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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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TWO EUROPEAN TORNADOES

As tornadoes are uncommon in Europe, it is a fact of some interest that two occurred there within three days of each other last June; one in England on the 14th and the other in Germany on the 17th. The former was especially notable for the fact that it passed through the large city of Birmingham. "Altogether," says an English description, "a scar of some 10 to 12 miles in length was left across Birmingham from the south to the northeast; a scar marked by a very great amount of material damage evidenced by broken houses, stripped roofs, and uprooted trees, and unfortunately by the loss of one life." The path of destruction varied in width from 200 to 800 yards, and the storm traveled at a speed of about 30 miles an hour; a speed similar to that of many American tornadoes. At any one place the duration of the storm was not more than two minutes.

The German twister occurred in the valley of the Else, in Westphalia, causing damage in three small towns and the loss of three lives. According to the London Times, after a thundery day there came a sudden and striking darkening of the sky at about six o'clock in the evening, and, on the horizon, there appeared a funnel-shaped gray-black cloud, which advanced rapidly, accompanied by a noise "like the howl of dozens of sirens." When the cloud dipped upon the town of Plettenberg, where the greatest havoc was wrought, "heavy beams, scaffolding, roofs and fences flew through the air, some of them for a distance of several hundred feet."

Tornadoes do happen from time to time in the Old World; but the stupendous feats of destruction accomplished by some of our American storms are seldom rivaled abroad.

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