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EARTHQUAKES AND WEATHER

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Meteorologists take little stock in the popular belief that a recognizable type of "earthquake weather" generally prevails in a region that is about to be the scene of a severe earthquake. On the other hand they believe that many quakes may be due to atmospheric conditions; especially to inequalities of atmospheric pressure over extensive areas of the earth's surface.

Another possible relationship between atmospheric phenomena and earthquakes has lately been the subject of much discussion. Storms produce waves on the ocean, and many authorities believe that ocean waves are responsible for the miniature vibrations of the land, imperceptible to human senses but registered by seismographs, that are known as "microseisms." According to the late Prof. Emil Wiechert, microseisms are due to the beating of the surf on exposed coasts. Some years ago a Canadian seismologist installed off the coast of Nova Scotia a device for counting and timing the waves of the sea as they roll in from the broad expanse of the Atlantic, for the purpose of testing this hypothesis, and more recently many comparisons have been made between the prevalence of microseisms in different parts of the world and the simultaneous locations of ocean storms, as shown on weather maps.

It now seems possible that storm waves far from land rather than near shore may be the source of microseisms, the vibrations being produced in the sea bottom under the varying pressure of the water as the waves pass over. Attempts have been made by weather forecasters in India and elsewhere to obtain notice of distant storms at sea by means of seismograph records.

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