

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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TO LURE THE LIGHTNING

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Authority on Meteorology

A method of luring a flash of lightning out of the sky, in order that it may be observed and photographed, has been proposed by Dr. C. V. Boys, F.R.S. Photographs taken with Dr. Boys' high-speed camera, confirming observations made years ago by Walter, in Germany, show that the path of a lightning flash is generally or always built up by a preliminary "leader" stroke, which advances in a series of spurts. The "leader" ionizes the air, making it a good conductor for the main stroke. Dr. Boys suggests that a similar path might be prepared by discharging a big rocket toward or into a thundercloud. A rocket alone might answer the purpose, but a still better conductor could be provided by having a long fine wire attached to the rocket. The firing of the rocket would need to be done by some method of distant control, as a person standing at the point where the rocket left the earth would be in great danger of being struck by the succeeding lightning discharge, if one occurred.

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