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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE NAMES OF CLOUDS

To most people a cloud is a cloud, just as a tree is a tree. To the weather-wise, however, a cloud is a cumulus cloud, a cirrus cloud, a stratus cloud or a nimbus cloud - either in pure or hybrid form. The knobby, flat-bottomed, wool pack cumulus cloud means pronounced local vertical motion of the air. Aviators know that on flying immediately under a cumulus cloud an airplane is usually bumped up and then on passing into the clear space beyond allowed to fall some feet. Above the cumulus clouds, however, the air is "smooth", it is above the turbulent layer in which vertical motion is taking place. Cloud balls that appear smaller owing to their greater height are usually called alto-cumulus. High in the air ride the beautiful white cirrus clouds of long filaments of slowly falling snow crystals which now and then produce colorful halos and sundogs. In summer these clouds are commonly the lingering remnants of thunderstorm tops. The stratus or sheet cloud is usually an uninteresting, low, gray layer that apparently brings the sky down to low levels. A higher form is called alto-stratus. The nimbus or rain cloud is mostly but an intensified stratus from which rather continuous rain or snow usually falls. Combination clouds, partaking, in general, of the characteristics of both the primary ones involved are: strato-cumulus, rounded yet flat; cirro-cumulus, tenuous dots usually in rows; cirro-stratus, usually a fibrous white sheet; and cumulo-nimbus, the thundercloud.

(Pick Up One Column Mat, 7-23.)

(Tomorrow: Lake Bathing)

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