

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed March 9, 1933

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THE WONDERBOOK OF SNOW-CRYSTALS

It is pleasant to think that Wilson A. Bentley, the "snowflake man," lived long enough to see his lifetime task of photographing snow-crystals and other minute forms of water fittingly crowned by the publication of a magnificent book, in which are rounded up about 2,500 of his marvelous pictures. The book is entitled "Snow-crystals" and appeared only a few weeks before the death of the skilful photographer, which occurred December 23, 1931. It bears the names of Bentley and Humphreys as authors. The history back of this fact is that the pictures are a selection of the best taken by Bentley during his 46 years of photographing such objects through a microscope, while the publication of the book is due to the persistent efforts of Dr. W.J. Humphreys, of the U.S. Weather Bureau, who wrote the whole of the text.

Humphreys, in common with other meteorologists, realized that Bentley's collection of negatives might be scattered and lost to science after his death, and therefore sought some means of making the cream of the collection permanently accessible to the world. He finally aroused the interest of a generous Bostonian - whose name has not been made public - who advanced sufficient funds to make publication possible, and Humphreys then, after much correspondence, succeeded in finding a suitable publisher. The negotiations were conducted under the aegis of the American Meteorological Society. Photographic prints of the pictures were secured from Bentley. Each picture was skilfully cut out and mounted on a black card before the half-tones were made.

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