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August 20, 1927

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed August 13, 1927

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TORNADO CELLARS

There is no absolutely safe refuge from a tornado above ground. The tornado cellar, if properly constructed, affords complete protection from these most vicious of storms.

A tornado cellar should not be located under a house or other building, unless it has a ceiling of exceptionally strong construction, which will not collapse under falling debris in case the building is wrecked. Even when detached from the house the cellar must be either buried so deeply underground or so strongly roofed that heavy objects falling on it will not cause it to cave in.

More than forty years ago the Burlington Insurance Company, of Iowa, offered a prize of \$200 for the best plans for a tornado cellar. There were 122 competitors and the prize was awarded to John R. Church, an architect of Rochester, N.Y. His plans and drawings are published in Col. J.P. Finley's well-known book on tornadoes, which appeared in 1887.

Since that period the universal use of concrete has provided a building material well adapted for the construction of these refuges. A concrete tornado cellar is a valuable adjunct of a farmhouse, even though it may never be needed as a retreat from tornadoes, because, on account of its even temperature, it provides a good place for storing fruits and vegetables. Plans for constructing combination tornado and storage cellars have been published by the Portland Cement Association.

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21st and B Sts.,  
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