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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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TROPICAL CLIMATES

Present-day knowledge on the subject of infectious diseases discredits many ideas that once prevailed with regard to the effects of tropical climates on health. The remarkable results accomplished by vigorous sanitary measures in such places as Havana, the Canal Zone and Guayaquil have aroused hopes--perhaps too sanguine--that eventually all parts of the tropics will be made healthful for the white races.

In the Canal Zone the death rate of the large population of American men, women and children is not higher than prevails in most cities of the United States; whereas, a generation ago, when the French were at work on the canal, the climate of the region was regarded as one of the most unhealthful in the world. The climate has not, of course, changed in any way since that period, but it has been proved guiltless of the misdeeds once ascribed to it.

Some authorities go so far as to assert that the deterioration in the general health and efficiency of white people in the tropics, so far as it actually occurs, is due entirely to preventable diseases. It would seem more reasonable, however, to assume that there are climates, both in and out of the tropics, which, on account of their heat, humidity and other purely physical factors are not so suitable for habitation by any race of humanity as others.

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