

**Manuscript and typescript of a draft summary of simple rules respecting personal hygiene and preservation of health of the families of soldiers in India, by Colonel E.A. Parkes and Professor M.G. Maclean**

**Publication/Creation**

1872

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MANUSCRIPT.

OF

COLONEL E.A. PARKES, M.D. F.R.S.  
(Professor of Hygiene).

AND

M.G. MACLEAN, M.D. D.I.G.H.  
(Professor of Military Medicine).

Dated: 8 MAY 1872.

(Being a DRAFT SUMMARY OF SIMPLE  
RULES respecting the personal  
Hygiene and preservation of health  
of the families of soldiers pro-  
ceeding to India - written at the  
request of the Director-General,  
Army Medical Department).



Sir,

Sanitary  
7626  
614  
26th. February 1872.

We have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of a letter to your address from the Director General, Army Medical Department, No. and date as in the margin and an extract from No. 121, Bombay Military letter which accompanied it.

In this letter you are requested to call on us to submit "suggestions for framing simple rules, calculated to convey useful information respecting personal hygiene and the management of adults and children proceeding to India, and for observance and practice during their sojourn in that climate".

We observe that the extract from the Military letter referred to above, points to "married people" as those who most need suggestions for the preservation of their health, because, we presume, they are less under direct Military and Medical control in domestic economy, than single men living in barracks.

The wives and children of British soldiers in India are a very helpless class, and from the nature of their position, require that much of that care which the authorities now so properly extend to single soldiers in barracks, should be bestowed on them. In other words, there are certain things essential to their health and well being which they cannot do for themselves, and these we shall first briefly indicate.

1. For the preservation of health, the women and children of soldiers should have at least the minimum amount of cubical space allowed to soldiers, with the same attention to ventilation as in barracks.
2. That the same care be taken to secure for them a pure water supply, and the proper conservancy of the latrines in use by them, as in the case of men in barracks.
3. That the quarters occupied by them should be as much under the regular inspection of the Regimental Sanitary Officer as the barracks, so that all defects in construction, surface and sub-soil drainage, in a word, all Sanitary defects may be at once brought to notice and remedied.
4. That means may be taken to mitigate the high temperature to which women and children are subjected during the hot season in their usually small and confined quarters, which is so injurious to the health, particularly of children.
5. That some measures be taken to secure to the families of soldiers the means of purchasing the first necessities of life in such purity as is attainable in India. Milk, for example, which is notoriously often sold to soldiers families adulterated with impure water, a frequent source of fatal diarrhoea, and, there is reason to fear, sometimes, of cholera, when that disease prevails.



6. The families of soldiers should be inspected from time to time regularly, but with exceptional frequency and care during the prevalence of epidemics. In this way only can the Medical Officers secure the early detection of disease, so essential to effective treatment. This with a little tact could be done in such a way as not only to avoid offence, but to secure confidence.
7. As a rule, sick women and children in India should be treated, not as now in their own quarters, but in a part of the hospital set apart for them having at least one properly trained nurse. We regard this as essential to the proper management of the diseases of children who suffer from the ignorance of their parents.
8. In no case, where it is possible, should the children of English parents be kept on the plains of India after seven years of age. They should be sent to schools or depots, or in some way attached to regiments serving in healthy hill stations. This is a matter of obvious and well known necessity. It is no part of our duty to suggest the financial way of carrying out our recommendations, but as this last would be perhaps a costly measure it might be met by a change in the pay of the married soldier, and from that fund now understood to be growing up from fines imposed for drunkenness and other breaches of discipline.

With regard to the next part of the subject, viz, that we should submit "suggestions for framing some simple rules, calculated to convey useful information respecting personal hygiene and the management of adults and children proceeding to India, and for observance and practice during their sojourn in that climate".

We suggest the following are the most important points to be kept in view in preparing a brief manual of instructions for the guidance more particularly of soldiers wives -

1st a brief and simple account of the climate of India, pointing out the great difference between it and the climate of Britain and Ireland and the necessity of conforming to habits of life modified to suit the difference. That many things which can be done with impunity at home are dangerous in India.

2. The necessity of scrupulous attention to personal cleanliness and the daily use of the bath both for themselves and children.
3. That in like manner the house and all belonging to it should be kept perfectly clean. That no water or refuse of any kind should be thrown about, and allowed to stagnate near it. The barrack rules for the management of latrines should be strictly observed, and it should be explained that want of attention to this will surely breed bowel complaints, and render the inmates of the house more liable to Cholera should it attack the station. That beds and bedding should be often taken out and exposed to the air. That care should be taken frequently to search for and destroy bugs and other unclean insects in and about the beds, not only because all such insects are in themselves disgusting, but also because their attacks disturb rest, and are on this account hostile to health more particularly in the case of children.
4. Attention to ventilation should be insisted on, and the danger of breathing air made foul by respiration should be explained. That pure air is a first necessity of life as healthy and strong, and to blow away and destroy the invisible and dangerous poisons generated not only from putrid matters, but those given off from their own bodies.



5. The importance of pure water should be carefully explained. The authorities will of course supply the best available; but families must be careful to purify it still more by using a filter such as the one recommended below, which is cheap, simple and easily made. It should be explained that water is almost sure to become impure whenever many human beings are gathered together. Impure matters are apt to be thrown about; the rain dissolves them, carries them into wells and tanks, and other sources of water supply, and water thus made impure causes bowel complaints, some dangerous fevers and often Cholera.
6. Food - In India animal food is cheaper than it is at home, and as a rule Europeans eat more of it than is good for them. As a rule animal food should not be taken more than once a day - neither should it be over-spiced, made too hot with peppers and condiments and too rich by too large a quantity of butter. Indulgence in too much food of this kind is sure sooner or later to cause looseness of the bowels and dangerous liver complaints.  
  
For children, milk should be largely used, with water boiled rice, arrow root, which is cheap and abundant in India. The greatest care should be taken to secure it pure. If possible the families should see it taken from the cow, the native cow men often add water to it taken from the nearest at hand, which may be impure, and in this way children are often injured. If the milk of the Buffalo be used, it should be diluted with pure water as it is rich and apt to disagree with delicate children.  
  
Pork in India is an unwholesome and unclean and even dangerous food. The pig is an unclean feeder, and its flesh is certainly to be avoided, it often causes violent sickness and purging and symptoms like those of Cholera. Natives of a superior class never eat it, and are sure to despise those who do.
7. Drink - Spirit drinking is a bad and pernicious habit. Everywhere in India it is a short and sure road to the grave. It has destroyed more British soldiers than all the diseases of India. Wholesome beer in moderation, tea, coffee and such like should be the only drinks used in India. Respectable women should never cease by precept and above all by example to discourage spirit drinking in every shape.
8. Clothing will of course be adapted to the season. In the rainy season children should wear light woollen clothes.
9. The practice of sleeping outside the house exposed to night air and night dews is to be avoided. It often results in chills followed by fevers, rheumatism, liver complaints and such like diseases.
10. Needless exposure to the sun is to be avoided. Sunstroke is a dangerous affliction and often follows careless exposure. When the hot land winds blow, the means used in India to reduce the temperature should be used, more particularly when there are children, but it is not safe to put children to sleep as is often done too near the wet tatties, their beds should be at some distance.
11. It cannot be too much insisted on that many lives are lost in India by too long delaying to apply for medical assistance. The course of many diseases there is so swift and remedies to be effective must be used early. This is particularly the case with the bowel complaints of children.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servants,

(signed) M.G. MacLean M.D. D.I.G.H.  
Professor of Military Medicine.

(signed) E.A. Parkes, M.D. F.R.S.  
Professor of Hygiene.



A. M. School  
 P. V. Hospital  
 8th May 1872

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We observe that the extract from the  
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 to "married people" as <sup>those</sup> who most need  
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leaves under direct Military and Medical control in domestic economy, than single men living in Barracks.

The wives and children of British Soldiers in India are a very helpless class, and from the nature of their position require that much of that care which the authorities now so properly extend to single soldiers in Barracks, should be bestowed on them. In their words, there are certain things, essential to their health and well being, which they cannot do for themselves, & these we shall first briefly indicate.

- 1- For the preservation of health the women & children of soldiers should have at least the minimum <sup>amount of</sup> Cubical space allowed to soldiers, with the same attention to Ventilation as in barracks.
- 2- That the same care be taken to secure for them a pure water supply, and the proper Conservancy of the





Curtains in use by them, as in the case of men in barracks.

3 That the quarters ~~are~~ occupied by them should be as much under the regular inspection of the Regimental Sanitary Officer as the barracks, so that all defects in construction, surface and subsoil drainage, in a word all sanitary defects, may be at once brought to notice and remedied.

4 That means may be taken to mitigate the high temperature to which women and children are subjected during the hot season, in their usually small & confined quarters, which is so injurious to the health particularly of children.

5. That some measures be taken to secure to the families of soldiers the means of purchasing the first necessities of life in such purity as is attainable in India. Milk, for example, which is notoriously often sold to soldiers



<sup>families</sup>  
 1. adulterated with impure water, a frequent source of fatal diarrhoea, and there is reason to fear sometimes of Cholera, when that disease prevails.

6. The families of soldiers should be inspected from time <sup>to time</sup> regularly, but with exceptional frequency and care during the prevalence of epidemics.

In this way only can the Medical Officers secure the early detection of disease so essential to effective treatment.

This with a little tact could be done in such a way as not only to avoid offence, but to secure confidence.

7. As a rule, sick women & children in India should be treated, not as now in their own quarters, but in a part of the Hospital, set apart for them, having at least one properly trained nurse.

We regard this as essential to the proper management of the diseases





of children who suffer from the ignorance  
of their parents.

8. In no case, where it is possible should  
the children of English parents be kept  
in the plains of India after seven years  
of age. They should be sent to schools or  
depôts, or in some way attached to  
Regiments serving in healthy hill  
stations. This is a matter of brains &  
well known necessity. It is no part of  
our duty to suggest the financial  
way of carrying out our recommen-  
-dations, but as this last would be  
perhaps a costly measure, it might  
be met by a change in the pay of the married  
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We suggest the following as the  
most important points to be  
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- 1<sup>st</sup> a brief & simple account  
of the climate of India, pointing  
out the great difference between





It is the climate of Great Britain & Ireland and the necessity of conforming to habits of life modified to suit the difference. That many things which can be done with impunity at home are dangerous in India -

2. The necessity of scrupulous attention to personal cleanliness, & the daily use of the bath both for themselves & children.
3. That in like manner the house and all belonging to it should be kept perfectly clean. That no water ~~it~~ or refuse of any kind should be thrown about, or allowed to stagnate near it. The barrack rules for the management of latrines should be strictly observed, and it should be explained that want of attention to this will surely breed bowel complaints, & render the inmates of the house more liable to cholera than at attack the station. That beds & bedding should be often taken out and exposed to the air. That care should be taken frequently to search for and destroy bugs & other unclean insects on and about the beds.



not only because ~~the~~ all such insects are in themselves <sup>disgusting</sup> ~~unpleasant~~, but also because their attacks disturb rest, & are ~~thus more particularly~~ on this account hostile to health, more particularly in the case of children -

4. Attention to Ventilation should be insisted on, and the danger of breathing ~~so~~ air made foul by ~~the~~ respiration should be explained. That pure air is a first necessity of life to keep us healthy & strong & to blow away & destroy the invisible and dangerous poisons generated not only from putrid matters, but those given off from ~~our~~ <sup>their</sup> own bodies.

5. The importance of pure Water should be carefully explained. The Authorities will of course supply the best available, but families must be careful to purify it still more by using a filter such as the one recommended below, which is cheap, simple & easily made.

It should be explained that water is of almost ~~any~~ <sup>any</sup> use & becomes



impure whenever many human beings are gathered together. Impure matters are apt to be thrown about the rain. *Diptera* them, carries them into wells & tanks, and thus sources of water supply, & water thus made impure causes bowel complaints, some dangerous fevers, & often Cholera.

*(certain rules about cooking may be added.)*  
 Food. In India animal food is cheaper than it is at home, and as a rule Europeans eat more of it than is good for them. As a rule animal food should not be taken more than once a day. Neither should it be over spiced, made hot with peppers & condiments and too rich by too large a quantity of butter. Indulgence in too much food of this kind is sure sooner or later to ~~bring about~~ cause looseness of the bowels, and dangerous liver complaints.

For children milk should be largely used, with well boiled rice, arrow root, which is cheap & abundant in India. The greatest care should be taken to secure it pure. If possible the families should see it taken from the cow, the Native cow men often add water to it taken from the nearest at hand, which <sup>may be</sup> is often impure, and in this way children are often injured. If the milk of the Buffalo be used, it should be



diluted with pure water - as it is rich & apt to disagree with delicate children -

Pork in India is an unwholesome and unclean & even dangerous food - The pig is an uncleanly feeder, and its flesh is certainly ~~not~~ to be handled, it often causes violent sickness & purging & symptoms like those of Cholera. Natives of a superior class never eat it, & are sure to despise those who do -

7. Drink - Spirit drinking is a bad & pernicious habit. Every where, in India it is a short & sure road to the grave - It has destroyed more British soldiers than all the diseases of India - Whiskey <sup>is like</sup> beer in moderation, <sup>is like</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>should be</sup> the only <sup>drinks</sup> ~~liquors~~ used in India - Respectable women should never cease by precept & above all by example to discourage spirit drinking in every shape -

8. Clothing will of course be adapted to the season - In the rainy season children should wear light woollen clothes

9. The practice of sleeping outside the house exposed to night air & night dews is to be avoided. It often results in chills followed



by Pains, Rheumatism, Liver Complaints & such like  
Diseases -

10. Head & exposure to the sun is to be avoided. Sun stroke is a dangerous affection & often follows cerebral exposure - When the hot land winds blow, the means usual in India to reduce the temperature should be used, more particularly when there are children, ~~and~~ but it is not safe to put children to sleep as is often done too near the wall lattices. ~~They~~ Their beds should be at some distance.
11. It cannot be too much insisted on that ~~the~~ many lives are lost in India by too long delaying to apply for medical assistance. The course of many diseases there is swift & remedies to be effective must be used early. This is particularly the case with <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ bowel complaints of children.





as those who most need suggestions for the preservation of their health, because, we presume, they are less under direct Military and Medical control in domestic economy, than single men living in barracks.


The wives and children of British Soldiers in India are a very helpless class, and, from the nature of their position, require that much of that care which the authorities now so properly extend to single Soldiers in barracks, should be bestowed on them. In other words, there are certain things essential to their health and well being which they can not do for themselves, and these we shall first briefly indicate.

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2. That the same care be taken to secure for them a pure water supply, and the proper conservancy of the latrines in use by them, as in the case of men in barracks.

3. That the quarters occupied by them should be





be as much under the regular inspection of the regimental Sanitary Officer as the barracks, so that all defects in construction, surface- and sub-soil drainage, in a word, all Sanitary defects may be at once brought to notice and remedied.

~~H.~~ That means may be taken to mitigate the high temperature to which women and children are subjected during the hot season in their usually small and confined quarters, which is so injurious to the health particularly of children.


Also

~~A~~ That ~~some measures be taken~~ to secure to the families of soldiers the means of purchasing the first necessities of life in such purity as is attainable in India. Milk, for example, which is notoriously often sold to soldiers' families adulterated with impure water, a frequent source of fatal diarrhoea, and, there is reason to fear, sometimes, of cholera when that disease prevails.

That in addition

~~C.~~ The families of soldiers should be inspected from time to time regularly, but with exceptional frequency and care during the prevalence of





epidemics. In this way only can the Medical Officers secure the early detection of disease, so essential to effective treatment. This with a little tact could be done in such a way as not only to avoid offence, but to secure confidence.

**7** As a rule, sick women and children in India should be treated, not as <sup>is often the case</sup> now in their own quarters, but in a part of the hospital set apart for them, having at least one properly trained nurse. We regard this as essential to the proper management of the diseases of children who suffer from the ignorance of their parents.

**8** In no case, where it is possible, should the children of English parents be kept on the plains of India after seven years of age. They should be sent to schools or depots, or in some way attached to regiments serving in healthy hill stations. This is a matter of obvious and well known necessity. It is no part of our duty to suggest the financial way of carrying out our recommendations, but as this last would be





the beds, not only because all such insects are in themselves disgusting, but also because their attacks disturb rest, and are on this account hostile to health more particularly in the case of children.


4. Attention to ventilation should be insisted on, and the danger of breathing air made foul by respiration should be explained.

That pure air is a first necessity of life to keep them healthy and strong, and to blow away and destroy the invisible and dangerous poisons generated not only from putrid matters, but those given off from their own bodies.

5. The importance of pure water should be carefully explained. The authorities will of course supply the best available; but families must be careful to purify it still more by using <sup>themselves</sup> a filter, ~~which is the one recommended~~ ~~below~~, which <sup>are</sup> cheap, simple, and easily made.

It should be explained that water is almost <sup>sure</sup>





assuming that the rules which regulate  
the amount of cubical space, ventilation,  
pure water supply, & the proper conservancy  
of the latrines in the quarters of married  
soldiers, and also ~~therefore~~ <sup>regular</sup> sanitary inspection  
are properly carried out, we are of

opinion that means should <sup>in addition</sup> be taken to  
mitigate the high temperature in


also to secure to the families of married  
soldiers the means of purchasing

That in addition to the periodical inspec-  
tion of quarters provided for as above,  
the families of soldiers should be  
inspected from time to time

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The above appear to us to be the most important  
points to keep in view in preparing ~~for the~~  
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When the hot land winds blow, the means, usual  
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W. J. Macleod M.D. D.S. &c

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