

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER?

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THE EYE OF THE STORM

No feature of a violent tropical cyclone is more striking than the calm center, known as the "eye of the storm." Here the wind almost completely dies down, so that, in many cases, there is not enough to blow out a candle. The torrential rain of the hurricane ceases, and usually there is a break in the clouds, revealing the sun by day and the moon or stars by night. To the mariner this area is no haven of rest, as a tremendous, confused sea prevails here. Reports speak of it as "a high cross sea, rising perpendicularly," or as a sea "run up in the shape of a cone, making it very dangerous for a ship to live in." The waves are said to "break upon the vessel from all sides at once." Thousands of birds, driven to the center of the storm by the winds, sometimes take refuge on a ship that is passing through the "eye."

These remarks are prompted by the recently published narrative of a passenger on the S. S. "Coamo," which went through the center of the hurricane that devastated the city of Santo Domingo last September. The writer, Victor Braegger, says: "at 1 o'clock, all of a sudden, the wind subsided as if by magic, but mountainous waves rushed upon the ship from all directions. The ship became a haven for all kinds of sea birds seeking shelter, clinging to the railings, ropes, canvas and windowsills of the cabin. At 1:30, with a terrific pounding and slamming of wind and waves, we were driven right into the thick of it again; only this time the intensity of the storm and the howling and hissing of the wind and rain together seemed greater than before."

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