

Weather Lore in India*

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1. Introduction

In India where the people have had agriculture and the allied industries as their primary occupations, there is a considerable store of weather lore covering a variety of topics and themes of rural activity. Our folk, particularly those in the countryside, seem to have an abiding faith in the sayings regarding coming weather or the coming seasons; so that they are often guided by these sayings in their agricultural operations and other pursuits. It is thus possible for them to incur considerable losses whenever a proverb or a saying which was implicitly relied upon proves erroneous, as unfortunately it often does.

In this country, many of the prevalent weather lore are claimed in some quarters to be the accumulated experience of the past based on observations of the relevant events. It is argued that a particular saying would be applicable to conditions in the region where the saying actually originated, and in recent years this subject has been engaging considerable attention of various sections of the public including people in positions of authority. It was, therefore, considered necessary in the national interest to attempt to collect some of the weather lore prevalent in India and to submit them to critical examination and objective tests. To fulfil this object the India Meteorological Department felt in 1948 sufficient justification for appointing a committee and entrusting it with the task of examining the Indian weather lore with the meteorological data which have been collected for about 75 years.

2. The Material

Steps were taken to approach the agricultural authorities in the various states of

India to place their collections of folk-lore, if any, at the disposal of the department and a large amount of material was thus collected. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research also contributed a large number of folk-lore. To these were added a number of items which appeared as aphorisms in the *Brihat Samhita* by Varaha Mihira. More than 5200 folk-lore were thus listed. These were examined critically and 567 items were selected as being of interest from the meteorological and agricultural points of view and which could, therefore, be considered to be worthy of detailed scrutiny for testing their validity or otherwise in the light of our present day knowledge regarding the climatology of the country and methods of weather forecasting. The distribution of these 567 sayings according to the various Indian languages (and therefore regions) are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Serial Nos.	No.	Language
1 to 54	54	Gujarati
55 to 64	10	Kannada
65 to 91	27	Bengali
92 to 186	95	Tamil
187 to 209	23	Malayalam
210 to 219	10	Telugu
220 to 286	67	Hindi
287 to 338	52	Punjabi
339 to 542	204	From <i>Brihat Samhita</i> (Sanskrit)
543 to 552	10	Oriya
553 to 561	9	Urdu (U. P.)
562 to 564	3	Marathi
565 to 567	3	Assamese

*Based on the Report of a Committee appointed by the India Meteorological Department for examining some of the Indian folk-lore pertaining to weather and agriculture collected from various sources

The above list, therefore, represents a very wide variety of folk-lore in the different languages distributed over the various parts of India. Many of them seemingly predict the weather in the next few days or months or seasons from some indications prevalent at the time. For example, we have the Gujarati proverb which says

If in the month of Falgun it rains so much as to wash the Butard tree flowers, if there is lightning in the month of Baishakh and if it is too hot in the month of Jyeshtha, then there will be no end to rains in the monsoon.

As another example may be quoted the Bengali saying which may be rendered as

January hot and April cold, early floods by this are told.

From Tamilnad we have the saying

If there is thundering in the month of Ani (June-July), there will be no rain for two months.

To narrow down the study of these folk-lore, a further selection was made out of the above 567 sayings and 37 items were chosen which were wholly of meteorological import and which were most readily amenable to test by available meteorological data.

3. Method of examination and results

For the purpose of examination it was assumed, perhaps justifiably, that a particular saying should be taken to be applicable to the region where it is prevalent; accordingly, meteorological records of stations representative of that region were employed for testing the validity of the particular item. Each item taken up for examination was studied for its import, since it is often difficult to get the exact sense of the sayings at the very first reading. Having agreed upon the correct import and implications of the saying it was decided what meteorological data, and for which stations in the region, should be examined for testing that particular item. As it was found that the examination of each item

would require considerable time and computing labour, if all available meteorological data were to be utilised for testing the item, an attempt was made to reduce the work by limiting the examination of meteorological observations, but still taking them over a sufficiently long period, at a chosen number of representative stations only. The examination of three typical cases by this method is illustrated below—

Example 1

One of the sayings prevalent in Orissa, collected through the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, states—

Rain starting on a Saturday continues for seven days and on Tuesdays for three days at a stretch. Starting on other days of the week, it seldom lasts beyond those days.

This weather lore consists of three separate statements, viz.,

- (a) Rain commencing on a Saturday continues for seven days;
- (b) Rain commencing on a Tuesday continues for three days; and
- (c) Rain commencing on any other day seldom lasts beyond the day.

It is found from the collection of the weather lore that in some form or other this saying is also current in Mysore, Madras, Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and a few other regions.

For checking this lore, the period May to November of each of the 10 years 1933 to 1942 was considered. The dates of the Saturdays and Tuesdays during the period May to November for the ten years 1933-42 were obtained. From about 85 rain-gauge stations reporting rainfall from Orissa 15 were selected at random. All occasions when rainfall occurred on a Saturday at any of these stations during May-November were picked out for each of the ten years. Also, it was recorded if the rain continued for 6, 7 or 8 or more days (any rainfall being considered for this purpose). The "Daily Rainfall of India" volumes are the source of the data regarding rainfall. Similarly,

those occasions where rainfall occurred on a Tuesday at any of these 15 stations during the period May to November were noted for each of the ten years ; and it was recorded if the rain continued for 2, 3, 4 or more days.

TABLE 2

No. of occasions when rain commenced on SATURDAYS and TUESDAYS at any of the 15 raingauge stations in Orissa during the period May-November of 10 years (1933-42)

Station	No. of occasions on which rain commenced on a Saturday	No. of occasions out of those in column (1) on which the rain continued for 7 days	No. of occasions on which rain commenced on a Tuesday	No. of occasions out of those in column (3) on which the rain continued for 3 days
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Salepur	38	1	31	5
Korai	41	0	32	6
Rajkanika	39	0	39	7
Bhadrak	35	1	42	4
Soro	38	0	39	3
Balasore	41	0	46	4
Jellesore	53	0	48	8
Puri	42	2	46	10
Gop	44	1	36	5
Ambabhona	25	0	27	2
Russelkonda	42	0	40	3
R. Udayagiri	38	0	42	5
Mohana	45	2	44	6
Nawrangpur	28	0	27	1
Padwa	19	2	22	3

Table 2 above shows that the statements (a) rain commencing on a Saturday continues for seven days and (b) rain commencing on a Tuesday continues for three days are not substantiated even for one of the 15 raingauge stations selected at random from the 85 stations in Orissa. This shows that the lore does not apply.

For a more rigorous test, the records for all the 85 stations in Orissa were then considered. Those occasions when rain commenced (1) on a Saturday and continued for 6, 7 or 8 days, and (2) on a Tuesday and

continued for 2, 3 or 4 days during May-November were tabulated for the ten years (a) year by year and (b) month by month. The results are given in Tables 3(a), 3(b), 4(a) and 4(b) below—

TABLE 3 (a)

No. of occasions when rain commenced on SATURDAYS at any of the 85 raingauge stations in Orissa during May-November of each of the years 1933-42

Year	No. of occasions on which rain commenced on Saturdays	No. of occasions out of those in column (1) on which the rain continued for		
		6 days	7 days	8 days
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1933	463	59	51	35
1934	297	23	15	9
1935	253	25	18	15
1936	276	39	33	26
1937	253	17	13	12
1938	362	38	30	24
1939	357	24	21	13
1940	324	19	9	8
1941	331	35	30	16
1942	267	18	9	7

TABLE 3 (b)

No. of occasions when rain commenced on SATURDAYS at any of the 85 raingauge stations in Orissa during each of the months May-November of the years 1933-42

Month	No. of occasions on which rain commenced on Saturdays	No. of occasions out of those in column (1) on which the rain continued for		
		6 days	7 days	8 days
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
May	421	8	6	3
June	587	43	28	22
July	570	94	74	58
August	650	70	51	46
September	564	56	38	26
October	378	25	20	14
November	81	1	0	0

TABLE 4 (a)

No. of occasions when rain commenced on TUESDAYS at any of the 85 raingauge stations in Orissa during May-November of each of the years 1933-42

Year	No. of occasions on which rain commenced on Tuesdays (1)	No. of occasions out of those in column (1) on which the rain continued for		
		2 days (2)	3 days (3)	4 days (4)
1933	446	247	162	77
1934	325	122	70	47
1935	279	92	71	52
1936	404	240	171	123
1937	302	90	45	27
1938	323	197	118	77
1939	363	167	100	68
1940	238	107	71	39
1941	313	194	92	63
1942	210	94	40	25

TABLE 4 (b)

No. of occasions when rain commenced on TUESDAYS at any of the 85 raingauge stations in Orissa during each of the months May-November of the years 1933-42

Month	No. of occasions on which rain commenced on Tuesdays (1)	No. of occasions out of those in column (1) on which the rain continued for		
		2 days (2)	3 days (3)	4 days (4)
May	481	164	64	28
June	577	283	194	135
July	541	328	218	150
August	552	367	229	142
September	528	241	131	82
October	331	179	102	60
November	147	69	28	0

Tables 3(a) and 3(b) show that statement (a) does not have much support. The number of occasions when rain commenced on a Saturday and continued for 7 days is quite low; nor is this true in any particular month of the rainy months as shown by Table 3(b).

Tables 4(a) and 4(b) show that statement (b) is also not borne out (Percentage of the

number of occasions when the statement is supported being in no case more than 35 per cent). Neither is this statement finding more support in any month of the rainy season as shown by Table 4(b).

For checking the third statement (c), the data for the 15 stations of Table 2 were tabulated picking out the occasions on which rain started on days other than Saturdays and Tuesdays and on which the rain continued beyond those days. Table 5 below gives the result.

TABLE 5

Number of occasions when rain commencing on days other than a SATURDAY or a TUESDAY continued beyond that day in the period May-November 1933-42

Station	No. of occasions on which rain commenced on days other than a Saturday or a Tuesday (1)	No. of occasions out of those in column (1) on which the rain continued beyond the day of commencement (2)
Salepur	205	92
Korai	181	89
Rajkanika	220	131
Bhadrak	204	126
Soro	188	106
Balasore	238	139
Jellesore	234	133
Puri	224	133
Gop	221	123
Ambabhona	162	114
Russelkonda	230	144
R. Udayagiri	212	116
Mohana	249	148
Nawrangpur	202	120
Padwa	191	120
Total	3161	1834

It is seen from the above that, taking all the stations, on about 59 per cent of those occasions when rain started on a day other than a Saturday or Tuesday, the rain continued beyond the day. Thus part (c) of the lore is not supported.

*Example 2**Scorching heat in June indicates heavy rains*

is a saying prevalent in the Uttar Pradesh. This also was obtained from a collection sent by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

For checking this lore a month was taken to be scorchingly hot if the mean daily maximum temperature for the month exceeded the normal by 3°F or more. The heavy rains referred to in the folk-lore were taken to be that which occurred in the period July-August.

Mean daily maximum temperature during June for 30 years (1917-46) was obtained for the four stations Agra and Bareilly (in west Uttar Pradesh) and Allahabad and Gorakhpur (in east Uttar Pradesh) from the *Monthly Weather Reports*. The normals and the departures of mean daily maximum temperature during June were worked out for the 4 stations. Those years when this departure for at least one of the observatories was 3°F or more were picked out. They are 1919, 1920, 1921, 1923, 1924, 1926, 1927, 1931, 1932, 1935, 1937, 1940, 1942 and 1945. For these years, the rainfall and its departure from normal during July-August in east Uttar Pradesh and west Uttar Pradesh were obtained separately.

Taking the average of the Allahabad and Gorakhpur temperatures as representative of east Uttar Pradesh as a whole, we find that on 8 of the 30 years the mean daily maximum temperature during June was in excess of the normal by 3°F or more and on 4 of these 8 occasions there was a positive departure from normal of rainfall during July-August in east Uttar Pradesh, while there were 4 occasions with negative departure of rainfall. On none of the 4 occasions was the rainfall departure more than +2.9", or 12 per cent above normal.

Taking the average of Agra and Bareilly temperatures as representative of west Uttar Pradesh as a whole, it was found that in this case also on 8 of the 30 years the mean daily maximum temperature during June was in excess of the normal by 3°F

or more and on 6 of these 8 occasions there was a positive departure from normal during July-August in west Uttar Pradesh, while there were two occasions with negative departures of rainfall. On 5 of the 6 occasions the rainfall departure was not more than +2.6", or 11 per cent above normal, and only on one occasion the departure was +10.77", or 40 per cent above normal—which may be considered to be a truly heavy rainfall.

From an examination of 30 years' data it can only be said in a general way that when the mean daily maximum temperature during June is in excess of the normal by about 3°F, the rainfall during the succeeding July-August period is likely to be slightly in excess of the normal rainfall in both east and west Uttar Pradesh. However, it cannot be said from the data examined that the greater the positive departure of the June mean daily maximum temperature the heavier the July-August rainfall.

To see if the examination of a longer series of years changes the conclusion in any way, this saying was further examined with data of 51 years (1895-1945).

It was found that on 13 of the 51 years the June mean daily maximum temperature of east Uttar Pradesh was higher than normal by 3°F or more and of these 13 years only on 4 occasions there were positive departures of July-August east Uttar Pradesh rainfall. While on 14 of the 51 years the June mean daily maximum temperature of west Uttar Pradesh was higher than normal by 3°F or more, and of these 14 years on 9 occasions there were positive departures of subsequent July-August rainfall in west Uttar Pradesh. The conclusion, therefore, is that even with the extended data for over 50 years the folk-lore is not supported to any extent so far as east Uttar Pradesh is considered, but it does find some support for west Uttar Pradesh.

In west Uttar Pradesh there are more chances of hot Junes (with departures of mean daily maximum during June greater than normal by 3°F or more) being followed

by positive departures of rainfall during July-August, and to this extent the folk-lore finds support in west Uttar Pradesh. However, it cannot be said the hotter the June in west Uttar Pradesh the heavier is the July-August rainfall.

Example 3

If Paush (mid-December to mid-January) is warm and Baishakh (mid-April to mid-May) is cool, all the ditches will be filled up in the beginning of Ashadha (by the third week of June)

is a proverb current in Bengal.

The meteorological data recorded at Calcutta (Presidency Division), Burdwan, Midnapore (Burdwan Division), Narayanganj, Mymensingh (Dacca Division), Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri (Rajshahi Division) and Chittagong (Chittagong Division) were utilised for checking this folk-lore. The daily maximum and minimum temperatures recorded between mid-December and mid-January (*Paush*) during the period of 30 years (1911-12 to 1940-41) were copied. From this data the mean maximum and mean minimum temperatures of *Paush* were worked out for each year and the normals for *Paush* were also obtained from these 30 years' data. Those of the years

whose *Paush* minimum temperature exceeded the normal by 1°F (and the corresponding maximum was either equal to or also above the normal) were selected. These were the years when *Paush* was warm.

Similarly the daily maximum and minimum temperatures between the subsequent mid-April and mid-May (*Baishakh*) during the period of 30 years were also copied and normals calculated. From the scrutiny of the *Baishakh* data for those years having warm *Paush*, the years whose *Paush* was warm and the *Baishakh* cool were selected. The criterion for cool *Baishakh* is that the maximum must be below normal by 1°F or more (and the corresponding minimum must be equal to or also below the normal). For the years selected as above, the rainfall at the stations during the period from 1 January to 21 June and the period from 1 June to 21 June was obtained. Further, June rainfall at the corresponding division was worked out from the Provincial Rainfall Data (district-wise). The abstract data are given in Table 6. The table shows that the number of years having a warm *Paush* and cool *Baishakh* are not many. Only one observatory experienced 3 such years, two stations had 2 such years and three of them only 1 such year and there was no such combination in two stations.

TABLE 6

Station	Division	No. of years with warm <i>Paush</i> and cool <i>Baishakh</i>	No. of years when rainfall from 1 January to 21 June was excess of normal	No. of years when rainfall from 1 to 21 June was excess of normal	No. of years when June rainfall of division was excess of normal
Calcutta	Presidency	1	0	0	0
Burdwan	Burdwan	0
Midnapore	Do.	2	0	0	2
Dinajpur	Rajshahi	1	0	0	0
Jalpaiguri	Do.	0
Narayanganj	Dacca	3	0	0	0
Mymensingh	Do.	1	0	0	0
Chittagong	Chittagong	2	1	0	0

The statement *all the ditches will be filled up by the third week of June* is somewhat ambiguous. It may be judged by the rainfall during the first three weeks of June or the annual rainfall up to the 21 June (practically the period beginning after the *Paush*). The former may indicate early onset of monsoon.

From the final analysis the total number of years when there were warm *Paush* and cool *Baishakh*, according to the above criteria, is ten, taking all the stations together. In all those cases except one the rainfall for both the periods, viz., the three weeks of June and the period from 1 January to 21 June was below normal. Even in that one solitary case only the latter period had excess rainfall and the former one had rainfall below normal. Even considering the rainfall of the division of Bengal in which the observatory is situated does not improve the case.

From the data examined the folk-lore does not find any support. However, it must be mentioned that the number of possible cases available are too few to warrant any categorical judgement against the folk-lore.

4. Other types of weather lore

Besides the sayings of wholly meteorological import the weather lore contains sayings of various other types also. One type comprises of sayings which refer to certain planetary phenomena as indicating consequences which are expected to follow ; an instance of this kind is—

If in the rains the sun is not seen on the horizon at the time of setting on Friday and Saturday, it is sure to rain before the following Sunday night is over.

In another type, the occurrence of a certain day of the week on a particular date of the month is said to indicate the future weather ; for example—

If there is Sunday on the 10th of the month of Jyeshtha, there will be no rain and severe famine.

In a third category are those proverbs in which certain astronomical situations indicate the future weather ; such as—

If after the full moon in the month of Ashadha the rain God pours down rain on the 4th day of the dark half at the asterism of Purvashadha, the rainy season will prove beneficial, otherwise not.

Then there are sayings claiming to foretell future weather from the behaviour of insects, birds, etc ; for example—

If in the rainy season the crow caws sitting on a milky tree, the Arjun, the Vanjula, on the banks of rivers or on sand dunes, there will be good rain, etc, etc

is a saying in this category. In the entire collection one also comes across some sayings which are truisms and need no verification ; for example—

The cold is not determined by the month of Pausha or Magha as by the air mass.

And finally, there are some sayings which it is not possible to verify for want of adequate records of the required observations (or for other reasons) ; for instance—

A rainbow in the east foretells rain enough to breach the tank

is a saying of this kind.

The 567 folk-lore which were selected out of over five thousand total collections contained various items which, when classified, were listed in one or the other of the above categories, besides the sayings of wholly meteorological import illustrated in the three tested cases described before. A random selection was made from each of the above types, representing about 8 per cent of the 567 sayings. In this random selection of 48 items a representation of sayings in the different languages was also secured. The 48 items were also subjected to tests according to the methods illustrated in Examples 1 to 3 in Section 3. The examination of two typical cases out of these 48 items is illustrated below.

Example 4

If there is Sunday on the 10th day of the month of *Jyeshtha*, there will be no rain and severe famine.

This saying is current in Gujarat and, for verifying it, the annual rainfall for Gujarat as a whole, and also for five selected stations in it (*viz.*, Bhuj, Rajkot, Deesa, Surat and Ahmedabad) were examined. There were only ten years between 1890 and 1950, *viz.*, 1892, 1895, 1899, 1916, 1919, 1926, 1929, 1939, 1943 and 1946, in which the 10th of *Jyeshtha* was Sunday. The rainfall data were taken from the Annual Summary volumes.

It has been assumed that any year to be a year of famine should be a year in which the rainfall was at least well below normal. The timeliness or untimeliness of rains has not been taken into consideration.

The number of years with negative departures of annual rainfall or 'famine' years for each of the five stations as well as for the whole of Gujarat is given below.

TABLE 7

Station	No. of famine years out of the 10 years in which the 10th of <i>Jyeshtha</i> was on Sunday
Bhuj	6
Rajkot	3
Deesa	4
Surat	4
Ahmedabad	4
Gujarat	3

From the above it is clear that the data do not lend much support to the saying.

Example 5

1. If there are torrential rains on the 9th day of the full moon quarter in the month of *Ashadha* (mid-June to mid-July), there will be drought.
2. If there is scanty rainfall in *Ashadha*, fish will be plenty.
3. If there are drizzling rains now and then, crops are benefitted.

These aphorisms are prevalent in Bengal and with the available data, it is possible to test only the first part, while the third part is purely a statement which hardly requires verification. Six stations as representative of Bengal, *viz.*, Bogra, Burdwan, Chittagong, Narayanganj, Jalpaiguri and Calcutta were selected for verifying.

Dates in the Christian calendar corresponding to the ninth day of the full moon quarter in the month of *Ashadha* for each year between 1920 and 1940 were determined. The rainfall recorded at the six stations on those days during 1920-1940 as well as the annual departures were used as obtained from the Daily Rainfall volumes.

As the month of *Ashadha* comes off during the southwest monsoon period, torrential rainfall on some days in that month in some parts of Bengal can be expected. For the purpose of this investigation rainfall of 2 inches or more in 24 hours has been taken to be 'torrential' and positive departures of annual rainfall to mean absence of drought in those years.

Column 2 of Table 8 gives the number of years when torrential rain was recorded on the ninth day of the full moon quarter in the month of *Ashadha* during 1920-40. Column 3 gives the number of years when the annual rainfall was not only above normal but had also 'torrential' rain recorded on the ninth of *Ashadha*.

TABLE 8

Station	No. of years when torrential rain was recorded on the 9th day of the full moon quarter in the month of <i>Ashadha</i>	No. of years out of those in column (2) in which there was positive rainfall departure
(1)	(2)	(3)
Jalpaiguri	6	5
Bogra	—	—
Burdwan	—	—
Narayanganj	1	1
Chittagong	2	2
Calcutta	—	—

Figures in column 3 conclusively disprove the saying.

5. General Conclusion

It is seen that out of the 37 selected items of weather lore of purely meteorological content 24 are found to be not valid at all, 4 are not "proven", 1 is not verifiable, 6 are supported only partially and only 2 could be judged as supported by the available data. Of the 48 items selected at random, the tests showed that 17 were not verifiable, 16 were not supported, 6 not "proven", 3 were obvious facts, 4 partly supported and only 2 could be regarded as generally supported. Thus in all only 4 sayings out of 85 could be regarded as having general support. The general and indiscriminate belief in the value and dependability of these weather lore for planning or guiding agricultural and allied activities which are affected by weather is, therefore, hardly justified. While it may be of academic interest to verify each one of the vast store of folk-lore, the preliminary examination reported by the Committee did not lend encouragement to further efforts to prove or disprove every one of the large number of items collected.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century some amount of attention has been paid to the testing of weather lore and attempts have been made to find if some scientific basis exists, particularly for such of the items as appear to be fairly cogent at first sight. The type of lore that would be so tried are naturally those in which weather is attempted to be foreshadowed from preceding meteorological factors. We may particularly refer to some of the attempts in Germany. For example, on an examination of the folk-rhyme that

*Numerous March fogs bring frequent thunder
100 days later*

it was found that there was no statistical support for it (Hesse 1949). Similarly, the proverb regarding the "Old Wives' Summer" when subjected to a test showed that the occurrence of a period of warm sunny days and cool clear nights in autumn in Potsdam in the period 1896-1945 had no relation to

the character of the preceding summer (Hausmann 1949). On the other hand, a high correlation was found between the temperature (at Utrecht) during the first ten days of October and the temperature of the following winter, giving some possible basis to the old saying about

Winter and the Roman Snail

viz., that the depth of the snail on the first of October gives an indication of the severity of the coming winter (Visser 1950). We thus see that while there are plenty of weather lore, current from long before the days of synoptic meteorology or systematic climatology, which appear to give useful knowledge, there is no denying the fact that a great deal of the lore which has come down to us through the ages does not bear any objective scrutiny with regard to facts.

A few observations may not be out of place here regarding the weather lore in which the coming weather is supposed to be indicated by factors unrelated to meteorological observations, such as by astronomical or extra-terrestrial influences, or by the control exercised by some "key days" or by changes in the fauna and flora. No one knows who had the doubtful honour of being the first to suggest that our weather is greatly influenced by the planets, but from that distant day to the present his followers have been many and numerous. The weather fallacy that the moon to some extent controls our weather has perhaps an equally numerous and confident following. It seems quite probable that this idea was fostered into a belief by the fact that both the moon and the weather are always changing, and it was, therefore, thought that their changes are relatable. The idea of key or control days, *i.e.*, the belief that the weather of a given day is a sure sign of what the weather is to be for weeks or months to come, or on some other particular day to come, was formerly unquestioningly accepted. And finally, the type of sayings concerned with the omens derivable from the observed behaviour of animals, birds, insects, plants and other forms of life, is sometimes widely and confidently trusted by village folk. No doubt it is pleasant to think that somehow

every living thing which is to be protected against disasters is pre-warned of the dangers of whatever nature. While this type of lore still awaits proper testing, it is to be realised that there is a high degree of probability that the present conditions of animal, bird, insect, plants or flowers, are the results of past circumstances and not in the least dependent on those yet to come. Thus it may be only folly to look to either plant or animal for any foreknowledge whatever of a coming season.

One can do no better than to refer to part 2 of the book "Rain Making and other Weather Vagaries" by W. J. Humphreys, for a very readable discussion on the attempts at scientifically explaining some of these types of weather lore. The conclusions arrived at by this author will bear quoting, *viz.*, that "Many still believe in these sayings, or, at least, half believe them, for they cannot, or

will not, shake off the fetters of superstition and illogic forged in the nursery and flaunted through youth". It is true that many of the sayings in the weather lore have their chief appeal to antiquarians, and some of them are worth the attention of any one who finds interest in the workings of the human mind. But who will doubt that it is easier to develop a blind faith than to acquire sure knowledge regarding these aphorisms sanctified through antiquity?

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