

THE CLIMATE, ETC., OF NELSON, NEW ZEALAND.

SIR,—The object of this short note is to give medical men and others in England an unbiased idea of the suitability or otherwise of this climate for certain classes of disease. Speaking generally, the climate of Nelson may be described as warm, temperate; and it differs markedly from any other locality in New Zealand in the small amount of wind. New Zealand in general is decidedly windy, especially Cook's Straits; but Nelson, although in close proximity to the most windy part, has less wind than most places on the globe. This is one important reason that renders it a good place for pulmonary disorders.

The following are the chief directions of the wind and the associated weather: north-east, warm and rain (usually); north, sea-breeze in fine weather; north-west, gales and high tides; west to south, the so-called "Waimea" or "spirit" wind, very characteristic of Nelson, usually blows hard during the day, dying down to a perfect calm at night; always a very dry wind; south-east, squally and cold in winter.

On reference to a map, Nelson may be seen to lie at the head of Bluid Bay; and it is completely shut off from the colder southern regions by ranges of mountains. This absence of wind is somewhat relaxing, especially in summer; healthy strong people feel enervated by it, but it is this very point which (in my opinion) renders Nelson (the only place in New Zealand) a suitable climate for the phthisical.

As regards rainfall, about forty-five inches fall *per annum*, and it is distributed throughout the year; July, August, November, and December are the wettest months; January, February, and March, the driest. Thunder-storms are remarkably unfrequent; they mostly occur in winter, accompanied with south-east weather. Fogs are exceedingly rare down on the flat, though the hill-tops are very commonly obscured by mist and cloud. During the four years and a half I have resided in Nelson, I do not remember one single fog down on the flat; this is another point of difference from many other places in New Zealand.

The subsoil varies much. This is not to be wondered at in a country so hilly, and which has in former times been much disturbed with earthquakes. In some places, it is clay, in others, gravel; of course, the latter are to be preferred, for sanitary reasons.

With regard to earthquakes, slight shocks are not uncommon; according to the old settlers, they are not nearly so severe as they used to be.

There are extensive mud-flats near the town, between tide-marks; they are covered by the sea every twelve hours, and I have never been able to trace in them a distinct source of disease. In time, no doubt, they will be all reclaimed and brought under cultivation.

The average winter (May to September) temperature, taken from 8 to 9 A.M., is 40°; the average summer (December to March), 60°. In the shade, even in the hottest weather, it seldom rises above 80°, and the minimum winter temperature at night is not often below 30°, though occasionally such minima as 25° or 23° do occur. The sun's heat in summer is very great, and, were it not for the sea-breeze, which always blows in proportion to the heat of the sun, the temperature in the shade would be very much higher than it is. The sun's heat, even at midday, is never sufficient to deter people from walking or working out of doors. The sun's heat in winter is a delightful temperature—in fact, a fine winter's day in Nelson is the perfection of weather. Children play about on the shores in the same way that they do at an English watering-place in summer; and a strong point in favour of the climate is, that there are a great many such days.

The diurnal variations of temperature are pretty extensive, and this holds, not only as regards the difference between day and night (often as much as thirty degrees), but between one day and another. I have occasionally observed a difference of twenty degrees between the temperature on one day and that at a corresponding time on the next. These sudden variations are trying to many constitutions; they are, however, observed all over New Zealand.

Nearly all plants that grow in Great Britain flourish in Nelson. Owing to the small area of flat land near the town, agriculture is far behind other New Zealand districts; but fruit and hops are largely produced, and are important industries. Unfortunately, the mildness of the climate not only favours the growth of plants, but also of insect-blights, of which there are a great number, and they are very destructive.

With regard to the diseases of Nelson, one thing to notice is the absence of malarial fevers. I have never seen a case of ague, and cannot hear of one having ever occurred here. There is, however, a good deal of periodic neuralgia, which yields to quinine, and so this may be its representative. Dysentery is not uncommon; it is, however, seldom fatal. Pulmonary diseases, here as elsewhere, are frequently met with. I have seen several cases of phthisis originating in the district in people born here. The climate is not a specific for consumption, but it is undoubtedly beneficial, especially for cases that have originated in a bleak cold climate, such as the United Kingdom. The proportion of pulmonary diseases is decidedly less than in the old country. Heart-disease is rather common, owing to the relaxing effect of the climate on the muscular tissue of the heart. Puerperal cases do well; deaths in childbirth are very rare. Surgical cases generally do well, probably owing to the pureness of the atmosphere and the accompanying absence of germs. Goitre is rather common amongst the young people born here, especially the girls, and, I believe, due to the proximity of the hills. Nelson may be regarded as a valley surrounded on three sides by hills. The water-supply is excellent.

In conclusion, the chief characteristics of the climate of Nelson are the large amount of fine bright sunny weather and the very small amount of wind.—I am, etc., JAS. HUDSON, M.B.Lond.

SPRAY IN OVARIOTOMY.

SIR,—The following is an extract from a recent work by Dr. Emmet (*Principles and Practice of Gynaecology*, p. 715). "In this country I do not know of any prominent operator who employs the carbolic acid spray."

This statement implies that the writer is not persuaded of the value of spray in ovariectomy. My own experience has led me to an opposite opinion; indeed, I should not like to do a laparotomy for any purpose without antiseptic spray. I have been led to this conclusion by the results of 183 cases of removal of cystic ovaries, of which I have lost only 21; but more especially by the result of the last hundred of these cases, only 10 of which were fatal, while 38 were consecutively successful. I feel that to omit the antiseptic spray would be to deprive the patient of one of the ready and efficient elements of success. As I can hardly hope for much better results than these I have cited, and being quite content to let well alone, I shall hesitate before disturbing my present plan of operation by giving up a detail to which I attach much importance.—Very respectfully, your obedient servant, JOHN HOMANS.

161, Beacon Street, Boston, U.S.A.

CARBOLIC ACID.

M. G. DUCROT (Lyons).—We do not know of any journal specially devoted to carbolic acid, nor of any special book on the subject. As regards its surgical uses, there are the various books on Antiseptic Surgery, namely, Sir William Mac Cormac's and Mr. Watson Cheyne's, and several smaller ones (Beatson's, etc.).

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BOOKS, etc., RECEIVED.

Manual of the Antiseptic Treatment of Wounds. By W. Watson Cheyne, M.B., F.R.C.S. With illustrations. London: Smith, Elder and Co. 1885.

Injuries of the Spine and Spinal Cord. By H. W. Page, M.A. London: J. and A. Churchill. 1885.

The Microtometist's Vade-Mecum. By A. B. Lee. London: J. and A. Churchill. 1885.

Ten Years' Experience (now Fourteen Years) in Works of Intermittent Downward Filtration. By J. Bailey-Denton. London: E. and F. N. Spon. 1885.

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