

EXPERIMENTS IN CLIMATOLOGY—THE TROPICAL WINTER.

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THE doctrines of therapeutics are based upon the changes, more or less marked, which may be produced in the physiological economy of an individual by any agency over which the physician has control. To the somewhat ludicrous history of this subject from the days of the Empirics down to the present time, no detailed reference need be made here. The use of spells and of pharmaceutical preparations may be traced back almost to the days of the Early Quaternary Man; and while spells were at an early period abandoned, the very word therapeutics became at length associated with the idea of drugs of some sort. There are other therapeutic agencies beside drugs and spells, however, and one of the most important of these is climate. Heberden touched upon the subject more than a century ago, and while change of climate has been advised for various classes of invalids for many years past, the practice is still somewhat empirical, as usually resorted to, and will continue to be so until the physiological action of the climate *in itself* in a particular locality, and also the effect which follows *the change of one climate for another* in various given morbid conditions has received careful scientific study. A dry, cold climate, at a certain altitude, may produce a physiological action upon a person accustomed to a warm and humid atmosphere quite as easy to distinguish and to trace as a dose of digitalis.

North America and its islands affords every variety of climate that the physician could possibly need for therapeutical purposes, and the American physician has no real occasion to send his patient either over sea or south of the equator. With a territory thus circumscribed, the practitioner may begin to map out the climate of the various regions for future convenience; and as a wide personal knowledge of so vast an area can scarcely be expected to come within the experience of any one man, for few have wandered as far as the King of Ithaca or, like Moses (the father of Cook's tourists) and the travellers who accompanied him upon that "personally conducted" tour, have spent forty years on the road; the physician who wishes to add climate to his working pharmacopeia will be forced in many cases to depend largely upon the reports of others who have observed the climatic phenomena of more remote regions. To this need the present paper is a conscientious contribution.