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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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EARLY SNOWS

Autumn snows first begin on northern highlands where the air usually is much colder than at lower elevations. Thus, the high plains of eastern Wyoming and the Appalachian highlands south to Maryland claimed the season's first snow early in September, 1924. The first snow of autumn generally is the snow squall, produced by conditions which in summer might bring local thundershowers, perhaps with hail. In fall, dark clouds march across the sky before a penetrating wind. But, instead of pelting raindrops we have blustering gusts of snow, usually in big damp flakes. As the ground still retains considerable warmth, the snow may melt as fast as it falls, or disappear soon after.

These autumn snowsqualls, like the similar type of spring showers, usually occur in the western portion of an area of low pressure, where the overturning of the air is due to overriding cold winds falling into and lifting the less cold air below. This results in cooling by expansion and in consequent formation of snowflakes in such abundance that they fall to earth.

On the easterly shores of the Great Lakes, conditions are particularly favorable for such snowsqualls. There, northwest winds from the interior are much colder than the moist air over the Lakes. By the time the cold wind has crossed to the eastern shores, snow flurries may be formed. Under such conditions snow to depths of more than a foot sometimes falls even in October.

(Tomorrow: Wind Vanes)

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