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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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BLIZZARDS

On the Atlantic coast any severe northeast snowstorm may be called a "blizzard", but the true blizzard of the northern plains is practically unknown. Possibly the word blizzard is derived from "blitzartig" (lightning-like) a term said to have been applied to the sudden storms of the Dakotas by early German settlers. The true blizzard is characterized by intense cold and a gale of wind whipping up blinding clouds of powdery snow. Conditions are most favorable for a blizzard just after the passage of a strong storm or low, when fresh light snow lies on the ground. A northwest wind is usual on the rear of a low; over the open prairies where it has unobstructed sweep it may develop into a frigid gale.

The whole lower atmosphere becomes filled with choking,stinging particles. It is impossible to see a person 10 feet away and the roaring of the wind is deafening. Cattle perish and farmers are sometimes lost in going from house to barn unless the buildings are connected with wires or strings.

Do not think , however, that the blizzard is a purely American institution. The Buran or Purga, "snow from below", of the Russian steppes is of the same nature. The most intense storms of this type are found in Adelie Land, Antarctica, called by Sir Douglas Mawson "The Home of the Blizzard."

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