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WHERE TO SEND INVALIDS AND  
SEMI-INVALIDS FOR THE WIN-  
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SAMUEL S. WALLIAN, A.M., M.D.



REPRINT FROM

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## WHERE TO SEND INVALIDS AND SEMI-INVALIDS FOR THE WINTER

By SAMUEL S. WALLIAN, A.M., M.D.

A CERTAIN proportion of the invalid, semi-invalid, and by no means invalid public has grown to be migratory. One class is made up of those who are really sick and feel compelled to change their climatological or local and domestic surroundings, with a view to recovery, or at least amelioration of symptoms and prolongation of life. Another class, warned by timely hints from the medical adviser, would ward off the first manifestations of some malady for which they are told they inherited or have acquired a susceptibility or predisposition. Another large class, among the well-to-do, dread the long battle with the elements which our cold, treacherous, and inconstant northern winters make inevitable to all who lack means, opportunity, or discretion to migrate. Another and still larger class is composed of those who accept their climatic discomforts as a part and parcel of this imperfect mundane existence, and endure with as much fortitude as possible the long confinement in stuffy and overheated rooms, overdraped and underventilated—a condition to which long custom and fairly hereditary habit have made them uncomfortable if not always outwardly unwilling victims. Where shall they go?

Shall it be to the Bermudas, where, it is said in the advertisements, there is "positively no malaria and no mosquitoes," with such emphatic reiteration that one feels afraid of both? Shall it be to the West Indies, where the fires of revolution and the flame of yellow fever are never entirely quenched? Or to Florida, where King Frost made such terrible havoc last season, and where even the utterly unscrupulous advertising interests do not quite dare to assert that the wraith of malaria has ever been laid? Shall it be to the highlands of the Carolinas or Georgia, where less is claimed and more realized as to the absence of malaria, but where winter is still winter, and the weather is often as capricious as a regular city coquette? Shall it be to the Hot Springs of Arkansas, where one must encounter the repentant *roués* of all the "tenderloin" districts of all the large cities in the country? Shall it be to the dry, and sometimes overstimulating, atmosphere of Denver or Colorado Springs, where sharp twinges of genuine winter, pelting sand-storms, and sudden changes are by no means unknown? Or shall it be to the Ultima Thule of the Republic, Southern California, where the "equability" and "perpetual sunshine" so much advertised elsewhere are probably as fully realized as they well can be on this planet?

Let us see if this statement, which sounds so much like those we read in the illustrated hand-books of "How to See"—this or that much-advertised region, requires serious modification.

"California as a Health Resort" has been so repeatedly done, overdone, and underdone that it has

been voted a rather antiquated chestnut in medical literature. So much of what has been written on this theme has been inspired by a lunacy of enthusiasm born of novel surroundings and experiences—calla lilies that bloom all winter in the open, fuchsias that cover the whole front of a two-story building, fresh strawberries on the table every month in the year, etc., etc.—or has emanated from the needs and anxieties of poorly patronized boarding-houses and would-be fashionable “sanatoriums,” that it is hard for one who has not personally studied the region dispassionately and for a long time—not merely for a month or two in winter—to get any reasonably fair idea of what climatic and sanitary advantages may be realized by a resort to this now much-talked-about coast.

For all practical purposes the northern portion of the State may be excluded from the inquiry, since portions of it suffer more or less from miasmatic influences, and its average climate is subject to numerous drawbacks, some of which are very decided in character. Nor will it be either apt or accurate to speak of the *climate* of Southern California in the singular. The term is a misnomer. There are, in truth, almost as many climates as there are neighborhoods, since no two localities, five or ten miles apart as to distance from the coast, or 500 feet different as to elevation above sea-level, or topographically in marked contrast, have the same climatic characteristics. Thus the distance from the ocean, the particular exposure, and even the accident of artificial development and cultivation, including the presence or absence of irrigating sys-

tems and inland bodies of water, constantly modify climate in this region to an extent not even hinted at in the formal statistics of the Weather Bureau.

A statement of this fact is necessary to account for the great variety of often quite contradictory opinions and observations which have been published from time to time, and which are, perhaps, strictly true from the narrow standpoint of the individual observer. So marked and unmistakable are the contrasts between really contiguous localities that it is not impossible or unusual for equally accurate and equally candid observers to form almost opposite and apparently irreconcilable opinions as to prevailing characteristics, advantages, or disadvantages. One gathers all his impressions from a point directly on the coast, another spends his time in some inland valley, and a third studies the local characteristics prevailing on some mountain plateau, or in an elevated valley comparatively remote from the ocean. No two of these will agree as to special features, and in quite essential details there will be such wide divergence that while one may be commendatory to the pitch of enthusiasm, another will discover minor drawbacks sufficient to make his report practically negative, if not actually unfavorable. One will assert, in the face of the fact that semi-tropic products—the orange, the olive and the palm—flourish, and that the pineapple and banana mature their fruit in favored localities, that the climate is essentially a cold one. Another will as positively assert that it is too dry and subject to scorching and tropic heat, while a third will insist that there is too great prevalence of damp fogs! Therefore, the casual

visitor, who, from limited data and circumscribed observation, writes home of "the climate" of Southern California, as though it were homogeneous and he had learned all about it in a week or a month, will certainly mislead his readers and stultify himself. Of course there are general characteristics which are common to all localities; but these are so modified by the various conditions named, or by accidental deflections of prevailing air-currents, that there is notable choice between two spots separated by apparently inconsequential distances.

To the average Easterner the contrast between his homeland of at least seasonable verdure, of landscapes abounding in gracefully rounded hills, waving trees, and rippling streams, which never think of subsiding into courses of motionless but insatiate sands, and the uninviting approaches by which railways are generally obliged to sneak into a new and wild country, is often so sharp and unexpected that it is actually shocking. His extravagant anticipations, based chiefly on the intensely rose-colored circulars of advertising health resorts and land-agents—your regular land-boomer would discount Milton's description of the Garden of Eden—are as utterly unreasonable as they are impossible of realization. For years he has dreamed of stately palms, dense groves of oranges and lemons, of branching bananas, century plants reaching toward the sky, pampas plumes gracefully nodding in response to the softest and balmiest of sea-breezes—and all these are here, but they are not found everywhere!

To the imaginative and over-sanguine, and to the

untraveled novice, this contrast is at first fairly stunning. Instead of the earthly Paradise of which he has been nursing visions, the long vistas of magnolia and palm avenues, the photographed views of loaded orange orchards and gracefully waving banana plumes, he sees along the immediate line of the railway whole townships of barren, burnt-looking hills, bearing only a stunted growth of sagebrush and cactus to hide their hideous monotony. This first impression is as irrational and pessimistic as the bombastic land-boomer's advertisements are optimistic and overdone; but it often sends the disgruntled victim back to his Eastern home, where he roundly disparages a country he visited without seeing, and damns with faint praise a climate he could not enjoy or appreciate on account of his senseless homesickness and mental jaundice.

Such a witness, whether he be a layman or one of the profession, is incapable of appreciating his own testimony, let alone that of others; for if cross-questioned he will admit that he saw the identical palms, orange groves, olive orchards, and century plants, the same luxuriant growth of calla lilies and trees laden with roses, reproduced from "actual photographs" for the illustrated manuals. He will also admit that the charm of perfect June weather prevailed, that the air seemed quite as bracing as the most enthusiastic had claimed, and that in the way of equability without monotony, and mildness without enervation, no such climate had ever appeared even in his dreams.

Therefore when "one who has been there" writes of the *climate* of Southern California the only way to

understand him or get at the value of his observations is to find out how much of it he has seen, and whether he was strictly in his right mind when there. What is still more important is to know which one of a dozen special climates, to be found in the vicinity, is being discussed. If one spends most of his time over at the magnificent Hotel del Coronado, on the delightful beach of that name, it means one thing. If he selects Florence Heights, in San Diego, although in full view of the hotel and beach named, a mild but decided contrast is experienced. If you drive out to Lemon Grove, or La Mesa, or El Cajon, quite as many more variations and modifications will be encountered; and if you extend your trip to Lakeside, Alpine, or the Julian Mountains, the contrast will have become radical and almost contradictory. The Government Weather Bureau at San Diego faithfully records and reports the meteorological readings at that point; but on an extreme day in midsummer a drive of 10 or 20 miles inland discloses a difference of as many degrees in the thermometrical readings, and of course all the other items fluctuate proportionately. Hence the Weather Bureau, as an index to this unique climate, is not only unreliable—it is positively delusive. This criticism may be pertinent to other localities; it is especially true of this coast, where all the conditions are so radically changed. In fact, it must be admitted that of all misleading scientific data, the records of the Signal Office take the palm. The physician or patient who selects a climate from a study of these official reports is certain to be cruelly disenchanted by a practical test and actual experience.

Theoretical climates may be outlined with mathematical precision; but actual climates refuse to be charted from "official records," which go no farther than to establish the mean annual temperature, average rainfall, relative humidity, and character of the prevailing winds. In fact climate means so very much that is not even indicated in these official tables. It ignores latitude, sneers at thermometers and rain-gauges, and laughs at the contradictory prognostications of the barometer. In this, as in all semi-tropical countries, it is the thermometers that do the prize-medal lying. Patients from the East and North, accustomed to well-warmed rooms, make a great mistake by going to an "equable" climate with the expectation of finding warmth to a degree that will enable them to throw off their flannels and treat the "slight changes" with indifference. On the contrary, they should fortify themselves with extra flannels, and insist on having facilities for warming their rooms whenever the sensible temperature requires it; for the sensible temperature, and not the scientific one indicated by the mercurial column, is the one they have to encounter. The difference between the two is frequently ten, and sometimes as much as twenty, degrees! Those patients, and even well people, who try to ignore this indisputable and apparently unaccountable fact, soon pay for their temerity through sharp twinges of myalgic or "rheumatic" pains from which they will continue to suffer more or less until the process of acclimatization has been fully accomplished.

Dr. REMONDINO, of San Diego, recognizes seven

different climates in the State; but in truth, for the sensitive invalid, there are practically seventy times seven, and, if proper discretion be used, it must be a rare case that cannot find one that is both congenial and appropriate to its needs.

Helix, Cal.





