

THE EFFECTS OF SUNLIGHT UPON WHITE MEN.

(A Reply to Rev. E. C. Heustis,)

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In the February number of this journal an article was published by the Rev. C. H. Heustis, which was written to warn us against the risk which we run from the presence of the actinic rays when we freely expose our bodies to sunshine. The writer attributes the development of neurasthenia and "uric acid conditions" to the effect of these rays, which after a primary stimulation exhaust the nervous energy of the body. In accepting Mr. Heustis' invitation to criticize his paper, I propose to omit consideration of the diseases included under the indefinite title, "uric acid conditions." The consideration of this group would lead us into endless discussion, as this new cult of uric acid, notwithstanding the number of its votaries, rests upon no certain and unchallenged basis of pathology. For the purpose of our argument it is sufficient to confine ourselves to the relation which exists between sunshine and neurasthenia.

Mr. Heustis, noting the prevalence of neurasthenic conditions in Western Canada, and of the difficulty, somewhat similar to that which exists in semitropical countries, which many individuals coming from the East find in becoming acclimatized, suggests that sunshine is in both cases the principal cause, and asks this question, "If white men were not able to live in the sunny lands of the South, might they not be forced to abandon the equally sunny lands of the North?" The question is important, because if the answer is in the affirmative the future of Canada will be inconsiderable, and the prodigious energy now being manifested by her remarkably active children in the development of her rich territories is doomed to eventual