

WHY BE COLD?

IMMUNABILITY CAN EASILY BE ESTABLISHED.

Many men have been sent here and there over the world during this war, some from warm countries to colder climates, and some from cold climates to warmer. I have wondered as to how those who left their native temperate climate of the United States have met the adverse conditions of other latitudes, such for example as Siberia, England and Italy.

Ages ago, a band of naked, houseless, fireless savages started from their warm home in the torrid zone, and pushed steadily northward from the beginning of spring to the end of summer. They never guessed that they had left the land of constant warmth until in September they began to feel an uncomfortable chill at night. Day by day it grew worse. Not knowing its cause they travelled this way and that to escape. Some went southward, but only a handful finally returned to their former home. There they resumed the old life, and their descendants are untutored savages to this day. Of those who wandered in other directions all perished except one small band. Finding that they could not escape the nipping air, the members of this band used the loftiest of human faculties, the power of conscious invention. Some tried to find shelter by digging in the ground, some gathered branches and leaves to make huts and warm beds, and some wrapped themselves in the skins of beasts that they had slain. Soon these savages had taken some of the greatest steps toward civilization. The naked were clothed; the houseless sheltered; the improvident learned to dry meat and store it with nuts for the winter, and at last the art of making fire was discovered as a means of keeping warm.

Today mankind resembles these savages in certain respects. We know that we are limited by climate. As the savages faced the winter, so we are face to face with the fact that the human race has tried to conquer the arctic zone, the deserts, and the torrid zone, and has met with only the most limited success. Even in the temperate zone he has made a partial failure, for he is still hampered in hundreds of ways. Hitherto we have attributed our failure to economic conditions, to isolation and remoteness, to racial incapacity, or to specific diseases. Now we see that it is prob-

ably due in part to lack of energy or to other unfavorable effects directly produced upon the human system by climate and weather.

With the approach of colder weather, I observe many of the men in the camp are already wearing their heavy winter clothes, and are hovering around the stoves wherever they have been installed. Of course it is good to back up against a big stove and indulge with unrestrained delight the warmth of its cozy penetrating heat, but it causes one to droop with drunken, weak-kneed indolence into a state of temperate luxuriance that seriously affects our immunability to cold weather. Somehow the dry heat and aridity of the air of a heated room or tent seems to dissipate and exhaust one's native supply of bodily heat. Animals are able to do without artificial heat because they are accustomed to the cold weather. What corresponds to the heavy clothes with them is the heavier coat of hair or fur which nature furnishes them. Much of this loss of energy arises from the fact that after the wonderfully stimulating fall weather, when we have been living under almost ideal conditions of mean temperature, of humidity and variability from day to day, we suddenly begin to heat our tents. We create an indoor climate of great uniformity, of unduly high temperature and of the most extreme aridity. All of these conditions seem harmful when the effects are considered. Moreover, the uniform dryness within doors does almost untold harm in parching the mucous membranes and thus rendering us peculiarly liable to colds, grippe and similar ailments which often lead to serious diseases such as pneumonia and tuberculosis.

I remember in civil life a man who on the coldest days of winter could be seen walking the streets without a hat, clad only in light "Palm Beach" trousers, and a silk negligee shirt, open at the throat. "He is crazy," you say. "Perhaps, I answer, "but at any rate he is healthy—and immune from the cold." Heatless days mean nothing to him. Last winter during the spinal meningitis epidemic I very seldom wore my overcoat except only on the most rare days. I remember on one occasion in mess line, a big fellow-soldier, weighing over 200 pounds, full blooded and hearty, bundled up in two Red Cross sweaters and an overcoat, asked me if I wasn't afraid of catching a fatal cold. "No," I an-

swered, "you are the one that gives me concern." If I had your clothing on I would be a sick soldier. I am not healthy enough to wear all those things." Of course there are times when artificial heat is certainly necessary. Possibly a slight fall in temperature causes people to shiver. This is nature's sign that the body needs heat.

Humanity was not created in a warm room, nor was the human race nurtured in its infancy by a roaring fire, steam radiator or gas stove. Primitive man was his own heater. He had to discover fire and then exploit its uses. He was originally supplied by nature with a warm body, and he now finds artificial ways of making it warmer. Has not civilization pampered us to a point that has impaired our original heat-giving resources and substituted a forced warmth that has enervated us. The doctors tell us that many diseases come out of artificial heat—indoor diseases, they might be called—the diseases that are treated, and sometimes cured today by foregoing artificial heat and going back to nature. Does this mean that I suggest reverting to primitive conditions and giving up heat. No indeed. I suffered enough last winter. I do not advocate giving up heat—suddenly. But letting up gradually on artificial heat, I do advocate. Most of us live an overheated existence, to the depletion of our health. The little conical tent stove that we all hover around, like a serpent, is closing its coils about us, and greatly stifling our native vital resources.

It all means that we would be better off in health if we could accustom ourselves to less heat; if we could live as the people of some other nations do—comfortable and content with heat enough to take the chill off the air and not demanding that we shall be "kept going" by means of artificial heat outside our own natural heat-giving apparatus. We make caloric cripples of ourselves by giving crutches to nature in the form of roaring fires and excessive clothing. Would it not be better to change our method, based on foregoing artificial heat and developing the original body caloric? We would then leave artificial heat largely to infants, weaklings and invalids; we would abolish several diseases altogether, improve the mortality rate, and be healthy, happy and vigorous.

—Sergt. Owen B. Fuqua.



The Flower Shop



Anything in cut Flowers, we have it.

203 North Tryon Street.

Phone 1666.