ELEMENTARY SCIENCE SECTION

THIS EARTH OF OURS

WIND AND RAIN

Who has seen the wind? Neither you, nor I, but we know when the wind is passing by, and can tell generally whether it is a gentle wind or a strong wind that means rain. We can tell the direction of the winds by means of a weathercock which is the figure of a bird sometimes built on the roofs of houses. The head of the bird always faces the wind. When we know the direction from which the wind is blowing, we know what weather is coming.

The north winds come from a part of the world where there is ice and snow all the year round. They are cold, biting winds. The south winds blow from hot lands where ice and snow are never seen. They bring us warm weather. The winds from the ocean bring us rain, the winds from the land usually are dry winds. We have other names for gentle winds. We sometimes call them breezes or zephyres.

When there are clouds in the sky, the wind blows them along like so many sheep. As you have learned, these clouds are made of water that has evaporated from the earth. When these clouds come in contact with a colder part of the air, the vapor changes into water again and falls to us as raindrops.

Much of the rain that falls stays in the first few feet of the earth's soil. This moisture makes it possible for all the plants to grow, because

(Please turn to page 198)

WIND AND RAIN

(*Continued from page 188*)

they can suck it up with their roots; and animals, including man, can satisfy their thirst from the wells and springs and rivers. The water that has seeped through the earth in this way is better to drink than the rain water as it falls from the sky. The earth acts like a filter, and, as the rain water slowly passes through the sand and gravel, all the impurities that have been washed from the air are filtered out.

Not all the rain that falls stays in the soil for plants and animal to use. Much of it is evaporated right back into air when the sun comes out hot. In moist climates much of the water drains off into the rivers which carry it to the sea. Here it may once more evaporate into the air, and start the round again, to fall later as rain.