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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed July 27, 1934

COLLIDING WITH A WATERSPOUT

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Waterspouts were unusually numerous last winter over the tropical and subtropical North Atlantic, and one of them furnished a fresh proof of the fact that the shock of colliding with a ship -- though much more violent than that due to the time-honored process of firing cannon at waterspouts -- is not at all likely to break a spout up.

A waterspout encountered December 12 by the Italian ship "Maria" passed over the forward part of the vessel within 15 feet of the bridge without bursting. It was about 60 feet in diameter. Water and spray, rotating clockwise up to a height of about 80 feet, drenched the decks for a minute. The spout then continued its course in a southerly direction, but did not disappear for an hour and a half -- an unusually long life for a waterspout. Several other spouts were seen at the same time from 6 to 8 miles away.

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