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HOT SPRINGS FOR HEALTH

Oasis Sanatorium in Central Australia

PARALLANA MAY BE AUSTRALIAN CARLSBAD

Within the next few weeks, the Mount Painter Exploration Radium Company will begin a test at Parallana in the North Flinders ranges, South Australia, which may mark the commencement of the transformation of an isolated Central Australian beauty spot, into a fashionable health resort.

Hot mineralised water with medicinal properties, rugged scenery, unsurpassed in the State, a dry invigorating climate, and reasonable accessibility, are, it is claimed, attractions which may make of obscure Parallana, an Australian Carlsbad.

Parallana is an oasis-like area in the North Flinders Ranges. It is approximately 500 miles from Adelaide, one day's motor ride from Copley on the Great Northern railway, and only a few miles from the inhospitable shores of Lake Frome.

A section of Parallana is leased from the South Australian Government by the Mount Painter Exploration and Radium Company. In that area a hot mineralised spring rises and forms pools of varying sizes and temperatures. Wonderful curative powers have been claimed for these pools, and to ascertain the value of the waters from a medicinal viewpoint the Mount Painter company will shortly conduct an exhaustive test.

So impressed are the directors of the company with the curative possibilities of the waters that steps have been taken to establish a camp, capable of accommodating a limited number of patients under the supervision of a medical man, who will be in charge of operations.

Cure for Rheumatism

So sanguine are the company's directors of the beneficial nature of the waters that they have allocated £500 in testing the medicinal value of the springs. A start is contemplated early this month.

A temporary camp is to be erected on the site, and persons who are definitely proved to be suffering from rheumatism and kindred ailments, will be taken to the camp free of charge. The doctor will collect data as to the effect of the waters on the condition of the patients, and its curative properties. If he considers the patients have derived benefit from the waters the Mount Painter Company will then sell the whole of its interests in the springs to a new company, which will erect houses, hotels, and places of amusement for visitors.

Residents in the surrounding country have been greatly impressed by the curative value of the waters at the springs, and are sanguine of the result of the tests.

The company, of which Mr. Fred Tricks, F.F.I.A., of Broken Hill Chambers, Queen street, Melbourne, is manager, is not taking up the proposition for any monetary gain. Adjoining the springs the company holds a lease of 80 acres, and should the springs project prove successful this land might be used for the purpose for which it was leased.

Two eminent doctors in Melbourne have interested themselves in the scheme, and already evidence has been forthcoming to indicate that cures of rheumatism have been effected, following the drinking of the water and bathing in the springs. It is claimed that an analysis of the waters compares favorably with some of the famous spa waters of other countries.

To reach Parallana the journey must be made by the Great Northern Railway to Copley (370 miles), and thence 100 miles by motor in an easterly direction. The motor stage is one of constant fascination and changing interest. From the saltbush plains of Copley, which is 800 ft. above sea level, there is a climb for 30 miles up the rises of the Flinders Ranges to an elevation of 1,700 ft., and the transition from the drab saltbush flats to the timber-laden hills is picturesque. At Paisy's Creek, 15 miles from Copley, the higher elevations of the North Flinders Ranges commence, and onwards 16 miles of rugged but beautiful scenery is passed. The route is then northerly, and the sharp-peaked mountains on the left and the mirage-dotted plains on which Lake Frome lies 20 miles eastward, extend in sombre flatness to the remote horizon. Lake Frome, a salt lake covering a thousand square miles, is the present-day remnant of the great fresh-water area of the past.

Next Woollana homestead, one of the largest sheep stations in Australia, is passed, and Parallana is 20 miles beyond.

Wonderful Scenery

Parallana was once a volcanic district. Lava and basalt rocks occur a few miles

south of the hot springs, and during some remote period molten rock seared the countryside. It is quite on the cards that the high temperature of the water—144 degrees Fahr.—which issues from the spring is the remnant of volcanic action of prehistoric times. In a northerly direction from Parallana the ranges are separated from the plains as

though a gigantic knife had cut into the mountain heights and flattened out one portion to level flats. The high, rugged peaks are separated from the saltbush plains by a line almost straight, commencing at the base of the mountains. Perhaps it is along this line that the molten rock of the volcanic period issued, and along this same line the hot waters of Parallana creep today.

Sir Douglas Mawson and Dr. W. T. Cooke, of the Adelaide University, have conducted investigations of the water from Parallana Springs, and both have inspected the area.

Sir Douglas Mawson is enthusiastic as to its possibilities. He explains that the hot spring apparently bubbles through a granite rock, and is wonderfully good drinking water. It is slightly mineralised, and when it leaves the ground it is too hot to plunge the hand into.

This eminent scientist estimates that the spring has been flowing for half a million years, and there is still a good, strong flow. He says that the water at its fount has a peculiar attraction for animals. Old hands have told him that sheep dogs after sniffing this water had been known to jump headlong into it, and suffer varying degrees of scalding.

Sir Douglas believes that it would be a comparatively simple matter to convert the waters of the springs so that they could be used by health-seeking tourists. By damming the water near its source and running it through pipes into baths large numbers of people could be accommodated in comfort.

Sir Douglas says that examination of the waters has shown that they contain no injurious substances, and many of the qualities common to the famous European spas.

Nature's Sanatorium

Dr. W. T. Cooke supports Sir Douglas Mawson. "The hot springs of Parallana," he says, "contain similar constituents to some of the famous European mineral waters. The water is drinkable, and can be bathed in, or drunk, as desired."

Dr. Cooke visited Parallana in August. He describes the climate as "The best winter climate in Australia, with brilliant but not very hot sunshine in the daytime, and crisp, frosty nights."

Both Sir Douglas Mawson and Dr. W. T. Cooke picture Parallana as an ideal sanatorium site. Here are some of its attractions itemised:—

Hot mineral springs for drinking or bathing.

Dry, invigorating climate. (Situated on the easterly side of the range, Parallana misses the hot, scorching, dust-laden winds which blow from the west.)

Rugged scenery unrivalled in South Australia.

Wild donkeys, camels, kangaroos, emus, and other bird and animal life are to hand for the sportsman or the lover of Nature.

Reasonable accessibility. (It is within three days of Adelaide and one day from the railway.)

What will the initial tests at Parallana bring forth? In Germany there are several towns which have practically grown around their mineral springs. That these springs have medicinal value is recognised by physicians, and it has been said of the waters of Carlsbad that they give relief in two-thirds of the diseases which beset man.

It is not extravagant to forecast, therefore, that isolated Parallana may one day become a Mecca for invalids and tourists from all parts of the world.