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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Charles Fitzhugh Talman  
Authority on Meteorology

THE ROARING FORTIES

The name "Roaring Forties" was applied by sailors to the oceanic area of the southern hemisphere between latitudes 40 and 50 long before landsmen facetiously applied it to the focus of night life in New York City.

In both hemispheres westerly winds prevail from about latitude 30, the poleward limit of the trade winds, to the borders of the polar regions. In the northern hemisphere the "prevailing westerlies" are much interrupted by moving cyclones and anti-cyclones. In the southern, the winds blow more steadily from a westerly quadrant, and as there are few land features to impede their progress they attain great strength. The winds of the "Roaring Forties" are described as the "Brave West Winds". Sailing ships, by their aid, are able to compete with steamers in trade between England and New Zealand, via the Cape of Good Hope, the return journey being made around Cape Horn.

At one time these westerlies of the southern oceans were generally regarded as a permanent stream of air, as steady as the trades. It is now known, however, that many cyclonic disturbances travel eastward in that region. As in the southern hemisphere the winds in a cyclone have a "clockwise" direction around the center, the winds on the northern borders of these storms are westerly. The centers usually lie south of the 43d parallel in winter and south of the 46th parallel in summer. By keeping well to the northward of the storm centers in "running her easting down", as sailors say, a vessel gets the benefit not only of the general drift of the atmosphere from west to east but also of the strong west winds of the cyclonic circulation

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