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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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AN AUTUMN LOW PASSES

After a dry period in which the weather seems sluggish and unwilling to change, we suddenly find ourselves experiencing a succession of lows with their accompanying rains. Sometimes, before the cirrus cloud bank of one low has passed out of sight in the southeastern sky, there come new shafts of cirrus into the northern sky and overhead. These clouds, moving rapidly from the west-northwest, tell of a low somewhat south of west, not many hundred miles away, advancing at full speed. Look for rain in twelve to twenty-four hours - scarcely more - even though the air is marvellously dry, clear and cool. The next morning the sky is nearly filled with high clouds and there may be a halo. But under the onslaughts of the sun the clouds thin out. In the afternoon, nevertheless, new clouds, beautiful flocculent clouds, iridescent near the sun, cover portions of the clear blue sky here and there, and some dense remains of the snowy tops of shower clouds indicate the close approach of wet weather. The sun descends into a very dense cloud in the west, low lenticular outliers are silhouetted against it, and the surprisingly clear air begins rapidly to become hazy. A chilly south wind suddenly picks up, the barometer begins to fall, and soon it rains. The next day starts warm, muggy, and very hazy, while the clouds hang low. Later, or by the day after, the skies and air clear, and crisp autumn weather prevails. We must now be ready for the cycle to start over again.

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(Tomorrow: Water Vapor)

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