

**THE HURRICANE GUIDE: BEING  
AN ATTEMPT TO CONNECT THE  
ROTATORY GALE OR  
REVOLVING STORM WITH  
ATMOSPHERIC WAVES**

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The hurricane guide: Being an Attempt to Connect the Rotatory Gale Or Revolving Storm with Atmospheric Waves by William Radcliff Birt

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**WILLIAM RADCLIFF BIRT**

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THE  
HURRICANE GUIDE:

BEING

AN ATTEMPT TO CONNECT THE  
ROTATORY GALE OR REVOLVING STORM

WITH

ATMOSPHERIC WAVES.

INCLUDING INSTRUCTIONS FOR OBSERVING THE PHENOMENA  
OF THE WAVES AND STORMS;

WITH

PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS FOR AVOIDING THE CENTRES OF THE LATTER.

BY

WILLIAM RADCLIFF BIRT.

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1850.

P R E F A C E.

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IN introducing the following pages to the notice of the Public, it is the Author's wish to exhibit in as clear a light as our present researches on the subjects treated of will allow, the connexion between one of the most terrific phænomena with which our globe is visited, and a phænomenon which, although but little known, appears to be intimately connected with revolving storms. How far he has succeeded, either in this particular object or in endeavouring to render the essential phænomena of storms familiar to the seaman, is left for the Public to determine. Should any advantage be found to result from the study of the Atmospheric Waves, as explained and recommended in this little work, or the seaman be induced by its perusal to attend more closely to the observations of those instruments that are calculated to warn him of his danger, an object will be attained strikingly illustrative of the Baconian aphorism, "Knowledge is Power."

*Bethnal Green, April 19, 1849.*

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NOTICE.

IN the pocket accompanying this work are two rings of stiff cardboard, on which will be found all the information contained in figures 1 and 2. When they are laid flatly upon a chart, the continuity of the lines on the chart is not materially interfered with, while the idea of a body of air rotating in the direction indicated by the arrows is conspicuously presented to the mind. These rings are more particularly referred to on page 52.



THE  
HURRICANE GUIDE.

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CHAPTER I.

PHENOMENA OF REVOLVING STORMS.

It is the object of the following pages to exhibit, so far as observation may enable us, and in as brief a manner as possible, the connexion, if any, that exists between those terrific meteorological phenomena known as "revolving storms," and those more extensive and occult but not less important phenomena, "atmospheric waves."

To the great body of our seamen, whether in her Majesty's or the mercantile service, the subject can present none other than the most interesting features. The laws that govern the transmission of large bodies of air from one part of the oceanic surface to another, either in a state of rapid rotation or presenting a more or less rectilineal direction, must at all times form an important matter of inquiry, and bear very materially on the successful prosecution of the occupation of the voyager.

In order to place the subjects above alluded to in such a point of view that the connexion between them may be readily seen, it will be important to notice the principal

phenomena presented by each. Without going over the ground so well occupied by those able writers on the subject of storms—Redfield, Reid, Piddington, and Thom—it will be quite sufficient for our present purpose simply to notice the essential phenomena of revolving storms as manifested by the barometer and vane. The usual indications of a storm in connexion with these instruments are the *falling* of the barometer and the *freshening* of the wind, and it is generally considered that a *rapid* fall of the mercury in the hurricane regions invariably precedes the setting in of a storm.

There are three classes of phenomena that present themselves to an observer, according as he is situated *on* the line or axis of translation, or *in* either the right or left hand semicircle of the storm. These will be rendered very apparent by a little attention to the annexed engraving, fig. 1.

Fig. 1.



In this figure the arrow-head is supposed to be directed true north, and the hurricane—as is the case in the American storms north of the 30th parallel—to be moving towards the N.E. on the line N.E.—S.W. If the ship take the hurricane with the wind S.E.,—the letters within the two larger circles indicating *the direction of the wind in the storm* according to the rotation as shown by the circle of arrow-heads, and which it is to be particularly noted is in the northern hemisphere *contrary to the direction in which the hands of a watch move*: in the southern hemisphere the rotation is reversed—the only phenomena presented by the storm are as follows:—The wind continues to blow from the S.E., increasing considerably in force with the barometer falling to a very great extent until the centre of the storm reaches the ship, when the fury of the winds is hushed, and a lull or calm takes place, generally for about half an hour, after which the wind springs up mostly with increased violence, but from the opposite quarter N.W., the barometer begins to rise, and as the storm passes off, the force of the wind abates.

The point to which we wish particularly to direct attention in connexion with this exposition of the phenomena attending the transmission of a storm is this:—If the observer so place himself at the commencement that the wind passes *from his left hand towards his right*, his face will be directed towards the centre of the storm; and the wind undergoing no change in direction, but only in force, will acquaint him with this important fact that the *centre* is not only gradually but surely approaching him: in other words, in the case before us, when he finds the wind from the S.E., and he places himself with his face to the S.W. he is looking towards the centre, and the wind