

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed January 9, 1933

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SOME WEATHER "RECORDS"

The highest natural air temperature ever measured with an accurate and properly shaded thermometer was 136 Fahrenheit at Azizia, Tripolitania, Sept. 13, 1922. The lowest, so far as regular weather stations go, was 90 below zero Fahrenheit at Verkhoyansk, Siberia, Feb. 5 and 7, 1892. (Corrections applied to this reading on account of supposed defects of the thermometer have led to lower figures being published in many standard works, but the figure just given is the official one.) The district of Oimekon, Siberia, where a weather station was established in 1929, has recorded consistently lower temperatures than those occurring at the same time at Verkhoyansk, and seems likely to surpass the record-breaking temperature of the latter place, though it has not yet done so. A minimum thermometer left by Archdeacon Stuck at a place 15,000 feet up the slope of Mount McKinley, Alaska, in June, 1913, was recovered in May, 1932, with the index all the way down in the bulb, corresponding to a reading at least as low as 100 degrees below zero and possibly lower. Because of possible effects of wind-jarring and other factors, this reading is not conclusive evidence that the temperature actually occurred, but it is believed to be a possible one at that altitude and latitude.

The heaviest mean annual rainfall obtained from a long and trustworthy record is 428 inches a year at Cherrapunji, 4,300 feet above sea level, in the Khasi Hills district of Assam. The lightest is 0.02 inch a year at Arica, Chile.

The heaviest brief shower, as measured with a self-registering rain-gauge, was 1.03 inch in one minute at Opid's Camp, in the mountains of southwestern California, April 5, 1926 - but there are not many self-registering rain-gauges in the world, so that the vast majority of very intense showers remain unmeasured, and hence this figure does not mean much. The heaviest measured 24-hour rainfall was 46 inches, falling from noon, July 14, to noon, July 15, 1911, at Baguio, the mountain health resort in the Philippines.

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