

No. 631

A Science Service Feature

May 20

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SIZE OF HAILSTONES

A story of hailstones as large as oranges or baseballs, killing stock in their fall, is likely to make the incredulous sniff. True, hail the size of duck shot or sugar pills is much commoner, but cases of enormous hailstones are well authenticated. For instance hailstones 4 inches in diameter and weighing 4 to 6 oz. fell at Annapolis in 1915, crashing through skylights of thick glass reinforced with wire. It is extraordinary that hail can remain aloft long enough to attain such size. Hail is produced chiefly in the front portions of violent thunderstorms, which provide tremendous up currents of air. The disturbance must extend to heights where freezing temperatures prevail, thus hail occurs more often in spring and early summer than in fall, when the air is warmed to greater heights and when contrasts between hot air below and cold air above are, therefore, less pronounced.

In other countries even larger hailstones have been reported than in the United States, stones reaching even a pound in weight. India seems to produce especially large hail. Measurements of the hailstones of 600 storms showed that in 27 percent of the cases the stones were smaller than peas, in 51 percent they were larger than peas, but smaller than a lemon, and 22 percent they were larger than a lemon.

(Tomorrow: Distance Thunder can be heard)

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