

## PHYSICS

## Infra-red Rays Blamed For Stuffy Feeling in Hot Rooms

**S**IR LEONARD HILL, the noted English physiologist and writer on public health subjects, finds that certain heat rays (infra-red rays) given off by dark or dull-red sources of heat cause the nostrils to contract and thus interfere with breathing. He believes that this is the chief reason for the sense of stuffiness that we experience in an overheated room.

In a lecture given at the Public Health Congress, London, he showed that this effect is not due to a direct action of the heat upon the nostrils, but that it is a reflex effect from the sensory nerves of the skin. He describes the particular heat rays that give this effect as "nose-shutters."

Their action is especially marked in persons whose breathing is already partially obstructed, those with a deflected septum of the nose, for example, or a person suffering from catarrh, asthma or hay fever.

The effect can be neutralized by fanning the skin of the face with an electric fan, or by the action of certain other

rays, which he speaks of as nose-openers, that are given off especially by luminous sources of heat. They may also be absorbed by water vapor and he suggests that this is the explanation of the efficacy of a bowl of water placed in front of a heater in relieving the stuffiness of a room.

He finds also that these nose-shutting rays cause a diminution in the secretion of the mucous membrane of the nose, and since these secretions may be supposed to protect us from infecting organisms in the air, it is possible that the nose-shutters increase the risks of respiratory infections.

From experiments made at Bedford College, London, he found that 60 per cent. of the persons examined experience difficulty in breathing when exposed to heaters that give off these nose-shutting rays and that in over 25 per cent. of the cases the obstruction to breathing was so marked that it could be demonstrated in records of the respiration made upon a suitable apparatus.

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## BOTANY

## Married Women Lead In Supplying Flower Names

**G**ET MARRIED, girls, if you want to have flowers named after you. And for choice, get a husband who has either a fortune or big reputation.

This would seem to be the practical moral to a study of flower and other plant names made by Prof. J. B. S. Norton of the University of Maryland. A list of commercially named varieties of flowers, at least in the M's, "looks very much like an abstract from the Social Register," said Prof. Norton.

"This personal naming sometimes leads to strange combinations in reports of flower shows," he continued; "one finds a prize won by Mr. Charles Johnson for exhibiting Mrs. Raymond Jones."

"Perhaps it is some commentary on the impressionability of a man in look-

ing over such lists, where he gets the idea that most of the flowers are named for ladies. To test this out, I just went over the dahlia lists, with which I have had some familiarity, and found that out of about 8,000 variety names, 2,358 were named for women, and 1,627 for men. While this shows considerably more honors for the men than I expected, the ladies far outnumber them. The way these are distributed among the general titles is significant. There are 401 names of dahlias commencing with Mrs., against 120 Madams, 69 Misses, and 23 Mademoiselles, as compared with 19 Mr.'s, and 25 Monsieurs, 17 Fraus and 2 Fräuleins."

There is a good practical reason for giving flowers the names of well-known matrons, Prof. Norton thinks. Flower

breeders want to market their new varieties. They can get a higher price and a readier sale if they appeal to the vanity of a lady who is in a position of influence either in her own right or through marriage to a prominent man. So Mrs. and Madame take the lead over Miss and Ma'mselle.

But although the ladies receive most attention in the naming of flowers, male vanity is not at all overlooked. Sometimes it leads to difficulties. Only one variety of a given flower is supposed to be named for one person; but a newly-elected congressman or a newly-prominent hero does not always know this, and readily gives permission to anybody who requests the privilege of naming a plant after him. Thus, Rudy Vallee has given his consent to the use of his name for at least two distinct varieties of dahlia.

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## PUBLIC HEALTH

## Chemical Kills Germs Better Than Hot Water

**I**N THE LONG RUN, chemical washes are more effective than hot water in killing germs and preventing their subsequent development on milk cans and other milk utensils, A. G. Lochhead and C. K. Johns of the Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa, Canada, found.

In tests reported to the Society of American Bacteriologists they used milking machine tubes and milk cans that had been uniformly contaminated with sour milk containing very many of one type of germ, *B. coli*, which may cause disease in man.

Washing with water at 170 Fahrenheit for 20 minutes destroyed the greatest number of the germs, while lye, which was only slightly less effective than the hot water, was the best *B. coli* destroyer of any of the chemicals used. Chlorine compounds were more effective in keeping down the total number of germs of all kinds, the lye acting more specifically against *B. coli*. Examination of the cans 19 hours after treatment showed that the chemicals were decidedly more effective than hot water in preventing subsequent development of the bacteria.

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Longfellow's famous poem "The Skeleton in Armor" was inspired by remains of an Indian, and not a Norseman as he supposed.