

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed February 4, 1930.

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SOME EXCESSES OF CLIMATE

For years nearly all books on weather and climate have mentioned Cherrapunji, the village in the Khasi Hills of Assam, which, despite occasional claims on behalf of other wet spots, has never been definitely robbed of its distinction of being the rainiest place in the world where rainfall is measured. Where is the least rain measured? Less has been said in the books on this subject, but a few years ago the authorities who undertook to answer the above question named Iquique, on the coast of Chile. It is therefore interesting to learn from a collection of rainfall figures for South America lately assembled by W. W. Reed, that Arica, farther north on the same coast, is even drier, and is probably the least rainy place on earth for which records are available. A 17-year average for Arica is 0.02 inch of rain a year, as compared with 0.05 a year from a 25-year record at Iquique. Measuring rainfall is a sinecure at Arica, which had only three measurable showers during the entire 17 years! Iquique had 20 in 25 years.

Two other remarkable climatic excesses have lately come to the notice of the scientific world. In-Salah, in the Algerian Sahara, registered a temperature of 133 in July, 1914, so that Death Valley, with its famous reading of 134, and Azizia (near Tripoli), with its more recently famous 136, must look to their laurels. Lastly, it appears that the weather station at Ruby, Gunnison County, Colorado, perched high among the Rockies, averaged 467 inches of snow annually for 10 years, as compared with the more familiar case of Tamarack, in the High Sierra of California, which averaged 459 inches a year during 16 years. It seems likely, however, that Paradise Inn and Mount Baker Lodge, both in the Cascades of Washington, will show decidedly larger snowfall figures when longer and better records are available for those places.

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