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A Science Service Feature

! WHY THE WEATHER !

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POGONIP

In certain sections of the Rocky Mountains a frozen mist or fog is experienced in winter, sometimes appearing suddenly on very bright cold days. This fog is known by the Indian name of "pogonip" and is greatly dreaded by some mountaineers. The fine, extremely cold ice needles are said to cause fatal injury to the lungs. Pogonip seems to be caused by sudden condensation attending the mixture of cold air masses of different temperatures.

According to a story published in the Monthly Weather Review some years ago, one brilliant, though bitterly cold February day, a wagon party were enjoying a drive through the mountains in northern Colorado. All at once, they were aware of a stinging sensation which they could not account for. Gradually, a gentle wind started and the previously clear air became filled with sparkling diamond dust. They drove on, not realizing the danger until a settler rushed out of his cabin with his head bound in mufflers and handed them a warning written on a slip of paper. He did not dare speak. Within an hour after entering the cabin, the party were all violently sick with coughs and fever and one woman died the next morning, apparently from pneumonia. One winter a whole tribe of Indians in Wyoming are said to have perished from the effects of the pogonip.

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