

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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HEAT STROKES

Heat prostrations occur when the body temperature regulating mechanism becomes deranged, following exposure to intense sunlight or oppressive heat. When the air temperature is above that of the body, fever does not necessarily follow, as the body may be cooled by the evaporation of perspiration. But, as there is a limit to the rate at which perspiration can be produced, if the air is sufficiently hot the body temperature must rise. Under these conditions, high wind instead of cooling the body, only tends to accelerate the heating. The simoons, or hot winds of tropical deserts, are of this deadly character.

But heat stroke is common in far less extreme weather. Excessive dampness, especially when combined with strong sunlight will produce prostrations at even moderate temperatures. Indeed, heat strokes are known to have occurred with a temperature of only 70 degrees Fahrenheit, when there was no wind and the air was about "saturated" with moisture. A bad combination is found in eastern cities of our continent, and to an extreme extent in Liberia, where there is a relatively thin, very damp hot layer of air with little wind at the surface, and a dry, cloudless layer above, through which the sun blazes mercilessly. While Panama is protected from the sun by moisture extending to great heights, New York is not. At Panama, in spite of the high humidity, there have been but two deaths from sunstroke among a population of 120,000 in thirteen years. The eastern United States has no such record; but perhaps if our skins were dark, if our clothing were white and loose, our food were light and juicy and if we worked with no greater intensity than do the people of Panama, our heatstroke record would be better.

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