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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WINTER FOGS

Winter fogs, the bane of harbor shipping and of lowland express trains, usually occur as the result of the chilling of imported warm, moist air. At the close of a cold spell, when the ground is covered with snow and harbors have their floating ice, the wind turns and blows from the south. As the air moves northward it traverses a colder and colder surface and its vapor becomes more and more nearly sufficient for saturation. A few hundred miles of movement is usually sufficient to bring the temperature of the air down to its dewpoint, or "fogpoint", if one requires a more expressive term. Then the fog begins to form. If the fog is forming by day, one may see the cold surfaces, such as piles of snow, apparently steaming, as the warm air is chilled and made foggy. If the fog condition comes by night, the cooling during the darkness added to that by contact will make a fog of greater density, so dense that its individual accretions are not evident. If the wind travels a few hundred miles and then virtually stops for a while, the chilling of the moist air near the ground becomes greatest and the fog densest.

Sometimes a warm rain contributes to such a fog, or creates one by falling "steaming" through cold damp air near the ground. A fog of this sort disappears, however, when the warm wind from which the rain came wears its way through the cold air and blows briskly over the ground.

(Tomorrow: Cold Weather Thunderstorms)

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