

digestive juices, but that all actions of the individual are affected by the particular surrounding conditions of such actions.

That unfortunate effects result from the failure to appreciate the fact that in dealing with the human organism we are not dealing with isolated elements is a common observation in medical practise. All too frequently an individual, who is clearly in the process of preventable disintegration, is caused to break down completely because the elemental theory actuates the psychiatrist to pronounce that there is nothing wrong with a person having no apparent organic or functional lesion. The writer wishes to suggest, that at least from a medical standpoint, we have placed too great emphasis upon the chemical factors in the process of human digestion and too little stress upon the psychological factors.

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A SIDEWALK MIRAGE

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: It seems the phenomenon here described must have been noticed by many others, but it caught my attention for the first time about two weeks since, and nowhere have I seen it described.

On several occasions, lately, I have observed a mirage under the conditions hereafter stated which are those of a typical case. I was walking eastward on a cement sidewalk on a street running nearly east and west, and moving up a moderate grade which joins a nearly level stretch of walk. On reaching a point which brought my eye slightly above the level portion, and at which normally the level stretch would have been seen in its entire length, but much foreshortened, I observed instead what appeared to be a stretch of clear dark water covering the entire width of the walk, and brilliantly reflecting moving persons and other objects in sight beyond it.

The sky was clear, the air cool, the sun high. It was about three o'clock p.m., local time. There was a moderate breeze. The angle of observation was very small, probably not above three degrees. A step or two either east or west, and the water was gone,

but within the proper limits, the illusion was definite and continuing. The Weather Bureau report for the day indicates that approximately 30 feet above the spot where the mirage was observed the air temperature was about 63° F. and the humidity about 63°.

The resemblance between conditions here described and those which produce the mirage on the plains is obvious.

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SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Helmets and Body Armor in Modern Warfare.

By BASHFORD DEAN. New Haven, Yale University Press.

To most of us armor belongs to the romantic past. We hardly think of it as a practical, up-to-date accessory of modern warfare. But in a book which has recently appeared, it is clearly demonstrated that armor has still a distinct value. We are of course familiar with the various steel helmets used by all the nations in the Great War, but it is not generally known that all the countries were hard at work experimenting with and developing body armor of every sort for their fighting men. General Pershing recognized its value and in the title page of Dr. Bashford Dean's "Helmets and Body Armor in Modern Warfare" he is quoted as saying that "effort should be continued towards a satisfactory form of body armor."

Dr. Dean is the foremost authority on armor in this country and curator of arms at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. When we entered the war he was placed in charge of the armor problem and his tireless energy and enthusiasm, together with the generous co-operation of the Metropolitan Museum, led to the development of many types of armor for our combat troops. It is unfortunate that too little of this armor was used during the final drive of 1918.

Dr. Dean views the subject from many angles. The introduction is devoted to the evolution of modern armor from early times and enables one to contrast the old with the new. The medical viewpoint is considered