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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WINTER INDOOR ATMOSPHERES

For years the people of America have been aware that the excessively dry atmospheres of their heated buildings in winter were a source of illness, discomfort and expense, but they have only just begun to do something to improve matters. I am not forgetting the familiar water pan on the furnace, or radiator. I say "water pan" rather than "pan of water", because the water is generally conspicuous by its absence, but even when the pan is kept full the amount of moisture it supplies to the air is ridiculously inadequate.

In cold weather outdoor air contains very little moisture, even when its relative humidity is 100 per cent. so that it feels decidedly damp. When it is taken indoors and heated, though the amount of moisture in it remains the same, the relative humidity is greatly reduced and the drying effect of the air is correspondingly increased. In the average winter weather of the northern United States and Canada it is calculated that, in order to maintain a relative humidity indoors of 45 per cent. at ordinary house temperatures, nearly two gallons of water should be evaporated and added in gaseous form to the air of a living room of average size every day.

An air-conditioning plant operated in connection with the heating system is the logical solution of this problem. Many office buildings, theaters, hotels, etc., are already equipped with such plants, and their widespread installation in private residences is a probability of the next few years.

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