A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed December 6, 1926

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University

TRAVELING AGAINST THE WEATHER

Traveling against the weather brings us into surprisingly rapid changes. Normally in winter the weather is moving eastward at a rate of 30 miles an hour, and we recognize an average storm cycle of 3 or 4 days, from clear quiet weather through a storm and back to clear, cold and quiet. Now if we travel westward at ordinary auto or train speed the weather changes come with about twice the usual rapidity. This is quite evident if one is passing across a cold front. Setting out for Worcester from Cambridge, Mass. one morning in a brisk southwesterly wind with a temperature of 56 degrees Fahrenheit an auto party noted a dark bank of clouds in the west. Soon the wind freshened and shifted a little to the west and became much cooler as the dark clouds passed overhead.

After an hour of further travel the wind became west and the gusts strong enough to affect the steering and even the speed of the moving car. Much colder air was now felt. On the western landscape patches of sunshine began to appear, and soon the sky was but partly cloudy. When the party reached Worcester at 12:30 the temperature was 40, a fall of 20 degrees in two hours. But the weather observer in Worcester said the cold front had arrived at about 9:30, which was over an hour before it was met by the auto party 35 miles farther east, and that the temperature had been 53 when the fall began. So the motorists had experienced twice as rapid a fall in temperature as had the people who stayed at one place. A great crowd of eastward traveling automobiles, on the contrary, felt little wind and no change in temperature.

SCIENCE SERVICE,
21st and B Sts.,
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