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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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ODORS AT NIGHT

Do the sun's rays possess deodorizing power? An engineering publication has pointed out that although 24-hour operation was maintained at a certain garbage reduction plant the all-pervading smells became more offensive after sundown. Apparently, it would be incorrect to attribute the welcome daytime relief directly to the sunlight; it is rather the sun's heat which is responsible. And this is in spite of the tendency for odors to increase as the temperature rises, other things being equal.

By day the sun warms the surface of the earth, which, in turn, warms the lower air. Colder, heavier air from above descends and pushes up the warm surface layer. Up it goes, odors and all, to heights where the buzzards can smell it! As this process of convectional circulation continues, the odors are being constantly carried aloft, and dissipated. When the heating stops and the breeze dies down at sunset, stagnation begins. The earth's surface cools, and chills the lower air. This air, now being the cooler and heavier, no longer mixes with that above, and the population, especially that downstream, enjoys the undiluted savor of the garbage.

Though there is more stagnation in winter than in summer, the lower temperatures of the former more than offset the effects of the stagnation. Spring is better than fall, for this is the season of maximum interchange of air between the heated surface and the colder atmosphere not far aloft. Cooling autumn favors the stay of the ground layer of air, stable in its position below the higher air that is more slowly losing its accumulated summer heat.

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