

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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IN AN "AIR FOUNTAIN"

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Uprushing columns of air, such as are especially well developed on clear summer days over dry hot ground, have been named "air fountains" by Dr. W. J. Humphreys, who writes of them that "their sides, at times and places, are almost as sharply separated from the surrounding atmosphere as are the sides of a fountain of water, and it is altogether possible for the swiftest of these to produce effects on an aeroplane more or less disconcerting to the pilot." A striking example was furnished a few years ago by the experience of an air mail pilot, C. E. Peebles, during a flight from Dallas, Tex., to Kansas City. He wrote in a newspaper account of the occurrence:

"The wind began to boil and swirl. Suddenly and without any warning that anything so unusual was going to occur my ship started upward, completely out of control. With the nose pushed down and the engine wide open, the plane continued to go up. I had been flying at about 1,500 feet. Within 60 seconds, according to the clock on the instrument board, my plane was hurled 8,000 feet higher.

"As the ship went up it spun much as an aeroplane does when going down in a flat spin. That was one of the ideas that flashed through my mind as it was happening. A flat spin going up! The plane was bouncing around, nose up, then down; straining every wire; being buffeted by the giant winds; completely out of control; going up, up, up. At about 10,000 feet altitude I passed out of it, or maybe it passed away from me. Anywar the air became reasonably calm and I found that control over the plane had returned."

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