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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,  
Secretary, American Meteorological Society  
says:

MAY COLD SPELLS

In temperate America May rarely fails to have its spell of cold weather. The same condition exists in Central Europe, where the cold period is known as Kälterückfälle, the return or "backslide" of cold. In the United States the Mississippi Valley averages colder in the winter than the Atlantic states, but in the spring the center of the continent heats up more quickly, tending to the establishment there of a pressure lower than that over the regions of Hudson Bay and eastern Canada, the Labrador Current and the Grand Banks, which are still icily cold from their snowfields and vast expanses of ice.

Hence once in a while this cold air flows southwestward, down into the United States, reaching through New England and the Middle Atlantic States, and the great central basin, including the Great Lakes and the region for several hundred miles south of them. Near the seacoast or the Lakes the mercury tumbles sharply and usually suddenly. Chicago's records give instances of a quick shifting of the wind from the southwest to the northeast, the cold blast sweeping down over Lake Michigan, causing in a few minutes a fall of the mercury from 80 or 85 degrees to 45 degrees. Along the New England coast these sudden falls with a Northeast wind in spring and summer are known as "sea-turns".

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(Tomorrow: Fogs in Spring)

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