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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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INDIAN SUMMER

Is it, or is it not? Some <sup>writers</sup> tell us Indian Summer is a figment of the imagination, a poetical, idealized stretch of weather that does not occur at a particular time in autumn, or, indeed, at any time every year. Who is right depends on what Indian Summer is supposed to be. As the term was first used, in the eighteenth century, it referred to the spells of glorious autumn weather so characteristic of our climates. Two or three days or a week or more of generally fair quiet weather, cool or cold often foggy or frosty of mornings, but mild and pleasant and characteristically hazy of afternoons, occur now and then in mid or late autumn. They are commonly called Indian Summer, though it has not been practicable to set numerical limits on what is or is not this condition.

Last year the absence of Indian Summer up to the end of October was widely remarked on. Cold blustery weather set in well before the end of September, and continued with little abatement through October. This month last year was remarkable for its storminess and snowfall. November, however, was less wintry and there were brief periods properly called "Indian Summer."

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