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July 26, 1927

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER . Mailed July 19, 1927

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,  
Authority on Meteorology

HOW THEY KEEP COOL IN INDIA

Hot weather is the curse of India, so far as the white man is concerned. In the larger cities, however, this handicap has been offset to a considerable extent in recent years by the general introduction of electric fans. Henry D. Baker, formerly American consul at Bombay, tells us that in that city it is now possible for the theatres and churches to remain open all summer, whereas formerly, owing to the almost stifling heat, people could not be induced to enter such buildings during the warmer half of the year. The popularity of these places is now in direct proportion to the number and efficiency of the electric fans installed in them. All the leading hotels in the chief cities of India must have electric fans in every room in order to secure and retain their patronage.

Where electric current is not available, the old-fashioned system of cooling rooms by spacious fans hung from the ceilings is still in vogue. These fans, called punkahs, are worked by means of a rope led into an adjoining room and pulled by a "punkah-wallah".

Additional coolness is secured by removing the doors of the bungalows and replacing them by "tatties". A tattie is a wooden frame on which khuss-khuss, a fragrant grass, is bound. Water is poured over the grass from time to time, and its evaporation cools the passing air.

Another cooling contrivance is the "thermantidote". A door at the end of the room is removed and a very broad wheel, covered with khuss-khuss, is installed in its place. Water drips continually on this wheel, which two natives turn with a handle.

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SCIENCE SERVICE,  
21st and B Sts.,  
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