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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE FEAT OF A TORNADO

The most interesting tornado of the present season was undoubtedly the one that blew a passenger train from the track near Moorhead, Minn., on May 27, 1931. The event was recorded at the time in press dispatches, but the complete and accurate details of the story have only recently been gathered by the Weather Bureau.

The "Empire Builder," a crack passenger train of the Great Northern, en route from Seattle to Chicago, was traveling nearly a mile a minute when, about 4:30 p.m., it was struck at right angles by the rapidly advancing vortex. The heavy locomotive and tender remained on the track but all 12 of the coaches were derailed. Five of these were lifted bodily from the rails, one of them being hurled into a ditch 80 feet away, while the remaining seven were probably pulled from the rails. One passenger was killed and 57 were injured. The steel cars that the storm thus tossed aside as if they had been toys weighed, on an average, more than 70 tons apiece, unloaded.

On a farm in the path of this storm the owner was standing in the door of his barn when the whole building was lifted and carried away, leaving him unharmed. The barn was carried toward the farmhouse, three of its walls were deposited on three different sides of the house, and the roof was carried over a grove of tall trees and dropped in a field 200 yards from where the barn had stood. The farmhouse was not damaged.

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