

A Science Service Feature

Released on receipt
but intended for use
August 4, 1926

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed July 28, 1926

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PICNICKING ON THREATENING DAYS

Picnics or expeditions planned in advance may sometimes be held with fair safety even on threatening days, times when the Weather Bureau is forecasting showers and thunderstorms. But one must be prepared for a wetting. In the early morning observe the movement of any fleecy alto-cumulus clouds. These clouds, as their name implies, are not low clouds but are at moderate heights and their internal units or markings are of fair size. If these alto-cumulus clouds are moving so fast as to make their direction of motion readily apparent, any showers that may occur may come up suddenly, for they will be moving fast. But if their motion is somewhat difficult to see, thundershowers may be expected to give half an hour to an hour's warning as they approach. Obviously, picnics may be conducted when the clouds are moving slowly with much greater safety than when they are moving swiftly.

In choosing your picnic spot you should if practicable go to a place which from your home is in the direction from which the alto-cumulus clouds are moving. For if a storm should come up you could more readily reach home if traveling with the storm than if going toward it.

Now if you are having your picnic on such a day be sure to keep your weather eye open so that you may perceive while it is still in the distance any on-coming storm. You should watch the sky in the direction from which you saw the alto-cumulus clouds coming. Any large clouds should be viewed with suspicion.

If you have a car and do not wish to go home yet you may be able to sidestep a local storm by traveling to the right or left of its path. Since a shower's average rate of progress is about 20 miles an hour, this is often readily practicable.

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