

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE END OF A NORTHEAST STORM

Nothing seems so endless as a driving northeast storm. Snow or rain hurtle down continuously, low clouds darken the sky, and the wind holds steady in the northeast. If the barometer is falling it is one sign that the low center is moving. If the barometer is falling at an increasing rate, the low is coming on apace; and if the pressure has reached a low value the center is probably close by and the storm will end in a few hours at the most. A steady barometer does not indicate much of anything but that the storm winds are pretty well balanced and perhaps that but little motion of the storm system is taking place. A rising barometer, on the other hand, is suggestive of some reduction of temperature taking place, and, therefore, of an early ending. Here, again, the forecaster must be on his guard, for a short rise in the barometer may take place through some temporary crowding of the wind, only to be followed by a renewed fall.

Careful observations of the wind are very helpful in indicating the approach of the end of a northeast storm, especially if these observations can include the motion of the lowest portions of the nimbus cloudsheet. A tendency of the wind to shift to the north is a favorable sign, particularly so if the clouds move from a direction slightly north of the surface wind. So long as the clouds move from a more easterly direction than the lower wind the precipitation may be expected to continue.

A change in the character of the precipitation is sometimes suggestive. After a period of particularly intense precipitation, if the snow or rain becomes light rather suddenly the end is probably at hand.

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