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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
Secretary, American Meteorological Society,
tells about:

THE GREAT NEW ENGLAND ICE STORM

The New England ice storm of November 27-29, 1921, may be accepted as the extreme form of this phenomenon. Following days of clear, cold weather, snow set in on a Saturday afternoon and soon changed to rain, which falling through cold air and onto surfaces below freezing began to form as ice. Sunday it rained and sleeted alternately or together, while the thermometer fell to 25 degrees. At night it began to rain steadily and ice as steadily to form. Morning saw an inch-thick armor of ice over everything out-of-doors, and still it rained and froze, while the northeast wind increased to a gale. By afternoon city streets were dangerous. Everywhere trees and their branches and electric wires and their poles were falling.

A wild and terrible night followed. Electric lights were extinguished, and cities and towns lay in blackness. Trolley cars ceased running, telegraph and telephone service was gone, streets were impassable to vehicles, some of them to pedestrians. The climax was a thunderstorm, with pink lightning flashes, the thunder crashing to an accompaniment of falling trees.

Ice was two inches thick on the wires. It was estimated that a tree 50 feet high and an average width of 20 feet carried a load of five tons of ice, and few trees could bear the burden. The plumed elms were ruins, whole orchards were destroyed, long lines of telephone poles fell, in some cases a mile at a stretch. Forest trees lay prostrate in windrows. The money damage went into millions of dollars.

(Tomorrow: Cold Rain Leaves Sidewalks Dry)

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