

A Science Service Feature

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! WHY THE WEATHER !

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By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University

A MAJOR STORM

From February 13 to 21, 1927, a major storm or stormgroup passed across the United States. A great low pressure system, whose major center was in the north, passed over the Pacific coast, with an extraordinarily strong wind from southerly directions, carrying enormous quantities of water vapor. Beating against the coast and piling over the mountain ranges the amount of precipitation was such as to produce flooding rains and avalanching snows. At the southern end of the Great Valley of California a tornado was reported.

The high pressure companion of this great low pressure area invaded the northern plateau and Rockies as this low came inland. The meeting of the frigid air of the high and the much warmer air of the low produced severe winds and snows in the central Rocky Mountain region. Far inland, however, the low became separated from a supply of vapor adequate for general precipitation after the large losses already sustained as the wind crossed the mountains.

But on tapping the muggy air over the Gulf of Mexico the storm took on new life, producing more tornadoes and extraordinary rains in the South. At the same time, some advance lows had favored the southeastward movement of the cold air in the North. A Saturday, Feb. 19, snow and rainstorm was the result of this cold front nosing under the warmer, more humid air in its path. With rapidly rising pressure much snow or rain fell. But the major center of the transcontinental storm did not reach the Northeast till about 24 hours later. Then the bitter cold, northeast wind, under the warm raining or snowing layer from the southwest above, brought death and destruction in what was the worst day of the winter.

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