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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
of Clark University,
discusses:

LOOMING

Cases of mirage are not confined to the typical desert mirage in which objects appear upside down below the horizon as if reflected in a pond.

In describing other types Dr. W. J. Humphreys says: "Sometimes objects which are normally below the horizon, and hence invisible, come into view, being then said to 'loom', closer ones, at the same time, 'tower', that is, get unusually tall; and occasionally, too, upside-down images appear over them - the well known superior mirage - as though reflected from an overhead horizontal mirror."

In these cases, conditions are the reverse of those producing the desert mirage. The denser cold air is below and the warm lighter air is above, consequently, the bending of the light is in the opposite direction and the object appears too high rather than too low. As an instance may be cited the unusual visibility of lights on Lake Superior on two clear, cold nights, August 4 and 7, 1923. Lights having a normal clear weather visibility not exceeding 22 miles, were distinctly seen at distances varying from 34 to 67 miles. Looming made it possible to observe these lights which otherwise would have been below the horizon.

(Tomorrow: Sunshine Through the Clouds)

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