

No. 617

A Science Service Feature

May 4

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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CONFLICTING INDICATIONS

We are so accustomed to expecting warmer weather when a south wind blows, and colder when the north wind holds sway, that when it gets colder with a strong south wind or warmer with a north wind we lose our weather bearings. Not less disconcerting to a local forecaster who takes pride in his oracular pronouncements on the weather, is the occurrence of a rising barometer when a south wind has led him to carry an umbrella, or a falling barometer with a brisk north wind when he has told his clientele "Yes, the rain is over and we'll have fine weather now for a few days".

These peculiarities of temperature and pressure arise from slow moving lows or highs. If a low stops, then the cool air that was chasing it from the northwest can round the south quadrant and come up from the south pushing the warmer, lighter air up and forward. Similarly, some of the warm air rushing in from the southeast can keep on spiralling into the center till it comes in as a mild moist wind from the north.

With pressure systems slow moving or stationary any increase or decrease in size or general pressure will be felt by all places within them. Within an increasing high or decreasing or filling low stations on all sides with winds of all directions will experience rising pressure. Similarly, a decreasing high or an increasing low, will make falling pressure. Under such conditions the forecasting rules that go with pressure changes are to be relied on rather than those associated with wind directions. Nevertheless, the wind indications should not be neglected. A south wind with rising pressure usually indicates fair weather with warm days and cool nights. A north wind with falling pressure commonly means cloudy, showery weather for at least a little while.

(Tomorrow: Hail in Spring)
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