

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed July 26, 1927

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THE PAMPERO

The "pampero" is the most famous weather phenomenon of the South American region adjacent to the Rio de la Plata - the "River Plate" of colloquial English. It is a violent squall from the southwest, blowing chiefly during the months from July to September.

The storm is ushered in by clouds to the southwest, which have a rolled and tufted appearance, like huge bales of black cotton. Their forms are continually changing. They are accompanied by gusts of hot wind, blowing at intervals of about a minute. Following these gusts, the storm comes with hurricane force, blowing up enormous clouds of dust, which sometimes spread such a pall of darkness over the land that it is hard to find one's way about. Often heavy rain falls, and, mingling with the dust, becomes a shower of mud. Thunder and lightning frequently accompany the pampero. With the passing of the storm there is a marked fall in temperature. Shipping in the River Plate suffers severely in these storms.

A pampero generally lasts only a quarter of an hour or so, but in the year 1793, it is said, one blew without intermission for three days. The bed of the river was laid dry for a distance of ten miles from the shore, revealing the wrecks of many vessels that had been lost years before.

The pampero belongs to the type of wind known to meteorologists as the "line squall".

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