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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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

FOUR KINDS OF LIGHTNING

Lightning is popularly divided into four general classes. That of most common occurrence, which one always associates with the thunderstorm, is the "zig-zag" flash or forked lightning, where electrical discharges disruptively break their way through the easiest devious routes through the air. The crooked path is that of least resistance. The second class is the "sheet" lightning, which is the sudden, brief lighting up of a sheet of rain or a whole cloud, with outer edge sometimes more brilliantly illuminated than the center. The cause is a hidden flash.

A third form is "heat" lightning, which is the term applied to the sudden lighting up of the atmosphere near the horizon, occurring even when no thunderclouds are visible, and is usually explained as the reflection from the hazy air of the lightning flashes of storms below the horizon. It is called heat lightning because it is characteristic of hot weather when local thunderstorms occur. The fourth form is ball lightning, which is rarely seen, but is admitted as a real phenomenon, although accounts of it are often exaggerated. The lightning appears as balls of fire, which move slowly along and then burst with a loud explosion.

The common lightning bolt may be discharged from a cloud at frequent intervals. When the distance traversed by the flash is relatively small it may appear to the eye as a straight line, as is commonly seen as a storm passes up over a mountain slope, when bolts are projected with startling and terrible brilliancy.

(Tomorrow: Heat and the Cricket's Beat)

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