

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed Jan. 29, 1935

GOOD AND BAD AIR

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During the present generation science has dispelled a number of fallacies that were once rife concerning the influences of the atmosphere upon the physical well-being of mankind. Thus it appears that the bad effects of crowded, "stuffy" rooms are not generally due to impurities in the air, but to heat, humidity and especially lack of air movement. Prof. Leonard Hill, who has done more than anybody else to upset traditional ideas on the subject of ventilation, tells us that there is no such thing as "crowd-poisoning," and that the bad smells of confined places are no indication that the air is deleterious. Another illusion that has been shattered is that human beings are extremely sensitive to an excess of carbon dioxide and to a deficiency of oxygen in the air they breathe. A far higher percentage of the former gas than is found in the worst ventilated rooms can be breathed for hours together with impunity, while with respect to oxygen there is a decidedly lower concentration of it in the invigorating air of mountain health resorts than well-meant legislation requires shall be present in the air of mines -- where a smaller proportion would diminish the danger of explosions!

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