A Science Service Feature

Released on receipt
but intended for use
January 7, 1928

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed December 30, 1927

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THE ALPENGLOW

Among snow-capped mountains sunrise and sunset phenomena sometimes assume a particularly beautiful form, which is known as the "Alpenglow," because most descriptions of it relate to the Alps, and especially to its appearance on the huge snowy mass of Mont Blanc. In fine weather, just before sunset, the peaks to the eastward begin to show a reddish or golden hue. This fades gradually, but in a few minutes, when the sun is a little below the observer's horizon but the peaks themselves are still bathed in direct sunlight, an intense red glow, beginning down the slopes, moves upward to the summits. Presently this glow is succeeded by an ashy tint, as the peaks are immersed in the rising dark segment of the earth's shadow. Their rocks and snows assume a livid appearance - the "corpse-like hue" of Swiss descriptions.

In ordinary weather darkness succeeds without any further notable phenomena, but occasionally there occurs a remarkable renewal of rosy light upon the peaks, known as the "recoloration" or "afterglow". At Chamonix this is called the "resurrection of Mont Blanc". Sometimes this glow lasts until an hour after sunset, and it passes away from below upward. On very rare occasions there is a second afterglow. Similar phenomena are seen in reverse order in the morning, though less often than at sunset.

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