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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE MERRY-GO-ROUND OF WINDS

Did you ever see the mercury fall rapidly with a south or southwest wind and rise with a north or northeast wind? Just this reverse of the usual occurred recently with the passing of a large storm. Here's how it happens.

Around every storm, or low pressure area, a whirl of winds blowing toward the center tends to develop. The whirl goes counter-clockwise, or around in the direction opposite to that taken by the hands of a watch, face up. But usually the whirl is very imperfectly formed, perhaps the only traces of it that you see on the weather map are the characteristic warm southerly wind in front of a low and the cold northerly and westerly winds on the rear. But suppose the low or storm center is a big one and moves across the country very slowly. This gives time for the merry-go-round of winds to develop. The cold north or northwest wind comes down behind and continues around the circuit turning into a west, southwest and finally a south wind. If the low moves northward and is strong enough to make the wind move fast, the original northwest wind will retain much of its coldness part way around the circuit and blow as a cold south or southwest wind, causing a drop in temperature of 20 or 30 degrees. This happened in the middle west early in December this year and also in 1918, when a frigid southwest gale made January 12th the coldest day on record in the northern part of the Ohio valley. Similarly, an original southerly air current in front of the early December tropical cyclone this year turned around into the northern section of the storm as a northeast wind with rising temperature. Such striking effects from turning winds are observed only when the winds come from adjacent regions with widely different temperature.

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