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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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### ICE AGE CLIMATES

One of the startling revelations of modern science is that the climates of the ice age include the climates of today. We are living in the Quaternary Ice Age; which began some six or seven hundred thousand years ago and will undoubtedly continue for many thousand years more. An ice age is distinguished from other periods in the earth's history by the presence of great permanent sheets of glacier ice on the surface of the globe. About six million square miles of such ice now lies upon our planet -- five million in the Antarctic, and a million elsewhere. It is entirely possible that the ice sheets will grow bigger before they finally melt away. Nobody knows.

It is therefore a matter of contemporary interest that ice age climates are highly conducive to the development of vigorous and civilized races of mankind. It is probable, indeed, that man would never have evolved at all if the earth had remained iceless, as it was during long periods in the past. Ice sheets in high latitudes produce strong contrasts in temperature between the polar and the equatorial regions. With such contrasted temperatures there are brisk winds, frequent storms and incessant weather changes in the temperate zones. Man flourishes under such conditions.

During the coldest stages of the ice age there has always been plenty of ice-free land for him to range upon, and the climates in some regions were better, especially with respect to rainfall, than they are in the same regions today. During the mildest stages, the warmth and uniformity of climates may have greatly retarded man's rise in the evolutionary scale.

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