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January 30, 1929.

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed January 23, 1929.

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PROTECTION FROM AVALANCHES

Against avalanches, as against most other potentially disastrous visitations of nature, mankind has devised a number of ingenious means of protection. The value of forests in this connection is generally recognized. The protective woods on Alpine slopes, known as "Bannwaelder", have been strictly preserved for centuries, and the cutting of trees in them was at one time punishable by death.

Many of the places where avalanches originate are, however, far above timber-line or are too rocky to permit tree growth. In Switzerland, in such cases, walls of stone or wood, terraces, ditches or rows of posts are constructed to impede the sliding of snow down the slopes. In some districts it is customary to protect buildings by placing on their up-slope side a bastion-like stone structure, the salient angle of which is designed to split the avalanche as it descends.

In all mountainous countries subject to avalanches railroads must be protected at various points by means of tunnels or snow-sheds, but these costly constructions are often rendered ineffective by the occurrence of avalanches at intermediate places.

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