

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
August 31, 1932.

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed 24, 1932

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

RED SNOW

People whose summer vacations take them above snow line may have the luck to encounter the striking phenomenon of red snow, though they are not likely to come upon fields of it several miles in extent, such as were reported a couple of years ago to have been found in the mountains of southwestern Persia. The first recorded discovery of red snow on a large scale was made by the arctic explorer Sir John Ross at a place that he called the Crimson Cliffs, on the northwestern coast of Greenland. This discovery, in 1818, was the starting point in the scientific study of the phenomenon.

Ross brought back samples of the melted snow and also of a red sediment deposited from it, and these were found to contain microscopic organisms to which the Swedish botanist Agardh gave the name "Protococcus nivalis." The species has since borne several other names and is now known as "Sphaerella nivalis." Contrary to the impression conveyed by a good many reference books, this organism is but one of many that occasionally impart a red color to snow, while there are several other minute forms of life that give snow a variety of other colors.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

SCIENCE SERVICE
21st and Constitution Ave.
Washington, D.C.