

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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"PLEATED" CYCLONES

Cyclones are spirally inflowing systems of winds. But the spiral inflow is not a regular one even in the rather symmetrical tropical cyclone at sea. As a cyclone passes, the wind does not shift degree by degree, but changes more or less suddenly by many degrees, or several "points" of the compass, at a time. Thus, the wind may remain southeast for some hours, then shift, during or after an especially hard shower, to south. Another sudden shift may then bring the wind to northwest, from which direction it may continue with little deviation for a day. Such a rapid turning of the wind to a settled direction is characteristic of the V-shaped cyclone.

The shift usually is not so great as from south to northwest all at once, however, and some hours with smaller shifts at intervals are required. Each alteration in direction, nevertheless, is rather definitely punctuated by a shower, a snow flurry or a considerable change in cloudiness as the turbulent zone of convergence passes by. The similarity of these zones of overlapping winds to the pleats of a skirt has led to the characterization of cyclones in which the wind shift is in small overlappings oft repeated, as "pleated" cyclones, to distinguish them from others, such as the V-type, where the wind shifts are few but very pronounced.

(Tomorrow; "Fair and Colder")

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