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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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HURRICANE SEASON

August and September are the months when the Weather Bureau must be on the alert for West Indian hurricanes. These hurricanes are violent circular storms, known as tropical cyclones. The hurricanes of August and the first half of September generally come from the eastern side of the Atlantic and are the great storms, while those of the last half of September and the first half of October arise in the western Caribbean and are not usually so intense. Some enter the Gulf of Mexico and cause tremendous waves along the coast; after running ashore these storms weaken and usually become very like our ordinary "lows" or storms. Other tropical cyclones keep to the ocean and pass northward up the Atlantic coast, causing heavy rains and winds.

To be really appreciated, however, a hurricane should be viewed in the West Indies or Gulf states. The stronger the whirl of the wind and the greater the area of the storm, the lower the atmospheric pressure at its center. Hurricanes vary from 50 to 1,000 miles in diameter. At the center is a calm clear "eye" 5 to 30 miles across, where the air is descending and perhaps dissipating the clouds. The whirl of winds develops such a strong centrifugal tendency as to create this down-draft in the core. Though the wind is very light the sea is dangerously high. Away from the center the rain falls in torrents and the whirling wind rises to velocities well over 100 miles per hour, which amply accounts for the waves. Ships caught in a hurricane in the northern hemisphere seek to escape the central eye by taking a course 90 degrees to the right of the wind direction. With radio warnings now available hurricanes are less of a menace to shipping than formerly.

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(Tomorrow: Watching a Balloon Go)  
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