

NOTES UPON HEALTH RESORTS.

SCANDINAVIAN WINTER HEALTH STATIONS.

(BY A SPECIAL COMMISSIONER.)

II.¹

NORWAY'S WINTER HEALTH RESORTS.

NORWAY is well known to many as a land particularly rich in opportunities for the holiday maker and offering varied facilities for the sportsman. But its claims to be counted among the chief of European countries on account of its health resorts have not been duly recognised either in this or other lands. The fact is Norwegians themselves have only within recent years realised the possibilities of their homeland for the establishment of all-the-year-round health stations. The natural characteristics are eminently suitable but hitherto enterprise has been lacking in the opening up of the country and the provision of suitable residential establishments for visitors. The smallness of the native population and the somewhat isolated position of Norway have no doubt been in great measure responsible for the delay in the development of health centres. Now that Switzerland is being overrun with trippers of all nations it is but rational and reasonable that many should be desirous of seeking places where all the health advantages of "the playground of Europe" may be obtained without the increasing discomforts of overcrowded hotels and the disadvantage of fashionable and sports-loving manners of life. To all lovers of the simple hygienic life and to those requiring excellent climatic conditions for the winning back of health and the recuperation of strength Norway is likely to appeal more and more as its benefits become better known.²

A movement is now taking place in Norway which promises to make the country better known to Norwegians themselves and its many advantages realised by other countries.³ Hitherto physicians have been slow to realise the nature of the climatic conditions prevailing in this land and the many advantages which they offer for the health seeker.

While the fjords of the west coast are best known to the ordinary tourist they by no means offer the finest climate for the health seeker. This, generally speaking, is to be obtained on the highlands and in the wide and open valleys in the inland districts, such as Valdres, Gausdal, and Gudbrandsdal. The new line between Bergen and Christiania opens up a country which should in the near future become extensively developed as centres for excellent health stations. The suggested extension of the railway from Otta to Trondhjem over the Dovrefjeld should also lead to the establishment of many desirable new health resorts.

From a health standpoint the mountain climates of Norway are of particular benefit. They can be conveniently divided into (1) the high altitude or alpine climate, or as it has been well termed locally the "Hoifjeld" region, commencing at between 2500 and 3000 feet above sea level; and (2) the medium altitude, or subalpine climate, or "Hollids" region, 1500 to 2500 feet above sea level.⁴

For some cases the valley and lowland districts offer special advantages and in summer the coast climate, in the south especially, is excellent.⁵

¹ No. I, was published in THE LANCET of April 25th, p. 1238.

² Dr. P. A. M. Mellbye of Christiania, with whom I discussed the question of Norwegian health stations, has published a useful reference work on the subject, "Norges Kursteder og deres Kurmidler" (Alb. Cammermeyers Forlag, Kristiania), with helpful map marking the chief "kursteder." It is to be hoped that an English edition of this informing manual may soon be available.

³ The Norwegian Tourist Traffic Association (Forening for Reiselivet i Norge), 2, Storthingsgaden, Christiania, under the able and enterprising direction of Mr. H. Malling, to whom your Commissioner is indebted for much kindness and information, is doing much for the opening up of Norway. The association publishes a useful "List of Hotels, Sanatoria, and Skyds Stations" and all visitors to Norway would do well to avail themselves of the publications and assistance of this valuable organisation.

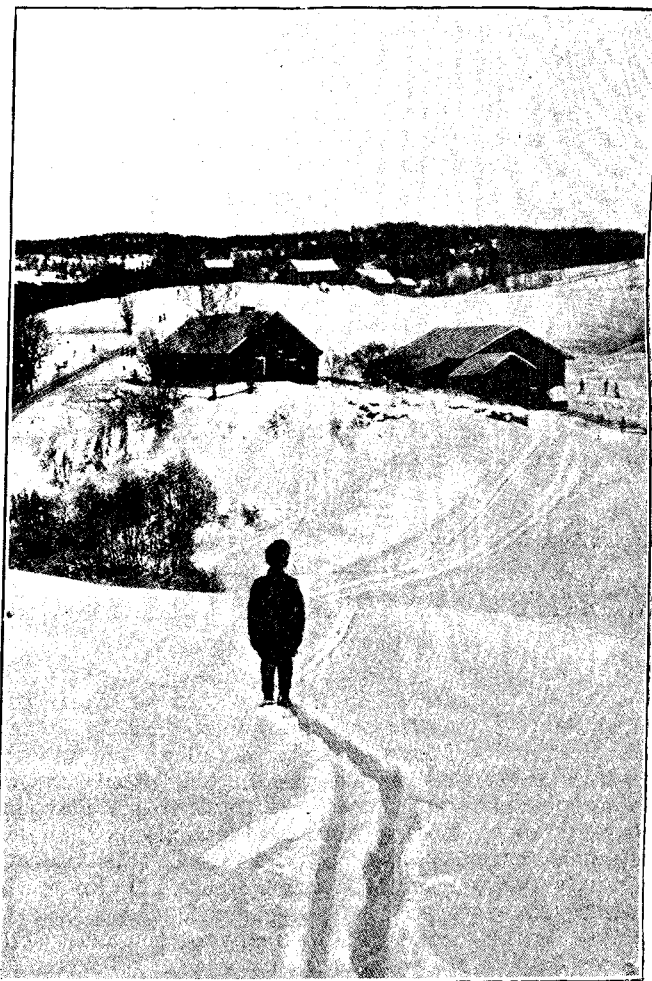
⁴ For much valuable information regarding climatic conditions and meteorological data see "Norway as a Winter and Summer Health Resort," by Dr. A. Magelssen. English edition, translated by Mr. John Sørensen of Tofte Sanatorium, Hundtorp.

⁵ Prospective visitors to Norway would do well to consult the interesting and informing Year Books of the Norwegian Club, 112, Strand, W.C.

WINTER CLIMATIC CONDITIONS.

As it is proposed to restrict consideration to what are essentially the winter health resorts of Norway, a few words on the climatic conditions prevailing during the winter season will not be out of place. Most erroneous impressions exist in many quarters as to the nature of the weather and the manner of life existing in Norway during this time of the year, when it can offer but little evidence for its claim to be called the "Land of the Midnight Sun." Over a great part of the country snow lies from November or at all events from well before Christmas to March or on the uplands till as late as Easter. (Fig. 1.) Thus for some four or more months winter sports may be enjoyed in all their fulness and variety. Although the early mornings are dark and the nights long, the difference from England is not conspicuous except in the very northerly parts. In most of what may be called the health resort districts the winter characteristics are excellent. These are particularly noticeable in the Norwegian Highlands. Here the air is dry, clear, rarefied, and the barometric pressure low. Although keen frost may

FIG. 1.



Winter in Norway: a ski track.

prevail the cold is but little felt and when one is well wrapped up in furs causes no discomfort. In sheltered and snow-covered districts but little wind is experienced. Extensive forests often afford admirable protection. Much more sunlight prevails than we are accustomed to in cloud-covered England and its luminous and actinic effects seem to exercise considerable beneficial influence on many patients. But little rain falls except in the west and sea-coast districts.

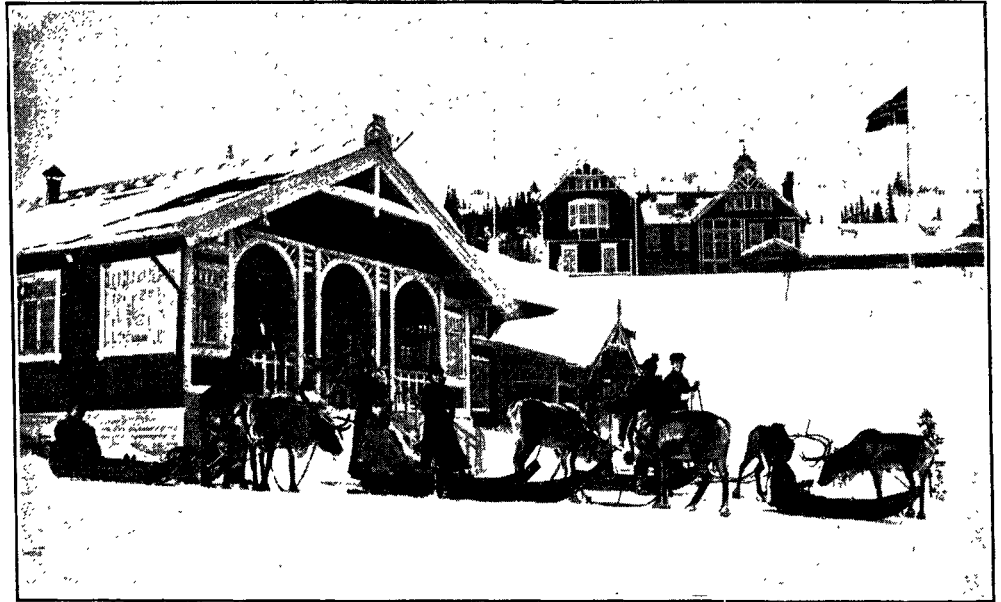
The snow descends usually in special "falls" and the land being thus protected all dust is avoided and by reflection the effects of the sun-light are increased and intensified. Fogs in the highland districts are rare and never produce those depressing and irritating effects which we know so well at home. The air is also said to be rich in ozone and electrical qualities. In the greater part of the country the soil is dry and hygienically favourable.

Having travelled throughout the greater part of the country during portions of the months of January and

February of this year your Commissioner has been very much impressed with the natural advantages which Norway offers for the establishment of winter health resorts.

THE BENEFITS OF WINTER SPORT.

It is only of recent years that Englishmen have begun to realise the benefits of wisely directed winter sports, not only as a means for refreshing the mind but renewing the body. During recent years large numbers of town dwellers and brain-workers have snatched a few weeks for a midwinter holiday amidst the snow and ice of Switzerland. The prophylactic virtues of a winter's holiday can now be attested by many. For those desirous of breaking new ground or of enjoying opportunities for winter sports, such as reindeer sleighing (Fig. 2), Norway may



Reindeer driving at mountain hotel, Trondhjem.

FIG. 3.



Ski-touring.

is the first season for many years that he has succeeded in resisting invasion by influenza. Perhaps some annual victims of *la grippe* might consider a voyage across the North Sea, however rough, a welcome means whereby to escape an inveterate enemy.

Almost all forms of winter sports may generally be enjoyed in and about Christiania, although in up-country resorts skiing and some other forms may usually be had in greater fulness and extent. Skiing on the high mountains is a form of mental and physical enjoyment known only to Scandinavians. Winter touring on skis exercises a fascination for the young and vigorous and is an admirable means for developing nerve and muscle and character.⁶ (Figs. 3 and 4.)

⁶ Captain Carl Roll has written an attractive, informing, and well illustrated booklet in English on "Winter Sport," which may be obtained from the Norwegian Tourist Traffic Association, 2, Storchingsgaden, Christiania. "The Winter Sports Annual, 1907-8," edited by E. Wroughton (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co. 1907. Price 2s.), contains much useful information respecting routes and fares to Norway and its chief sporting centres.

FIG. 4.



Ski-jumping.

be recommended as affording endless opportunities for exploration. Within the limitation of a short article it is impossible to describe adequately the fascination and charm exercised by the outdoor life and active pursuits as practised by the Norwegians. All, from the King and Queen and little Prince Olaf to the tiniest country beggar, seems to be most at home when tobogganing or skiing. Girls and women are keen enthusiasts for winter sports and certainly these rational forms of exercise are doing much for the development of the youth of the nation. The co-education of the sexes is thereby encouraged under the healthiest and happiest conditions. For many pampered, self-centred, delicate English children I can imagine nothing more beneficial than a winter in Norway.

If a personal reference may be permitted as evidence of the prophylactic powers of Norwegian residence, your Commissioner may note that this

WALES AND WESTERN COUNTIES NOTES.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.)

Diphtheria in Holywell.

At the last meeting of the Holywell (Flintshire) rural district council Mr. James Williams, one of the medical officers of health, called attention to the large amount of sickness among school children and said that a great deal of it was due to imperfect scavenging and to the large accumulations of filth at many of the houses. The conditions which he had found were a disgrace to the owners, to the occupiers, and to the sanitary authority. At a previous meeting, when eight cases of diphtheria were reported upon as having been notified during the month of March, the district council sought to minimise the seriousness of the outbreak by reflecting upon the *bona fides* of the medical practitioners who certified the cases, one member of the council remarking that "if a person had a sore-throat it was diphtheria right away; the mistake was the half-crown notification fee." It is a pity that the difficulties which sanitary officials have to contend with when endeavouring to check an outbreak of infectious disease should be increased by the passive opposition of the very persons who ought to render assistance. It is indifference of such bodies as the Holywell rural district council which made it possible for Sir John Dickson Poynder's Committee to recommend the transference of certain administrative powers to the county councils.

Infantile Mortality in Newport.

As the result of a conference recently held at the Newport (Mon.) town hall it has been decided to form a ladies' public health society upon the lines of the organisation which has for many years done such good work in Manchester. The primary object of the newly formed society is to coöperate with the sanitary committee of the corporation in its attempt to lessen the amount of infantile mortality in the borough. A female health visitor has been employed by the committee for more than five years and in his last annual report the medical officer of health (Dr. J. Howard-Jones) pointed out that the substantial reduction in the infantile mortality rate during the previous five years ought to encourage the corporation to take still further action in instituting preventive measures. At the conference referred to it was decided to establish a fund for the purpose of providing proper nourishment for expectant mothers who were not qualified to receive Poor-law relief.

Medical Inspection of School Children.

The Gloucestershire county council has appointed Dr. J. Middleton Martin as a whole-time medical officer of health and to undertake, with assistance, the medical inspection of the school children in the county. The Carmarthen town council has appointed Mr. L. M. Bowen-Jones, the medical officer of health of the borough, as medical inspector of school children. There will be about 600 children to be inspected each year and the payment proposed to be made is at the rate of 1s. for each child. A suggestion was unsuccessfully made that the payment should be 2s. per head, while a proposal that it should be 6d. met with but scant support.

The Notification of Whooping-cough.

There are so few districts in which whooping-cough has been continuously notifiable that the results obtained are always of interest. The disease has been included in the list of diseases notified in the rural district of Llandaff and Dinas Powis since the adoption of the Infectious Disease (Notification) Act in 1890. There were notified last year 186 cases, and six children, all under eight months old, died. Dr. Richard Prichard, the medical officer of health, in his annual report suggests that the council should consider the desirability of utilising some part of the newly erected isolation hospital for the purpose of isolating patients suffering from whooping-cough. Unless some such course as this is taken he considers that he would not be justified in recommending the continuance of the disease among those compulsorily to be notified. It would be a pity if any precipitate action were taken in this direction, for even without the means of isolating patients much good can be done by the timely visits of an inspector and especially if the inspector is a woman. The case mortality from whooping-cough in the rural district in 1907 was 3·2 per cent. and in the preceding ten years it was 5 per cent.

April 21st.

SCOTLAND.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.)

The McAlpin Nursing Home, Glasgow.

THE new buildings in connexion with the McAlpin Nursing Home were formally opened last week by Lord Inverclyde. This marks a new epoch in the history of nursing homes in Glasgow. The home was first started in 1874 in a humble way. It was the pioneer nursing home in Glasgow and led the way to an immense improvement in the housing and treatment of private patients, especially those who had to come from the country to undergo an operation. From its inception this institution has done a great deal of charitable work, over one-third of the patients, it is stated, being treated at considerably less than cost. Although the home has recently been incorporated no part of the income can be paid away in dividends. Any surplus accruing is to be expended on reducing the fees to those charged less than the cost of their board and nursing and in extending the institution. The new building has been specially designed and constructed for the purpose of a nursing home and contains accommodation for 24 patients in single and private rooms, six in double rooms, and two wards of six beds each. All the principal private rooms have a southern exposure and each one is provided with a separate outside balcony. The operating theatre is fitted up on the most modern lines and the building is fire-proof throughout.

The University of Glasgow "Commemoration Day."

A most interesting and attractive gathering took place at Gilmorehill on April 24th, when the University celebrated its Commemoration Day. Not only did graduates from all parts of the country return to pay homage to their *alma mater* but representatives from sister universities and from the town council were also present and helped to make the assembly a representative one. After Principal MacAlister had read the commemorative preface an oration was delivered by Professor Gray on Lord Kelvin, the late Chancellor of the University. Thereafter honorary degrees were conferred by the Vice-Chancellor. Colonel David Bruce *in absentia* received the degree of LL D. for his researches in connexion with Malta fever, tsetse fly disease, and sleeping sickness. The same degree was conferred upon Dr. J. C. McVail, who for the past 18 years has been medical officer of health of the counties of Stirling and Dumbarton. In the evening the commemorative dinner was held in the Bute Hall. It was attended by over 200 ladies and gentlemen. The principal guests of the evening were the honorary graduates of the day.

Honour to Glasgow Professors.

Last week an interesting presentation took place to Dr. J. G. McKendrick, late Professor of Physiology at the University of Glasgow. It consisted of a portrait for the University by Mr. J. H. Lorimer, R.S.A., a sum of £450 for the equipment of the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology in the new physiological buildings, and a silver tray as a personal souvenir. The portrait and the tray had suitable inscriptions. The movement originated a year ago in the business committee of the general council, which thought that a mark of respect should be paid to the Professor of Physiology on the occasion of his retirement. In his reply Dr. McKendrick referred to the 30 years of his professorship in Glasgow, during which time more than 4000 students had passed through his hands. Since 1876, when he became professor, something like £17,000, in addition to the sum expended on new laboratories, probably amounting to £20,000 more, had been contributed for the physiology department. The result of this was that the dream of his life had been fulfilled. Referring to the recently established lectureship of Experimental Psychology Dr. McKendrick said that was a subject in which he had always been interested. This lectureship was intended to deal with the investigation by physical methods, so far as it was possible to apply them, of the action of the organs of sense, the nervous processes in general, and of the nervous processes in connexion with sensation, perception, emotion, choice, and even certain mental acts. As a subject experimental physiology and psychology lay between physiology and psychology connecting one with the other. Another interesting presentation was made to the University by Principal J. Yule Mackay. This consisted of a bronze medallion of the head of Professor Cleland, to be preserved permanently in the anatomical museum of the University. He made the gift, he said, on behalf of 17 men