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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed November 16, 1927

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ICE STORMS HERE AND ABROAD

The ice storm is a beautiful and expensive variety of weather which probably flourishes in greater perfection in North America than anywhere else. Europeans occasionally see outdoor objects covered with a light coating of smooth ice - the "glazed frost" of British parlance - but a deposit of such ice heavy enough to cause serious damage to trees and wires is a rare event in the Old World.

European meteorologists still cite a case that occurred in central France in January, 1879 - one that would have attracted only passing notice over here - as the classic and almost unique example of the phenomenon in that region; while in Andrew's "Famous Frosts and Frost Fairs of Great Britain", which chronicles the frigid happenings of more than seventeen centuries, only one typical ice storm is mentioned. It happened in the west of England in 1672, and, says the English narrator, "made an incredible destruction of trees, beyond anything in all history". Probably it was, as a matter of fact, a tame affair compared with the icy visitations with which we are all too familiar in America.

The prevalence of ice storms in this country has caused them to be a subject of extensive studies on the part of American meteorologists, engineers and foresters. About fifty stations of the United States Weather Bureau are cooperating this year with the National Electric Light Association in observations of ice formation on wires and the accompanying meteorological conditions. Sets of wires of different sizes have just been installed at these stations and the amounts of ice deposited on them in each storm are to be weighed and measured.

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