

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE "BIG WIND"

The most furious tempest to visit the British Isles during the nineteenth century was probably that of January 6-7, 1839. It caused great destruction of property in England and Ireland, there were many disastrous shipwrecks on the British coasts, and many lives were lost by land and sea. The strength of the winds may be judged from the fact that at places sixty miles from the nearest coast vegetation was encrusted with salt from ocean spray.

This storm had a curious sequel. It was a recent and memorable event at the time Irish emigration to America was at its height following the famine of 1845-46 in the old country, and its memory has been preserved among the descendants of the immigrants. Under the name of "the Big Wind in Ireland" the storm is still a subject of frequent allusion on this side of the Atlantic, though it is rarely heard of on the other. Paragraphs about it crop up from time to time in the newspapers of the United States and Canada, and the official weather services of both countries receive a good many inquiries about it.

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