

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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TROPICAL "ONIONS"

Every fall a number of tropical storms, or hurricanes, are likely to beset the West Indies, and the Gulf States, furnishing plenty of excitement for the Weather Bureau. On the weather map, one of these alarming storms appears somewhat like an onion cut crosswise, a neat round or slightly oval area of low pressure with concentric isobars, or lines of equal pressure, close together. It is characterized by torrential rains and tremendous winds spiralling counter-clockwise toward a calm clear "eye" or center.

These tropical storms are not as large as the usual lows of temperate latitudes, nor do they travel as fast, although they rotate rapidly. Where they originate, they may be only 50 miles in diameter; at most, they may grow till they are 1,000 miles across, though 500 miles is a more common breadth. Two hundred miles out from the center, the winds are only moderately high, perhaps 30 to 45 miles per hour, while at the center the wind may exceed 100 miles per hour. The winds are usually highest on the right side of the storm because there the rotational velocity is added to the forward motion of the hurricane.

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