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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed August 24, 1933

EARLY "EQUINOCTIALS"

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Contrary to popular belief, the passage of the sun over the equator, alias the "line," does not produce a storm. The "equinoctial storm," or "line storm" is a myth, but it is not uncommon for the tail-end of a tropical cyclone to give us a spell of rainy, blustery weather in the early autumn, which the public identifies as the "equinoctial." We recently had a dose of such weather, and though it came a whole month ahead of the equinox, the suggestion was heard in some quarters that it was the "equinoctial" out of season.

The recent coast storm was remarkable for its erratic course. It originated in the eastern part of the tropical North Atlantic, moved up into the temperate zone while still well to the eastward of the West Indies, gave Bermuda a rather close shave, and then headed west for the shores of North Carolina and Virginia, where it was central on the morning of August 23.

On September 3, 1925, the naval airship "Shenandoah" was destroyed in a storm over Ohio. Some authorities believed this storm to be of the type known as a "line squall," which advances across the country with a linear front, so that a long narrow strip of country is affected at the same time by its passage. The storm was described under this name in the newspaper reports of the disaster. Most newspaper readers had never heard of a "line squall," but believed firmly in the recurrence each year of the "line storm," alias the "equinoctial". The curious result of all this was that the wreck of the "Shenandoah" was widely attributed to an "equinoctial storm".

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