

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt  
but intended for use  
April 11, 1931

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed April 4, 1931

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,  
Authority on Meteorology.

DOWNPOURS IN A DRY COUNTRY

The normal rainfall at Cairo, Egypt, is only 1.3 inches a year; less than that at any known place in the United States and decidedly less than at any point in Canada. As in the case of many other desert regions, however, this part of Egypt is subject to occasional heavy downpours, which produce very striking effects.

When such an event occurs at Cairo the drainage of the storm water is a slow and difficult operation, owing to the flatness of the land. In the native quarters many of the houses are built of mud bricks, which are badly damaged by the rain. Apart from this effect, serious inconvenience and heavy expense are caused by sand washed down from the adjacent desert. A single storm in 1919, in which 1.77 inches of rain fell, flooded the electric railway between Cairo and its suburb Heliopolis and caused the suspension of service for a fortnight. After the storm 40,000 tons of water had to be pumped out of the railway cutting at Qubbah, a few miles from Cairo, and when this had been done there remained to be removed no less than 20,000 tons of sand from the desert. In May, 1923, a downpour of nearly an inch in an hour deposited in this cutting about the same amount of water and 10,000 tons of sand.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

-----  
SCIENCE SERVICE  
21st and Constitution Ave.  
Washington, D.C.