

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed August 25, 1933

WEATHER WORDS

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Authority on Meteorology

More than twenty years ago the writer of these notes began to gather from every possible source material toward an all-inclusive dictionary of terms relating to weather. The task turns out to be endless. Progress merely opens up new and limitless vistas. "Hills peep o'er hills and Alps on Alps arise."

Speaking of Alps--the Alpine lakes of northern Italy have been prolific in local names of winds. On Lake Garda the up-valley day breeze is called the "ora" and the down-valley night breeze the "sover," "sopero" or "vento paesano"--- and that is merely the beginning of a list of more than twenty wind names peculiar to that one lake! Probably at least a hundred local wind names are current in different parts of the Alpine region.

If you are not a mountaineer, perhaps you have never heard of a "snow cornice"; a ledge of snow, shaped by the wind, projecting over the edge of a precipice. It is a treacherous foe of the climber and the skier. You may, on the other hand, be a veteran at mountain-climbing, yet not be aware that certain parts of a cornice are known to specialists as the "root," "roof," "face," "scarp," etc.

If you are at all acquainted with snow, you know that it is sometimes covered with a "crust," but do you know that different kinds of snow crust have been given distinctive names? Skiers and students of mountain snowfall speak of "film crust," "foam crust," "marble crust," "sun crust," and so on.

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