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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed February 6, 1934

NORTH ATLANTIC WINDS

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Authority on Meteorology.

The middle latitudes of the North Atlantic lie in the region known to weathermen as the "prevailing westerlies." There is a general drift of the atmosphere in this region from southwest to northeast, but the overwhelming preponderance of winds from westerly quadrants indicated by monthly averages and depicted in the conventional wind-roses is often at variance with the winds actually encountered by navigators. This is because the region is also one of numerous cyclonic disturbances, which, while they progress eastwardly, have winds directed more or less spirally around their centers. Prof. R. De C. Ward wrote of the so-called "westerlies" on this ocean:

"They are often interrupted by cyclones, which cause changes of wind direction to southeast or south with foul weather and rain, followed by a shift to the southwest and west or northwest with clearing weather and higher wind velocities. The winds, while generally strong, are variable both in direction and velocity. During the colder months the storms increase in number and are more violent; the shifts of wind are more frequent; the periods of rainy and cloudy weather come oftener and the winds have higher velocities. Because the 'Atlantic Ferry' runs through the latitudes of the stormy westerlies, the passage is apt to take a steamer through one or more storms, especially in the colder months. There are fewer changes in weather and in pressure on the eastward voyage than on the westward. This is because the storms themselves move eastward, and the steamer travels along with them. On the westward voyage the ship moves toward the approaching storms and in a given number of days is therefore likely to pass through more of such disturbances than when she travels eastward."

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