

The War Against Malaria in Italy.*

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(Concluded from page 410.)

[After discussing the different preparations of quinine, Professor Colli continues, outlining the work of preventive treatment as follows:]

(a) During the months in which the malaria develops, preventive treatment should be applied to all persons, those who are well as also those who may have a latent infection.

Daily or weekly distribution of quinine can be made without difficulty, provided that the sugar-coated tablets are used. The cost is very small, two or three francs per person during the whole season of four months. The quantity of quinine necessary for each person during the whole course of treatment is less than that which must often be employed to cure one case of fever.

(b) Those rare individuals who in spite of prophylaxis take the fever must have therapeutic doses immediately, with the aim of cutting short the disease. And this must continue from two to four weeks, the preventive treatment finally being resumed.

(c) Individuals who in spite of treatment suffer recurrences must be treated with large doses for a yet longer time—four to six weeks—and also with iron and arsenic.

In this way, from one year to another, this hereditary scourge of infection would be continually weakened; by perseverance, it would be possible to attain a remarkable reduction, perhaps even an entire suppression, of the tribute which our rural population pays to malaria.

Everywhere in Italy *mechanical prophylaxis*, especially the protection of houses against the entrance of mosquitoes, has given most marvellous results. In 1901, upon the initiative and by the advice of our society, 5,165 persons, employés of the railroads, public officials, peasants, working men and business men, were mechanically protected against malaria.

In localities especially chosen for a virulent type of malaria, among 4,363 individuals completely protected there was an average of 1.9 per cent. of cases, and among 802 who were incompletely protected 10.9 per cent. of cases. In 1902 of 5,851 persons mechanically protected there was in all 2.8 per cent. of new cases, and only 10.1 per cent. of recurrences.

Thus a greater number of poor families afflicted for years by malaria for the first time entered, as it were, upon a new life, thanks to mechanical prophylaxis either alone or associated with treatment by quinine.

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[Professor Colli then spoke in detail of different places where mechanical protection was in full force, but concluded that the expense of proper window-nets and screen doors and the care necessary in managing them would prevent this method of protection from ever becoming general among the peasants. He also spoke of the interest which had been shown in the work of the society by the Governments of France, England, Austria, Russia, Roumania, Greece, Spain, Brazil, and Argentine, and of his hope that there might be an international effort made towards abolishing this universal and formidable scourge. He then continues:]

Italy has given the first example of special legislation against malaria. On the initiative of members of our society Parliament has already passed two laws.

In virtue of the first, pure quinine is prepared and distributed for sale over every part of Italy under Government supervision. According to the second, workers and peasants are to be abundantly and gratuitously supplied with quinine by physicians at the expense of the employers. A neglected case of malaria is recognised as an accident received in the course of work, and in case of death damages may be recovered on the ground of criminal neglect. The State set a good example in protecting all the dwellings of those directly or indirectly in its employ. Consequently the customs officers, the employés of highways, railroads, and all kinds of public works, will all be protected against malarial infection, and now that the obstacles audaciously opposed by a small number of selfishly interested or unprincipled people have been overcome, these two beneficent laws are proving of precious and inestimable service to the people.

The revenue received by the Treasury from the sale of quinine, which will be considerable even though it is sold at a low price, is to be entirely devoted to the work of prosecuting the national struggle against our secular enemy.

In France there is talk of imitating our legislation as to quinine.

The municipality of Rome has given the good example of introducing new and salutary principles of anti-malarial hygiene into the regulations of the local sanitary board. Upon my proposition the Minister of Public Works has also incorporated them into contracts for new undertakings in malarial districts, and he has published the new regulations which must be conformed to in beginning and carrying on work in reclaiming the soil. Three hundred and twenty-five thousand souls will be affected by these rules. The scientific irrigation of the Roman Campagna will henceforth be accomplished with an eye to the new principles of the etiology of malaria in seeking the maximum of hygienic efficacy.

* Translated from the Original. By Miss L. L. Dock.

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