

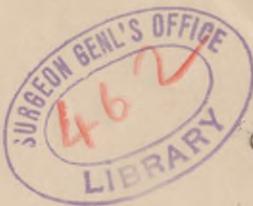
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CALIFORNIA AS A WINTER
RESORT FOR INVALIDS.



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CALIFORNIA AS A WINTER RESORT FOR INVALIDS.

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THE season is approaching when the physician is asked where certain of his patients shall go to avoid the inclemency of a Northern climate, or, the physician himself is constrained to recommend, advise, and even urge the departure of his patient, often without serious consideration of the convenience, comfort, or the expense.

Few questions are more important to decide, or require more discrimination, than that of advising patients to go away and the indication of where they should go. This is particularly applicable in the case of the sufferer with confirmed pulmonary disease, notably phthisis.

I believe few physicians (comparatively speaking) are personally familiar with the localities or regions to which they send their patients. There is, perhaps, a reasonable excuse for this condition—lack of means, time, or disposition, or all of these, and so are dependent upon the reports of others for whatever of information they may have of them.

It is the fate of the physicians—and particularly those in large cities—to receive from time to time circulars, pamphlets, and books upon various places, lauding their advantages as health resorts, giving barometric, thermometric, and hygrometric tables, which are generally meaningless, so far as anything can be derived for practical use.

I believe that nothing but a personal visit can give the desired knowledge. Not of a day only, but sufficient to observe the climate and surroundings, and preferably during the season which it is most desirable for the patient to avoid at home.

The many places recommended for invalids of the same class are apparently so diametrically opposite in what would naturally be regarded as desirable, as to appear incongruous; the extreme cold of the Dakota winter being regarded as health-procuring as the more moderate temperature of Southern California, and is, perhaps, in some respects, more advantageous. For the patient, sick with whatever disease, who is able to travel, stop a longer or shorter time at a place, and then move on at will, a trip is perhaps better than a prolonged sojourn in one locality; but the patient who is far advanced in an incurable disease should never be sent away from home; and I hold that a physician is censurable, if not more, who would advise the contrary, unless the patient's family decide to make a home in a recommended locality. For in that way, and only in that way, will the invalid have home comforts; and it is the deprivation of these comforts that shortens the life.

A personal friend, who had spent some winters in the Bermudas, once wrote to me, saying: "In the name of humanity, keep your consumptives at home!" This expression was made from observations of invalids who had, by recommendation, sought the climate of those islands, "who, either in their rooms or in the damp and chilling corridors of the hotel, shivered and coughed their lives away, suffering greatly ere death relieved them."

It is not sufficient to recommend or regard a place as suitable for invalids because the temperature does not reach the extremes of heat or cold as they are found in the Eastern and Northern parts of our country, nor that tropical plants grow and the trees are ever green. It is a noted fact that cold winds of the Southwest are more penetrating and unbearable than to be found in the North, even in the most inclement period of a Northern winter, and that because the houses are not built to resist, and no provisions for heating the rooms.

Southern California! Oh, how delusive! The land of perpetual sunshine, flowers, orange groves, vines, Elysian fields; no storms, no sweeping, chilling winds, no need for stoves or furnaces.

The poor invalid, filled full of hope, leaves home to seek this great natural sanitarium, a journey of perhaps 4,000 miles, arrives weary and exhausted, but with brightened eyes looking out upon the luxuriant green grass, orange blossoms, and fruit on acres upon acres of trees, feels thrilled with the idea that here there is no snow and ice, here the warm and genial temperature will enable the eye to feed on beauty, the lungs to breathe a softened atmosphere; but woe to the unfortunate who is not provided with good, warm clothing, for the temperature (because it does not reach the extremes, because the tropical plants remain out during the entire year) does not admit of indulgences in summer garments.

Sleeping may be done at most any time under comfortables and blankets. The houses or hotels are not generally heated, nor is there any general provision made for the heating of apartments to combat an emergent cold snap or the chilly evenings which are frequent; it becomes a case of "go to bed to keep warm."

In the last of May, 1890, in the city of Los Angeles, Cal., I saw ladies wearing fur shoulder capes, and I personally experienced the comfort of my winter clothes, which I had not discarded, excepting a light overcoat instead of my heavy one. A beautiful, charming, and attractive place, palm-trees and century plants planted in the ground along the curbs in some parts, towering and luxuriant eucalyptus, orange orchards and evergreens at almost every hand, and flowers everywhere, pleasing to the eye, making a picture hardly to be seen elsewhere in the United States. Smaller adjacent places are said to be even more beautiful, and the temperature delightful to those who are merely run down from close application to business, or those who are completely convalescent from prolonged sickness; but to the invalid afflicted with incurable disease or organic disease of the lungs, I can readily understand he will be worsed instead of bettered, and is fortunate if he have strength enough to get home to die among his friends.

In a conversation with a lady long a resident of Los Angeles, and whose position brought her somewhat into relation with the traveling public, I expressed my surprise that this place had such a great reputation as a winter resort for invalids from the North and East, when she stated that the inhabitants regarded Los Angeles as a summer resort rather than as a winter resort; in other words, that summer was the proper season to visit this place. She also gave me some of her observations of some of the cases which come for health—borne from the cars on a litter; borne to the cars in a coffin. Hopeless from the first; hopeful to the last; chilled, dying, dead; away from home and the comforts only to be gotten there; among strangers who are mercenary even though humane. The region of perpetual fruits, flowers, and evergreen trees, means to the invalid, no ice, no snow, no shiver from cold and chilling winds, sweet and balmy atmosphere, gentle repose—often a complete delusion. Warm, woolen clothing always advisable, and outside wraps should be at hand.

I would earnestly recommend to the members of the medical profession, as far as possible to familiarize themselves with the health resorts ; their advantages and disadvantages ; their fitness or unfitness for particular classes of cases ; and, under the most favorable considerations, to weigh well the advisability of sending any confirmed invalid of the class contemplated in this paper, *i. e.*, pulmonary disease, away from his home.

California is a marvel in what it contains of varieties of climate ; from the torrid temperature of the Colorado desert to the snow peak of Shasta. To the person in health, or recovering from disease, there is, perhaps, no State in which so much variety can be obtained, invigorating and health producing.

P. S.—Since writing the above it has been my pleasure to receive from Dr. T. D. Myers, of Philadelphia, his valuable paper entitled, "Some of the Peculiarities of the Climate of California, and their Relation to the Treatment of Consumption of the Lungs," in which I find complete confirmation of the opinions I have expressed, only that his conclusions are the results of several years of personal observation, and, therefore, much more extended and valuable, and take the liberty of quoting from it the following :

"The difference between the sunshine and the shade is very striking during the winter months. The sunshine is that of the semi-tropics, while the tone and coolness of the air corresponds pretty nearly with that in the White Mountains in New Hampshire in early autumn. This wide difference between sunshine and shade is one of the strongest factors in limiting the class of consumptives who may go to Southern California during the winter with a reasonable hope of benefit."

1816 DIAMOND STREET.
