

No. 613

A Science Service Feature

April 29

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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RAINS ON THE REARS OF LOWS

When the barometer begins to rise with the passage of a storm center or trough we usually look for fair weather soon. In fact, we expect it to stop raining long before the barometer rises to the point at which rain began while the pressure was falling. In other words, our prognostications from a barometer are based more on trend than on whether it is high or low. Sometimes, however, the rain stops most grudgingly. The wind shifts, the barometer begins to rise, and the lower air begins to clear in the usual manner but the rain does not stop. The sun may even appear shining hazily through the sheet of falling rain, but the rain may continue for hours more.

"Why doesn't the rain stop? If it keeps on it won't be through before the next storm is due."

If lows remained in one place and if the temperatures and humidities of the arriving air were about the same in all directions we should have a condition not unlike that of the stationary or slowly moving tropical cyclone, with rain occurring on all sides of the center to a distance of 100 or 200 miles or more. But lows usually move, and progress faster than the air on the rear can come after them. This results in a concentration of the rainfall in front and a dry descending wind behind. But even under such conditions the spreading, dripping cloud mass from the storm center may push some tens of miles rearwards and keep the rain going. Usually, however, it is the slow-moving storm that keeps on raining when we expect quicker clearing.

(Pick up one column matrix 4-29.)

(Tomorrow: How Much Did It Rain?)
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