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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed October 22, 1926

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University

AUTUMN WELL ALONG

The average southward progress of autumn is at a rate of about 100 miles in six days, and on hills and mountains its downward advance is about 1,000 feet in ten days. Thus the conditions of the White Mountains in mid-October now obtain in central and southern New England and over a belt slightly south of westward from there. In another fortnight the line of completed defoliation should have reached the latitudes of Philadelphia and Washington,

It is evident that to the traveler north or south the contrasts in a distance of only 200 miles may be considerable. By the middle of October the leaves of all deciduous trees were gone from the central parts of the White Mountains above a height of 3,000 feet, and on the colder, north slopes the trees were bare down to an altitude of about 2,500 feet. At 4,000 feet ledges glistened in a coating of ice, and above 4,500 feet the mountains were whitish with a light sprinkling of snow. On the lower slopes the rich yellows and oranges of the beeches and maples, mixed with the deep greens of the spruces, still colored the landscape. At the same time, central New England was in the full glory of the autumn foliage, including the red and crimson splashes of the red oak.

A severe frost, with the temperatures in the twenties at this time, however, accelerated greatly the fall of leaves. When such low temperature occurs the leaves do not fall off till the morning sun warms the leaves; then down they flutter like snowflakes.

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21st and B Sts.,
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