

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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! POGONIP AGAIN

Belgium's "poison" fog mystery of last December revived interest, on this side of the Atlantic, in the variety of fog known as "pogonip," occurring in winter in some mountain districts of the western United States and long reputed to be deadly or injurious to the lungs. Apparently no scientific investigation of pogonip has ever been made and no literature on the subject is recorded in medical bibliographies. From non-scientific sources, however, plenty of testimony has lately come forth to the effect that this fog is really dangerous.

Typical of letters I have received concerning it is one from George R. Williams, of Tonopah, Nevada, who writes:

"Pogonip is, in Piute Indian language, 'white death,' and all red men, in this section at least, have a mortal dread of being caught in it. About four years ago a shopmate of mine was driving north of here and ran into pogonip. He was in an open car, and while the top and windshield gave some protection his throat was affected so that he could not even whisper for twenty days afterward.

"While clouds are a rarity here, I have seen them down to the earth and walked through them. It is when they descend that way in extremely cold weather that we have the dreaded 'white death.' I have been told of Indians being caught in a sudden cloud of it and dying in great agony in a short time. It seems to freeze the lungs and respiratory organs."

Let us hear more about pogonip. It is high time to clear up this long-standing mystery.

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