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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed May 28, 1931

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Authority on Meteorology.

A TYPICAL TORNADO

One of the best descriptions of a tornado and its effects is that of the Omaha, Nebraska, tornado of March 23, 1913, written by A. C. Arend and published in the Engineering News. Mr. Arend says:

"The cloud formation was of the typical funnel form, seemingly about 600 feet high, with the point touching the earth. From some points of vantage this lower end of the cloud was a lurid fiery mass, while from others it was described as like a large roll of dark paper whirling along rapidly, with ragged edges or ends flashing out spasmodically. Its passage was preceded for several minutes by a roar like that of many railway trains. It probably traveled at the rate of 30 to 40 miles an hour. It was followed or attended by a mass of flying debris, which traveled always endwise and at an angle of about ten degrees to the ground in the case of such articles as studs, planks and bricks. Such light debris as shingles, laths, mounted photographs and wearing apparel was carried from Omaha to the vicinity of Denison, Iowa, a distance of over 60 miles!"

The same writer states that there were more than 6,000 people in the damaged houses in Omaha. The surprisingly small number of these persons killed was explained by the fact that people had been warned of the tornado's approach in time to take shelter in cellars and basements.

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