

# INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE UPON HEALTH.

The following interesting extracts are from an article by Dr. M. Beard in a recent number of the *Atlantic Monthly* on "The Physical Future of the American People":

A fact of special note is that the exceeding cold of our winters compels us to pass a large part of our time not only in-doors, but in rooms overheated with dry air; thus one of the bad features of our climate into the hands of the other, reinforcing, extending, multiplying its capacity for evil. The high temperature and unnatural dryness of our close rooms are both harmful, and are both made necessary by excessive external cold, and by the alternations of heat and cold that produce a sensitiveness of organization which can only find comfort in a somewhat high temperature.

Dryness of the air, whether external or internal, likewise excites nervousness by heightening the rapidity of the processes of waste and repair in the organism, so that we live faster than in a moist atmosphere. The

rationale of this action of dryness on living beings—for it is observed in animals as in men—is as follows: Evaporation from the surface of the body is accompanied by dissipation of heat, and by the numerous and complex vital changes of which the evolution and dissipation of heat through evaporation are the results. In a moist atmosphere such evaporation takes place slowly, because the air, being already saturated with water, cannot rapidly take up the vapor that comes from the surface of the body; hence this vapor accumulates in the form of sensible perspiration. A dry atmosphere, on the contrary, is eager and hungry for the bodily moisture and rapidly absorbs it, so that it does not accumulate on the surface, but passes off as insensible perspiration. Hence the paradox that we perspire the least when we are apparently perspiring the most; on sultry August days our clothing is soaked, because the moisture of the body has no chance for ready escape, and consequently the vital changes that produce the moisture are obstructed and move with corresponding slowness. A day that is both moist and warm is hotter to the nerves of sensation and far more oppressive than a far warmer day that is also dry, for the conversion of the fluids of the body into insensible vapor, which process takes place so rapidly in dry air, is attended with escape of bodily heat, which gives relief.

Dryness of the air is the main cause of the long-observed leanness of the Americans as compared with the Europeans. We are taller, thinner, lankier, than the original stock in England and Germany, mainly because in our dry atmosphere we so rapidly evaporate; the animal fluid disappears into the aerial fluids; we have little chance to accumulate fat.

Remembering that the body is composed mostly of water, it is clear that rapid evaporation must be attended by a rapid loss of bodily weight. A thousand Americans, taken at random, weigh less on the average than a thousand Englishmen or Germans of the same ages and social status; even the dark aborigines, in spite of their indolence, were almost always lean.

Our habits and institutions, so far as they are distinctively American, rapid eating, eager quest for gold, exciting revivals and elections,—are the product of a dry atmosphere and extremes of temperature combined with the needs of a new country and a pioneer life. We are nervous, primarily, because the rapid evaporation in our dry, out-door air and in our overheated rooms, for reasons above given, heightens the rapidity of the processes of waste and repair in the brain and nervous system, and the exhausting stimulations of alternations of torrid heat and polar cold; and, secondarily, because this nervousness is enhanced by the stress of poverty, the urgency of finding and holding means of living the scarcity of inherited wealth, and the just desire of making and maintaining fortunes. We

cannot afford to be calm; for those to whom the last question is whether they shall exist or die there is no time or force for acquiring plumpness of the body. Not how shall we live? but can we live at all? is the problem that almost every American is all his life compelled to face.

Susceptibility to alcohol and tobacco is one of the most striking characteristics of the many evidences of the American nervousness. We cannot bear these stimulants and narcotics as our fathers could; we cannot bear them as can the English, or Germans, or French; indeed, all the Old World can both drink and smoke more than the Americans. Even coffee can be indulged in with freedom only by a minority of the population in the Northern States, and a cup of weak tea is for many a sure prescription for a wakeful night. Foreigners travelling and sojourning here must be far more cautious than is their want with the purest and mildest liquors; while Americans when long abroad, can often partake of the native wines, and also of stronger liquors, to a degree that at home would induce intoxication, perhaps lead directly to the symptoms of alcoholism. In truth, this functional malady of the nervous system, which we call inebriety, as distinguished from the vice or habit of drunkenness, may be said to have been born in America, has here developed sooner and far more rapidly than elsewhere, and here also has received earlier and more successful attention from men of science. The increase of the disorder has forced us to study it and to devise plans for its relief.

All of the above reasons apply to Northern and Eastern portions of the United States, far more than the Southern States or to Canada. In the South, particularly in the Gulf States, there are not the extremes of heat and cold, nor the peculiar dryness of the air, that have been described. The Southern winters are mild, with little or no snow and abundance of rain and dampness, while the summers are never as intensely hot as in the latitude of Boston and New York. Throughout the year the Southern climate is both more equable and more moist than that of the North. Herein is explained the most interesting and suggestive fact, that functional nervous diseases of all kinds regularly diminish in frequency and variety as we go South.

Canada has extremes of temperature, but more of steady cold than the States, while the air is kept moist by numerous rivers, lakes, and wide extent of forest; it does not therefore share, to any marked degree, in the nervousness of the Northern United States.

A CLINCHER.—Applicant.—“I would like to obtain a position with you as cashier.”

Merchant.—“I don't want to keep a cashier. I prefer to keep the cash here.”

Everybody's favorite—\$

SHUTTING UP A BISHOP.—A certain Bishop in the House of Lords rose to speak, and announced that he should divide what he had to say in twelve parts, when the Duke of Wharton interrupted him and begged that he might be indulged for a few minutes, as he had a story to tell which he could only introduce at the moment. A drunken fellow was passing by St. Paul's at night, and heard the clock slowly chiming twelve. He counted the strokes, and when it was finished, looked towards the clock and said: “—you! why couldn't you give us all that at once?”

There was an end of the bishop's story.

If a girl thinks more of her heels than her head, depend upon it she will never amount to much. Brains which settle in the shoes never get above them. Young gentlemen will please put this down.

The husband of the lady who arrived at Saratoga July 1 with sixty-four different costumes lives in St. Louis. Last week he failed and offered thirteen cents on the dollar. The sixty-four different costumes are all safe, however.

		June			
		DAY OF WEEK.		SUN	SUN
				RISES.	SETS.
DAY OF YEAR.	DAY OF MONTH.			M. M.	M. M.
132	1	Monday	.....	4:31	7:25
133	2	Tuesday	.....	4:30	7:26
134	3	Wednesday	.....	4:29	7:27
135	4	Thursday	.....	4:29	7:27
136	5	Friday	.....	4:29	7:27
137	6	Saturday	.....	4:29	7:28
138	7	Sunday	.....	4:29	7:29
139	8	Monday	.....	4:28	7:29
140	9	Tuesday	.....	4:28	7:31
141	10	Wednesday	.....	4:28	7:31
142	11	Thursday	.....	4:28	7:31
143	12	Friday	.....	4:28	7:31
144	13	Saturday	.....	4:28	7:32
145	14	Sunday	.....	4:28	7:32
146	15	Monday	.....	4:28	7:33
147	16	Tuesday	.....	4:28	7:33
148	17	Wednesday	.....	4:28	7:33
149	18	Thursday	.....	4:28	7:34
150	19	Friday	.....	4:28	7:34
151	20	Saturday	.....	4:29	7:34
152	21	Sunday	.....	4:29	7:34
153	22	Monday	.....	4:29	7:35
154	23	Tuesday	.....	4:29	7:35
155	24	Wednesday	.....	4:29	7:35
156	25	Thursday	.....	4:29	7:35
157	26	Friday	.....	4:30	7:35
158	27	Saturday	.....	4:30	7:36
159	28	Sunday	.....	4:31	7:36
160	29	Monday	.....	4:32	7:36
161	30	Tuesday	.....	4:32	7:35

Moon's Phase.—Third Quarter, 7h. 5m. p.m. New Moon, 29.46m. p.m. First Quarter, 8h. 52m. a.m. Full Moon, 6h. 22m. a.m.