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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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"IF THE WIND BLOWS FROM THE SOUTHEAST"

In New England there is a saying "If the wind blows from the southeast for twelve hours, it will rain in spite of hell." Few weather sayings are better founded. An enduring southeast wind is a harbinger of rain almost everywhere in our middle latitudes, for when the wind is in this quarter the pressure is lower to the west, the direction from which the weather generally comes. Lower pressure usually goes with a greater probability of rainfall.

But the eastern part of a low in middle latitudes is wetter at some places than at others. In the interior of the continent, for example, there may be little vapor in a southeasterly wind until after much more than 12 hours' travel, and not even then if there were effective mountain barriers between the place and a possible source of much moisture. Our eastern seaboard is well exposed to importation of abundant vapor from the Gulf Stream, almost any part of the coast being within 12 hours' southeast wind travel of this warm current.

New England is not only well exposed to such winds when they blow, but also favors rapid chilling of the muggy air as it slides up over the land. In the cold half-year the general chilling plus the forced ascent of the air over the rough land, hills and the heaped up cold air on the landscape, readily precipitate much of the vapor. In summer, the heating of the air over the land quickly leads to convectional ascent to the low heights at which showers can be produced in such damp air. Thus winter or summer, New England's southeast wind, when it is not simply the temporary daytime sea-breeze, is the rainbringer.

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