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A SCIENCE SERVICE FEATURE

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks  
of Clark University.

COOL CLIMATES AT HOME

When we want to find out how to keep cool at home, it is well to look into the practices of those who live where it is hottest. In the tropics we notice at once the airy spaciousness of the houses, or their closed shady coolness. A family can keep reasonably cool by living in an openwork house, with windows, doors and ventilating openings everywhere, with low partitions or none. The coolness comes from the breezes, which are little damped by obstruction. Another family close by may be just as comfortable in a thick walled, masonry or adobe house closely shuttered against the hot street air during the sunny hours, but generally open to a small, interior patio, cool and beautiful with green plants, and perhaps a fountain. The coolness of the night is preserved in the solid construction and by the closed windows, and though there is but little breeze, this coolness is comfortable. Hammocks hung on the roofs are the coolest for night sleeping.

In much hotter places, as in India and very hot deserts, a breeze must be provided, and perhaps also some cooling by evaporating water from wet hangings or clothing. Electric or hand fans provide breezes locally, while for whole buildings or dwellings either general installments of fans or some natural ventilation is required. In Persia, not only are dwellings commonly underground in the hottest places, but there are also some wind shafts directed toward the northwest, whence the winds of summer come. At Greenland Ranch, Death Valley, the hottest known place in the world, the rancher has a fan and before sleeping sprinkles his blanket and the floor with water.

(Tomorrow: Why City Streets Are Hot)

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