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God's miraculous handwork is never revealed more clearly to New Bernians than on those rare occasions when the town is visited by a blanket of snow.

No one in his right mind can fail to feel a sense of awe, as flakes fall from heaven to enhance the beauty that is ours, while transforming ugliness into splendor.

Dead trees, gnarled and twisted, respond in Cinderella fashion to the cloak of white that hides their defects. For awhile they look even prettier than younger trunks and branches that still possess the surge of life.

Everything--houses, streets, lamp posts, smokestacks, garbage cans--becomes a magical work of art. What we see with the naked eye is miracle enough, but under the microscope a snowflake becomes a magnificent masterpiece that dwarfs all human endeavor into insignificance.

Snow, the scientist tells us, consists of water crystals that are formed in infinite variety. Some crystals are flat or tabular, some are columnar needles, and some are compound structures. The variations of these three classes are endless.

Flat crystals are the most beautiful, and God in His great generosity has seen fit to make them more plentiful than all the rest. Some of them are flowered rosettes, while others within the plain six-sided outline contain marvelous inlaid designs formed by air tubes within the crystal structure.

Our favorite encyclopedia says that the most curious are perhaps the "cuff-button" doublets composed of a large and a small tabular crystal connected by a columnar needle. Crystals formed in the low clouds are usually large and branching, while those from the high clouds are small and compact.

Search though you might for duplicate snowflakes among the billions and billions that tumble from the sky, you would never be able to find two alike.

Photographing a flake before it melts in a challenging undertaking, but Vermont camera enthusiast has managed to record more than 1,000 different forms on film.

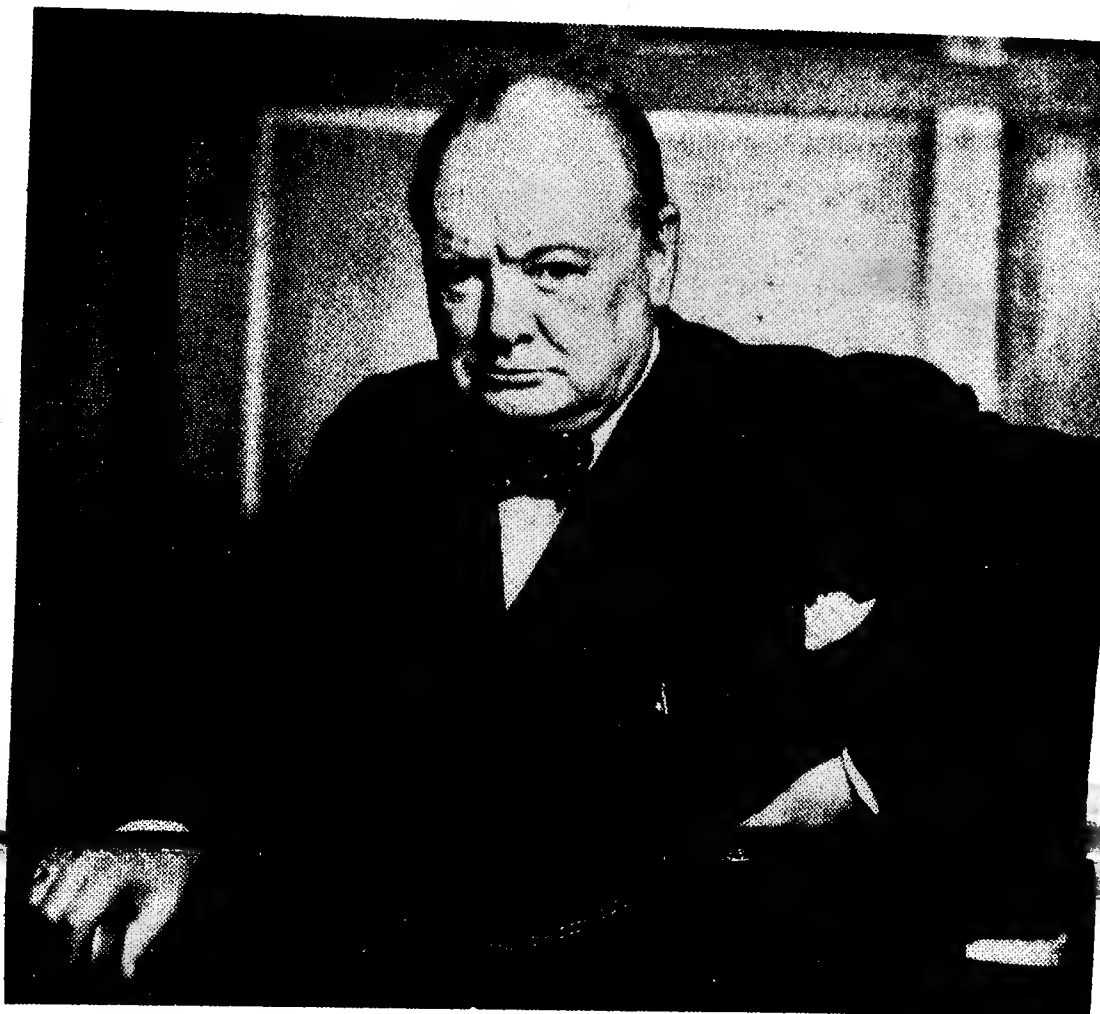
An atheist or agnostic would have a tough time convincing W. A. Bentley that there isn't a Supreme Being responsible for these intricate designs. It didn't "just happen".

One of the reasons that snow seldom comes to New Bern is the fact that we are only a few feet above sea level. In all latitudes, snow forms out of the moisture in the upper air, but melts as it falls through the lower air, if this is warm. From the Equator to latitude 30, snow is almost unknown at sea level. From latitude 30 degrees to about 40 degrees, it pays an occasional visit, while from 40 degrees to 75 degrees it covers the earth frequently during winter months.

These are the scientific aspects of snow. Of more interest to kids, and to grown-ups who are still young at heart, is the fact that the stuff makes wonderful snowballs, snow men and snow cream.

When Irving Berlin wrote his "White Christmas" in Calif-

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If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on";

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings--nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run--
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And--which is more--you'll be a Man, my son!

—Rudyard Kipling.