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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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A PREVIOUS PORTO RICO HURRICANE

The tropical hurricane that wreaked its fury on the island of Porto Rico on the 13th of this month was the worst that has visited the island since that of August 8, 1899, which it appears to have surpassed considerably in violence. How the two storms compare in destructiveness cannot yet be determined, as only fragmentary data concerning the later one are now at hand.

The storm of 1899 swept over the entire length of the island from east to west. More than 3,000 lives were lost, mostly from drowning, and there were thousands of deaths from starvation in the weeks following the storm. The high winds and heavy rains completely destroyed a maturing coffee crop valued at more than \$7,000,000; the plants of the banana and plaintain, which furnish the principal food supply of the mountain people, were mostly uprooted, while the frail houses of the natives were, with few exceptions, wrecked by the winds or swept away in the floods.

The rainfall attending this storm was remarkable, even for a tropical cyclone. At one place a fall of 23 inches was recorded in 24 hours. As in the disaster of the present month, there were great landslides, and in some places the roads were blocked by great boulders washed down from the hillsides.

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