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MOUNTAIN AND VALLEY BREEZES

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A normal phenomenon of mountain valleys is a reversal twice a day of the direction of the wind. Relatively cold and heavy air drains down the valley from the upper slopes by night, constituting the "mountain breeze", while by day the lower air is warmed and expanded, and as it is confined laterally by the sides of the valley it flows up the slopes, constituting the "valley breeze."

Long before meteorologists undertook to classify the winds of the globe, these mountain air currents attracted attention and in many cases acquired local names. Among the Alps, alone, we find scores of such names still in use. Thus a cold, nocturnal wind that blows out of a narrow valley opening upon the plains of the Rhone, near the town of Nyons, is known as the "pontias." One of the legends about this wind is that it was brought to the region in a glove by St. Caesarius, Archbishop of Arles, for the purpose of improving the fertility of the land.

On Lake Como, in Italy, the wind that blows by day up the valley, toward the head of the lake, is called the "breva", while the night wind, blowing from the opposite direction, is called the "tivano." The corresponding breezes on Lake Garda are known, respectively, as the "ora" and the "sover."

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