

MEDICINE

Asthma, Arthritis Relief

➤ THE REASON why people suffering from asthma, arthritis, skin diseases and various other disorders get relief when they go to a warm, dry climate is that such a climate favors evaporation of perspiration from the skin.

Studies supporting this explanation were reported by Dr. Marion B. Sulzberger of New York University at the meeting of the American Academy of Dermatology and Syphilology in Chicago. Dr. Franz Hermann of the same university collaborated in the studies.

A great variety of diseases and symptoms can result, these scientists find, from very small, superficial damage or disturbance of the sweat organs. Sometimes the damage can only be seen by microscopic examination of the sweat organs and pores.

Diseases caused in this way range from ordinary prickly heat to practically incurable forms of chronic skin eruptions. When the patient with these sweat gland disorders is exposed to a hot, humid environment, such as the tropics or the temperate zones during humid, hot periods, he may also

have various severe bodily disorders. Deteriorating heart function, disturbances of circulation and breathing difficulties are among these.

Disorder of the sweat organs, Dr. Sulzberger said, is like failure of the automobile radiator which is supposed to keep the car cool while running. When the radiator fails, other parts of the car are apt to break down and the same thing may happen to a person whose sweating mechanism breaks down.

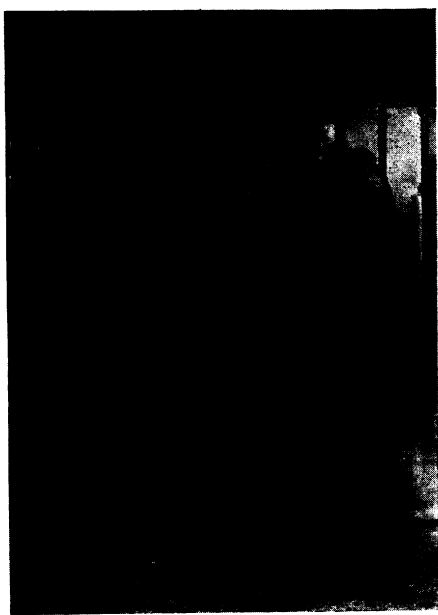
About the only successful treatment for many such persons has been to send them to a warm, dry climate, such as desert areas of Arizona, Texas, California, Egypt and Palestine.

Because of the wide variety of serious disorders that may result from sweat organ failures, Dr. Sulzberger said that more studies of a fundamental nature should be made, using "climatized rooms" to learn the effects of deliberately produced changes in heat, humidity, barometric pressure, air movement and the like.

Science News Letter, December 22, 1951

ZOOLOGY

Predict Gorilla Extinction



EXTINCT IN CENTURY?—Gorillas may be threatened with extinction within 100 years. This picture is of Bambo, the Zoological Society of Philadelphia's giant gorilla, who was 25 years old this year.

➤ THE GORILLA will become extinct within 100 years, unless humans make a special effort to prevent such a fate. This popular zoo animal "has no chance of survival in competition with man," predicts Dr. Robert M. Yerkes, professor emeritus of Yale University.

We must take steps either to protect the gorilla in its natural habitat—a narrow strip of Africa near the equator—or to learn how to breed it successfully in captivity. While there is yet time, Dr. Yerkes urges an intensive study of the gorilla. Man does not know much about its physiology or psychology. Even the number of chromosomes, bearer of inheritance traits, is a guessing matter, he reports.

There are almost twice as many gorillas in the U. S. now as two years ago, his survey shows. Scientists should get together with zookeepers and circus men and make arrangements for thorough and accurate studies of all details of the gorilla's daily life.

Being large animals, sensitive to diet and often quite difficult to handle, gorillas have not usually kept well in captivity. But recently there has been a large influx of the animals into this country. This increase is due, he states, to recent immigrants starting agricultural development of the parts of West Africa where the gorilla is found and to air transportation making it much easier to ship the animal.

Because gorillas are so expensive—thousands of dollars compared to hundreds for chimpanzees—they have rarely been owned by individuals or institutions interested mainly in research. But, he says, it is quite easy for the scientist and the animal's caretaker to conduct the necessary studies without upsetting the daily routine of the gorilla and without interfering with the public's view of this huge, human-like animal. Indeed, the investigator may be an advantage to the animal, providing "diversion, exercise and novel situations," Dr. Yerkes reports in the JOURNAL OF MAMMALOGY (Nov.).

Science News Letter, December 22, 1951

METEOROLOGY

Snow and Cold Weather Predicted for Holidays

➤ SNOW AND COLD weather over most of the nation will make this Christmas holiday season an "old-fashioned" one.

The Weather Bureau's extended forecast section predicts temperatures below seasonal normals over most of the nation. New England and Florida and the West Coast are the only exceptions. In New England and Florida, near normal temperatures are forecast, while the West Coast can expect warmer than usual weather.

Much of the precipitation from now until the middle of January will be snow, the forecasters state, and it is expected to exceed the usual amounts over the southern half of the nation, in the Ohio Valley and in the middle and north Atlantic states. Elsewhere, less than normal amounts of precipitation are forecast.

Science News Letter, December 22, 1951

A light-weight concrete, particularly suitable for heat insulation, is made by putting powdered aluminum and sodium hydroxide in the mix; chemical action releases bubbles creating gas-filled cells.

The practice of renting hives of honeybees by seed growers is increasing because wild bees and other insects necessary for *pollinization* are no longer sufficiently abundant.

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