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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SOME PACIFIC COAST WINDS

The violent squalls, usually accompanied by thunder and lightning, that sometimes blow on the Pacific coasts of southern California, Mexico and Central America during the rainy season are known to sailors as "chubascos". The force of these winds is illustrated by an episode recorded by Dr. F. A. Carpenter. An American steamer encountered a chubasco and was compelled to lie to. During a heavy gust the steamer's whistle sounded a long wailing blast. The quartermaster in the wheelhouse was asked by the skipper why he had signaled and replied that he had not touched the whistle cord. Presently another blast sounded, and then it was discovered that the pressure of the wind against the cord had blown the whistle. The cord was a one-eighth inch steel cable 200 feet long, and subsequent experiment showed that, with the same steam pressure, an 18-pound weight suspended from the middle of it was required to operate the whistle.

The wind most dreaded on the west coast of Mexico blows with hurricane force from a southerly quadrant during the passage northward, off the coast, of a tropical cyclone. This may occur any time during the summer and autumn, but the wind is traditionally identified with St. Francis' day (October 4) and is called "el cordonazo de San Francisco" ("the lash of St. Francis"): usually shortened to "el cordonazo".

The "papagayo" is a violent norther of the winter half-year on the Pacific coast of Central America; originally one blowing from the Gulf of Papagayo. In the vicinity of the Gulf of Tehuantepec winds of the same character are called "Tehuantepec", or "Tehuantepecers".

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