A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed Nov. 6, 1934

COLD-FEELING AIR

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Authority on Meteorology

The United States Weather Bureau recently received a letter from a correspondent who wanted to know why air blowing from the Great Lakes in cold weather felt colder than air in another region, although, as measured by the thermometer, the air was actually warmer in the former case than in the latter. The following explanation was furnished:

"When the temperature is low the more humid the air the more disagreeable it is, and the sooner we become chilled in it. When our clothing is quite dry and our skin also dry, heat is not lost from our bodies nearly so rapidly as it is when the clothing and skin are more or less moist, as they are sure to be when the humidity of the air is high.

"Now, near the lakes where the wind is from over the water the air is much more likely to be humid than it is far inland. Also when the temperature is quite low there is very little moisture in the air at most. This explains why the air from off a lake may seem colder than air that actually is still colder but much drier. It is a question, largely, of the heat conductivity of our skin and clothing; when that conductivity is good, and the temperature is low, we lose heat rapidly and get cold, but when the conductivity is poor we lose heat slowly and stay warm longer."

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