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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SUN AND SHADE IN MOUNTAINS

"From a human point of view," says Prof. Roderick Peattie, "the most critical meteorological element in mountains is sunlight. The matter of sunlight is so dominant that each dialect of European mountain peoples has a set of terms for sunny side and shady side. Thus the German, Sonnenseite, Schattenseite; Sonnenberg, Schattenberg; French, adret (Latin, ad directum), ubac (Latin, ad opacum); endroit, envers; Italian, indritto, inverso; adritto, opaco; Catalan, sola, бага; solana, ubach; soula, umbaga. One may so name a village or a shady portion of a village; as Envers de Fontenille, or Inverso Pinusca.

"It is the field in the sunlight that brings the high price. It is the poor whose fields are in the shade. Instances showing the higher limits of culture in the sun than in the shade are as numerous as regional studies in mountain geography. The contrast of the two slopes is quickly observed by the traveler."

The contrast is, however, often modified by other factors, including soil, character of relief, the mass of the mountain, and ground water. A steep slope limits culture, both through loss of soil by erosion and through exposure to landslides and avalanches.

As a rule, villages are on the sunny slopes, but the writer mentions one valley with 12 villages on the "ubac" and 7 on the "adret"; the explanation being that the topography of the former is more favorable for a low-level road, along which the 12 shady villages are located.

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