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TROPICAL HURRICANE

By

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July 15, 1933

TROPICAL HURRICANE

A STORM is announced." We hear the news at eleven o'clock in the morning while shopping at the Plaza Provision in San Juan. A clerk says that word of the storm is being spread officially from the weather bureau. Wind of cyclonic velocity is reported off the Virgin Islands and moving directly towards Puerto Rico. It will be upon us in its maximum intensity by midnight.

"Sister, pray for us," ominously whispers a shopper at our side, plucking the black sleeve of a nun whose hands are busy testing the hardness of a head of imported lettuce. They cross themselves and continue solemnly buying vegetables.

Through with our shopping, we hurry into the street. Just what will this mean? Inexperienced, we cannot think in terms of cyclones. The sky looks ordinary. The sun is shining. There seems nothing to fear.

The news is spreading rapidly in voluble Spanish. No one gives the customary greetings. Everybody asks, "Have you heard that a storm is coming?" All eyes are serious.

We motor to Rio Piedras through more than usually cluttered streets and to the ubiquitous sound of hammers tapping on wood or corrugated zinc.

Roofs are being made a few nails more secure. Storm shutters are leisurely adjusted. No one is hurrying. There are nine more hours in which to prepare for the hurricane.

We try to think whether we have the proper supplies at home. What might we need in a storm?

"Have we a lantern?"

"No, but a kerosene lamp."

"That will do. Kerosene?"

We stop at Sobrinos Villamel's in Rio Piedras and buy a can of kerosene and, as an afterthought, some candles.

Shop windows and doors are being boarded solidly. Every signboard that can be detached is hammered down to be taken in.

We hurry into a beauty parlor to make an appointment for tomorrow's shampoo.

"Tomorrow?" The beautician looks at us searchingly. Over her grim face comes a slow glimmer of reassurance. "*Si, señora, mañana*—tomorrow," she agrees. Then, just as we are to go, "That is, if the destruction is not so great you cannot come in," she adds, as the spell of our ignorant optimism begins to fail her.

"The destruction . . . so great —"

Wrath to Come

STILL we cannot feel alarmed. People are moving so slowly, working so deliberately. But the thoroughness. There suddenly seems something awful in the fact that no single loose thing is being left in sight, that even appurtenances which were fairly secure are being loosened and carried in. The town begins to look as though it were cleared out for a scouring. Fewer and fewer people are walking in the streets. These few are heading dully homewards carrying a new lantern, small boards, some charcoal, a hammer, a bag of nails. Benches and a carnival booth have already been cleared from the plaza and dragged into the church. The plaza looks bleak. The boarded merchants' windows seem to announce "Business is forever over here." So much precaution looks unnecessary.

We scan the sky for a cue to fear. Southward the clouds are black. "Is the storm coming sooner than expected?" we inquire.

"No thunders with cyclone," a native tells us. "You hear thunders—no storm." He waves his arms dramatically and wanly smiles. We are reassured. The storm is hours away.

At home, the serious, Spanish-speaking Negro servants look more serious than ever. They are clearly scared.

Pedro and Pablo are awaiting orders. They know that the storm shutters must be put on, but will not be bold enough to bring them out until commanded.

The men work hard. By three o'clock the extra storm shutters of heavy planks have been nailed securely

over the windows on the east side of the house, which must bear the brunt of the wind. Victoria has carried things in from the porches. Dolores has made a compact pile, in a corner of the outside laundry house, of all her washing paraphernalia. There seems to be little else to be done by way of preparation.

A neighboring American fruit grower with years of island experience comes to see us.

"Scared?" he asks, and looks amused.

"Will it amount to much?" we want to know; not scared, but puzzled.

"Oh, not likely. A blow. But not much. These natives get scared to death," he poohs.

"The blacks are dreadfully frightened," we explain to him. "We're letting all ten of them go down into the basement. Their house looks so flimsy. Do you think they will be able to manage down there all night?"

He laughs.

"You haven't been in the tropics long," he says.

It will soon be dusk. We take a walk around the nine-acre *finca* to make sure that everything is in good shape.

A Farm in Eden

THE *finca* is beautiful. A border of royal palms shades the busy Carolina road along the front. The two-storied house is almost hidden by luxuriant tropical vegetation. Inside the narrow gate the green, circular lawn is inclosed by a tall hedge of hibiscus spotted with giant scarlet blooms.

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In front of the porch two tall coconut palms tower symmetrically. Across the porch grow thick clusters of purple bougainvillaea, through the rails peep yellow hibiscus blossoms, and above the steps twine vines with many delicate blossoms which change in color through a series of lavenders and pinks with chameleonlike inconstancy. Spreading away from the house are deep-foliaged orange, lime and grapefruit trees, lacy acacias and flamboyants,

sturdy mangoes, hedges of multicolored crotons. A flaming crimson bougainvillaea covers the cistern at the back of the house and shelters the prize of the *finca*, a delicate South American orchid. Fanning palms and tall rubber trees with broad, shiny leaves conceal the laundry, a tropically crude shed open on two sides and partly palm-thatched. Dozens of tall, slender coconut palms, bent curiously by years of trade winds. Thickets of bamboo. A windbreak of tall, fluffy-needled Australian pines. A few exotic cacti. Two acres of hybrid tea roses. Beyond, at the edge of the *finca* and in a clump of ragged banana and platanos trees, the humble, spare shelter of the Negro peons.

In a storm, what will become of the two unsheathed cows, their calves, the chickens and pigs, and of Pablo's Belgian hares in their rickety hutches?

Opposite our *finca* and beyond the Carolina road stretch grass-covered uplands. Peons are slashing furiously with skillful machetes to harvest a store of the juicy, broad-bladed grass for the cattle of a little *lecheria*. In the distance, on a high green hill, stands a pretty Spanish bungalow, white, with red-tiled roof, beautiful against the deep blue of the sky. We admire the outlines and the coloring. An exposed spot for a house during a hurricane, we think.

Fighting the Storm

DUSK in the tropics is like a moment's indecision. Sunset glows, then goes out like an extinguished flame, and it is dark.

Dinner is over. The Negroes go into the basement, huddle the babies off to bed in a corner, bolt the door against their fear, and wait.

Back of the waving palms the moon comes up in a soft blue, star-filled sky. The coquis begin their noisy concert: "Co-qui, co-qui, coqui-ee-ee." Above the constant call of the coqui shrills the *esperanza*.

Esperanza—hope. Let the *esperanza* shrill tonight!

The nine-year-old daughter goes willingly upstairs to bed. Against the weariness from a day at play and the habit of a scheduled bedtime, the coming storm is shadowy, an unreal, reported thing unlikely to materialize.

"Will you waken me if it's bad?"

"Yes, of course, if it's bad."

She goes unconcernedly to sleep.

The living room seems stuffy and unfriendly with the side windows boarded shut. The unaccustomed voices of the Negroes come muffled from the basement. Will they be cautious down there with the kerosene lamp? We go outside and call through the barred entrance to the basement.

"Pablo, be very careful with the lamp."

"Yes, sir. Yessum."

Back in the living room, we try to read.

"Where is the flash light? We must have it ready."

It is in the car. We go out to the garage, crudely improvised for our temporary use from the shell of an abandoned chicken coop.

We try again to read. It is difficult to find a settled occupation.

By half-past eight there is a heavy shower. Is this the storm beginning? No, we hear it thunder. Perhaps there is to be no cyclone. This is a typical tropical rain, falling precipitously, pounding the zinc roof as though a mammoth bucket had been overturned above us. It dashes down faster than you think it possible for rain to fall. And just when you have thought that, it doubles its speed. It stops as suddenly.

We step out on the veranda. The moon is shining again, silvering the moistened foliage. The night is very calm. The coquis sing. We say that on a night

like this there cannot be a hurricane. The fronds of the palm trees sway and crackle briskly. A sudden gust of wind bends them more than ordinarily. We exchange glances. That wind seemed peculiar.

By nine o'clock there have been several flurries of rain and gusts of wind. And we have noticed that each gust is harder than the preceding one. Between the gusts are calms. Our anxiety is increasing, but during the calms we still voice foolish hopes.

By 9:30 the power of the increasing gusts is terrific and there is very little time between them. The electricity goes out and we hasten to light the one kerosene lamp, placing it on bookshelves against the inside wall of the living room. Great sheets of wind crack against the unprotected southwest side of the house. Rain is driving down in torrents. We no

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longer question that the storm will come. It is upon us. We strain to peer through the glass panes of the door. Even in the dark it is possible to catch glimpses of the palm fronds streaming horizontally and to sense a frantic motion in the trees. We reflect that the maximum intensity of the storm is expected by midnight and that even now the wind is blowing harder than we had imagined wind could blow.

Calmly and deliberately we set about with sheets and pillow cases making a bed on the day cot in the living room. The child will have to be brought down. We bring her clothes, and, to be armed against an unthinkable emergency, we assemble coats, caps and overshoes for all three of us in an accessible pile near the cot.

A crashing racket from the kitchen is alarming. We grab a flash light and hasten to see whether something should be done. Passing through the dining room, we step into unexpected water.

"Look! Water is getting in somewhere!"

"Get cloths, quick!"

Upstairs on a dash and back with large cloths. Together we mop on hands and knees, running to the dark, howling kitchen to wring out the water into the sink.

"So much! Where is it coming from?"

"Under the door to the back porch." We mop faster. But the puddles grow larger in spite of our frantic efforts and water spreads rapidly across the floor.

Water drops on our heads.

"From Carolyn's room!"

Her room is above us. We drop our mop cloths and run up the stairs. The noise of wind and driven rain is deafening now. Perhaps the roof is off above her. If she had called, could we have heard her in this din? That wind! Can it get louder than this? It seems miles to her room. We dash in, flashing the light around. Water is oozing in around the shutters. It is pouring from the sills. The floor is fast becoming a pool. Drops are beginning to splash here and there from the seams of the grooved wooden ceiling. Thank God, there is no plaster to fall.

The commotion is waking her.

"Get up, dear. Rain is coming into your room."

"What's all the noise?"

"Wind. Wind and rain."

"When will it stop?"

We are grabbing clothes from the closets and crushing them, hangers and all, into a cedar chest in the hall.

"Grab the mattress. Get it out of here." We carry it into the hall and pile it on a desk. We snatch out whatever loose furniture we can quickly get our hands on.

"Go downstairs. Your clothes are there. Dress fast."

"Here, bring the flash light. There seems to be a hole."

"Pails—get pails."

Down to the kitchen for pails. The kitchen floor is flooded. The noise there is frightful. So much wind is ripping in from the unglazed, shuttered door to the porch. Small objects have been torn from their places and are crashing about. We grope for pails and hurry back upstairs, shouting as we pass the living room, "Dress faster!"

Streams of water are flowing out of the bedrooms and into the hall. No use trying to fight this water. Abandon the rooms. We close the doors. Wind cracks against the walls, wrenching the house. The din is terrific.

This won't do. We are both up here working to save things and that child is down there alone. What if we should be cut off? What if — We start down along the wind-pounded southwest wall.

"Look!"

The wall is actually buckling along the stairway. We can see it give and recover. It will surely cave in at the point where the wooden second floor is anchored to the concrete of the first.

Water, Water Everywhere

ABANDON the second floor entirely. We must not go up there again, past that buckling wall. We might go with the top of the house. We shout this to each other.

"More pails."

The streams from the bedrooms have crossed the hall and are pouring in a Niagara down the stair well.

To the kitchen for pots and pans to try to catch the water before it deluges the living room. This kitchen is a hell! Grab a broom too. And do not come out here again. Something is going to break loose out here.

"Get up the rugs! Put them on chairs. On chairs!" Could that be heard?

Pull the cot from that corner. Rain is falling on it from the ceiling. How will we keep anything dry? Funny to have thought Carolyn could lie down here.

"Put your coat and cap on. Your coat on!"

The waterfall from the stairway is doubling in volume. Pans cannot be emptied. There is no quick place to take the water. Streams are flooding out across the floor. There is a steady, deafening roar.

"Put on your rubbers."

Poor child. She is frightened now. Her lips are beginning to quiver. Nothing to do. She has nothing to do. Work—she must work.

"Here, take this broom. Sweep the water. Sweep fast! Keep sweeping! Don't stop!" She sets to work.

Another broom. That kitchen! There is another broom out in that kitchen. No! But we have to have it. All right. The flash light.

It is mad in this kitchen. It is like being on the inside of the roar of a mighty machine. Broom. Broom. Can you keep thinking broom in this roar? Is this it? Take that brush mop along too. Get out of here. Something is going to crash just as you turn to go.

Sweep. Sweep. We all three sweep fast and hard, trying to dash the flooding water under the outside door. The plan is working. She is smiling now, happy to be helping. How long can this roar keep up? Will the house stand much longer?

"Look at the lamp." Rain is dropping on the bookcase close to it. Move the lamp. Where? A little to one side. You cannot guess where it will stay dry.

The matches? Are they dry? Put them and the candles into this bag.

The rugs on the chairs are getting very wet.

The wind is crashing frightfully against the dining-room door. If it breaks that door down and rushes in, the top of the house will be lifted right off. Barricade the door. We push all the dining-room furniture against it. Not very heavy. But it may help.

Sweep and sweep. We are splashed with water to the knees.

Darkness

A blast of freakish wind rips across the constant roar. The light goes out. Everything is black. The noise seems twice as deafening, now that we cannot see.

The flash light? Where did we put it after coming from the kitchen?

"The flash light! Can you hear? Where did we put that flash light?"

Wait. Think. Think. Calm now. Think. On the cot?

"Light coming, dear."

"Here it is!"

"Watch out. That chimney's hot. Hot!"

The candles. We light two candles. They tremble and flutter and make weird shadows.

"Here, hold up the lamp chimney with this handkerchief." It is lighted again. It will not last, though. A drop of water on that hot chimney—

We go on sweeping frantically, interminably, and shunting furniture about futilely, attempting to save it from leak after leak. The living room is a cluttered disarrangement in which we can scarcely get about. There is no place to be dry.

An eternal chaos of noise and water and shaking walls.

There comes a change. Is the wind dying down? The steady fury of it has broken into terrific blasts.

What a queer, hollow feeling in the ears!

"Are your ears funny? What's doing that?"

"Vacuum. Vacuum."

"I've had it three times. It hurts."

We remember suddenly about the calm. Is this to be the calm at the center of the hurricane? Which means? Must we, then, go through all this a second time? Can it be endured?

We look at the time. One o'clock. Three hours, and but half done.

A Lull in the Storm

Haggard-eyed in the crazy shadows from the kerosene lamp, we go on working with heavy effort. There is to be no peace in whatever calm this is, knowing that a second storm must follow. Is it possible that any house can stand through two or three more hours of that? We open a crack in the door, and sweep water out onto the porch. Rain is falling hard. Treacherous gusts of wind slap intermittently.

How about the Negroes in the basement room? Are they all right? The room is so little. They must be terrified, squeezed in there like sardines.

"Could those Negroes below possibly drown?"

"They are in the safest place."

"We should be down there?"

"No question about it."

"Can we go down during the calm?"

A great risk. Flying stuff. Wind still very strong. Bad gusts.

We consider. Across the porch, down the steps, skirt around the shrubs onto the open lawn, around to the latticed door under the porch. That door would be locked. If we did manage to reach there in safety, could they, in the inner room behind another bolted door, hear our pounding? We would not dare stand long at the door, exposed to flying things—zinc roofing, glass, boards, coconuts. . . . Why is this called a calm?

"Better not try it."

"Do you think the house will ——"

"What shall we do if—when ——"

We look around, trying to think it out now, when the noise is reduced to a point where we can think. That closet under the stairway? Just like any animal, that idea. Hide your head—hide in a hole. Crawl away into a trap with an unintelligent sense of security. Don't be fooled just because it is a closet now and the stairway is standing. Huddle against a wall? Which wall? Which one will be up? Is

it possible that there is no place to go? With a saw we might cut a hole in the floor and drop into the basement. But there is no saw. May as well keep calm and admit it—there is no place to go.

That first phase of the storm is moving on westward. It is in Carolina now. Then Louiza, Rio Grande, Arecibo. What will it do to those poor towns? To all the tumble-down houses near Luquillo? To thatched *bohios* up in the mountains? So flimsy. Houses on frail-looking piles. Tiny huts jammed full of people. How will people manage to live? Babies? Children? Heaven help all those naked children. What's happening even now back in San Juan? Perhaps the second half of the storm is already there. Crushing down the hundreds of poor little shacks in Puerta de Tierra. Wrecking the squatter houses on stilts over the swamplands of Catano. . . . Everything in this room is drenched. Will we ever be dry again?

"Look out! That front door!"

That was a frightful crack. It has not been that hard on the front side of the house before.

"It's here again. A new direction."

"That door!"

"Quick! Get away from in front of it. Look! It's bulging in!" If that door gives way, we are done for.

With the wind pounding against the front of the house, the attack on us is more direct. There is no place to sweep the water now. Let it accumulate. This room will soon be part of out-of-doors anyway.

"Carolyn, you must not go near the front door."

"Is the wind coming back?"

"Yes."

Doggedly her heavy, long broom starts to move.

"Come here, dear; we won't sweep any more."

There is no fright in her face. Just weariness. Good. She is exhausted with working, beyond strength for fear. The chairs are all so wet. Put an umbrella up over this driest one and let her rest in it.

The noise is horribly loud again. Not a series of gusts as in the evening and during the calm, but that constant, deafening roar. There is nothing in the whole world but noise. Our ears are filled with sound to bursting. We had wondered as a child how it would be if at any single instant of time all the sound waves in the whole world could be heard simultaneously. Now we know. It would be like this. Our ears would have reached a saturation point for registering sound. Out there in the black is a roaring, hissing, grinding, whirring speed. Power. Noise and speed and power. Speed irresistible. Power imponderable. Certainly it cannot grow worse. It is a moment when we are as nothing.

What is that? A rip! A hiss above the roar. Something faster than speed.

Man and Nature

Ah! Then it can be even worse. In the source of this power there must be no limit. Out there in the center of that thing, somewhere, there are still reserves. And in us? What reserve remains in us? Well, this—to be destroyed. And we want—how desperately we want—to keep on knowing — Better to snap out of this!

"Keep away from that door," he had said. And look. He is standing there in the water, pushing against the door with all his might.

"That's too dangerous. If the door gives way —" The glass would shatter and fly inward at his face.

That door looks like a quivering, living thing bent on gaining ground against a foe. There's an ironical bout for you—a man whose strength looks finite against a bulging door that looks omnipotent. It could break in at any second. Just waiting.

"It's about to give way!" he calls, and, still straining hard against it, bends his neck stiffly to look here and there around the room. Yes, he's wondering where we can go. He must see that there is no place to go. When the wind tears in here through the hole that the ripped-off door will make, what will happen? Things will spin

around. They will crash about like demons. Tables and chairs and the bookcase slushing and smashing in the water. There will be no escaping them.

Perhaps if you push too — Even that little might help.

Having your hand pressed hard on this vibrant door gives you more of the feel of that raging storm out there. Sight has become chaotic and hearing numbed. Now, touch reading, you sense the might of the storm anew, with fresh interpreters.

But this won't do. Suppose the break comes while you are across the room from that little child, huddled under the umbrella. Go to her. Do not leave her again for a second. Sit on the arm of her chair and be there when it happens. Be ready. You will have to think quick. Can you? Thought has nothing like the speed of that wind. You will have to decide which way to push her. Keep your muscles ready to jump.

If the door goes, push her under the stairway. If it is the wall by the stairs that comes down, try to get her under that cot. Would the cot stay where it is? It might dash about and hurt her. Hurl yourself over her, wherever she is. Keep rehearsing this and keep ready.

How long has this hellish racket been going on? This sitting, waiting? That pushing on the door? Will there never be an end of it? How can he keep at it so long? But is he pushing so hard now? Is the wind possibly decreasing? Is it? Or is this some kind of sensory adaptation?

"What time is it?"

"Nearly three o'clock."

"You've been pushing almost two hours against that door."

"Yes."

Waiting. Separate blasts again. Sudden cracks of terrific intensity that make you wonder whether it is all to be repeated.

After the Storm Was Over

No. The roar is definitely dying away. It has slowed down to merely exceptionally strong wind. We can begin to hear the rain in it and the rattle and pounding of shutters against the house. Missiles are flying past. Noises are differentiated—loud and terrible, but an unspeakable relief after the ear-filling roar that had in it no separable sounds. Flapping noises break from the kitchen. Overhead, loosened metal screeches for release. A clattering bombardment of unidentifiable objects against the concrete of the outer walls.

It does not matter now that everything is drenched, that we feel scarcely a dry spot on our chilly bodies, that rain is pouring down upon us from all the crevices of the boarded ceiling. The four walls of the room are, incredibly, around us. Why, we wonder, are we here, alive? Wet, tormented by anxieties and dulled by weariness, but alive. Not because of the strength of walls. There was a twist in that hurricane that could have crushed in these walls like eggshells. We live as a part of the accidental pattern of mechanically ordered things? Or, is it the will of Something Responsible and Knowing? To whatever Source, humbly we offer thanks.

In the first faint visibility of dawn we press against the unshuttered door. Rain drizzles gloomily. The air is calm. There is no familiar sight. Inexplicable whitish disks are strewn about. Vague emptinesses where objects should be.

In a tropical dawn there is no lingering. It is as though, after the short-lived dimness of a single candle power, full light suddenly floods in and sweeps bewilderment away. There, in a stroke, is daylight—finished.

With feet squashing in softened, water-soaked shoes, we step slowly out onto the porch. This cannot be believed. We look at a strange landscape, never seen before. The house seems to stand in brazen nearness to the Carolina road, stripped completely of beauty and of privacy. We have a feeling of being exposed in nakedness in the bareness of the unfoliated porch. Long, ugly trunks of prostrate palms piled crisscross like the jackstraws of careless giants. Towering poles that had been royal palms now starkly frondless or gaunt with tattered and drooping remnants. Grapefruit and oranges in circular heaps on the ground under the nude branches of bent citrus trees. A mass of twisted sticks that may have been mangoes or flamboyants or acacias. What strength could wrench the tenuous wood of a large mango tree so that the slit fibers of its trunk look like torn and twisted match sticks? The almond trees are leafless and maimed, their hacked-off limbs sticking out in ugly dissymmetry. There is no hedge of hibiscus. There is not a blossom anywhere.

The child's playhouse, large enough so that an adult could stand erect in it, has been catapulted like a weightless leaf over the tops of citrus trees and deposited on the lawn on its roof many rods away. The spouting is gone from the house, shutters ripped off, siding warped, glass broken.

We look from the back of the house. The laundry shed has been demolished and its carefully stacked washing utensils scattered irretrievably in the wind. Its screen of rubber trees is broken and leafless. The garage has collapsed completely, and through the cracks of the wreckage we can see the unpromising car—glass broken, back dented, crevices crammed full of shredded leaves and twigs, and wheels pounded hub deep into the mud. The Australian pines are needleless—tall, ungainly, without beauty. There is no beauty anywhere.

Pablo is returning from a quick inspection of the *finca*.

"Your house, Pablo?"

"The roof is gone. Everything wet and broken."

"Your pigs and rabbits?"

"Most of them dead or gone."

"The cows and calves?"

"They are alive." Incredible! They stood out in the storm!

"The roses?"

"Gone."

Maria and Florentina are coming from the basement with the babies. They disregard the drizzle of rain that still falls. Victoria comes out, star-eyed and with bitten lower lip.

"Victoria, make coffee for your people. See that they have bread to eat." It is impossible to realize so soon how difficult the simplest preparation of food will be without water in the pipes and without electricity for cooking and refrigeration. We cannot know that for days we shall suffer from thirst and lack facilities for bathing and proper sanitation.

We try to make our way down to the Carolina road, stepping cautiously over strewn débris—twisted and crumpled corrugated zinc, sections of roofs, broken boards, scattered coconuts, pieces of glass, grapefruit, limes and oranges, and everywhere the bared branches of broken trees.

Luck is Comparative

It is when we are halfway to the road that we lift our faces above the lopped and uprooted palms and see the wrecked landscape and denuded hills. There is no leaf on any tree.

"The pretty house on the hill?"

It is gone. There is not one standing timber to mark the place where, last evening, it had colorfully and serenely stood.

The small *lecheria* is a disordered heap of kindling wood and crumpled zinc. Gullies in the sloping pasture land are filled to overflowing with muddy torrents spilling down regardless of former channels and flooding the deep ditches along the road.

The bungalow on the neighboring *finca* is crushed. Not a wall is intact. On the flat, water-soaked, roofless floor

stands a piano in the rain.

We have reached the Carolina road and stand in the impassable débris of fallen power and telephone poles, twisted wires and uprooted, broken trees. Scared, hollow-eyed pedestrians are beginning to appear. They are making an impeded way over logs and branches, trying to take injured ones to hospitals for treatment. Three men are

approaching. One hacks fiercely at branches with his swift machete. Another supports, almost carries, the third—a middle-aged man painfully hopping on one leg, his other leg in a bulky blood-stained bandage, his head blood-smeared, a coarse burlap sack across his half-clothed shoulders, his face haggard with worn-out eyes. A man assists a limping woman using boards as crutches. A native policeman hurries along, dispatched to rescue.

"Are many hurt?" we ask.

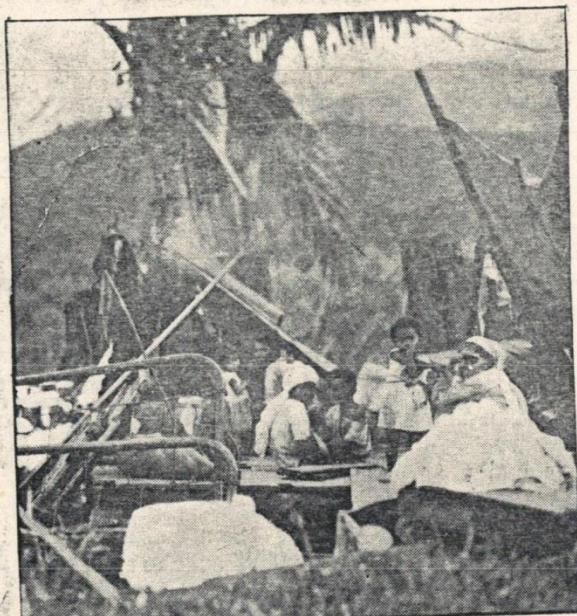
"Many," he gravely answers. "Just around that corner is a heap of concrete blocks. Yesterday it was a house. Three people were crushed to death there."

A native soldier comes up as we talk.

"Look!" says the policeman, greeting him, his face distorted into a sour, ironic grin as he points to our standing house. "The house of the Americanos! With the roof still on! The lucky devils!"



Destruction Follows Upon the Heels of a Big Blow



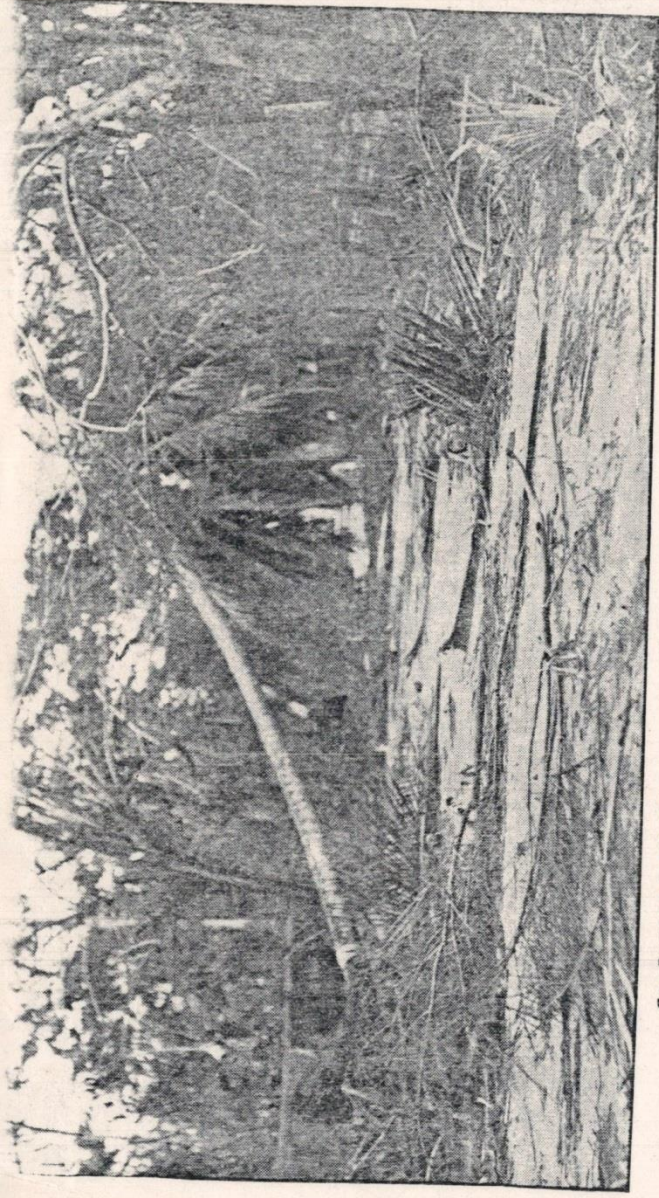
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After the Hurricane—No Roof But the Sky



WIDE WORLD

Sufferers From a Puerto Rican Hurricane in a Refugee Camp



An Avenue in the Residential Section of Santurce, Showing Storm Damage

WIDE WORLD