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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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INDOOR DESERTS AND HUMIDIFYING

When in winter we hear the wall paper cracking off the walls and feel the furniture becoming loose jointed, we begin to notice the excessive dryness of the air and to think of humidifying. When air is very cold, although it may be "saturated" with moisture, it is still very low in water content. If such cold air is heated to 65 or 70, the relative humidity becomes even 20 per cent. or lower. Most people live all winter under such conditions of very low humidity. In other words, inside their houses, the air is drier than that of our driest desert in summer. Much of the physiological harm attributed to low temperatures is really due to these low humidities. The hot dry air of houses in winter may be responsible for much of the high pneumonia rate in cold weather. Moreover, the constant inhaling of such dry air causes mild nose and throat afflictions generally. Dryness is responsible also for the chapping of our hands and lips; chapping will occur in summer in desert regions. It can be prevented by covering the exposed skin with cold cream, which hinders evaporation, or with glycerine that tends to absorb some moisture from the air. Unfortunately, our mucous membranes are not so easily protected, though it is possible to offset some of the excessive evaporation by drinking plenty of water.

Any method of indoor humidifying that does not add large quantities of moisture to the air is likely to be of little avail except in rather tight houses. The usual furnace pans are of almost no avail. The leakage of steam, however, or the actual spraying of water into the air are fairly effective, so also are the large evaporators with many shelves or sheets of wet wicking that may be placed over radiators, though these evaporators are cumbersome and most types require much attention. To bring our indoor humidities up to the recommended 50 per cent is not only difficult but likely to be attended by flooding condensation on windows and outside walls.

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