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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE WEATHER BREEDER

Occasionally, just after a storm, we are treated to an unusually clear day, one on which the skies are practically cloudless and the sun is dazzling. Since such a day is commonly followed by another storm it is often called a "weather breeder". This sequence of storm, cloudless day, and storm, occurs when a ridge of high pressure lies between two areas of low pressure. In the "high" the air, some of it overflowing from the "low", or storm, to the west, is descending, and warming by compression, and evaporating any clouds. At the same time, the air is moving outward along the ground in both directions slantingly towards the neighboring "lows". In the high pressure area, then, the sky is blue, the air dry, and the wind light. If the clearness lasts into the night the air becomes cold, because under quiet, clear, dry air conditions, rapid fall of temperature owing to radiation can take place.

The "weather breeder" lasts only about 24 hours, for its clearness must soon be replaced by the oncoming clouds, winds and rain or snow of the western low pressure area. Were it not for the rather close proximity of the two storms there would not be such a concentrated descent of air and such clear skies so close behind one and so shortly before the other. Usually there is a reasonably long period of clearing after one storm and another of clouding over before the next, but both are curtailed in the "weather breeder" type.

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(Tomorrow: The Atmosphere and Its Properties)

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