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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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APRIL SHOWERS

Why do we think of showers as characteristic of spring? Probably it is because of their novelty after the more steady rains of winter. In spring with the increasing warmth of the sun the weather becomes more and more dominated by immediate solar heating and less and less by passing lows. All winter long, except in the South, such rains or snows as we have are mostly of the enduring type. At any time of the day or night the sky may slowly cloud up and rain or snow may then fall without appreciable intermission for some hours. While there are variations in the rate of fall, and some intermittent rainfall or snow flurries, the general impression gained is one of continuous rains or snows for some hours at a time.

In spring, however, the genial warmth of the sun asserts itself strongly enough to make some rain on its own account. In a period when there is sufficient moisture available, the heating of the ground starts local vertical interchanges of the air, called convection, produces cumulus clouds and their grownup shower clouds. For every rise of a mass of warm moist air sufficient to produce a shower there must have been a neighboring fall of air. So the rain clouds must be rather detached and, therefore, the rain is showery as the clouds pass. The cyclonic action with great masses of over and underrunning air and widespread continuous precipitation is becoming weaker and less prominent in spring. At the same time the shower type of action becomes stronger. These conditions with the sunshine of spring bring May flowers!

(Pick up one column matrix 4-27.)

(Tomorrow: Why the Weather Clears After a Storm)

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