

OPEN-AIR TREATMENT OF CONSUMPTION—INTERESTING EXPERIENCES IN PRACTICE.

DR. James Blake, F. R. C. S., etc., gives in the *British Medical Journal* of January 15th, '87, the following experience: "I am glad to find in the *JOURNAL* of December 4th, 1886, an account of the treatment of a case of consumption by a modified form of open-air treatment, as, so far as my experience goes, it is the only means by which there is any chance of curing the disease. Some twenty-four years ago (1862) I published an article on the subject (*Amer. Jour. of Med. Sci.*) I then gave an account of some cases, showing the beneficial result that followed, even when the treatment was carried out but partially, that is, where the patients lived in the open air during the summer, but had to come back to their houses in the winter. Whilst living in the open air they invariably improved, gaining in weight from four to twelve pounds; whilst living in their houses during the winter they all lost weight. Two of these cases that I did not lose sight of recovered from the disease; one dying of small-pox after twelve years, and the other is still alive, and was in the enjoyment of perfect health the last time I saw him, about six months ago. The history of this last case is interesting. He belonged to a consumptive family of four sisters. I attended three who died of the disease, and the next generation I attended one child that died of tubercular meningitis, and another that died of tubercular peritonitis. When I first saw the case there had been a cough for about three months. The upper part of the right lung was solid as far down as the nipple, with commencing breaking-down at the apex. There was emaciation and want of appetite as the stomach was upset,

and the disease was being hurried on by the use of cough medicines. Some improvement took place on restoring the digestive organs, and free exposure to air night and day. By the middle of April (I took the case first in January) he was well enough to join a surveying party that was surveying a route from California to Salt Lake for the Central Pacific Railroad, mostly through the Nevada and Utah deserts. At first he could do but little work, but his strength rapidly improved, and by the end of the summer the cough was almost gone. Two years were spent with the party, camping out all the time, with the exception of about three months in the winter. His health was perfectly restored, and has remained good ever since. As regards the etiology of the disease, the following facts may be interesting:—In the early days of the settlements in California, a great many Indian children were brought in, and sold as servants, their parents having been killed as the country was settled up. The children were carefully raised, being well clothed and fed, but fully five per cent. of them would die of consumption, generally between the ages of 10 and 15 years. On looking into some of the cases, I arrived at the conclusion that the disease was caused from the children sleeping in too comfortable rooms, and having too farinaceous a diet. I advised that they should be lodged in out-houses, under sheds in bad weather, and when it did not rain that they should sleep in the open air. They were also to get a little more bacon and meat. This certainly prevented, to a great extent, the development of the disease, and many children that would otherwise have