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Sunshine and water vapor! Water vapor helps to keep us warm by preventing, to some extent, the heat of the earth from escaping. Pure dry air allows the sunshine to go through unhindered, but the water vapor, ozone and carbon dioxide absorb some of the radiated heat. In this way the air becomes heated by direct radiation. Since water vapor absorbs radiated heat fairly well, it is clear that the earth cools most rapidly on clear nights when the air is dry. This condition is found over the deserts, where during the day the temperature may be unbearably high and at night uncomfortably low. Water there, if properly exposed, may freeze before morning.
