

**THE MOON AND THE
WEATHER: THE
PROBABILITY OF LUNAR
INFLUENCE RECONSIDERED**

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The Moon and the Weather: The Probability of Lunar Influence Reconsidered by Walter L. Browne

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WALTER L. BROWNE

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*THE PROBABILITY OF LUNAR INFLUENCE
RECONSIDERED.*

BY
WALTER L. BROWNE.

SECOND EDITION,
WITH PREDICTIONS OF STORMS FROM DECEMBER, 1885,
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PREFACE.

IN the following pages the lunar theory is often spoken of, but no attempt is made to demonstrate that theory; not because such demonstration is impossible, for it can be demonstrated, and its truth decided in the most positive manner. Considering the long and difficult chain of causes and effects, any demonstration in these pages would be impossible from the complex nature of the subject, and would require numerous figures and diagrams illustrative of principles employed in it, and also synoptic maps for many weeks, or months, in succession. Many assertions are here made, every one of which, however, has been fully corroborated by the facts shown by observation. More than twenty-five years of observation and daily practical work, undertaken with the special intention of investigating the popular belief in the moon's influence, has resulted in putting this long undecided question beyond doubt. 'Prevision is the test of true theory,' and the reader will find, at the end of this work, the prediction of areas of depression for the British Isles and other places for several consecutive months, with the dates of their occurrence and places where they will strike our coasts; and, by comparing them with the weather map in the *Times*, it will be found, with perhaps a few exceptions, that these areas of depression, as in-

licated by the isobars, will arrive on or between the dates, and over or near, to within about 5° , the places mentioned.

Astronomy is a science whose laws are expressed in the periodical recurrence of certain phenomena in time and place: and, without the intervention of a miracle, these phenomena must take place. Storms and weather generally have been supposed by some writers to be capable of scientific prediction, although nothing of the sort has ever been attempted, and we are far from claiming for our predictions anything approaching to the accuracy of eclipses or other astronomical phenomena. We hope to show that storms, or gyratory motions of the air, do obey certain laws, which are sufficient for their prediction roughly; and these laws are a deduction from the theory of the effects produced by the attraction of the moon on the earth's atmosphere. Storms and meteorological phenomena have shown no such periodicity of sufficiently decided a character to afford a basis upon which to construct any theory of recurring periods that can serve as a precedent for prediction. The forecasts of the late Admiral Fitzroy were an acknowledged failure, and those of his successor do not seem to have attained a much greater degree of accuracy. All we know is confined to proximate causes and effects, and some larger natural laws, which do not in the least account for the actual conditions upon which the effects depend. The weather, in its larger and minute variations, must be governed by law, or there can be no such thing as a science; and it may be a law whose very purpose is to prevent such absolute periodical recurrence. And this is, in fact, what is the case: the law is periodical and recurring; but from the action of certain causes the periodicity is

translated to other areas of the earth's surface every two weeks; thus, for a given place, there is, in the course of any period of time, practically no absolute periodicity or recurrence of precisely similar conditions. The laws are such that a periodicity of weather is prevented.

The effect of the moon's attraction in producing the tides of the ocean has been known since the time of Newton, although it is a subject yet imperfectly understood. Most people have thought that the atmosphere must also have its tides, and La Place, in his 'Celestial Mechanics,' applied the theory to these aerial tides; but theory, even in his hands, could not overcome the exceedingly complicated mechanical difficulties of the atmospheric movements. The theoretical conclusions of La Place have been corroborated by barometrical and anemometrical observations since his time, as one sees in the works of M. Bouvard, Lubbock, Howard, Sabine, Elliot, Bergsma, Rykatchew, and others; but this influence has been considered too feeble in its effects to have any determined influence in producing weather changes, and therefore has been put aside as a true cause. It is true, then, beyond doubt, that some influence is attributed to the moon, and that it is faintly shown by instruments; but the effects can scarcely be called 'tides,' in the general meaning of the word. Storms, tempests, cyclones, are the results of the moon's action, and these are the most remarkable phenomena that first present themselves to us, and they are distinctly traceable to her influence, and all conditions of weather depend on them.

The fact of some influence being shown depending on the moon, and also the very apparent irregular recurring periods of barometer and thermometer

about which Webster has written in his very interesting 'Recurring Periods,' seemed to demand some further inquiry, and led the writer to form some conception as to the general law of such periods, and to deduce the necessary consequences from it. The facts observed do agree perfectly with the theory developed, and storms have been predicted for two years past as to their time and place. The lunar theory explains all those conflicting anomalies of atmospheric motions which have up to the present received only a very imperfect explanation. It unites facts and reasoning in the most harmonious manner, and agrees with all of them. If the predictions are correct, there can be no possible doubt as to the truth of the theory here advocated; for they are the interpretation of that theory. All physical science reposes on a belief in really existing material bodies with certain powers or forces; and, that they have these powers is supported and verified by prediction of the phenomena they cause. It explains how the phenomena are caused, and it is in this conception of the inter-relation of bodies, and the action of their respective forces, that the basis of science lies. This is the first time that the theory of the moon's attraction has been brought forward to account for storms and weather changes; for up to the present the construction of any theory having this force for its primary cause has not even been thought of, or at least deemed possible. Yet such a theory is possible, and, as stated, clearly demonstrable from already existing principles, laws and forces, and, that from the simple fact of the sun and moon's attraction, which has a real, an acting, and effective force on the atmosphere.

The truth of science is in the truth of ideal construction; its abstractions are formed out of sensible