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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed October 8, 1928

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THE "SMOKING" OF MOUNT HOOD

Mount Hood, the mighty snow-clad mountain in Oregon, often flies a banner of cloud that streams out in the direction of the wind and that, as in the case of similar clouds on many other mountains, is due to the cooling of the air by expansion in passing over and around the summit; perhaps also, in part, to snow blown from the peak.

While this phenomenon is familiar to residents of the surrounding country, there are much rarer occasions when an apparent cloud of smoke rises from the mountain. As Mount Hood is an ancient volcano, these occurrences sometimes set afloat the rumor that an eruption is at hand, though no eruption has ever happened within the memory of man. According to Floyd D. Young, of the U. S. Weather Bureau, this apparent smoke sometimes consists of snow. Evidently at one time a high inward-facing cliff extended in a complete circle around the summit, forming the walls of the crater. Part of this has disappeared, leaving a semicircular wall of rock facing west and north. When loose dry snow is present below the cliffs inside the crater rim, a strong wind blowing from the south or east will sweep it into the middle of the arc and there throw it high into the air.

In other cases, says Mr. Young, clouds drift into the open side of the crater ring and are carried aloft by air currents formed by the cliffs. Lastly, there are large patches of rock within the crater rim hot enough to vaporize any water falling on them. A surface of this kind lies almost directly under the cliffs forming the crater rim. If a snowslide should throw a large quantity of snow on that spot, the steam generated would produce a similar appearance of rising smoke.

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