

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE HODGKINS FUND

The scientific study of the atmosphere has been much aided by the various awards made from the Hodgkins Fund. The donor of this fund was a wealthy philanthropist, Thomas G. Hodgkins, who was born in England in 1803, amassed a fortune in New York City, and died on his farm at Setauket, Long Island, in 1892. In 1891 he gave the Smithsonian Institution the sum of \$200,000, with the stipulation that the interest of half this amount was to be devoted "to the increase and diffusion of more exact knowledge of atmospheric air in connection with the welfare of man."

In 1893 the Smithsonian announced that a series of cash prizes would be awarded from this fund and also established a "Hodgkins Medal", to be awarded for similar contributions to science. In the prize competition 229 scientific memoirs were submitted to the Institution by competitors of many nationalities. A prize of \$10,000 was awarded to Lord Rayleigh and Prof. William Ramsay for their paper "Argon: a New Constituent in the Atmosphere," and for their discovery of this atmospheric gas, described therein. A prize of \$1,000 was awarded to Dr. Henry de Varigny for the best popular treatise on atmospheric air. Many of the grants since made from this fund have been for researches relating to problems lying on or beyond the border of meteorology, such as ventilation, air pollution, air resistance, atmospheric acoustics, the physiological effects of altitude, etc., but on the other hand some definitely meteorological investigations have been aided; notably the pioneer explorations of the atmosphere with kites made by the late A. Lawrence Rotch at Blue Hill Observatory.

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