

Nov. 7

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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

"WHEN THE PEACOCK LOUDLY BAWLS"

Sometimes when the air is extraordinarily clear and distant objects are visible with unusual sharpness and sounds come from afar with startling distinctness, it is a warning of foul weather. Then it is

"When the peacock loudly bawls
Soon we'll have both rain and squalls."

Under these atmospheric conditions the songs and cries of birds sound loud to the ear. The barking of dogs, the lowing of cattle, the whistles of locomotives, the honking of motor horns, come from far away, whence sounds are not commonly heard. To the eye the difference of visibility from the ordinary may be likened to the contrast between a view through a pane of ordinary window glass and that through one of plate glass.

The reason is that early during the occurrence of a warmer southerly wind at a moderate height, a condition usually preceding a storm, a stratus cloud is likely to cut off the sun's heating from the ground and so prevent irregularities in heating and also to permit the surface air to remain cool. The result is a homogeneous lower atmosphere through which light and sound waves travel without local disturbance. The sound waves are further intensified at a distance from their source by a phenomenon very common on a quiet morning after a clear night when the air close to the surface is cooler than that a few hundred feet aloft. There is a concentration of the waves. In the warmer air at a moderate height the sound waves travel faster than in the lower colder air, so those that ascend are bent back to earth and combine with those that travel the normal straight course, thus intensifying the sound in the listener's ears.

(Tomorrow: Cold Weather Winds are Strongest)
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