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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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"PALMS IN COPLEY SQUARE"

We have sometimes envied Europe the mildness of its climate and wished that the Gulf Stream might be induced to stay on this side of the Atlantic and bathe our shores with warm water. Indeed, a proposal to ward off the Labrador Current and to deflect the Gulf Stream has even been considered by Congress.

What would really happen if this current of clear warm water, instead of passing us a few hundred miles out at sea should reach the coast of the middle Atlantic states and New England? The results would be less happy than one might anticipate. Europe and our Pacific coast have warm water to windward in the region of the westerlies. But the Gulf Stream would be on our east coast, or to leeward, so the prevailing winds would not so readily take its warmth inland. In winter there is a normal outflow of air from the cold continent to the somewhat warmer ocean. Make the ocean very warm and you increase the temperature difference and the strength of the outflow. On the east coast, then, we would have very strong northwest winds bringing with them the cold of the Canadian interior. On the Pacific coast the westerlies tend to balance this outflow, on the Atlantic they would reinforce it. Thus, with the Gulf Stream close at hand we would probably have stronger winds and storms and greater temperature fluctuations than at present - conditions not conducive to "Palms in Copley Square".

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