

The Open Air Treatment of Phthisis.

Dr. Thomas Harris, in the *Medical Chronicle* for November, 1900, enters fully into the above subject. He points out that the death rate in Britain from phthisis has been steadily declining for forty years. Forty years ago the death rate was 2.6 per thousand living, whereas it is now only 1.7. Under favorable conditions tubercular disease may become quiescent. He states that, from his own records, in all persons dying over 20 years of age, 39 per cent. showed quiescent tubercle. Also that of a series of 192 cases of undoubted phthisis in his own practice, 10 per cent. seemed to have recovered, and were living active lives. He thinks that it would be more correct to speak of arrest of the disease than cure. Since the days of Hippocrates, residence in suitable climate has formed an important feature in the treatment of the disease. In 1840, Dr. Bodington, of Warwickshire, published a work on the treatment of consumption, which details practically all the points now discussed under the heading of the open air treatment. In 1860 Dr. Blake, of San Francisco, published papers on the same subject. In 1854 Dr. Brehmer began systematically to treat patients at Görbersdorf, on the open air plan. It appears that any bracing, pure air will do for the treatment of phthisis. It should be free from what is called relaxing in its character. The same patients can stand currents and draughts, still by far the larger number do best when protected from such conditions. There should be such shelters as will permit of exercise in bad weather. Elevation does not appear to be a matter of very much importance. The main feature being the purity of the air, and the amount of sunlight. Abundance of fresh air and sunlight is largely preventive of the disease. The death rate from the disease is higher in congested centres, factories and poor barracks than in the rural districts. In addition to the open air, abundance of good food and proper rest and exercise play a most important part. Patients living in the open are able to take a much larger amount of solid food than when housed too closely. This increase in the appetite should be encouraged. During the periods when the temperature rises, it is most irrational to take much exercise. The amount of exercise must be regulated by a close watch over the temperature. No matter