

Historic Natural Events.

Sept. 21, 1486. Sweating Sickness in England.—According to Holinshed, "in this year a new kind of sickness invaded suddenly the people of this land passing through the same from the one end to the other. It began about the one and twentieth of September and continued until the latter end of October being so sharp and deadly that the like was never heard of to any man's remembrance before that time. For suddenly a deadly burning sweat so assailed their bodies and distempered their blood with a most ardent heat, that scarce one amongst a hundred that sickened did escape with life."

Sept. 21, 1741. Shower of Gossamer at Selborne.—Gilbert White records ("Natural History of Selborne") that before daybreak "I found the stubbles and clover grounds matted all over with a thick coat of cobweb. . . . When the dogs attempted to hunt, their eyes were so blinded and hoodwinked that they could not proceed, but were obliged to lie down and scrape the encumbrance from their faces with their forefeet. . . . About nine, an appearance very unusual began to demand our attention—a shower of cobwebs falling from very elevated regions, and continuing, without any interruption, till the close of the day. These webs were not single filmy threads, floating in the air in all directions, but perfect flakes, or rags: some near an inch broad, and five or six long, which fell with a degree of velocity, that they were considerably heavier than the atmosphere. On every side, as the observer turned his eyes, he might behold a continual succession of fresh flakes falling into his sight, and twinkling like stars, as they turned their sides towards the sun. How far this wonderful shower extended, it would be difficult to say; but we know that it reached Bradley, Selborne and Alresford, three places which lie in a sort of triangle the shortest of whose sides is about eight miles in extent." The gossamer descended even on the highest part of the downs.

Sept. 23, 1834. The "Padre Ruiz" Hurricane.—This was the most severe hurricane on record in Santo Domingo; it takes its name from the fact that it began during the funeral service over a priest of that name. The loss of life and property was appalling; everything was laid waste, large areas of timber being torn up by the roots. Hundreds of houses were destroyed and many vessels were lost. The stone church of San Antonio was demolished, and its ruins have been left as a monument of the storm. The downpour of rain was so great that a fisherman was drowned in the principal market, as no one dared to go into the street to assist him.

Sept. 23, 1924. Inundation at Leningrad.—At 10 A.M. the waters of the Neva commenced to rise rapidly and by 7.15 P.M. stood 12 feet above their ordinary level. This flood was second only to that of November 1824 and caused enormous damage. The flood was caused by a deep depression over Finland, resulting in westerly winds over the Gulf of Finland, which heaped up the waters and impeded the flow of the Neva. The actual flood was due to sea water.

Sept. 25, 1909. Magnetic Storm.—A magnetic storm, of brief duration but of unusual severity, began abruptly at noon on Sept. 25 and ceased about 15 hours later. The ranges at Greenwich—193' in declination and 1710 γ in horizontal force—have not been equalled there for at least fifty years. An oscillation in declination of 3° within 15 minutes of time was recorded at Kew; at Stonyhurst an oscillation of 2½° within 2 min., and one of 5° within 14 min. at Cheltenham, Maryland. An aurora accompanied the disturbance of the magnets; at South Kensington,

in spite of cloudy or overcast skies, the green auroral line was easily seen with a spectroscope. A large sunspot crossed the central meridian on Sept. 23.8, and this was observed spectroscopically to be very active; about twenty-six hours before the commencement of the magnetic storm, the spot was for a time nearly obliterated by an overhanging cloud of brilliant calcium that probably represented a large active prominence.

Sept. 25, 1928. Waterspout off Deal.—An immense waterspout was reported over the sea about 4½ miles off Deal. It was described as having a conical shaped top which was encircled by a large rainbow, with a remarkable background formed by heavy rolling clouds in which the sun was setting. It lasted for about ten minutes.

Sept. 26, 1902. Heavy Rain in Sicily.—On Sept. 25–27 a barometric depression travelled northwards from Tunis and settled over Sicily. It was accompanied by an extraordinary series of thunderstorms, in the course of which more than half the normal year's rainfall fell in five days. The most violent occurred at 7.25 A.M. on Sept. 26; it lasted only about half an hour but in that time several inches of rain fell. The total for the 24 hours at Linguaglossa was 16.7 in., and in five days (Sept. 25–29) 29.1 in. At San Alfio 23.3 in. fell in two days and 30.6 in. in five days. The storm of Sept. 26 was followed by extensive floods. At Modica, where three small streams meet, the flood was the first since 1833 and the worst on record; the water rose 10 to 20 feet above the level of the streets, and 111 persons lost their lives, while enormous damage was done. A rock weighing 90 tons was carried two-thirds of a mile by the force of the water.

Sept. 27, 1911. Tornado in Victoria.—A violent tornado, in the shape of a long inverted cone of cloud, appeared between Leichardt and Derby about 2.30 P.M. and travelled south-eastward, completing a course of 12 miles in about half an hour. Much damage was done by the wind to buildings, cattle, and agricultural machinery, and several persons were injured. The tornado was accompanied by heavy rain and hail, some of the hailstones weighing a pound.

Sept. 27, 1912. Heavy Rain.—At Wynaad in southern India an extraordinary rainstorm broke at 1.45 P.M., unaccompanied by wind but with a good deal of thunder and lightning. The storm lasted an hour, during which time the fall amounted to 9.75 in. The extensive lowlands were flooded to a depth of more than a foot.

Sept. 27–28, 1908. Floods at Hyderabad.—At Hyderabad in the Deccan, India, during the passage of a cyclone, more than 15 in. of rain, nearly half the annual total, fell in 36 hours, causing the river Musi to rise 60 feet. A considerable part of the city was ruined, more than 5000 persons lost their lives, and 100,000 were rendered homeless.

CORRECTION. Sept. 10, 1903. Gale over British Isles. Line 5, for 5 mb. (1.4 in.) read 5 mb. (0.14 in.).

Societies and Academies.

PARIS.

Academy of Sciences, July 28.—Deslandres: The *raies ultimes* of the alkalis and alkaline earths.—Bigourdan: The observatory of Courtanvaux at Colombes.—L. Blaringhem: The influence of the pollen on the movements which precede the opening of the flowers in poppies.—J. Costantin: The increase in resistance to disease (of plants) due to altitude. The resistance of cultivated plants to disease is increased when the plant is grown at a high