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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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CIRRUS CLOUDS OF LOWS

Cirrus clouds are the highest of all. They are the delicate white feathery forms, a few of which move slowly across the sky on a clear day. Sometimes they form bands or ripples and are then popularly known as "mares' tails". They are composed of particles of snow and ice, for up so high it is very cold, 60 or 70 degrees below zero. In general they are fair weather clouds, but when they move rapidly and are constantly growing thicker, they indicate a coming storm.

From the center of a cyclone the cirrus clouds move outward in all directions. But this motion is usually combined with the general advance of the storm, so that little, if any, actual rearward movement of such clouds occurs. Most of our storms on land, however, are not cyclones - spirally inflowing systems of winds - but merely low pressure areas of non-circular shape, marked in the lower levels by a general southerly wind in front and a northerly one behind, and in the upper or cirrus levels by a general, usually fast, westerly or southwesterly wind. Thus the high cirrus clouds issuing from the stormy portions of our lows extend far in advance of the storm center, spreading to either side, but little beyond the zone to be occupied by the oncoming rain or snow area.

(Tomorrow: How to Forecast by Cirrus Clouds)

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