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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed September 15, 1932

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IN THE CENTER OF A TYPHOON

In the center of a tropical hurricane there is a small area where the wind dies down, sometimes to a dead calm. It is called "the eye of the storm." When, however, a ship passes through this area the tremendous confused sea is almost as bad as the howling tempest from which the mariner gets a brief respite. These remarks are suggested by the experience of a British naval officer in passing through the heart of a China Sea typhoon, as recorded in Laughton and Heddon's "Great Storms." His vessel was a destroyer -- not the most comfortable kind of a craft in a seaway.

"The sea," he writes, "presented a remarkable sight. There was no consistency in its direction. Only the crests were breaking, and they did not seem to care which way they fell. They just tumbled over because they were too tired to remain standing up. The ocean appeared a cauldron of steep cones, each acting independently of the other, the result being the utmost chaos. Some of these seas would clash together on opposite courses, and the effect would appear in the shape of a waterspout. I was fearful I should hit one of these columns of water, but fortunately luck steered me clear. ... I do not suppose that the bright sky overhead and the cessation of wind lasted more than about ten minutes, when the squalls suddenly veered to the east-southeast."

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