

METEOROLOGY

# Erratic Gulf Hurricane "Licked" by Land Wind

## Gulf-Born Storm Forced to Double on Its Tracks; Inland Weather Favors Fall Agricultural Work

"SCREWY," though slang, is nevertheless an accurate characterization of the conduct of the Gulf hurricane that threatened the Gulf ports of Texas during the last week in August, and then put out to sea again, bound no one knew whither. Its course could almost be charted with a corkscrew.

It was not in any respect a typical autumnal tropical storm in its coming, and in its howling retreat over the thrashed-up waters of the Gulf it was just as atypical, C. L. Mitchell of the U. S. Weather Bureau told Science Service. It was driven back, "licked," by a high-altitude land wind from the north.

It was not a large storm, as hurricanes go, but what there was of it was pretty intense. When it approached Galveston, meteorologists expected it to go on ashore, wreak what damage its strength enabled, and then blow itself out over the wide plains of Texas. That is the ordinary, or "orthodox" thing for a hurricane to do. People on the Gulf coast, warned of its coming, made things as secure as possible and then got out of the way.

Instead of striking as expected, however, it veered back toward the east, whence it had come, and when last heard of it was still doing its dervish dance out over the Gulf, some 280 miles to the south of the Mississippi delta.

Meteorologists were as baffled as laymen over this abnormal behavior, until reports of pilot balloons launched at inland points in the South and West began to come in. These showed that a strong wind at high altitudes had steadily pressed against the westwardly drifting storm from the Gulf, amounting in effect to a counter-attack which it could not overcome or pierce, so that in the end there was nothing to do but retreat.

This saving high-level north wind was born of a great, persistent area of high pressure, that moved in with the recent cool wave from the Northwest and had much to do with the beneficial

rains that have fallen in the Midwest and Southwest. The "high" constituted a citadel of even, steady weather which the violent but small off-shore storm could not penetrate, and from which the land-wind sortie issued to drive it back.

In its birth no less than in its behavior, the storm was atypical, Mr. Mitchell said. The usual autumnal hurricane comes into being somewhere out over the South Atlantic, drives up through the Caribbean, and makes its landfall somewhere in the West Indies, on the South Atlantic coast of the United States, or on the Gulf coast of this country or Mexico.

Not so the present storm. It apparently originated right in the Gulf of Mexico itself, for its presence was first reported somewhere to the southward of the Mississippi delta. Thence it fol-

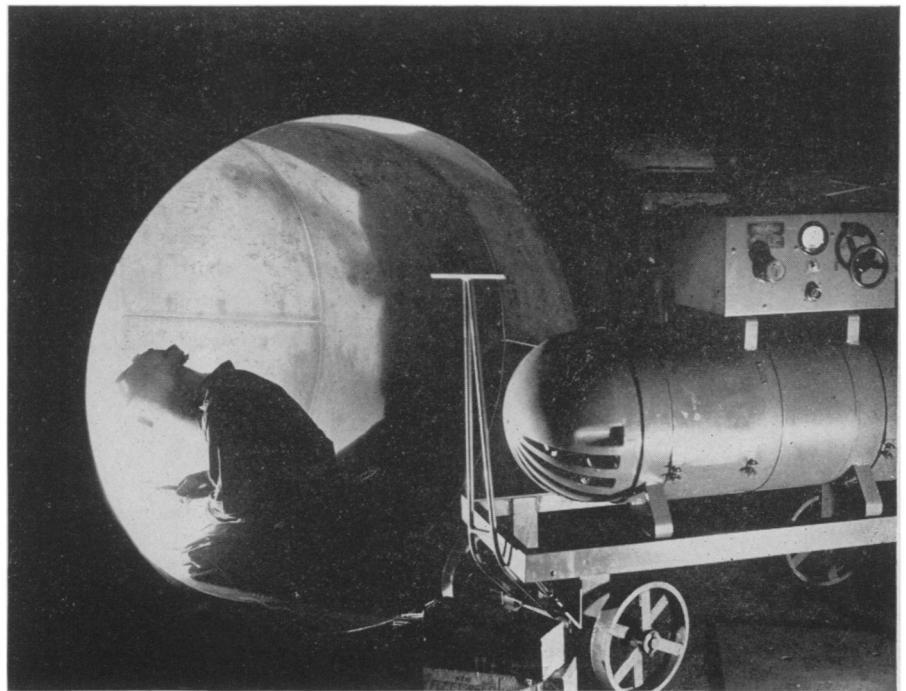
lowed its erratic course, first toward the west, then back again in an easterly direction.

This has been a freak season for marine storms anyway, Mr. Mitchell commented. There have been three so far, one in June and two in August, none of them of tropical Atlantic origin. The other August one originated off the Carolina coast and wound up on the shores of Texas.

Two August "tropicals" striking Texas in itself constitutes a record, Mr. Mitchell reported. In 48 years of record, only half-a-dozen hurricanes have struck the Texas coast during the month of August. Never before, so far as can be determined, have the weather-gods bestowed upon it such a double doubtful favor.

Farmers over a wide area in the Ohio valley and the southern part of the Midwestern corn belt are now energetically pushing ahead with their fall plowing program, taking advantage of the thorough wetting down which the soil received from early autumn general rains. In Iowa, Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin, other farmers followed their example, as the skies cleared after a second rain area that swept across the grain area on Aug. 28 and 29.

At the same time, they received encouragement from the fact that the cool



### MODERN VULCAN

*The fantastic figure performing the rite at the left is welding 315,000 pounds of stainless clad steel into the huge pipe, part of which is shown. When completed, the pipe will carry air under pressure. It is being built by the Cream City Boiler Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*