What Open-Air Treatment Accomplishes in Colorado

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Compiling with your request for an article upon the "Success of the Open-Air Treatment for Pulmonary Tuberculosis in Colorado," I am confronted at the outset with an inability to strictly confine myself to the title of the article. Statistics bearing upon the subject are not obtainable; neither do I find that any authoritative notes or tables on the "success of the open-air treatment" have been taken or kept by any majority of physicians or by any individual. However, the subject during the past few years has been pretty thoroughly threshed out, and both professional and lay opinion are agreed as to the importance and success of the open-air treatment, or rather the open air. Such a mode of living, favored by strict adherence, offers by far the greater chance for recovery, and it is the very best remedy known at present to the medical profession.

The subject of open-air treatment, however, is not a new or modern one. Its recent advocacy, and the many articles published during the last few years, would very naturally lead one to believe that an entirely new discovery had been made and a few recent advocates were the discoverers. The truth is, this as well as many other modern theories only illustrates the old saying, "There is nothing new under the sun." From the earliest days of history, even from the date of Adam and the Garden, open air has been intelligently recognized, and only as necessary to man's existence, and as a means for the support of life, but also as the means, properly applied, for the perpetuation of perfect health. A glance into ancient history will convince one of the splendid health and physique of the human inhabitants of the earth, whose nomadic habits kept them constantly in the open air. Coming down to more modern times, we find that the Civil War demonstrated in a practical way the great benefit and advantage of the open air life for the body and mind in many cases for the predisposed tuberculous subject. Many cases under my observation, and I dare say many Civil War soldiers who can recall, among their acquaintances and companions, cases in which the army comparative huts, who not only survived, but were restored to health and perfect health by the open air life. The results in such cases could not possibly be due to other causes.

Thirty-five years ago, when first coming to this country, everyone then resident in the territory, and those coming for health, looked upon living in the open as a matter of course. I believe it is a fact that as the result of this habit of living, the curative power by a power of invalidating, I am told, from Baltimore. They started some time in the year 1865, with the intention of clearing the plains and eventually settling in California. The open air life in Colorado worked such cures that many of the party were practically cured before reaching Denver. From this beginning and result, the fame of Colorado climate spread until this region was for a time a very Mecca for the afflicted.

Great tribes of Indians were then largely in the majority as inhabitants of this country, and, as all know, lived the year round in the open air. I do not recall ever having heard, at that time or since, of an Indian being afflicted with consumption or of one dying from it. It is also a matter of record that the slaves of the south were rarely afflicted with pulmonary diseases. These people led an open air life. Their cabins and sleeping rooms were open and well ventilated, and all seasons a maximum of fresh air. Their freedom from tuberculosis must be attributed to the open air life, and not to any racial resistance against the disease, as the Indians destined to remain in the south cannot remain in the cold climate.

As to the success of the open-air treatment in Colorado, and in the absence of statistics, I can only say in conclusion this article that the early growth and development of this city and of the state was brought about by those who were first attracted by the climate. The "health seekers" who recovered health remained to become permanent inhabitants of the country. A large number of the old-timers induced to come here by impaired health are still living examples of the open air life. These people were those who spent their days and nights in the open, their days picnicking on the plains or in the mountains, taking their luncheons where the noontide found them, forming congenial and convivial companies, enjoying by such association diversion and rest from their daily toil, devoting ourselves to the business in hand, the "get-well-quick," and always in the open. In those days the open-air life was not in vogue, and patients were not sent here "after taking," but "before taking."
Thirty-five years ago, when first coming to this country, everyone was resident in the territory, and those coming for health, looked upon living in the open as a matter of course. I believe it is a historical fact that attention was first called to this climate and its curative power by a party of invalids hastily thrown into the air, I am told, from Baltimore. They started some time in the year 1873, with the intention of crossing the plains and eventually setting in California. The open air life in Colorado worked such curative wonders that many of the party were practically cured before reaching Denver. From this beginning grew the fame of Colorado climate spread until this region was for a time a very Mecca for those so afflicted.

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In the early days of the settlement of this region life in the open air was followed much more zealously and literally than at present, and yet to listen to the recent advocates of the open air treatment, one would suppose that an entirely new discovery had been made. To such an extent has the claim of the modern discovery or been advanced and emphasized that the layman all believes that a newfad is upon him, and perhaps wonders if this, like the history of all fads, will not soon drop out of view, only to be replaced by the ever recurring new.

Open air treatment, however, is not a fad, and can never become such. The only question is its systematic and rational administration, and, above all, the quality and composition of the air to be used. Upon this selection and use, in my judgment, depends the success. This can be demonstrated and proved statistically, which latter of course will be gathered and attested by the medical profession most actively engaged in treating tubercular diseases. The advantage of open air life cannot be too strongly advocated or encouraged, but at present there are antagonistic views as to the proper method to be pursued, and also as to what is meant by open air living. Many advise and imagine that if one window is open at night in an all day heated and closed room, this is sleeping in the open. As previously stated in this paper, thirty-five years ago open air living in this climate was followed much more systematically and conscientiously than it is now. If the word may be allowed, than at the present time, invalids lived and slept out of doors the year round, frequently upon the bare ground, or when camping in the parks in the mountains or adjacent foothills, a fire or apiece of bough mattress, built upon the ground, made a most excellent bed, and with blankets and the blue sky for a consecu-