

**INTERNATIONAL SERIES:
THE HYGIENE
OF THE SOLDIER IN
THE TROPICS, NO. 7**

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International Series: The Hygiene of the Soldier in the Tropics, No. 7 by F. Burot & M. A. Legrand & Arthur L. Wagner

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F. BUROT & M. A. LEGRAND & ARTHUR L. WAGNER

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INTERNATIONAL SERIES,

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THE
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No. 7.

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PREFACE.

The importance of a knowledge of Military Hygiene on the part of officers in command of troops has long been recognized, and was painfully emphasized during the war with Spain by the heavy losses of many volunteer organizations that, remaining in home camps, did not see a hostile flag or hear a hostile shot. Not only is Military Hygiene a subject for serious consideration when our troops are stationed in a climate to which they are accustomed, but it becomes doubly so when they are called upon to serve in tropical regions whose climatic and hygienic conditions are new and strange, and where no enemy is so formidable as the endemic diseases.

The climatic conditions of Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines are not unlike those of Madagascar, Tong-King, and Martinique; and the observations, experience, and deductions of the medical officers of the French Army in those regions are accordingly deserving of careful attention. It is reasonable to conclude that anything good or bad for a French soldier will be beneficial or injurious to an American soldier serving under like conditions, and the editor therefore ventures the hope that by placing this translation in the hands of his brother officers he may be, in some degree, conferring a benefit upon our military service.

Headquarters Department of Dakota,
St. Paul, Minn., June 13, 1899.

Hygiene of the Soldier in the Tropics

INTRODUCTION.

Much has been written of late years upon colonial hygiene. Numerous authors have tried to state precisely the rules to be followed in order to preserve the health of the soldier in hot countries. It would suffice to refer to their works, if we did not hope to present new ideas and to explain, in concise form, the *ensemble* of the measures capable of protecting the soldier against the diseases which Professor Brouardel has so happily called the *maladies évitables*.

The ideas which flow from our preceding studies permit us to face the danger and combat it rationally.

Among the means of protection and defense, the whole of which constitutes the Hygiene of the Soldier in the Tropics, it will not be surprising if we accord first place to those which seem to us more particularly shown to protect the European soldier from telluric action. The soil is the most important factor, for it is the receptacle of the germs which provoke the principal endemic disease: paludism. Water comes in second place; it bears the microbes of dysentery, of cholera, of typhoid fever; it is through it that epidemics are propagated.

There are other morbid causes which it is well to neglect. The sun aggravates most of the diseases and produces some of them. The effect of high temperatures, of

humidity, of cold, of insufficient or bad nourishment, of overwork, is only too real not to attract our most particular attention. The scarcity of medical attendance, the vicious organization of the sanitary service and of urban hygiene in the colonies, must also be taken into account.

The causes inherent to the country itself are not the only ones which produce mortality among the colonial troops; there are others peculiar to the individual who arrives for the first time in a tropical country, whether to remain in garrison or to take part in an expedition.

If the soldier is too young, if he has not a robust constitution, he will be an easy prey; but if, on the contrary, he has been selected strictly with a view to the trials he will have to bear, he will be able to become refractory to the morbid influences. There arises in this connection the much-debated question of the recruitment and organization of the colonial army. We propose to discuss it with all the care it merits.

Humanity and military interest are in accord in demanding, among the contingents destined for service in our possessions beyond the seas, a preparatory selection, which has not yet been made. There should no longer be allowed to go, even voluntarily, by the side of the veterans of the Sahara, of the Soudan, and of Chinese India, young Frenchmen entirely disarmed in the face of that enemy called the torrid climate. All should be professionals, inured to military life, capable of prompt and easy adaptation to the colonial existence, and surrounded, in addition, by all the guaranties necessary to the preservation of their health.

It seems to us possible to group in eight chapters all the hygienic principles applicable to the colonial troops, in the following order: 1st, Habitation; 2d, Alimentation; 3d, Clothing and Equipment; 4th, Military Life; 5th, Med-

ical Service; 6th, Sanitary Police; 7th, Special Measures for Expeditions; 8th, Hygienic Principles of a Colonial Army.

It is a question of preparing a veritable *Code of Health*, and our ambition will be satisfied if we succeed in showing the absolute necessity, in the colonies, of a rigorous hygiene for both individuals and communities.