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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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of Clark University.

HOW TO FORECAST BY CIRRUS CLOUDS

"When we see cirrus clouds coming from the southwest, that means it is likely to be stormy the next day. When they are moving from the north, that means warmer and fair. If we see the cirrus clouds moving from the southwest at sunrise, it is likely to be stormy that night. If we see the cirrus clouds coming from the southwest at noon, it is likely to be stormy at sunrise the next day. If we see the cirrus clouds coming from the southwest at sunset it is likely to be stormy at noon the next day."

These simple rules, written independently by a 9-year old boy after a few months of observation in New England are widely applicable, at least to weather in the cooler half year. For much of our continent the southwest is a source of warm moist winds, and cirrus clouds are the first heralds of the coming of such winds. Immediately after a storm, the observer, of course, will not expect more storminess if cirrus clouds present are decreasing in extent, even though these clouds move, as usual when the sky is clear, from the southwest. It is an increase in such clouds or the arrival of more after some clear weather that constitutes the threat.

(Tomorrow: The Coming of Spring)

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