

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SALT IN THE AIR

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Spray from the ocean is often carried great distances inland during storms and its effects are seen after the storm in the shape of deposits of salt on foliage and elsewhere. Thus after the great British storm of January, 1839, (often referred to as the "big wind in Ireland," though the Emerald Isle has no monopoly of it), salt was found on the leaves of trees at places near Huddersfield, which is in the middle of northern England, about 80 miles from the east coast and 60 miles from the west coast. After a gale in April, 1882, salt was found at Kew Observatory, about 50 miles from the sea in the direction from which the strongest winds blew. Many similar cases have been recorded in the British Isles in later years. In November, 1911, after a severe and long-continued westerly gale, windows were incrustated with salt at Ilkley, 50 miles from the coast.

In recent years we have heard complaints from England of the effects of these inland spray deposits on electric transmission wires. The same effects are well known in other parts of the world, and they are not always due to spray from the ocean. Thus on the lines running across the mud flats surrounding Great Salt Lake, Utah, salt borne by fog and wind sometimes crusts on the insulators and reduces their power of insulation so much as to interfere with service. These deposits are removed by a jet of steam from a small boiler, mounted on wheels and hauled from pole to pole by an automobile.

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