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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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COMPLEX STORM SIGNALS

The elaborate storm signals displayed along the China coast are a striking contrast to the simple combinations of flags, cones and the like used in most other parts of the world to advise mariners of approaching tempests. The system was introduced by the French Jesuit meteorologists of the Zikawei Observatory, near Shanghai, but is employed generally at the signal stations on the coasts of China and Indo-China.

The signals are made by means of symbols of various geometrical shapes hoisted at the yardarms and masthead of a signal mast. There are ten of these symbols, each of which for certain purposes represents one of the numbers from 0 to 9. Two types of signal are displayed. One shows the location and movements of typhoons and continental depressions; the other gives warning of gales threatening particular districts and indicates the direction from which the wind is expected to blow.

The former type is the more elaborate. In this case the symbols suspended from one yardarm indicate the latitude and longitude of the area within which the storm lies, those at the other yardarm give the direction of movement and certain other information, while a symbol at the masthead shows the time when the warning was issued. At Shanghai combinations of red and white lanterns are displayed by night to show the location of a storm area. An almost ^{equally} elaborate system is employed at the storm-signal stations of Japan.

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