A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed June 14, 1930.

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SOME EFFECTS OF HAIL

There is much uncertainty about the maximum size attained by hailstones, since big pieces of ice found on the ground after a hailstorm are, in many cases, the result of two or more stones freezing together after their fall. The uprushing blasts of air in thunderstorms are often doubtless strong enough to support growing hailstones until they reach a weight of more than a pound and in rare cases perhaps a few pounds. Moreover, according to some authorities, the electrification of the atmosphere during a thunderstorm may exert a considerable upward pull on a hailstone and thus help to prevent its fall, though this is a debatable question.

On the other hand evidence of the remarkable sizes sometimes attained by these icy missiles is furnished by the destructive effects of their fall. For example, a heavy fall of hail occurred at Trichinopoly, India, in May of last year, with results thus described by a resident:

"The only portion of the roofing on my bungalow tiled with what are known as Calicut tiles was riddled. The portion roofed with country tiles, which are laid four or five deep over bamboos, was also seriously damaged. The tiles were not only broken, but in places were pounded into small pieces measuring about a quarter of an inch. The concrete of the terrace roof was unharmed, but is scored all over by marks, many of which are two inches in diameter. In a garden two large outbuildings roofed with Calicut tiles were completely riddled, the holes being about three feet apart on an average; in many cases neat circular holes were made in the tiles from one to three inches in diameter."

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