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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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HOT-WEATHER ARCHITECTURE

A bizarre picture published in the Illustrated London News of Dec. 31, 1927, shows the city of Hyderabad, Sind, with a forest of vertical shafts projecting above its roofs. Each shaft bears a sloping shield at its summit. The adjacent text explains this "cubist" picture. "Sind," we are told, "has a climate which is abnormally dry and sultry. In the winter the heat of Hyderabad is tolerable; in the summer it is almost unbearable. The houses are built of clay and are distempered white. The bitter fight against the sun and the desert is waged incessantly. Part of the defences are the air-shafts and their shields. The former are designed to draw into the dwellings every possible current of air; the function of the latter is to keep out the sand."

The same journal for Feb. 28, 1931, illustrates a ventilating device employed in the hot desert towns of Persia. The text says:

"On nearing either Yezd or Kerman, both of them typical towns of the arid central Persian plateau, the traveller's first impression is that of a city full of church towers or minarets; on entering it he discovers that these fantastic towers are the 'bad-girs' -- a form of air-shaft, or wind-chimney, built very scientifically to catch every stray breeze that has lost its way in the desert. They are so designed that they collect the currents in the upper layers of the air and guide them down into the houses of the rich merchants and the offices of some of the sarais. They are generally built of mud brick and a native type of plaster, with the horizontal supporting timber beams left sticking out to make future repairing easier, or as bird-rests. Both in Yezd and Kerman there are many hundreds of these towers."

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