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978-1-108-06231-2 - The Influence of Climate in the Prevention and Cure of Chronic Diseases

James Clark

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The Influence of Climate in the Prevention and Cure of Chronic Diseases

Published in 1829, this important work raised awareness of a poorly understood topic, running to a third edition by 1841. Sir James Clark (1788–1870) had trained as a surgeon in Edinburgh and gained experience in the Royal Navy during the Napoleonic Wars. During subsequent European travels, he studied the effects of climate on disease, particularly tuberculosis, and this publication represents an expanded version of his *Medical Notes on Climate, Diseases, Hospitals, and Medical Schools in France, Italy, and Switzerland* (1820), which is also reissued in this series. A licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians from 1826, and elected to the Royal Society in 1832, Clark became a trusted physician and friend to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Also reissued in the Cambridge Library Collection are his *Treatise on Pulmonary Consumption* (1835) and *Memoir of John Conolly* (1869).

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THE
INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE
IN THE
PREVENTION AND CURE
OF
CHRONIC DISEASES,
MORE PARTICULARLY OF
THE CHEST AND DIGESTIVE ORGANS :
COMPRISING
AN ACCOUNT OF THE PRINCIPAL PLACES
RESORTED TO BY INVALIDS IN
ENGLAND AND THE SOUTH OF EUROPE ;
A COMPARATIVE ESTIMATE OF THEIR
RESPECTIVE MERITS IN PARTICULAR DISEASES ;
AND
GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR INVALIDS
WHILE TRAVELLING AND RESIDING ABROAD.

With an Appendix, containing a Series of Tables on Climate.

By JAMES CLARK, M. D.

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON ;
CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY OF MARSEILLES, OF THE
MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY OF NAPLES, OF THE MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL SOCIETY
OF FLORENCE, OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF SIENNA, &c. &c.

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TO

JOHN FORBES, M. D. F. R. S.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN OF THE CHICHESTER INFIRMARY,

AS A TRIBUTE JUSTLY DUE

TO HIS

VIRTUES, TALENTS, AND ACQUIREMENTS,

AND

TO HIS ZEAL IN

THE ADVANCEMENT OF MEDICAL SCIENCE :

AND AS

THE MEMORIAL OF A FRIENDSHIP

THAT HAS BEEN THE

SOURCE OF MUCH HAPPINESS AND MANY BENEFITS :

This Work is Inscribed

BY HIS FAITHFUL AND ATTACHED FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

IT is nearly nine years since I published a small volume of "Notes" on the Climate and Medical Institutions of France and Italy. This met with a very favourable reception; more, I believe, from the want of such a work, than from any merit it possessed. Since that time I have had ample opportunities of observing the nature of the climate of the south of Europe, and its effects on disease: and during the three years which have elapsed since my return from the Continent, I have endeavoured to make myself acquainted with the milder parts of England, with the view of ascertaining their respective merits, and of comparing them with the climates of the south. The present work may,

therefore, be considered as exhibiting the result of much more extended observation and experience than its predecessor.

But although I have endeavoured to take a more comprehensive and philosophical view of my subject, I wish this work still to be regarded as an Essay, which future and yet more extensive observation can only perfect. If, however, it shall be found that I have investigated the subject faithfully and closely, as far as I have gone, and if the results of my researches, and my experience, now recorded, shall prove useful to future inquirers, and serve as a guide to my medical brethren in the application of climate to the prevention and cure of disease, I trust I may be considered as having accomplished all that could be reasonably expected of me, in an inquiry of such extent and difficulty.

The following work is divided into two parts. In the FIRST, I have endeavoured to determine the general physical characters of the milder climates of the South of Europe and of England,—to point out the manner in which the climate of different

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places resorted to by invalids is modified by local circumstances ; and to compare these places relatively to their influence on disease.

This part is illustrated by a series of meteorological tables (which will be found in the Appendix) more comprehensive and perfect, I believe, than have before been published ; and for the construction of which I am indebted to the kindness of my friend Dr. Todd.

In the SECOND PART, I have given some account of the principal diseases which are benefited by a mild climate. This I found to be unavoidable ; it being impossible, otherwise, to give precise directions for the application of particular climates to the cure of particular diseases,—and much more so to their varieties and complications.

In my endeavours to distinguish the characters of some of these diseases in relation to the effects of climate upon them, it may appear that I have been unnecessarily minute ; but I have only made such dis-

tinctions as my experience warranted; and I have made them, because I feel satisfied that without strict attention to distinctions of this kind, climate can never be successfully applied as a remedial agent.

In treating of two diseases (or rather classes of disease) I have gone more into detail than the nature of my work may, at first sight, appear to require; but the great importance of these affections, their extreme frequency in this country, and the close relation in which they stand to climate, considered as a remedy, appeared to me to claim for them all the consideration which I have bestowed upon them.

The diseases to which I allude are Consumption, and Disorders of the Digestive Organs. Under this last title, I comprehend the various affections designated by the terms "Indigestion," "Bilious Complaints," &c. In the article on Consumption, I have endeavoured to show that the disordered states of the stomach are intimately connected with the origin of diseases of the chest, and with tuberculous affections generally. On

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this account alone disorders of the digestive organs would claim particular notice in a work of this kind ; but on their own account they are no less entitled to attention, seeing the amount of suffering and of evil which they produce, and the great benefit which I have shown may be derived from change of air and of climate in the treatment of them.

With respect to the subject of Consumption, it will probably be considered the most legitimate of any, in a work treating of the effects of climate. On this occasion, I have directed my inquiries chiefly to the causes and origin of this fatal disease, with the view of establishing rules for its prevention ; being well satisfied that it is only by a knowledge of the causes which lead to it, and by directing our efforts to counteract them, that we shall be able to diminish the ravages of Consumption. On this most important inquiry, therefore, I have entered as fully as the nature of my work would admit, and have endeavoured, to the best of my abilities, to fill up the blank which has been left in the natural

history of Consumption,—that, namely, between a state of health, and of established and sensible disease of the lungs.

I feel convinced that by adopting such a system of management, from early infancy, as I have laid down in the following pages, a great improvement might be effected in the general health of many among the higher and middle classes of society in this country. The children of delicate, and even of diseased parents, might, by proper care, be reared so as to overcome, in a large proportion of cases, their hereditary disposition to disease. The ultimate effect of this in diminishing the vast and increasing extent of hereditary diseases, need not be pointed out.

Instructions respecting the necessary preparation of invalids for a change of climate,—for their guidance during the journey, and during their residence abroad, will be found as minutely laid down as the nature of the subject would admit. During my residence on the Continent, I found these matters greatly neglected. They are, however, of

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the very first consequence to invalids, as, without attention to them, the best climate will be productive of little benefit.

It was originally my intention to have added a third part, giving some account of the principal mineral waters of the Continent; but I found, on arranging my materials on this subject, that I could not have condensed them sufficiently for this purpose, without greatly diminishing their value. I have therefore resolved to lay them before the public in a separate volume; and have satisfied myself, on the present occasion, with merely indicating the mineral waters most suitable to the different diseases treated of. This class of remedies will be found to co-operate powerfully with a mild climate in the removal of many chronic disorders.

This is the proper place to notice the kind and liberal assistance which I have received from many friends, while engaged in collecting materials for this work. To Drs. Heineken and Renton of Madeira, Dr. Skirving of Nice, Dr. Peebles of Rome, and Dr. Playfair of Florence, I am indebted

for much valuable information. By the assistance chiefly of the two first named gentlemen, I have been enabled to give more precise information respecting the climate of Madeira, and its influence on disease, than has, I believe, been previously laid before the public. From Dr. Forbes of Chichester, Dr. Lempriere of Newport, and Dr. Down of Southampton, I have received much information respecting several of the English climates. But the gentleman to whom I am indebted above all others, is my esteemed friend Dr. Todd of Brighton, who has, with one or two exceptions, resided for some time at all the places on the Continent noticed in the following pages, and who has unreservedly communicated to me the result of his observations and extensive experience ; so that there is scarcely an article in the work which has not been improved by his suggestions. I also avail myself of the present occasion, with much pleasure, to acknowledge the information which I liberally received from my continental brethren. To my valued friends, Professor De Matthæis of Rome, Dr. Lanza of Naples, Dr. Mojon of Genoa, and Professor Grotanelli of Sienna,

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I am more particularly indebted in this way. Indeed, the friendly and liberal intercourse which I enjoyed, while on the Continent, with my professional brethren, is one of the circumstances connected with my residence abroad, the retrospect of which affords me the greatest satisfaction. I can assure such of the profession of this country as may visit the Continent, that they will very generally experience there the greatest facility in prosecuting their professional researches; and, I take leave to add, that, if they carry with them minds free from prejudice, and a sufficient degree of practical knowledge to enable them to profit by what they observe, they will not fail to improve themselves.

I hope it will be found that I have succeeded in throwing some light on the obscure subject of the influence of climate on human health, and on the application of it to the treatment of disease. I would also hope, from the minute manner in which I have described the characters of the different climates frequented by invalids, and the care with which I have indicated the nature of the diseases benefited by them, that I

have gone far to correct many of the erroneous opinions which have hitherto existed on these subjects. However this may be, I do at least anticipate this good effect from my labours—that, for the future, those patients only will be sent abroad whose cases afford a reasonable prospect of benefit from such a measure ; and, that the practice of hurrying out of their own country a class of invalids, whose sufferings can only be thereby increased, and their lives shortened, will no longer be sanctioned, but that such persons may be allowed, henceforth, to die in peace in the bosom of their own families.

As I anticipated that the following work would be perused by many persons not of the profession, but who are yet deeply interested in the subject of climate, in relation to its effects on disease, I have endeavoured to express myself in as plain language as possible ; and I trust I have succeeded in making myself intelligible to the generality of readers, without at all diminishing the utility of my book to the members of my own profession. It has been my wish to lay before the public such a work

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as might serve at once as a manual to the physician in selecting a proper climate for his patient, and a guide to the latter while no longer under the direction of his medical adviser. It is only those who have resided abroad, and have mixed much with that numerous class of our countrymen who travel for health, that can know how very much such a publication is wanted; and I may perhaps be permitted to add, at the same time, that it is only those who have attempted to compose such a work that can be aware of the difficulties of the task.

George-Street, Hanover-Square,

May 22, 1829.

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