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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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RAIN COMING

"When the clouds appear like rocks and towers
The earth's refreshed by frequent showers."

A double decker cloud, with rather solid looking supporting cloud columns, or masses between decks, is often a sign of showers to come within a few hours. This is especially significant in the morning, within a few hours after sunrise, before the heat has had a chance to evaporate the clouds of the cooler hours. Tall clouds of any sort, whether or not surmounting a lower deck or apparently supporting or piercing an upper layer, are shower prognostics. An increasing southerly wind, falling pressure and increasing humidity, at the same time, make such indications almost infallible.

Dense clouds of any appreciable vertical extent in a local formation must represent a considerable rise of humid air. Such an ascent cannot take place unless there is an appreciable contrast in temperature at different heights. And it cannot occur without rather abundant condensation, often resulting in rain. A double deck of clouds usually represents over and under-running humid winds rather contrasted in temperature, and, therefore, an excellent opportunity for the development of considerable instability and consequent rain.

(Tomorrow: The Squall Cloud)
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