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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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A QUESTION OF NAMES

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Under a clear sky on quiet nights terrestrial objects cool rapidly by radiation. If the air adjacent to them contains a considerable amount of invisible water vapor, some of this is condensed on the surface of these objects, either as water or ice, according to the prevailing temperature. If the deposit is liquid, it is called dew; if solid, hoarfrost.

Altogether similar deposits of atmospheric moisture occur under different conditions and in such cases are usually given different names. Thus in a warm room the surface of an ice pitcher becomes coated with water droplets formed in the same manner as dew though not usually called by that name. Shaded pavements are sometimes moistened in the daytime by a direct deposit of moisture from still air. In winter a warm and moist wind setting in suddenly after a cold spell often deposits a considerable amount of water on stone walls and other vertical surfaces. The term "sweating" is commonly applied to such deposits.

In winter a moist wind sometimes deposits on exposed objects a coating of ice crystals quite similar to hoarfrost. This deposit has no universally accepted name. Official English and Canadian meteorologists call it "silver thaw," but this term has had a number of other uses among weathermen. This deposit should not be confused with the crystals of ice that form in cold weather on the windward side of objects exposed to a drifting fog nor with the smooth icy coating resulting from cold-weather rain. The former is known as "rime"; the latter as "glaze" or "glazed frost."

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