



STORM

By George R. Stewart
(Random House, 1941—\$2.50)

*Book review by Paul E. Ruch,
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George R. Stewart's novel *Storm* might be the story of the New England hurricane of 1938 or any other devastating weather occurrence, for the entire plot is based on the sequence of events accompanying or caused by intense cyclonic activity. Newspaper and radio accounts of the occurrence of severe storms normally convey matter-of-fact information pertaining to destruction and damage, but in this book the experiences of many persons form an exciting and extremely interesting narrative.

Professional meteorologists could offer little criticism of the technical details of the author's presentation of the storm development. Obviously Stewart has spent considerable time in weather offices with the result that his account of the storm's formation, structure, and subsequent meteorological effects are technically

correct. This is particularly refreshing after witnessing numerous motion picture presentations of airline or military aircraft operations that are far from even approximating actual conditions. Any engineer or scientist, although not directly associated with meteorology, could accept the author's presentation of the storm's activity as correct. Every meteorological feature of the storm is possible and certainly has occurred many times. No doubt some criticism has been made of *Storm* by those who are unfamiliar with weather developments as they are seen by the meteorologist, the airline dispatcher and pilot, the division superintendent of a state highway department, and others whose daily activities are basically dependent upon the weather. However, such criticism is not based on a true appreciation of fact.

Although the story centers around the activities of a violent weather disturbance on the west coast of the United States, the incipient storm is first discovered off the east coast of Asia by the junior

meteorologist in the Bay Region office of the United States Weather Bureau as he constructs the synoptic weather chart. This new storm the junior meteorologist named Maria, as it was his custom to personalize each new storm appearing on the weather chart. As the storm moves eastward across the Pacific it intensifies, and finally, on reaching the mainland, brings to an end a month-long drought. The effect of the storm on the lives of thousands of persons is shown in detail. Entirely unrelated incidents are commonly affected by wind and rain. Highways are flooded, dams threatened, air transportation periled, and a train wreck narrowly averted. Rain in the coastal areas turns to a blizzard of snow over the Sierras. Through the whole story of the development of this one storm and the destruction it wrought Stewart has interwoven accounts of many different human activities. In each is a sharp climax. For light reading with interest guaranteed, *Storm* is to be highly recommended.



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