

**A STUDY IN THE EPIDEMIOLOGY
OF TUBERCULOSIS, WITH
ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO
TUBERCULOSIS OF THE TROPICS
AND OF THE NEGRO RACE**

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A Study in the Epidemiology of Tuberculosis, with Especial Reference to Tuberculosis of the Tropics and of the Negro Race by George E. Bushnell

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GEORGE E. BUSHNELL

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Epidemiology of Tuberculosis

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AND OF THE NEGRO RACE

BY

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P R E F A C E

To understand tuberculosis of the temperate zone and of our race it is necessary to know something of tuberculosis as it affects other races which live under different social, economic and climatic conditions. No apology is therefore needed, it is hoped, for this little book, although the views as to tuberculosis set forth in it are not supported by any original investigations of the author. The aim has been, rather, to collect and discuss facts and in so doing to make known to the English-speaking public some of the very important but little known epidemiological data which have been published in widely scattered and often more or less inaccessible periodicals and, the greater part of them, in foreign tongues. With this end in view the writer has not scrupled to make copious extracts of papers on the epidemiology of tuberculosis, mostly from the German, for the translation of which he assumes the responsibility.

The work in its first draft was an essay on tuberculosis of the tropics and of the negro race. It has outgrown its original framework, but it has been thought best to retain the references to the tropics, especially those which have a practical bearing upon prophylaxis, treatment and the like. While the principal object of the writer has been to further the acceptance of certain views of universal applicability in phthiology, he has also borne in mind the need which exists of a greater clarity of the conception of tuberculosis as a practical problem affecting races as yet not fully tuberculized and hopes that what he has written may serve, not

so much as a formal treatise on tuberculosis, but rather as a study which by emphasizing certain important but too much neglected distinctions may stimulate inquiry and may also prove of some practical benefit to the physicians who encounter the disease in remote regions. The tuberculosis of the civilized negro has been discussed in some detail, not simply because of its interest as an epidemiological study, but also on account of its practical importance to the citizens of the United States.

Great difficulty has been experienced in determining what the truth is as to the prevalence and severity of tuberculosis in various parts of the world. With regard to some countries it has proved impossible to form any conception as to what the actual facts are. No attempt has therefore been made to report upon all tropical countries — there is little use in repeating statements that tuberculosis “rages” here or there, if no further information is furnished. It is the way of the epidemiologist to write pessimistically on tuberculosis, as if something could be gained by creating alarm. But this is not the standpoint of the writer. If tuberculosis is really ravaging the world and if nothing can be done to restrain it as a world-plague, the proper course is to dismiss the unpleasant subject from one's mind as completely as possible. On the other hand, if there is a prospect of improvement rather than of deterioration — and the experience of the last half-century should encourage us to believe that this is the case — every one interested in the prevention of the disease should be anxious to lend a hand wherever possible.

The suggestions as to a practical program in the epidemiological study of our own communities, as well as those of other peoples, are submitted with much diffidence with a view to stimulate thought and investigation.

PREFACE

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The role of the von Pirquet test in the epidemiology of tuberculosis is destined, it is believed, to become of increasing importance. Especial attention has therefore been paid to it in the hope that the Anglo-Saxon may be inspired by the example of the French and of the Germans to make use of it on a large scale — not only in the tropics, but also at home.

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