



East Meets West

➤ **EASTER**NERS, spending their first spring season in southern California, Arizona or New Mexico, are very apt to exclaim over finding violets and buttercups, anemones and shooting-stars

among the chaparral. Even some of the other flowers which they don't recognize so easily, like some of the western pentstemons and mimuli, have the same delicacy of texture to their leaves, the same dainty tints to their flowers, that mark the spring offerings of the humid woods of the East and somehow seem out of place in the harshness of the Western brushlands.

The secret is that for a few weeks in spring the desert is not quite a desert, and the humid woods are not as humid as they seem: East and West have met each other halfway. What little rain the desert gets is most likely to fall in late winter and early spring, and the seeds and bulbs and rootstocks of the desert's spring flowers take quick advantage of this moisture and expand their leaves and open their flowers in the mild warmth of the April sun.

At the same time, the Eastern woodlands are being swept by spring winds and are getting nearly the full benefit of the warm sunshine, with as yet very little development of the leafy canopy that will later block off a large part of the light and slow the winds to

weak breezes. This means that evaporation rates are much higher in April than they will be from mid-May onwards: for a little while, the woodlands approach the condition of the chaparral as the chaparral approaches the condition of the woodlands.

Somewhat similar, though with a difference, is the later coming of spring to the higher altitudes, where the last of the snows do not thaw away until June or (at the greater elevations) even early July. Here the same delicate spring flowers appear, to strangers' eyes seeming incongruous as they crowd amid the rocks or carpet a meadow on the bank of a glacier-fed stream.

Blossom-time is short on the mountainsides, so you are apt to find a grand jumble of spring, summer and autumn flowers, all hurrying through their cycle of bloom and seed production, as if they knew they have a frozen deadline to beat. There will be harebell and phlox for the spring, Indian paintbrush and evening primrose for the summer, and fringed gentian and wild aster for the autumn, all going at once.

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MEDICINE

Ulcer Patients Need Rest

➤ **COMPLETE** physical rest for patients with stomach ulcers gets strong support from research by Dr. C. W. Lillehei, National Cancer Trainee, and Dr. O. H. Wangenstein, professor of surgery, at the University of Minnesota Medical School at Minneapolis.

Moderately severe physical activity from fairly strenuous exercise, they find, helps bring on a certain type of ulcers in dogs. The ulcers are the kind that come following injections of histamine, a body chemical which stimulates stomach activity and dilates small blood vessels.

Histamine provoked ulcers about three times as often in dogs tired by strenuous muscular activity as in dogs that were not doing tiring exercise, the scientists report to the *Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine* (Jan.).

Strangely, however, muscular fatigue decreased the output of hydrochloric acid in the dogs' stomachs. By decreasing the acid output, it might seem that muscular fatigue would decrease instead of increase ulcer formation. The apparent paradox, the scientists explain, suggests that muscular fatigue affects the stomach lining itself and makes it more vulnerable to the action of the acid-pepsin mixture in the stomach juices.

Strenuous muscular exercise probably affects the stomach lining by changing its blood circulation. The exercise would cause blood to be diverted from the stomach lining to the leg muscles.

Constricting the blood vessels, so that less blood gets to the stomach lining, aids and abets ulcer formation, the scientists found in another experiment. The blood vessel constriction in this case was brought about by injections of adrenalin. This fits in with the muscular fatigue findings because muscular fatigue is known to cause liberation of adrenalin in the body.

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