

## CLIMATE—ITS INFLUENCE UPON MAN.

Whether the father of mankind was the Adam of a poetical Eden or simply the highest development attained in the less pleasing realm of Evolution, for our present purpose it matters not. At best 'tis a matter of opinion, perhaps—taste. But in either case must we look to Nature and her laws for an explanation of that great diversity in physical and mental structure, which distinguish dwellers in different climes. Of this unlikeness the most effective and powerful component is the ever ceaseless and persistent influence of climate. The working of this power is two-fold—direct and indirect. 'Tis humidity of climate that changes regions identical in formation with the burning wastes of Sahara into the green plains of the Llanos, the home of countless herds of fleet-limbed and comely steeds. This influence may be seen in the fauna and flora of our own country and is fringed written upon the leaves of her forests and the rocks of her hills and valleys. Whilst the effects of this sovereign power are too well known to need more than reference, let us not forget the influence which a country in turn exerts upon its inhabitants.

In what degree is this *indirect*, this reflected influence of climate, shown in the aborigines of the New World? America bears upon her bosom many mighty, deep-rolling rivers, which in size and grandeur shame the largest streams of the Eastern Continent. Who knows not of her numerous lakes, wide and expanded, the envy of the Old World? But all these great bodies of water seeking the way to their home, the sea, are but the surplus yielded by the earth satiated with the bounty of the freighted clouds. Thus humid breezes greeted by the smiles of a tropic sky have adorned the Selvas with boundless forests and luxuriant vegetation, whilst barren table lands from the "Dark Continent" frown upon the same sky. Hence universal vegetation is the result of our oceanic climate, the distinguishing feature of our Western World.

But what of man the native of this clime, has he escaped the moulding power of his vegetal home? The shade of his sheltering forests has tinged his complexion with a copper hue, whilst that of the African has been darkened with more sombre tints by exposure to a burning sky. Ecstatic joy and

hysterical grief find no home beneath the coldness of his calm, stern dignity. Stoical, melancholy, cold, nought disturbs him but fierce jealousy and a savage love of vengeance. Wonderful are his feats of strength yet of endurance small is his share, the gift of a vegetative clime. For when the cross-bearing invaders from the East not only robbed these poor heathen of their home, but doomed them to serve and toil, these children of the forest incapable of enduring fatigue perished by thousands beneath the lash of enlightened Europe. Not so the Negro, the strong and robust native from the "land of the mid-day." Not unhappy even in bonds, he has conquered the toil which destroyed the Indian, whilst the danger of his race becoming extinct never seriously threatened him.

Upon the highlands of the Incas and Aztecs all is changed. Here an oceanic climate with his heat and humidity ventures not, but in his stead reigns a sterner king whose vigorous rule has produced instructive results. Of the *direct* influence of climate the inhabitants of these highlands bear marked evidences. Among these most singular and interesting is the exceptional size of the body combined with a stature of low height. The rarity of the atmosphere upon these elevated plateaux renders an increased volume of air necessary to meet the demands made upon respiration. To accommodate this increased demand the whole respiratory apparatus enlarges and as each generation adds its mite, we finally have that abnormal development of the chest, which causes the singular appearance of the Peruvian.

But the social condition of the Aztecs and Peruvians is a still stronger evidence of climatic influence. Elsewhere the red man rises not above the condition of hunter, an unprogressive and hand-to-mouth existence. But here blind trust to the morrow has been driven hence by stern necessity, to live is to have forethought. Hence here are tillers of the soil, workers in gold, builders of temples and cities, and above all a systematic organization of society. Busy with brain and ready with hands they worked out a purely native civilization unmingled with even the trace of a foreign element.

'Tis the mountainous climate that has preserved and inspirited with fresh life the fiery heart of freedom. The wild fierce winds on the Gaelic hills have ever strengthened this bright flame in the fearless soul