

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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AN ITALIAN TORNADO

Another illustration of the fact that North America enjoys no monopoly of tornadoes is furnished by a recently published description of one of these storms, which occurred in northern Italy on July 24, 1930. The tornado is said to have formed at the meeting point of two thunderstorms; one coming from the southwest and one from the northwest. It began its career 19 miles northeast of Vicenza at 1:15 p.m. The path extended thence 50 miles in an east-northeasterly direction, and the storm covered this distance at an average speed of 36 miles an hour. The width of the path of destruction varied from about 100 to about 2,460 feet and averaged 1,345 feet. The funnel cloud was about 2,600 feet high. At two points the cloud rose free from the ground leaving breaks in the destructive path with a total length of 5 1/2 miles. Objects whirled aloft by the vortex were deposited from two to several miles to the left of the path, and one, a picture, fell 30 miles from its original location. Hundreds of houses were destroyed or badly damaged, trees were uprooted, etc., but no human lives were lost, though several persons were carried hundreds of yards through the air and dropped on the ground without serious injury.

One interesting feature of this tornado was the formation, at several points along the path, of small secondary vortices, which traveled along with the principal one. The maximum speed of rotation of the main vortex was estimated, from the structural damage done, at 180 miles an hour, which is much below the usual estimates for American tornadoes.

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