

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
December 21, 1932

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed December 14, 1932

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

ODD EFFECTS OF A HURRICANE

Messrs. Cook and Cintrón, of the School of Tropical Medicine at San Juan, have reported a curious sequel of the "San Ciprian" hurricane of last September in Puerto Rico. After the storm the paint of many buildings in and about San Juan began to show irregular patches of discoloration, and the intensity of the staining increased with time. The darkened areas were most frequent in places where there had been prolonged contact with water and had the appearance of being caused by hydrogen sulphide. There were also many reports of the blackening of silver and copper in people's homes.

A tidal mangrove swamp located just south of the city was found, on chemical examination, to be producing large amounts of the gas above mentioned and its presence was attributed to the discharge of sewage into a tidal stream that cuts through the swamp.

"The hurricane," say these writers, "undoubtedly helped to distribute the sewage over a wide area and stirred up the mud by swaying the mangrove trees. Possibly the low barometric pressure helped in liberating the gas. The storm was followed by several warm quiet days, with faint land breezes at night that blew from the swamp over the city. It is, of course, well known that sewage produces appreciable amounts of hydrogen sulphide, but it seems unusual to find a case with such a wide distribution and high concentration in the air as to affect paint and metal objects in a city that extends over six miles in length."

The same effect, though in a less marked degree, was observed after the "San Felipe" hurricane of 1928.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

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