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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed October 18, 1933

A BELATED HURRICANE REPORT

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The story of a great storm at sea is usually pieced out slowly from the belated mail reports of ships, though the main facts may be made known promptly by radio reports. This has happened in the case of the severe hurricane that swept over the Caribbean Sea early in November, 1932, causing great damage and loss of life in Cuba, where on the ninth, the town of Santa Cruz del Sur was wiped out by the attendant tidal wave.

The steamship "Phenius" ran into this storm on November 5 when about midway between Jamaica and Colon, and an account of her experience has recently reached the British Meteorological Office. That evening, says the report, a fierce hurricane was blowing and a very high sea running. The ship was soon enveloped in spindrift, reducing the visibility to nil, so that the hatches could not be seen from the bridge. About 8 o'clock the funnel was blown away by a wind estimated at 200 miles an hour. "Hatches were blown overboard like matchwood, derricks and lifeboats wrecked, upper and lower bridges blown in" before the relatively calm center was encountered at 2 a.m. the next morning.

The most interesting fact of all is that at 8 p.m. of the fifth the barometer read 27.01 inches. This is the lowest presumably accurate sea-level reading of a barometer hitherto reported, with one exception, viz., 26.18 inches, observed on board the Dutch steamship "Saparoea" in the midst of a typhoon 400 miles east of Luzon on August 18, 1927.

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