

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed November 20, 1931

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MISPLACED SNOWSTORMS

People who live or have lived in a region where snow falls every winter can hardly realize the excitement caused by a heavy snowstorm in a locality where snowflakes are hardly ever seen. A case of this kind occurred in South Africa in August, 1909. On the morning of the seventeenth the town of Johannesburg, for the first time in its history, was covered with snow to a depth of several inches. To many of its inhabitants, especially of the younger generation, the sight of snow was quite new, and the unusual event was celebrated as a general holiday.

In Palestine, where many people had never seen snow, Jerusalem and the country for miles about was mantled with it to an average depth of 40 inches, with drifts 10 feet deep, on February 9-11, 1920. More than 40 houses were crushed in by the weight of snow. Streets, highways and railways were blocked; telegraph service was interrupted by the falling of wires, and the Holy City was entirely cut off from the outside world. For a time there was grave danger of famine. The native inhabitants had no idea how to deal with such a situation, but fortunately a battalion of British troops was garrisoned in the city. Hundreds of these soldiers went to work with shovels and soon restored normal traffic conditions.

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