

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
September 18, 1930

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed September 11, 1930

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

THE WORST HURRICANES

The recent disaster in Santo Domingo was one of the worst in the history of West India hurricanes, but there is a grain of comfort in the reflection that the loss of human life in the storms of the Caribbean region has never approached that occasionally occurring in some other regions of tropical cyclones. Certain typhoons of the Far East have probably been attended by ten times as many fatalities as occurred in the recent West Indian storm, and even more deadly hurricanes have raged along the coast of India.

In the year 1737 a furious hurricane, accompanied by a violent earthquake, visited the mouth of the Ganges and extended 60 miles up that river. It is said to have destroyed 20,000 craft of all descriptions. According to contemporary estimates 300,000 people perished, mainly by drowning. However, H.F. Blanford, who was a great authority on the meteorology of India, writing of this storm in 1876, expressed the opinion that this figure was an exaggeration.

The Calcutta cyclone of October 5, 1864, was estimated to have drowned 48,000 people and upwards of 100,000 head of cattle, and 50,000 human lives are said to have been lost in a storm flood about the mouth of the Megna in June, 1822. More definite information is available regarding the great Backergunge cyclone of 1876. The rising waters due to this storm sweeping over the low-lying lands at the mouth of the Megna during the night of October 31-November 1 probably drowned 100,000 people (the number was originally reported at 215,000), and as many more are supposed to have died of cholera and other diseases resulting from the inundation.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

SCIENCE SERVICE,
21st and B Sts.;
Washington, D.C.