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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WATCHING GLACIERS

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The steady shrinkage of the Nisqually Glacier, on the slopes of Mount Rainier, is a matter of much concern to the nearby city of Tacoma, Washington, as this great body of ice is the source of the waterpower that operates one of the city's big hydroelectric plants. In recent years the glacier has receded from 50 to 100 feet or more a year, and its total size is supposed to be only about half of what it was 80 years ago. Its variations have been measured regularly from year to year for several years past, and a detailed topographic map of the glacier from an altitude of 7,000 feet down to its lower end, recently completed, is planned to be the first of a series of such maps to be made at intervals of a few years for the purpose of obtaining exact information concerning the changes in its volume.

Watching a glacier year after year, in order that all its variations may be noted and recorded, is a much commoner undertaking in the Old World than in America. The observations include annual surveys of the glacier surface, measurements of the movement of the ice at various points, records of the advance and retreat of the front or "snout," measurements of snowfall on adjacent slopes, etc. The Rhône Glacier has been observed regularly since 1874, and since 1881 annual records have been kept of about a hundred glaciers in the Swiss Alps. Since 1894 similar records have been gathered and published for several mountain regions by an international commission.

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