

No. 444

A Science Service Feature

Oct. 13

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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TROPICAL "LOWS" AND OUR WEATHER

People along the eastern seaboard have become quite familiar with the weather produced by tropical cyclones during the last two months. At intervals of a week or two since the middle of August such storms have brushed or swept the coast. Coming first within the field of observation generally at latitudes 15 degrees to 25 degrees, these storms have moved northwestwards and then recurved to the northeast at latitudes about 24 degrees to 33 degrees. As usual, these storms moved forward at slow to moderate speed before the recurve and at good speed after. Thus while the tropical and subtropical localities affected were in the throes of the gusts of gale or hurricane strength and the attendant heavy showers, for one day, two days, or even more, the coastal regions farther north were seriously affected for but little more than 12 hours.

When a tropical cyclone leaves the tropics and passes into temperate latitudes it tends soon to lose its peculiar violence; it becomes less intense and widens out to cover a larger area. After entering the United States, particularly, its weakening over the land makes it appear on the weather map merely as a strong "low". For localities some distance northwest or west of the center, northerly and northwesterly winds and fine weather prevail; while near the storm center, and, particularly, northeast of it, dense clouds, heavy, showery rainfall, and strong gusty winds are the rule. Sometimes, distances of only a few tens of miles mean all the difference between a destructive and an ordinary gale, and between a four-inch deluge and a two-inch heavy rain.

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(TOMORROW: Quiet Weather)

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