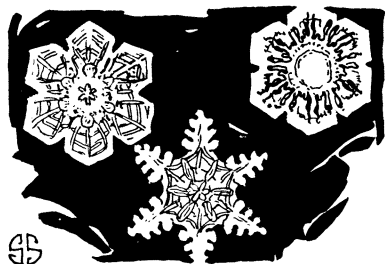


NATURE RAMBLINGS

By FRANK THONE



Snow Crystals

Now is the time when people begin to speculate and wonder whether there is to be a "white Christmas." The fall and early winter have been so uneven—they usually are, so far as that goes—that even if there is snow on the ground today, that is no assurance that it will be here two weeks hence, or even two days hence. It is one of the peculiarities of the part of North America that lies east of the Rockies that settled winter weather cannot be looked for until after Christmas.

But at least light snowfalls may come at any time, and whoever is curious and has a fairly good hand lens can get much enjoyment out of "snow botanizing." For the six-pointed snow stars that sift down in the average storm are among the most beautiful and fascinating of all natural objects. No two of them are ever alike, and some of them form the most intricate and lacy patterns imaginable.

Snow is formed, rather than hail, when the cold breath of the northern wind strikes the vapor-laden air aloft suddenly, and freezes the water into minute ice crystals without giving it a chance to form into drops. An ice crystal nucleus "grows" new slivers of ice, projecting from its various faces, and since the natural shape of ice crystals is hexagonal the resulting snowflake is always a six-pointed star.

Very wet snow, partly melted by falling through a layer of warm air, may aggregate the flakes into shapeless, heavy masses, concealing the original form. On the other hand, a dry snow drifting before a high wind may break up the flakes into the tiny slivers of ice that are their building blocks. It is these minute crystals that are commonest when the snow-storm assumes the force of a blizzard.

Science News-Letter, December 7, 1929

For the first time strawberries grown in British Columbia were marketed in England this year.

Ancient tablets recently unearth in Egypt are the grocery accounts of Egyptian households.

A blind mathematician in London carries on intricate computations by means of Braille numerals and symbols in raised dots and reads with the finger tips.

March's Thesaurus Dictionary

Finds the word you have forgotten, and *defines* it.

See full description in full page advertisement, issue of November 30, 1929.

Write for "How Dr. Johnson Would Marvel," an entertaining little booklet tracing a single word through our language.

Historical Publishing Co.
Dept. SC-12, 1334 Cherry St., Phila., Pa.

Once upon a time there was a Busy Person who, discovering that Thanksgiving was past, began to worry and make out a Christmas list. He was in what the novels call a dilemma. So many figurative stockings to fill! And handkerchiefs, neckties, and the doodads of the department stores seemed so trite and futile.

And then the Busy Person, leafing over the pages of his favorite magazine for relief and relaxation, came upon this life-saving suggestion:

"Make a year's subscription to the SCIENCE NEWS-LETTER your standard Christmas gift, a 52 times repeated blessing to the recipient. Notification card will be sent to you or directly to your lucky friend. Science Service as its Christmas gift to you offers a reduced price (good until January 1, 1929 only, as they say in the bargain advertisements) of only \$8.00 for two gift subscriptions, \$12.00 for three gift subscriptions, etc."

Realizing that this was the happy solution of his difficulty and that he would actually save money, the Busy Person jotted down the names and addresses in a space like this:

.....

He wrote out his check, mailed it and the list to Science Service, 21st and B Sts., Washington, D. C., and stopped worrying until next December 1.

P. S.—You are invited to do likewise. In spite of the beginning, this is not a fairy story.