

THE HEALTH JOURNAL.

A Record of Sanitary Progress.

VOL. XI.

DECEMBER, 1889.

No. 12

ON THE "OPEN-AIR" CURE FOR CONSUMPTION.

IF some one, say under the *nom de plume* of a "retired clergyman" desiring only to benefit others, were to advertise extensively a "sure cure" for consumption, charge a large fee for the secret, and on receipt of which send this advice: "Live constantly out-of-doors," properly clothed, of course, the remedy would probably soon become popular, and a vast amount of benefit would be the result. The open-air treatment is now the one most relied upon by the best authorities in the medical profession. For twenty-five years we have urged that the advantages to consumptives of changing to a warmer climate were all in this, the ability there to remain more out of doors; and that if consumptives even in this climate would not commence "housing up" as the weather in autumn becomes colder, but persist in remaining out, properly clad, and in the sunshine as much as possible, they would be vastly better in the long run; and probably many, if in the early stage much better than if they had gone to a warmer, less invigorating climate. At first, from being out in colder, less pleasant weather, the cough might be worse and greater irritability of the bronchial tubes and larynx might alarm or discourage the patient. But after a little perseverance and persistence in remaining out, this trouble would abate and improvement would follow. This we know from experience, in many cases. It is possible there may be cases in which harm would follow this treatment, but we have never met one. By keeping out constantly during the fine weather of summer and continuing the practice as the weather becomes gradually colder I doubt if there be ever a case, accustomed to this climate,

which would not be so benefitted, unless it were one in that late stage of the disease in which nothing would be of any real service.

The British Medical Journal (of Nov. 16) in an editorial advocating this "open-air treatment" says: "Among the many changes which have taken place in the treatment of phthisis in the last forty years, none is more marked than the substitution of a system of bracing and hardening the patient for one of "coddling," and foremost in this plan is the principle of open air, or exposure of the patient as much as possible by day and by night to the influence of the atmosphere. The great object of change of climate is to afford greater facilities for this process, and it appears from the testimony of most authorities that the meteorological phenomena which interfere with the success of the system in England are not the coldness of the climate, but its humidity and the prevalence of fog and mist, and the fear of exposure to these elements prevents it being completely carried out here. There is no question now that cases not only of non-pyrexial (without fever) but also of pyrexial phthisis are favorably influenced by open air treatment, which produces a diminution of the troublesome symptoms, such as high temperature and night sweats. It is doubtful whether in England we are sufficiently alive to the advantages of the open-air treatment in phthisis, for though in our palatial hospitals the systems of ventilation and warming have been carried to a high state of perfection, and the atmosphere is changed frequently and without draught, the exposure of the consumptive patient on a terrace or balcony to the sun's rays and