

SCIENCE

VOL. 79

FRIDAY, MAY 11, 1934

No. 2054

<i>The American Association for the Advancement of Science:</i>	
<i>The Glaciers of Mountain and Continent:</i> PROFESSOR WILLIAM HERBERT HOBBS	419
<i>Obituary:</i>	
<i>Robert Henry Wolcott:</i> PROFESSOR HENRY B. WARD	422
<i>Scientific Events:</i>	
<i>Industry and the Research Associations of Great Britain; The New Weather Forecast Program; Report of the Director of the Field Museum; Charter Members of the American Academy of Tropical Medicine; Grants-in-Aid of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences</i>	423
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i>	426
<i>Discussion:</i>	
<i>The Expansion and Contraction of Chromatophores:</i> DR. G. H. PARKER. <i>Foliar Determination in Angiosperms:</i> DR. ADRIANCE S. FOSTER. <i>Multiple Births in Anthropoid Apes:</i> PROFESSOR ROBERT M. YERKES. <i>Permian Sharks of Wyoming and of East Greenland:</i> DR. C. C. BRANSON. <i>A Voracious Starfish:</i> AUSTIN H. CLARK. <i>On the Courage of Scientists:</i> PROFESSOR CHARLES D. SNYDER	428
<i>Scientific Apparatus and Laboratory Methods:</i>	
<i>Endospore Formation by Bacillus subtilis in a Synthetic Medium:</i> J. LEMOYNE ROBERTS. <i>A Sim-</i>	

<i>plified Technique for Mounting Ground Bone Sections to Show Air-injected Lacunae and Canaliculi:</i> EDMOND J. FARRIS	432
<i>Special Articles:</i>	
<i>X-ray Diffraction Studies of the Bureau of Standards Rubber Fractions:</i> PROFESSOR GEORGE L. CLARK and OTHERS. <i>Effects of Endocrine Extracts on the Early Development of the Chick:</i> W. R. BRENNEMAN	433
<i>The National Academy of Sciences. II</i>	435
<i>Science News</i>	8

SCIENCE: A Weekly Journal devoted to the Advancement of Science, edited by J. McKEEN CATTELL and published every Friday by

THE SCIENCE PRESS

New York City: Grand Central Terminal
Lancaster, Pa. Garrison, N. Y.
Annual Subscription, \$6.00 Single Copies, 15 Cts.

SCIENCE is the official organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Information regarding membership in the Association may be secured from the office of the permanent secretary, in the Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington, D. C.

THE GLACIERS OF MOUNTAIN AND CONTINENT¹

By Professor WILLIAM HERBERT HOBBS

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

GLACIERS are found to-day in practically all latitudes, but are found larger and more amply nourished as one recedes from the equator, and also as one approaches those coasts of the continents where moisture-laden winds advance from the sea athwart lofty mountain ranges. Within the torrid zone the glaciers retreat into the higher portions of very lofty mountains. Of altogether exceptional development are the low-latitude glaciers of the Himalayan region in Southern Asia, due to the extreme altitude, in combination with the heavy precipitation brought in by the monsoon winds from the heated Indian Ocean.

¹ Introductory portion of the address of the retiring vice-president of the Section of Geology and Geography, American Association for the Advancement of Science, delivered at Cambridge, Massachusetts, on December 27, 1933. The full paper is to appear in the *Zeitschrift fuer Gletscherkunde*.

All glaciers are fed by moisture in the form of snow, or in some cases of rime, which becomes compacted into ice under its own weight and through recrystallization. They are always of fresh-water ice, in which respect they are in contrast with sea-ice and floe-ice, which are formed by the freezing of the surface layers of the sea. Glaciers, moreover, are land born, as they are quite generally land borne, though with important exceptions within the high latitudes.

Living in a world of glaciers, it has been natural for us to apply Lyell's phrase, "the present is the key to the past," and to assume that glaciers have been characteristic of all past geological ages as well as of the present; but the evidence from both geology and paleontology is that for the greater part of geological time there have apparently been no glaciers, and the climate from the equator to at least near the poles

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