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and in the occupations which these features require of people, are sufficient to ensure considerable difference in the folk developed in different sections of the land. Under the mask of a common language, which, though varied by provincial peculiarities, is a perfect means of communication among the greater part of the folk to the N. of Mexico, the acute observer will detect varieties in essential quality quite as great as those which separate the people who dwell in different parts of Great Britain, France, or Germany. Though in some part these peculiarities may have been due to the diverse origin of the folk, they are in the main to be attributed to the effects of the local conditions of climate and occupations.

It is evident that the climate of North America, except those parts which have a subtropical character and the regions of the Far North which are too cold for tillage, are admirably suited to the uses of the European peoples from the states in the N. part of that continent. The descendants of the colonies from England, France, and Germany planted on this soil more than two centuries ago between Florida and Labrador have all greatly prospered. They have increased in numbers at a more rapid rate than their kindred of the old world, their average life is as great if not greater, and their endurance of labour of all kinds is in no wise diminished. The history of the Civil War shows that in the essential qualities these men of the new world have lost nothing of their primitive strength.

Fortunately for the transplanted population of America, the conditions of soil, climate, and earth-resources permit the people to continue on the ways of advancement in the occupations of life which were trodden by their forefathers in the old world. The agriculture and the mechanic arts required no change whatever on the part of the immigrants; the nature of the country seemed to welcome them to the new-found shores.

### XIII. Climate and Climatic Resorts of the United States,

by

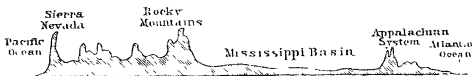
*Edmund Charles Wendt, M. D., of New York.*

Without some knowledge of the physical geography and topography of a country, an intelligent appreciation of its climatic peculiarities is not possible. This is particularly well seen in relation to the climatology of the United States. Extending from well-nigh arctic to almost subtropical regions, and from the level of the sea to elevations of nearly 15,000 ft.; covering a vast expanse of partly arid inland territory, and showing an enormous coast-line laved by two great oceans, it should not be surprising that every conceivable variety of climate may be found within its borders.

As compared with Europe, perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the American climate consists in its greater range of temperature and comparative dryness. The E. is also strikingly colder than the W. coast as well as the European countries of corresponding latitudes. This circumstance has led to much confusion, and has given the United States an undeserved reputation of being everywhere colder than Europe. It is quite true that, if New York, for example, be compared to cities of the same latitude, like Naples, Madrid, and Constantinople, or if Boston be contrasted with Rome, the American towns will be found decidedly colder. On the other hand if cities on the W. coast, like San Francisco or Portland, be selected for comparison, only trifling differences will appear.

**Variations of Temperature.** The mean annual temperature varies to

the extent of over  $40^{\circ}$  Fahr. in different parts of the Union. Extremes of actually recorded temperatures extend from  $-56^{\circ}$  Fahr. to  $121^{\circ}$  Fahr. in the shade, a range of  $177^{\circ}$ . Taking the mean temperature of July as representing the hot season, we find in different sections of the country variations of more than  $30^{\circ}$  — viz. from  $60^{\circ}$  to over  $90^{\circ}$  Fahr. Again taking Jan. as a representative cold month, we find a range of over  $50^{\circ}$  — viz. from  $10^{\circ}$  Fahr. to above  $60^{\circ}$ . Now it must not be forgotten that in the United States, perhaps more than elsewhere, temperature and climate are not merely questions of so many degrees of latitude. The lines for similar annual means (isothermal lines) are considerably modified by ocean currents and winds, besides being deflected by the interposition of lofty mountain-chains.



**The Mountain Ranges.** The two main ranges are the *Appalachian System* in the E. and the *Cordillerean System* (Rocky Mts. and Sierra Nevada) in the W. As will be seen later on, the W. highlands have a climate peculiar to themselves. They run from N.W. to S.E. for nearly 5000 M., i.e. from Alaska to Mexico, and gradually slope to the E., so as to fill in from one-third to one-half of the N. American continent. The E. or Appalachian system extends in a S.W. direction from Nova Scotia to Alabama, a distance of over 1500 M. Its width averages hardly one-fifth, and the elevation of its peaks and plateaus not one-half that of the W. highlands. Hence its effect on local climate is much less pronounced (Guyot). Between these great mountain ranges the vast *Mississippi Basin* stretches out for thousands of miles, from truly arctic regions to the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. This basin also includes the *Great Lake district*, one of the prominent features of the N. states. The climate of this region is controlled by the vast expanse of these veritable 'inland oceans'.

**Three Main Climatic Divisions.** In accordance with the brief description just given, we recognize three main climatic divisions in the United States.

1. An *Eastern Region*, extending from the foot of the Rocky Mts. to the Atlantic seaboard, and including the entire Appalachian system.

2. The *Plateau and Mountain Region of the Western Highlands*.

3. The *Pacific Slope*, to the W. of the Sierra Nevada range.

The peculiarities of each region may be briefly stated as follows :

1. The Atlantic seaboard is moderately moist, and, in general, rather equable. It is, however, subject to summer 'hot spells', and winter 'cold snaps' of a very trying kind. The altitude of the Appalachian system is not sufficient to very materially affect the distribution of heat, winds, and rainfall, so that the change is a gradual one, as we approach the dry interior zone of the Great Mississippi Basin.

The latter region, about 1,245,000 sq. M. in extent, is in general warm and moderately equable. Extensive forests supply adequate moisture to the air, but where trees are sparse, the atmosphere becomes excessively dry. The Great Lakes temper this region on the N. and the Gulf of Mexico warms it on the S. Nevertheless Europeans often complain both of great summer heat and extreme winter cold; sensations which the thermometer rarely fails to justify. The numerous local departures from this general condition cannot be considered here.

2. ~~The Plateau and Mountain Region is dry and cold.~~ The higher peaks are Alpine in character. The great plateaus, situated between the border chain of the Sierra Nevada and the Rocky Mts., are on an average 5000 ft. above sea-level. Some of them are fully 6000 ft. high. The climate there is harsh, cold, and very dry. It is a common mistake, however, to suppose that these elevated plateaus are merely barren wastes. Especially at the lower levels richly fertile valleys are everywhere found to alternate with sandy treeless tracts, salt lakes, and marshy wastes. That there are corresponding differences in local climates can only be alluded to in this place. During the height of summer the days are hot, but as soon as the sun sets, the air grows chilly, and the nights are always cold.

3. The mountain slope of the Pacific is characterized by abruptness and great irregularity. Its climate is varied. The narrow strip bordering on the ocean is much warmer, more humid, and very decidedly more equable than corresponding interior latitudes and the Atlantic coast. This Pacific section is farther distinguished by a well-marked wet season, corresponding to the E. winter, and an equally well-defined dry season, corresponding to the E. summer. Moreover, cool summers and mild winters, as well as the complete absence of those extreme variations, which elsewhere mar the climate of the States, render the Pacific coast pleasantly conspicuous. It is here that some of the most popular winter and summer health resorts have been established.

**Some Special Features.** In regard to temperature, it is significant that, in spite of the wide range of the thermometer, something like 98 per cent of the entire population inhabit those regions in which the annual means extend from 40° to 70° Fahr. only. Roughly calculated, therefore, the average annual temperature of the whole United States is 55° Fahr. But foreigners are of course more interested in the extremes of heat and cold, which are disagreeably perceptible in almost all the states. The most delightful season of the year is unquestionably the so-called 'Indian summer', *i.e.* the few Autumn weeks which precede the actual onset of winter. It would be difficult to imagine anything more exhilarating than the crisp air, brilliant sunshine, clear blue skies, and grateful temperature characterizing the closing days of an 'Indian summer' at its best.

The summer temperature is everywhere higher than in Europe, with the exception of certain districts on the Pacific slopes already alluded to. The hottest regions of the country are naturally the southernmost parts of the southernmost states (Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, etc.). Here the annual mean rises to  $75^{\circ}$  Fabr., which is almost that of tropical climes. In the valley of the Lower Colorado, in California and Arizona, the summer mean rises to  $90^{\circ}$  Fabr. In Texas temperatures of  $110^{\circ}$ , and in Arizona and parts of California of  $115^{\circ}$ , are no great rarity, and yet here the great dryness of the atmosphere makes the heat seem less oppressive than in humid regions at a much lower range of temperature. In almost all the states of the Union several extremely hot days are to be looked for every summer. And in the more prolonged 'hot spells' the mortality from heat-stroke and diarrhœal diseases becomes alarming to a degree quite unknown in Europe. The severity of the winter is most felt in the elevated parts of New England, the higher plains of N. Minnesota and Dakota, and the lofty mountain plateaus of the Rockies. There the usual mean may descend below  $40^{\circ}$  Fabr. In upper Minnesota the winter mean is only  $10^{\circ}$  Fabr. On the whole, it may be said that American winters are more severe than those of Europe, always excepting, of course, the S. states. In the Atlantic and Middle states the winter is generally steady. Ice and snow may be counted on during one-half of the three coldest winter months. But to the W. of the Mississippi great irregularities are experienced. Mild and open periods there alternate with intense cold and violent storms. As we approach the Pacific increased mildness is observed. Continuous snow and ice are unknown along the whole W. coast from Vancouver to San Diego. Moreover, the temperature is so equable there that the winter mean is only  $5-15^{\circ}$  below that of summer. In the S. occasional cold storms are experienced, although the thermometer at New Orleans, for example, rarely descends below the freezing point. Yet the S. winter is fitful and at times trying. It begins and ends early, lasting from about Nov. until February. But there is absolutely no periodicity in the various irregularities observed, so that elaborate calculations based on averages may be rudely upset by the eccentricity of certain seasons. It is always well to be prepared for 'any kind of weather' in the United States.

**Rainfall.** The rainfall is quite unevenly distributed through the United States. In the E. section it is abundant, while the great W. plains and prairies are often parched with prolonged drought. This has led to the general employment there of irrigation, without which agriculture could not flourish. In the strip along the Pacific coast a very plentiful precipitation occurs. The heaviest deposit of rain takes place in the borderlands of the Gulf, namely the S. parts of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, the E. part of Texas, and the W. coast of Florida. The annual quantity of water amounts to about 65 inches there. But at Philadelphia it is 45 inches, and at

Chicago only about 30. All over the E. the rainfall is abundant in spring and summer. It usually occurs in heavy showers, often accompanied by violent electrical discharges. On the Pacific coast, apart from the regularly recurring winter rains, little or no precipitation of water takes place. But at a short distance inland profuse summer rains are again observed. In the mountainous highlands heavy winter snows augment the annual volume of watery precipitation. The most arid tracts of the United States are in W. Arizona, S. Nevada, and S.E. California. The annual rainfall there descends from 15 to 8 inches and less. Broadly speaking the United States may be said to be favoured by an abundance of rain, with a relatively small proportion of rainy days. Fogs occur in the seaboard states, but they are neither as frequent nor as heavy as those known in many European countries.

**Winds.** The prevailing winds of the United States are westerly, like those of other countries situated in middle latitudes. Around the Gulf of Mexico the main current of the atmosphere moves in an E. or S.E. direction. Along the Atlantic coast region the predominating winds are S.W. in summer, and N.W. in winter. In a large S.W. district, including Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, Arkansas, Texas, New Mexico, Utah, and Arizona, the summer winds come from the S., and the winter winds have a N. direction. In the region of the Rocky Mountains the winds are so irregular that none of them can be said to be 'prevalent'. In the tract between the Mississippi and the Appalachian ranges, both summer and winter winds are S.W. and W. It may be borne in mind that in the United States the S.W. winds blow over an expanse of warm water, while the N.E. winds hail from a frigid ocean, and the N.W. from frozen deserts.

**Storms and Blizzards.** The regularly recurring winter storms are most violent on the E. seaboard. The term 'blizzard' is employed to denote the blinding snow-storms with intense cold and high winds, which have their true home only in the W. but which are sometimes observed in the Atlantic States. †

### Climatic Resorts.

The custom of spending the winter in the South and the summer at the seaside has nowhere assumed more formidable proportions than in the United States, and a few of the more important climatic resorts are named and characterised below. Comp. also the notices throughout the Handbook.

**WINTER RESORTS.** The best known winter-stations are in Florida, California, the Carolinas, Georgia, and Virginia. A large proportion of the invalids visiting these regions are the victims of consumption, but sufferers from gout, rheumatism, neurasthenia,

† A violent blizzard occurred in New York on March 12th, 1888. The snow was piled up in drifts of 10-30 ft., stopping all communication.

chlorosis, anæmia, diseases of the kidneys, affections of the heart, insomnia, chronic bronchitis, asthma, and over-work are often signally benefited by a stay at one or other of the resorts named below. In making one's choice of a winter's residence, the factor of accommodation should not be lost sight of; and it may be stated generally that the sanitary arrangements of American health-resorts are far superior to most places of the kind in Europe. In some of the hotels every conceivable modern comfort and luxury are provided (comp. pp. 402, 493, 505).

In *Florida* (RR. 76-82) the temperature is equable, the atmosphere is neither too dry nor too moist, the sunshine abundant, and the soil sandy. Consumptives do well there, especially in the early stages of the disease. The only drawback is the possibility of malaria; but the dangers arising from this source have been grossly exaggerated. — *Southern California* has, perhaps, the most delightful climate in the world (comp. p. 499). The air is genially warm and dry, yet not enervating as in more tropical climates, and more salubrious general conditions can nowhere be found. *Santa Barbara* (p. 497), *Los Angeles* (p. 499), and *San Diego* (*Coronado Beach*; p. 505) are among the chief resorts, the first named showing the least variation between the day and night temperatures, while the other two enjoy an almost total immunity from fog. At *San Diego* the coast-winds are sometimes inconvenient for invalids with throat-troubles. *San Bernardino* (p. 502) is more inland and has a rather bracing, but not irritating, climate, which some consumptives find more beneficial than that of other Californian resorts. *Monterey* (p. 493), *Santa Cruz* (p. 494), *Pasadena* (p. 500), *Redondo Beach* (p. 500), and *San Rafael* (p. 487), have all their special advantages. — *Thomasville* (p. 398), in Georgia, and *Aiken* (p. 393), in South Carolina, are much frequented by weak-chested persons, who find benefit in the balsamic fragrance of their pine forests. The advantages of *Asheville*, North Carolina, have been sufficiently indicated at p. 386. *Old Point Comfort* (p. 372), *Virginia Beach* (p. 371), and *Newport News* (p. 371), in Virginia, are fashionable intermediate stations for invalids on their way back to the North. — *Lakewood* (p. 247), in New Jersey, and *Cumberland Gap Park*, in Tennessee (comp. p. 382), are also favourably known. — *Colorado Springs* (p. 468), *Manitou* (p. 469), and *Saranac Lake* (p. 186) are the chief resorts for the high-altitude treatment of consumption.

**SUMMER RESORTS.** *Newport* (p. 76), *Nahant* (p. 101), *New London* (p. 71), *Narragansett Pier* (p. 72), *Bar Harbor* (p. 114), *Long Branch* (p. 63), *Atlantic City* (p. 248), *Cape May* (p. 249), and parts of *Long Island* (p. 61) are the most fashionable SEASIDE RESORTS. Sea-bathing in the United States differs somewhat from British and Continental practices. Permanent bath-houses on the beach take the place of bathing-machines, and the institution of bathing