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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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GRAUPEL

The word "graupel" (in which "au" is pronounced like "ou" in "out") is German but it has lately been adopted by English-speaking meteorologists as the name of a variety of icy precipitation that formerly figured in scientific books under the name of "soft hail"; an inappropriate designation, since, though crumbly, it is not soft, and it differs in both structure and origin from true hail. The latter falls in connection with thunderstorms and mainly during the warm season of the year, while graupel falls only in cold weather. While true hail contains concentric layers of clear and snowy ice, graupel is a granular variety of snow. Its particles, ranging from the size of coarse shot to that of peas, look like miniature snowballs. Graupel sometimes falls mixed with ordinary snowflakes.

Differing from both hail and graupel is the form of precipitation that meteorologists on this side of the Atlantic, but not in England, call "sleet." This consists of little pellets or lumps of clear ice -- frozen raindrops.

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