll always pay its debt.

When an opinion once obtains that a change of the weather happens at certain times, the change is expected, and as often as it takes place the remembrance of it remains; but we soon forget the number of times it fails.—JOHN MILLS, F.R.S. (Essay on the Weather).

Aratus says: "Do not neglect any of these [weather] signs, for it is good to compare a sign with another sign: if two signs. agree, have hope, but be assured still more by a third."-

Weather

Weather

rhyme.

C. L. PRINCE.

"Well, Duncombe, how will be the weather?" "Sir, it looks cloudy altogether; And coming across our Houghton Green, I stopped and talked with old Frank Beane. While we stood there, sir, old Jan Swain Went by, and said he knowed 'twould rain; The next that came was Master Hunt, And he declared he knew it wouldn't: And then I met with Farmer Blow-He plainly said he didn't know. So, sir, when doctors disagree, Who's to decide it-you or me?"

[This is a village rhyme written in the last century, and well known in Bedfordshire, where all the names are still found.

Shepherd.—"Well, do ye ken, sir, that I never saw in a' my born days what I could wi' a safe conscience hae ca'd bad. bad weather? The warst has aye some redeemin' quality about it that enabled me to thole it without yaumerin [murmuring]. Though we may na be able to see, we can aye think of the clear blue lift. Weather, sir, aiblins no to speak very scientially in the way o' meteorological observationbut rather in a poetical, that is, a religious spirit-may be defined, I jalouse [suspect], 'the expression o' the fluctuations and modifications of feeling in the heart o' the heevens made audible and visible and tangible on their face and bosom. That's weather."—PROFESSOR WILSON.

The common feelings of every man will convince him, if Weather he will attend to them, of the superior advantages health and health. derives from a pure and temperate atmosphere; for while troubled, tempestuous, foul, rough and impetuous weather prevails, while the days are cloudy and the nights damp, the mind becomes tetrick [perverse], sad, peevish, angry, dull, and melancholy; but while the western gales blow calmly over our heads, and the sun shines mildly from the skies, all nature looks alert and cheerful.

Thus when the changeful temper of the skies The rare condenses, the dense rarefies, New motions on the altered air impress't, New images and passions fill the breast; Then the glad birds in tender concert join, Then croaks the exulting rook, and sport the lusty kine. Virgil's " Georgics," Book I., line 490.

Weather

Weather and healthcontinued.

Weather works on all in different degrees, but most on those who are disposed to melancholy. The devil himself seems to take the opportunity of foul and tempestuous weather to agitate our spirits and vex our souls; for as the sea waves, so are the spirits and humours in our bodies tossed with tempestuous winds and storms. - Burton (Anatomy of Melancholy, chap. iii.).

The very air itself and the serenity of heaven will cause some mutation in us according to these verses of Cicero:

> The minds of men do in the weather share, Dark or serene as the day's foul or fair. MONTAIGNE (Cotton's Translation).

Weather prayers.

In one of Lucian's Dialogues there is an account of a couple of countrymen,-one pouring into the right ear of the god a petition that not a drop of rain may fall before he has completed his harvest; while another peasant, equally importunate, whispers into the left ear a prayer for immediate rain, in order to bring on a backward crop of cabbages.

Weather pravers of the Egyptians. Weather

Renouf refers to a papyrus on the staircase of the British Museum, which concludes with a mention of prayers for fine weather and a high Nile.

madness.

The astronomer in Dr. Johnson's Rasselas goes mad on the subject of the weather, which he fully believes he can control; and there have not been wanting in modern times sages who believed themselves equally potent, and some of them have gone the length of offering to predict the weather for any future time on payment of a fee, whilst the moderate price of sixpence was indicated as necessary for a single day's prophecy.

### Times and Seasons.

Amongst the first attempts at weather guesses, those concerning the seasons and their probable fitness for agriculture, the breeding of animals, or the navigation of the seas would take a prominent place. The weather during the winter and spring seems to have been narrowly watched, and the chances of a good harvest, a fat pasture, or a loaded orchard inferred from the experience of previous years, combined with a fair reliance upon fortune. Some of these predictions, though not strengthened by modern observation, are not to be altogether despised or thrown aside. least show us what kind of weather our forefathers wished to take place and thought most useful at the times to which they refer. The sayings of French, Scotch, and English agree in many particulars—such, for instance, as those referring to Candlemas Day and the early part of February generally. It seems that, according to the notions of our ancestors, this

part of the year could not be too cold, and no statistical evidence will ever make our farmers believe that a warm Christmas bodes well for an English harvest, or that a dry year ever did harm to the country. Some of these old sayings are also interesting as perhaps indicating the slowly changing climate of this country, and it is not unlikely that at some distant date most of the predictions will be found inapplicable. Particular saints days have also been selected as exerting special influence over the weather, and here we are constantly treading on the fringes of the veil of superstition, spread by ignorance over all matters about which but little certain knowledge existed. There are, however, still believers in St. Swithin and St. Valentine as weather prophets; and if their favourites do sometimes fail to bring the expected changes, they have at least no worse guides than those furnished by the Old Moores and Zadkiels of modern times.

It has been thought advisable to admit the proverbs concerning the proper seasons for sowing, etc.; and a table of the times of the flowering of certain well-known plants has been added, so that the progress of the seasons may be watched by observing the punctuality of the vegetable world in heralding their approach.

NOTE ON NEW STYLE.—In considering the weather proverbs regarding certain days, it must be remembered that the new style came into use on the day following September 2nd, 1752, which next day was called September 14th, and the eleven dates which would have been called September 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th, were omitted from the calendar by Act 24 George II., c. 23. Some of the ignorant pensioners, who had a daily allowance, thought they were being cheated by the new regulation, and petitioned for the eleven days' pay, and a man is shown in Hogarth's picture of the Election, in the Soane Museum, with a label on his breast to this effect: "Give us our eleven days." But, as stated in the introduction, the whole eleven days' correction should not be applied, but only such portion as corresponded to the error which had accumulated at the year of the particular saint. Thus, St. Swithin should have his day celebrated on July 19th instead of July 15th, to bring it into accord with the natural course of the seasons.

A good year is always welcome.—ICELAND.

YEAR.

Do not abuse the year till it has passed.—Spain.

Year.

If the old year goes out like a lion, the new year will come Old year. in like a lamb.

The harvest depends more on the year than on the field. Harvest.

A dry year never beggars the master.—FRANCE.

Dry.

A dry year never starves itself.

Mushrooms.

U	77 0000007 13070.
[Year.]	If there be neither snow nor rain, Then will be dear all kinds of grain.
Wet.	A bad year comes in swimming.—FRANCE.
	After a wet year a cold one.
	Rainy year, Fruit dear.—HAUTE LOIRE.
Wet and	Wet and dry years come in triads.
dry. Fine.	There are more fine days than cloudy ones in the year.  OVID.
Misty. Frosty.	Misty year, year of cornstalks.—Spain. Year of frosts, year of cornstacks.—Spain.
170091	Frost year, Fruit year.—Eure et Loire.
	Frost year, wheat year.—FRANCE.
Snowy.	Year of snow, Fruit will grow.—MILAN.
	A snow year, a rich year.
	Snow year, good year.
	A year of snow, a year of plenty.—Spain and France.
Windy.	A year of wind is good for fruit.—CALVADOS.
Acorns and figs.	Acorn year, purse year. Fig year, worse year.—Spain.
Nuts.	A good nut year, a good corn year.
•	Year of nuts, Year of famine.—FRANCE (HAUTE MARNE).
Hay.	A good hay year, a bad fog year.
Grass.	A year of grass good for nothing else.—SWITZERLAND.
Pears.	A pear year, A dear year.
Cherries and plums.	A cherry year, A merry year. A plum year, A dumb year.—KENT.
Plums.	In the year when plums flourish all else fails.—Devonshire.
Gooseberries.	Year of gooseberries, year of bottles [good vintage].—FRANCE.
Haws.	A haw year, A braw year.—IRELAND AND SCOTLAND. A haw year,
	A snaw year.—Scotland.
71.	37

Year of mushrooms, Year of poverty.—FRANCE (HAUTES PYRÉNÉES). Year of radishes,

Year of health.—ARDÈCHE.

[Year.] Radishes.

Year of cockchafers, year of apples.—France.

Cockchafers.

A cow year a sad year;

Cows.

A bull year, a glad year.—HOLLAND. Corn and horn go together.

Corn and cattle.

Leap year was ne'er a good sheep year.—Scotland.

Leap.

A serene autumn denotes a windy winter; a windy winter, SEASONS. a rainy spring; a rainy spring, a serene summer; a serene summer, a windy autumn, so that the air on a balance is seldom debtor to itself.-LORD BACON.

Spring. Slippy, drippy, nippy. Summer. Showery, flowery, bowery.

Satire on seasons.

Autumn. Норру, сгорру, рорру. Winter.

Wheezy, sneezy, breezy.

ATTRIBUTED TO SYDNEY SMITH.

[Composed as a satirical mistranslation of the names given to the months at the time of the French Revolution .-

G. F. CHAMBERS.

Extreme seasons are said to occur from the sixth to the tenth Extreme. year of each decade, especially in alternate decades.

The first three days of any season rule the weather of that season.

The general character of the weather during the last twenty days of March, June, September, or December will rule the following seasons.

Spring is both father and mother to us.—GALICIA.

[SPRING.]

A late spring Is a great bless-ing. Late.

A late spring never deceives.

Better late spring and bear, than early blossom and blast.

When the cuckoo comes to the bare thorn,

Cuckoo.

Sell your cow and buy your corn; But when she comes to the full bit, Sell your corn and buy your sheep;

i.e., A late spring is bad for cattle, and an early spring is bad for corn.

The cuckoo (says Sir G. W. Cox in "Aryan Mythology") marks the growing rains of spring, and also foretells the character of the coming harvest .- C. SWAINSON (Folklore of Brit. Birds).

If the spring is cold and wet, then the autumn will be hot Cold. and dry.

[Spring.] Dry.	A dry spring, rainy summer.—FRANCE.
Damp.	A wet spring, a dry harvest.
	Spring rain damps, autumn rain soaksRUSSIA.
	In spring a tub of rain makes a spoonful of mud. In autumn a spoonful of rain makes a tub of mud.
	The spring is not always green.
Day.	An unseasonably fine day in spring or winter is called a perday in Scotland. The fate of pets, they say, awaits it, and they look for spoilt weather on the morrow.
Seas.	The spring openeth the seas for the sailors.—PLINY.
Thunder.	Thunder in spring Cold will bring.
First thunder. Early	First thunder in spring,—if in the south, it indicates a wet season; if the north, a dry season.
thunder.	Early thunder, early spring.
Lightning.	Lightning in spring indicates a good fruit year.
Storms.	As the days grow longer, The storms grow stronger.
Spring.	As the day lengthens, The cold strengthens.—YORKSHIRE.
Spring in winter.	If there's spring in winter, and winter in spring, The year won't be good for anything.
Caution in seed-time.	Nae hurry wi' your corns,  Nae hurry wi' your harrows;  Snaw lies ahint the dike,  Mair may come and fill the furrows.  SCOTLAND.
Spring and summer.	There are a hundred days of easterly wind in the first half of the year.—WEST OF ENGLAND.
	If the spring and summer are dry, the early autumn, and the late autumn as well, are close and free from wind.—GREECE (THEOPHRASTUS: Signs, etc. J. G. Wood's Translation).
Summer.] Moist.	Generally a moist and cool summer portends a hard winter.  BACON.
Stormy.	An English summer, two hot days and a thunderstorm.
Ory.	A dry summer never made a dear peck.
	A dry summer never begs its bread.—Somerset.
	Whoso hath but a mouth Will ne'er in England suffer drought.