

do not look upon solar heat, individually considered, as particularly worth special attention, for the reason that its chief benefits seem equally derivable from artificial heat, which is generally much more readily obtained, and because it is this element of caloric which is often injurious to the very person most in need of the salutary influence of the sun.

It is, in fact, one of the great problems in solar therapeutics to so regulate the thermic force as to avoid annoyance or injury from its effects upon delicate constitutions, while receiving the full benefit of the luminous, and particularly of the actinic element in the sunbeams. These elements are of the utmost importance, and so far as their beneficial effects upon the human organism are concerned, they are practically unobtainable from any artificial source.

It should be observed here that in this discussion I am leaving out of the question entirely the relations of light to the eye as an organ of special sense, and also the use of solar heat by means of burning glasses for cauterization and other processes pertaining to surgery more properly than to therapeutics. The question I wish to press home to the conscientious and intelligent medical practitioner is simply this: Do my patients receive enough of the peculiar vitalizing influence which is lodged in the solar rays, and if not, how can it be most easily and safely administered?

There is no doubt that many physicians who are quite ready, in theory, to admit that sunshine is a valuable remedy, are, in practice, deterred from resorting to it through apprehension of some of the undesirable, and often serious evils which in ordinary life it too often occasions. The annoying cutaneous eruptions or irritations resulting from excessive insolation, the hepatic disorders and general debility caused by prolonged residence under tropical skies, the sudden fatality or lingering blight of sunstroke, all serve to prejudice them against the remedial use of the solar rays. They observe almost daily, during the hot season, various minor disturbances produced by exposure to a blazing sun; they read perhaps in Dr. Wood's monograph on sunstroke of the celerity with which he killed rabbits by submitting them in closed boxes to the sun's action; they find Esquirol and other celebrated alienists tracing causes of insanity directly to insolation; and they resolve to have as little as possible to do with so dangerous an agent; preferring to view it solely from a pathologic and not at all from a therapeutic point of view. Such a course, however, is very far from wise. As soon should the physician think of banishing opium from the *materia medica* because of the deaths for which laudanum is responsible, and the long train of miseries arising from the opium habit. He simply prescribes it with increased care, and taxes his inventive powers in contriving means to secure its benefits and avoid as much as possible its deleterious effects. Precisely this policy should be pursued with reference to the rays of the sun, and the observer in this direction may inspire himself with the thought that if he or his patient should chance to acquire the "sunshine habit" it will prove as advantageous as the opium habit is destructive.