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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
of Clark University,
describes

THE MAKING OF A SNOWFLAKE

Snow is formed by the condensing of the moisture of the air in a freezing atmosphere. The vapor does not instantly become snow, as we see it, but grows into flakes through a process of gradual crystallization, forming the exquisite snow-stars, which everyone should view under a magnifying glass in order to have a realization of a loveliness which the highest art of the jeweler can do no more than imitate. They take on a very wide variety of crystalline form, nearly all hexagonal, with rarely a 12-pointed star or a triangular crystal.

Photography through a microscope has classified hundreds of highly individualistic designs, fashioned as the freezing moisture responds presumably to different conditions of air composition, temperature, rate of condensation, and electrical action. The initial phase is usually a more or less solid disc or an open-work hexagon, and further development is toward a filling of the inner interstices, with an inconceivable variety of branching. These are the flat crystals. There are other forms, among them the columnar, and some like delicate collar buttons. Wilson A. Bentley of Jericho, Vt., has made thousands of microphotographs of snowflakes, no two of which are like.

(Tomorrow: Winter Snow and Winter Sports)

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