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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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Authority on Meteorology.

THE DEADLIEST HAILSTORM

So far as known, more people have been killed by hailstones in India than in any other country on earth. The deadliest hailstorm of all was one that occurred in a region about 100 miles east of Delhi on April 30, 1888. More than 230 and perhaps 250 persons were killed, chiefly by the hail, in the Moradabad district; 16 were killed by hail, one by lightning and seven by falling trees in the neighboring district of Bareilly, and five were reported killed at Pilibhit; besides which some deaths are supposed to have occurred in the native state of Rampur, over which the storm passed. At Moradabad the damage done to property by hail and wind was estimated at 100,000 rupees.

The collector of Moradabad reported: "The vast majority of the deaths were caused by the hail. Some were caused by the falling of trees or walls, but these were comparatively few. Men caught in the open and without shelter were simply pounded to death by the hail. Most of the deaths were in the bare and level plains round the station, where people were caught unawares. More than one marriage party was caught by the storm near the banks of the river and was annihilated. No Europeans were killed."

However, S.A. Hill, then in charge of the meteorological service in northwestern India, wrote: "Immediately before the storm the temperature had been very high, and many if not the majority of the deaths may have been occasioned by the persons exposed to its fury being knocked down and temporarily packed in ice. The shock to the system, especially of a thinly clad native of India, under such circumstances would probably in many cases be sufficient to cause death."

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