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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed October 9, 1933

OLD-FASHIONED INDIAN SUMMER

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The old-fashioned Indian summer is as much a myth as the old-fashioned winter. In former times, as today, the autumn usually brought to the northern United States and southern Canada one or more periods of mild, calm and hazy weather, but the dates of occurrence of such weather were as variable as they are now. The notion that Indian summer gradually ceased to be a pronounced, definite and long-enduring event of the autumnal calendar is not new.

In 1833 an unidentified Baltimorean wrote of Indian summer: "It is worthy of remark that, according to the recollection of our older inhabitants, its former duration was often three or four weeks, whereas its present continuance is short and uncertain, seldom exceeding ten or fifteen days. It appears, further, that this decline has been somewhat regular, keeping pace with and evidently influenced by the gradual uncovering of the country."

In his history of Vermont, published in 1842, Zadock Thompson says: "But it appears that from the commencement of the settlement of the country the Indian summers have gradually become more and more irregular and less strikingly marked in their character, until they have almost ceased to be noticed." In the same year J.F. Watson wrote that in Pennsylvania Indian summer "was formerly much more manifest than of later years."

The delusion still prevails.

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