

A few SUGGESTIONS on the PRESERVATION of HEALTH in Polar Climes.

HAVING had under consideration the best means of escaping scurvy, and preserving health in the Arctic regions, I deem it my duty to submit the following brief remarks for the use of future voyagers. In so doing, I shall confine myself wholly to the results of my own experience during a period of some years passed in the higher latitudes, feeling confident that attention to the precepts here inculcated will secure for those who may follow me as successful an exemption from scurvy and sickness as have crowned my own efforts, by a rigid adherence to them.

In the first place, I would unhesitatingly recommend the *entire exclusion* of all kinds of salted meats from the diet; convinced as I am, from long experience and close attention to the effects of such food, that it proves, through its indigestibility and deficient nutrient properties, injurious to the system, and deteriorating the condition of the circulating fluids and secretions generally—inducing a debilitated habit of body, favourable to the production of scurvy, under circumstances of privation and exposure, and other exciting influences, calculated to call it into action. In fact, it is my belief that the origin of every case of scurvy may be fairly traced to the use of salted meats.

In the present age of inventions and improvements there can be no lack of substitutes, and excellent ones too, for the hard salt beef and pork, and the whole category of dried tongues, hams, &c., which constituted the sea stock of bygone years, when every ship in a long voyage, as in Anson's time, lost great numbers of the crew.

Now, we have preserved meats, poultry, soups, pemmican, and fresh bacon of all kinds. The latter article, which was supplied for the first time to the expedition now out, especially that preserved in tins for the use of travelling parties, proved the most valuable addition of all to the scale of Arctic victualling; its freshness and mildness rendering it easy of digestion, and its fatty quality rendering it highly nutritious by affording a large supply of carbonaceous material to make up for the constant waste occasioned by the increased exhalation of carbon which accompanies the activity of the respiration in very low temperatures of the atmosphere.

The various kinds of vegetables when carefully selected and preserved are quite equal to the fresh ones; more especially the preserved potato, carrot, parsnip, turnip, and peas; and I cannot speak too highly of those bottled fruits, as the damson, greengage, currant and raspberry, gooseberry, and that perhaps best of all antiscorbutic fruit, the cranberry, which is quite equal to the lime juice in its valuable properties: all these fruits are quite as good as when first gathered.

Dried fruits—apples, figs, prunes, raisins, and almonds, &c.—are all objectionable.

The best diluents are tea, coffee, and chocolate, more especially the patent chocolate which the travelling parties were supplied with in the last expedition. Of spirits and wines, the less taken the better; good sound malt liquors are preferable in all respects, combining, as they do, a nutritive with a stimulating property.

On the subject of clothing I have only to observe that I found the Government pilot-cloth suit, with a "sou'-wester," the most generally useful in summer or winter; but for boating or sledging, in severe weather, I know of nothing equal to the Esquimaux seal-skin dress and fur boots.* A common blanket bag I have always found far more comfortable than a felt one for sleeping in, when away travelling, with a buffalo robe beneath it.

Of medical treatment, little is required. The bracing effects of a low, dry temperature, and the absence of all moisture in the atmosphere for a large portion of the year, so that not a cloud can form in the clear blue sky, render catarrhal and other affections resulting from atmospheric transitions of rare occurrence.

During the dark and monotonous season of winter, active exercise in the open air, on the floe or on the land, is the very best preservative of health, aided by proper attention to diet; the mind being at the same time engaged in rational occupations, reading, writing, sketching, or whatever may be the bent of individual taste.

* Those supplied to the expedition by Mr. Richard Jeffs, of No. 1, Hanway Street, Oxford Street, I believe, gave much satisfaction.