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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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HEAT AND THE DEATH RATE

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The statement has often been made in recent years that cases of heat stroke are much less frequent than formerly during the hot waves of our American summers because of the cooling afforded by the universal use of automobiles. It is therefore rather disconcerting to learn that in Kansas more deaths were caused by heat last summer than during any previous summer since statistics on the subject were first collected. July was the hottest month on record in that state. According to S. D. Flora, of the Weather Bureau, there were 206 deaths from heat during that month, as compared with 33 in July, 1931, the previous maximum. He adds:

"For the summer as a whole, 430 deaths from heat were reported, which is at the rate of 22.6 per 100,000 population. The previous record for any summer was 75 in 1931, but reliable mortality statistics in Kansas do not extend back to the hot summer of 1901. The total of accidental deaths from all causes in July also was the highest on record for any month, due, doubtless, to increase in outdoor recreation, such as motoring, swimming, and picnicking generally. During the 12-day period, July 10 to 21, when all-time heat records were broken in most parts of the State, there were 113 fatal heat strokes, or 55 percent of the total for the entire month.

"Excessive heat as a cause of death was, apparently, far more effective in cities than in rural sections. There were 114 deaths in cities of more than 2,500 population, compared with 92 in smaller towns and rural sections. A majority of the deaths from excessive heat occurred in the eastern third of the State, where most of the larger cities are located and where the humidity is higher, the nights warmer, and the wind movement less, though maximum temperatures are not likely to be as high there as farther west. Only 19 of the heat deaths were reported from the western half of the State."

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