

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed June 27, 1929.

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THE INTERNATIONAL CLOUD CLASSIFICATION

It was the British meteorologist Ralph Abercromby who, through the many photographs of clouds taken in the course of his world-wide travels, proved that the typical forms of clouds are the same everywhere, and thus paved the way toward an international system of classification. In 1896-97, during the period known as the "international cloud year," a campaign of cloud measurements was undertaken in several countries according to a uniform plan. These measurements confirmed the belief previously put forth by special students of clouds that there is a fairly definite relationship between the forms of clouds and their heights above the ground.

This relationship forms the basis of the present International Cloud Classification, in which all clouds are divided into five classes; viz, (1) Upper clouds, including cirrus and cirro stratus; (2) intermediate clouds, comprising cirro-cumulus, alto-cumulus and alto-stratus; (3) lower clouds, which include strato-cumulus and nimbus; (4) clouds of diurnal ascending currents, including cumulus and cumulo-nimbus; and (5) high fog, or stratus. In addition to these main types a few special forms are recognized, and still others are included in the recent provisional new edition of the International Cloud Atlas.

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