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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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AUTUMN BEST FOR MOUNTAIN CLIMBING

Autumn is the ideal season for mountain climbing. The woods are free from the insect pests which harass the trapper in spring and early summer. Neither is he handicapped by midsummer heat. In the White Mountains or Adirondacks at elevations of 4000 to 5000 feet strong winds and temperatures as low as 40 degrees are not unusual even at midday. Perhaps this is not the summer tourist's idea of delightful weather, but it is a great help to the climber. Going up a steep ascent on a warm day one becomes so overheated that the work of the heart and lungs is still further increased by the necessity of cooling the body. The blood must be driven to the surface and circulated rapidly. But if the temperature is as low as 40 or 50 the heat produced by climbing may be only sufficient to keep one comfortably warm.

Fall is also usually a good season for clear views from mountain tops, though occasionally in dry seasons much haziness is caused by forest fire smoke. However, neither spring nor summer is immune from forest fires. Moreover, in autumn the upper air is less hazy than in spring because upward air currents are weaker. These convectional currents over heated ground not only carry dust and water vapor aloft but destroy the optical uniformity of the air, causing a blurring effect as of heated air over a hot pavement.

(Tomorrow: Water Vapor and Altitude)

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