

Glaciers



People have been for years observing the motion of glaciers to find, if they could, a satisfactory explanation of it. If a line of wooden pegs be driven into the ice, it is found, the day after, that they have altered their relative positions, and that the pegs towards the middle have moved more rapidly down the valley than those towards the side. The motion is usually found to be very slow – not more than a few inches in the twenty-four hours; but the whole moves onward like a stream. The ice moves in a way that might rather be compared to treacle or any other viscous fluid than to an ordinary solid. As the glacier moves down the valley it widens and deepens, scraping the sides and bottom of the channel, and by means of the stones it carries with it, scratching the rocks that form the sides and bottom of its channel, and carrying with it a huge mass of earth and stones torn out of the solid hills. The glacier usually ends in an ice-cave from which issues a stream. The Rhine, and the Rhone, great rivers which begin in alpine glaciers, have their origin in such an ice-cave.

Give the meanings of the following words:

rapidly

motion

viscous

fluid
