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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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STORMS AND BATTLES

It is a paradox that our contemporary historians, who pride themselves upon having broken away from the old conception of history as a record of wars and politics, almost completely neglect the history of natural disasters. These events are, in fact, much less adequately recorded by the historians of today than they were by the annalists and chroniclers of the Middle Ages.

Thus, little or nothing is said in the history books about certain storms that cost more lives and produced more profound economic effects than most of the battles whose names are familiar to every schoolboy. Six thousand people perished in the Galveston hurricane of 1900, as compared with 5,600 in the battle of Gettysburg. In the Backergunge cyclone of October-November, 1876, 100,000 human beings were drowned by storm waves in the Ganges delta, and as many more perished in the famine and cholera that followed the storm. How many professors of history have ever heard of the Backergunge cyclone?

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