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November 10, 1933

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed November 3, 1933

MISTRAL AND BORA

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Anywhere along the northwest shore of the Mediterranean between the mouth of the Ebro and the Gulf of Genoa the sailor may run foul of the mistral, but the best place to observe it in all its blustering strength is the Gulf of Lions, where it issues from its favorite habitat, the Rhône valley. Blowing down from the bleak Alpine heights to the warmer shores of the Mediterranean, it feels disagreeably chilly even in midsummer. At its strongest the mistral has been known to blow railway carriages from the track. A weather map will show you the distribution of barometric highs and lows responsible for the genesis of this wind, but it is acceleration under the pull of gravity in its drainage down from the mountainous hinterland that makes the mistral so violent on the shores of Provence.

Drainage down still steeper slopes makes the bora of the Adriatic an even fiercer blast, on an average, than the mistral. At Trieste its gusts are said to have sometimes attained a velocity of more than 130 miles an hour. A stiff bora is an ugly customer, especially for sailing craft, for the reason that the Italian shore to the leeward has few good harbors. The terrific gusts of this wind whip the choppy seas of the Adriatic into a dense blanket of spindrift, known locally as "fumarea."

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