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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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MANY A MICKLE MAKES A MUCKLE

Big rain drops and big snowflakes come down in a hurry and make a great show while they last, but seldom continue long. Small drops or moderate sized flakes coming down steadily more often indicate the beginning of a real storm. It rains or snows when cloud particles become large enough to fall all the way to the ground without evaporating. When condensation first occurs aloft, the droplets or ice crystals are so tiny that they settle downward only very slowly. A slight upcurrent of air is sufficient to keep the cloud from falling. If condensation continues and the drops grow bigger and perhaps collide and join, they begin to fall unless there is a vigorous vertical updraft, as in thunderstorms or snowsqualls. In front of a large storm, the upward currents are general and moderate rather than local and violent. The flakes or drops therefore begin to fall before they have become very big. When the storm is passing, however, the cold wind pushing in on the rear is likely to cause vigorous overturning and strong convection, producing heavy showers of large drops or flurries of big flakes.

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