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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WHEN A HURRICANE PASSES

Along the Gulf Coast, the first sign of an approaching hurricane is the long swell coming in from the sea, combined with a steady rise in water level above the expected tide. Sometimes this warning comes two or three days before the storm, as waves may extend 800 miles or more from center. Meanwhile the barometer may remain stationary, or even rise slightly, owing to the outpouring of air from the storm and its partial accumulation in what is called a peri-cyclonic ring of high pressure.

When the storm is perhaps 200 miles away, fine high cirrus clouds radiating from the center appear. These clouds extend farther in the case of our ordinary storms of temperate latitudes, for the upper winds here are more rapid than in the tropics. At first only a gradual breeze is felt, then the barometer begins to fall rapidly and the wind quickens to a gale. The clouds thicken, rain falls in torrents, tremendous waves hammer the shore. In the midst of the uproar comes a sudden lull as the small "eye" or central vortex of the storm approaches. The sky clears temporarily and the wind ceases, though the waves do not abate. Soon the tempest starts again, from the opposite direction, as the cyclone passes off. Inland, tropical cyclones usually soon lose their violence and on moving into higher latitudes assume most of the characteristics of our ordinary lows.

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