

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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A SEA THERMOGRAPH

What sort of a mental picture have you of the Gulf Stream? Is it that of a stormy river of salty tropical water somewhere out in the ocean, that dark blue, almost black stream which a southbound ship suddenly enters half a day to a day out of New York?

Few realize the distinctness of the northern edge of the Gulf Stream. Where the Labrador Current drives headlong into its side the boundary is sharp enough to photograph and also to permit pleasant swimming within a quarter mile of an iceberg. In fact, temperatures differing by 20 or 30 degrees Fahrenheit have been reported from bow and stern of a ship at the same time.

Put a sea temperature recorder on a moving ship, as the Weather Bureau recently did on a New York to Porto Rico steamer, and the Gulf Stream writes its signature with a bold upward thrust as steep as the precipice of El Capitan. On the maiden trip of this thermograph, April 29 to May 10, 1926, the sea temperatures slowly rose from 46 degrees Fahrenheit at New York to 50 at midnight the first night out. Then inside of an hour the temperature rose 25 degrees to 75 and soon to 78. The instrument drew some small ups and downs then a drop, rise, and drop of 8 degrees as the southern edge of the Gulf Stream was crossed. From there, in the Antilles Current, the temperature slowly rose to over 80 near Porto Rico. Returning a week to 10 days later the curve was written in reversed order but on a few degrees' higher plane. The north "Cold Wall" of the Gulf Stream was not so sharp, the fall of 25 degrees from 80 to 55 indicated by the thermograph requiring three hours and including several sharp ups and downs.

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