

Original Communications.

The Climate of Colorado, as experienced during the Winter of 1875-76. By RICHARD A. KENNEDY, M.D., &c., Professor of Surgery, University of Bishop's College, and one of the Attending Physicians of the Montreal Dispensary.

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Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—As physicians, the question of climate demands our serious consideration. We are frequently called upon to give an opinion in regard to a change of residence, not only to relieve suffering and prolong life, but, if possible, to restore to health and strength those who are apparently the victims of incipient disease. How often is the *materia medica*, as represented by drugs interrogated in vain, and we are forced to look for something beyond the remedies at our command, and suggest that our patient seek by a change of climate, that relief which hygienic and climatic influence affords. Considerable difference of opinion exists as to which climate is most appropriate in this or that case. This, no doubt, arises from the difference of theory which is, or may be, adopted, and not from an actual experience of benefits derived. I found it so in my own case, when ill-health compelled me to leave the city last fall. Florida was suggested by some of my friends, Colorado by others. Yet no two places probably could be found having more opposite climatic conditions than these.

Florida with its low altitude, semi-tropical climate, and an atmosphere containing a maximum amount of watery vapour.

Colorado, the highest portion of this continent, temperate climate, with an extremely dry and thin atmosphere.

On the one hand, an atmosphere capable of satisfying all the demands of respiration by the use of less than two-thirds the capacity of the lungs; on the other, a rare atmosphere, in which the lung cells are taxed and forced to expand to their utmost capacity to satisfy the same demands.

To-night I lay before you the results of my experience of the climate of Colorado, mostly gathered by personal observation, but also from the observation of others with whom I have come in contact, trusting that I may afford you some items of information in return for your patient attention.

Colorado has received its name from the prevailing red colour of its surface. Both rocks and soil are

so highly impregnated with the red oxide of iron that the term red colour applied, by the early Spanish discoverers, distinguishes this peculiar feature in the landscape. The country was but little known until 1859, when the Pike's Peak gold excitement brought it under general notice, otherwise the beauty of the mountain scenery and the delightful and invigorating climate would, in all probability, have still remained a *terra incognita* to the debilitated invalid. The annually increasing numbers who there seek relief attest to the restorative powers the climate possesses, and in the near future it will, without doubt, become the great sanitarium of this continent.

A large proportion of the present population owe their existence to its health preserving atmosphere, and are loud in its praises. From many of these, formerly invalids, I gleaned considerable information.

As a means of contrasting our Canadian climate with that of Colorado, I would request you to recall to memory your experience of last January, and compare it with this verbal picture. Last New Year's day six Canadians held a picnic on the cliffs overhanging the Grand Canon of the Arkansas River, at an altitude of 8,000 feet above sea level. The temperature as registered by a thermometer 76° Fahr. The day was, as usual, bright and clear, with a cloudless sky, a cool and pleasant breeze blowing directly from the snowy range, tempering the heat rays of the sun. Here the wanderer, as he inspires health and vigor, has spread before him a grand and magnificent prospect, in which mountain and valley stands out with startling distinctness in the thin and translucent atmosphere. In the west, the serried masses of the snowy range dazzle the eye, as the brilliant sunlight is reflected from their snow-covered surfaces. Towards the east the plains are discernible fading in the mists of distance; while to the north and south innumerable mountains, with beautiful parklike valleys intervening, complete the view. These cliffs will be the point of pilgrimage for many an invalid and tourists, for below them lies the Grand Canon, presenting a scene of such imposing and terrific grandeur that the beholder is filled with awe as he gazes down into the profound abyss, of over 2,000 feet deep. The convulsions of past ages, aided by the eroding action of water, has here grooved out a channel, at the bottom of which the Arkansas river rushes with tremendous rapidity, enclosed in nearly perpendicular walls.