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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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TORNADOES IN EUROPE

In the year 1730 there was published in London a slender book by Richard Bugdon, entitled: "The passage of the hurricane, from the sea-side at Bexhill in Sussex to Newingden-Level, the twentieth day of May, 1729, between nine and ten in the evening. Containing I. A particular account of the damage and devastations of the buildings, timber, &c., that stood in the way of its course. II. An account of the weather and bearings of the winds that preceded the hurricane: with the celerity of its circular and progressive motion, the time taken up and distance it passed along over the east end of Sussex. III. Some observations on the way and manner of its course. IV. By way of inquiry, some account attempted of the causes of tempests, whirlwinds and hurricanes."

The "hurricane" described in this quaint work was a true tornado; a type of storm that is by no means so rare in Europe as most Americans believe. An especially interesting feature of the book is a map showing the track followed by the storm, the houses and woods destroyed, etc.; the earliest map of this kind ever published, so far as we know.

This is not, however, the earliest book on tornadoes. Lamy in France and Montanari in Italy wrote treatises on tornadoes and the kindred phenomena of waterspouts in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Olaus Magnus describes tornadoes in his "History of the Northern Nations", published in 1555, and they are mentioned by the writers of antiquity, including Pliny, Seneca and Lucretius.

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