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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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AUSTRALIAN TORNADOES

Although North America probably experiences a larger number of full-fledged tornadoes than all the rest of the world combined, our continent is far from "enjoying" a monopoly of such visitations. Dr. Alfred Wegener published in 1917 a good-sized book about the tornadoes and waterspouts of Europe, in which many of the former were described. South Africa has had some of great intensity.

Tornadoes are not common in Australia, but there have been two remarkable cases in recent times in the state of Victoria. In September, 1911, one of these storms swept over the Marong district of that state, near Bendigo. It was attended by a typical funnel cloud and by a fall of hailstones, many of which were the size and shape of safety-match boxes, with the edges rounded off, and some of which weighed a pound. The storm followed a serpentine course, varying from 110 to 780 feet in width and about 12 miles long, which was covered in half an hour. Houses were wrecked, trees were uprooted, and several people were badly injured, but none were killed. Two occupants of a house were blown a distance of 50 yards. The smashing and twisting of metalwork recalled episodes of American tornadoes.

At Brighton, Victoria, on February 2, 1918, three tornadoes were in action at the same time. At a gasworks, according to Dr. Griffith Taylor, "heavy plates of sheet iron weighing 200 lbs. were carried 100 feet and hurled up into pine trees with such force that the soft wood of the pine burst right through the 12-gauge iron." Two people were killed in this storm.

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