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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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ACCLIMATIZATION IN THE WET TROPICS

It is so hard to adjust ourselves to an occasional few days of hot muggy weather that we can readily appreciate what a problem acclimatization is where such weather has to be endured month after month. After a hot spell we are not likely to be misled into thinking that when the conquest of tropical diseases is nearly complete, large colonies of white people will flourish in the wet tropics. Although it is possible to control such diseases as yellow fever, cholera, malaria and hookworm in small areas like Panama, where strict supervision can be exercised, and where expense is not a consideration, their general eradication is still a long way off and dependent in part upon education of the natives of the tropics.

But even if tropical diseases were eliminated, it is very questionable whether white men could continue to live in the tropics and maintain their vigor for even a few generations. It is said that a fourth generation of Indian-born Englishmen is almost unknown in India. Every summer, in so-called temperate latitudes, we are likely to experience a few days of tropical weather. A few days of such weather can be endured, even perhaps a few years, but white stock remaining long in regions of high temperature and high humidity is almost certain to deteriorate. Nervous exhaustion and loss of vigor are very characteristic.

It seems at present that the only possible acclimatization is external; the white man must slow down, he cannot hope that his bodily machine will adjust itself internally to the climate so that he can continue to run at his original speed.

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