

# DREADED LEPROSY, whose touch is SLOW and AWFUL DEATH, visits Washington.



JOHN EARLY THE LEPER IN WASHINGTON.  
By THEODORE H. TILLEY.

"UNCLEAN, unclean!" they cried, and stood afar off.

For three thousand years men have been compelled to hear that voice of doom.

"Come not near, I am a leper," said the sick man in the days long before Christ, and with his admission then, as now, came the realization that he had drained Life's cup of sorrow to its bitterest dregs. Science has done nothing for the leper—except to isolate him, as it has ever done. When the sign of death appears beneath the whitening skin, the door of hope has closed; the sun has set; the last watch has begun. It is only a question of time.

There sits in Washington today—a leper. The Leper of Lynn and the Leper of Washington they call him, for both places might claim him and yet neither do. It is the hand of fate—he is an outcast, he is unclean.

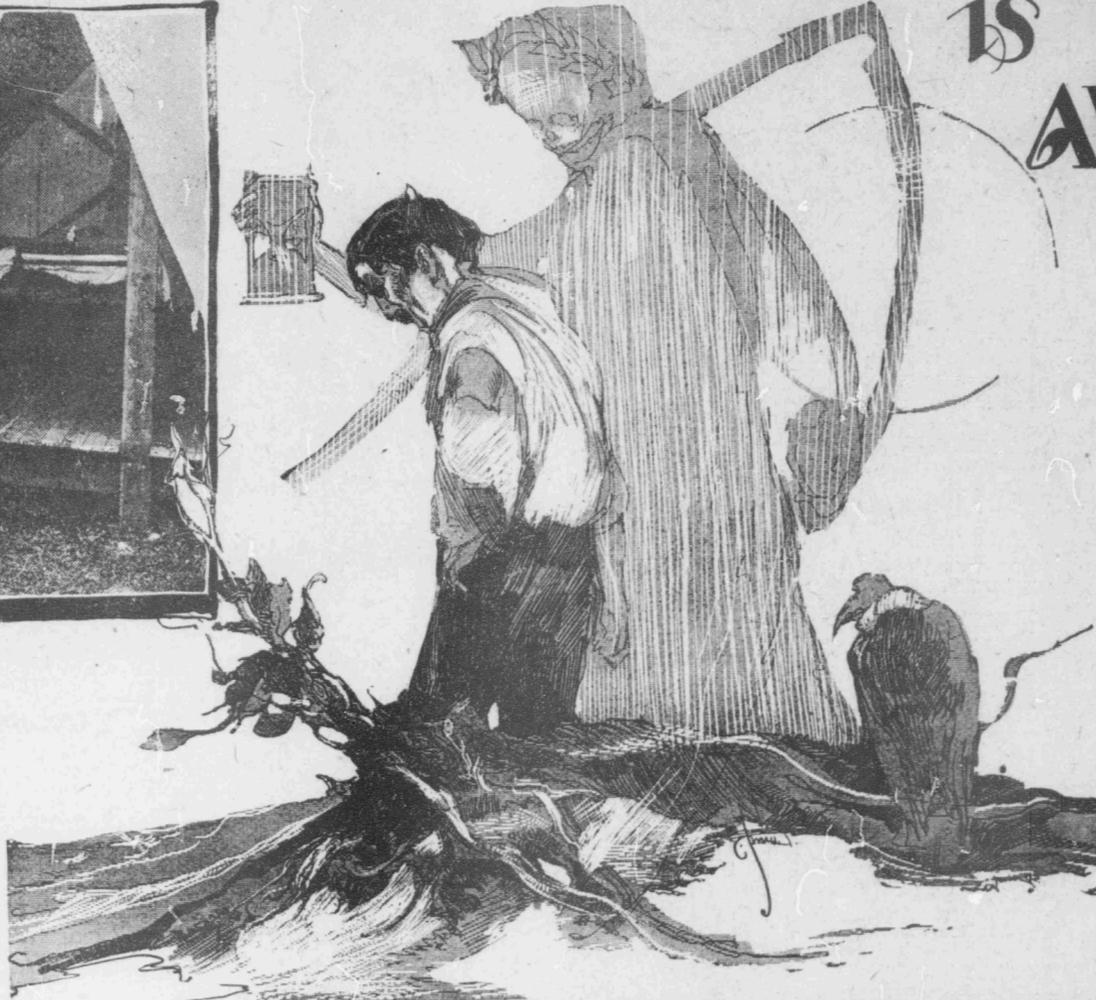
John Early is his name, Early the leper from Lynn, N. C., who came to Washington a week ago in search of a pension, for he had fought long in his country's cause in the distant Philippines. He knew not the nature of his disease—only that he was sick. Behind in the little North Carolina town he left a wife and a year old baby—till he returned with the pension. Mayhap he shall never return again; mayhap, although he prays not, he shall not see them again. But he is a leper and what can one do?

I TALKED to this unfortunate man as he stood in the doorway of his little tent, down by the Eastern Branch of the Potomac. Those who have heard the sound of the leper's voice, have seen that knotted forehead, have watched that nervous clenching of the tent flaps, and have unwearily and yet pityingly looked at the distraught man as he paced like a wounded animal up and down the floor of his narrow prison, will never forget the scene.

There is nothing but humility on Early's face. It draws one to him and you feel you would go and put your arms about the deserted one—but you dare not.

He is "unclean." And so you begin to talk, to try to understand how he bears up under it all. "Is there that you get an insight into the leper's soul and you learn of the peace of which, there is no understanding."

"I am a Christian," said the doomed man, "and that is why I can bear with fortitude the fate that has overtaken me today. Three years ago I was converted in a little church in Flatfishburg, N. Y., but the John Early of those days never dreamed that the grace he found then would stand John



Early, a leper, in such sweet isolation three years later.

### Knows He's a Leper.

"I know that I am a leper," he said, and the voice choked a little; the blue eyes welled with tears and the little nervous steps the man was taking about his tent front became shorter and more indicative of the cruel thoughts that raged within. The long, lean fingers closed and opened again; the leper stroked his arms, whether from habit or from the insidious creep of the disease his auditors knew not; he pulled at the frayed coat, the low-cut collar, and then at his arms again.

"And yet even the doctors tell me that I may hope," he said at last, and those about him were glad that the silence had been broken and turned their eyes again toward the frail, pathetic figure, the embodiment of hopelessness, and yet with hope; a living being, and yet, according to the law of Moses, belonging to the "dead," just another unfortunate man—a leper.

"I want to see my wife and baby again somehow," he said after a while. "Do you think it can be arranged? Is there any law to prevent them coming to see me, doctor?" he said eagerly, turning to the grave-faced man who stood near. And the humane physician gave him comfort when he replied that there was no law.

"He talks about them all the time," said one of the guards who stood nearby. "That's all he does, talks of his wife and baby back in Lynn, and reads his Bible. It seems to comfort him, and God knows a man like him needs comfort. So we listen and help him plan and hope for brighter days, when the scourge shall be removed and he can go forth into the world again—to wife and baby."

### Caring for Lepers.

For Early says that he had rather die than be taken to a leper colony and doomed to a still more horrible living death, isolated from all who love him and whom he loves. There is a special lazaretto maintained for lepers by the State of Louisiana, about seventy-five of the unfortunate being segregated there in 1902.

The annexation of the Hawaiian Islands by the United States brought this Government face to face with the leper question. A commission was ordered from the Marine and Hospital Corps in 1898 to investigate conditions there, but their work had hardly begun when the Spanish-American war broke out. In November, 1898, D. A. Carmichael, M. D., made an extended report on leprosy in the islands. There were then in the leper settlement in Moloai a total of 1,073 lepers, including 141 boys and 130 girls. The leper colony at Moloai is maintained at an annual expense to the Government of more than \$80,000, the Government housing, feeding, and clothing all its inhabitants. There is an average of 1,000 lepers in the colony at all times. The colony also embraces a number of "clean" persons, who are employed as helpers, priests, and assistants.

### Restrictions on Visitors.

Under the new rules, visitors are not allowed to embrace, touch, or kiss the lepers, but may visit and converse with them at any time separated by a double wire fence.

Egypt is considered the cradle of leprosy, and it has existed there since quite ancient times. It has existed in India at least 3,000 years. Leprosy was described by a writer in China 2,000

years ago. Greece had seen the disease before Hippocrates wrote of it. The Romans contracted it from the Greeks; the troops of Pompey carried it into Italy in the first century before Christ. Pilgrims from the Holy Land introduced the disease into England, Wales, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, and other European countries became affected. The invasion of America by the disease has never been traced.

### In the Middle Ages.

In the Middle Ages leprosy was established in France under chaplains, and the lepers were made to garb themselves alike and to bear a rattle, warning all clean people of their approach. At the time of Louis VIII there were 2,000 leper houses in France. In the British isles isolation was enforced, cows, gray habits, sticks, and clappers being furnished the unfortunate. In modern times strict segregation is practiced in nearly all instances where lepers are found.

In this connection, and Early himself pins his faith on these passages as he lies in his tent on the outskirts of Washington, it is interesting to note that Moses and the ancient writers took it for granted that leprosy was a curable disease. One is told that the lepers were even allowed to go about the streets to beg; that they sat upon church steps and asked alms. In Abyssinia to this day these things are seen, and in many of the superstitious countries of the Old World the synagogues and churches were provided with separate pews, where the unfortunate might attend service.

"The Door of Lepers" was known to many a church and considered a matter of course. Only the touch was considered profane, and the lepers might mingle among the people so long as they disclosed their identity and remained aloof from the "clean."

Fingering a little red Bible, his swollen hands numb to the touch of its precious pages, his eyes half closed at times as the leprous welts upon his forehead imprint deeper the sign of the white death; stunned as ancient Naaman was stunned, but hopeful as those who sought the Nazarene, sits the leper of Washington—the leper of modern days.

"And there came a leper to Him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, If Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean."

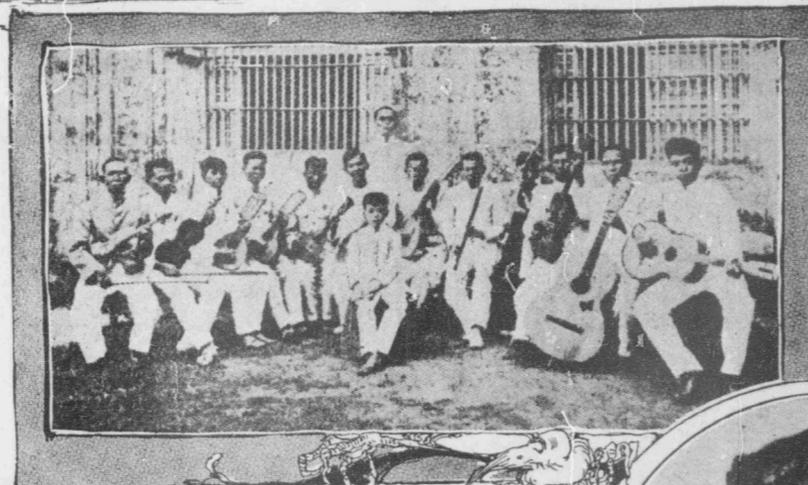
"And Jesus moved to compassion put forth His hand, and touched him and said unto him, I will, be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed."

Thus the leper of Washington reads from the Scriptures that have come down through all the years, and is comforted. "They are my mainstay now—My God and my Bible—for I know that I am a leper, and that men must shun me. Somehow, I have been reconciled since I learned the truth—God must have prepared me for the awakening. I only ask that humanity may be kind to my helpless wife and child, whether I shall be permitted to live out my days within their care I do not know. I am a leper, and it is not for me to say."

### A Pathetic Scene.

And Early ran his hands nervously through the sunny hair that straggled down as though to hide the spotted forehead; through the mist of tears that suddenly filled two frank blue eyes gleamed the light of hope and then the shadow of despair; incessantly he paced before the little six-by-ten tent that represents home a space in which is crowded all the tragedy of life and the hopelessness of a lingering death. Those who saw the pathetic figure as it stood in relief against a near-by potter's field will never efface the scene from memory, nor shall they wish to see its like again.

Thus Early meets his interviewers and has watched them involuntarily shudder and withdraw as he in his restlessness would overstep the dead line that separates the scene from memory, nor shall they wish to see its like again.



ORCHESTRA COMPOSED OF LEPEPERS.



FATHER DAMIEN.

"My soul, my heart is alive, and thirsting for the something that will help me spend my days in peace; this old body is dead, according to the code of Moses, and there is no hope for it," he says, resignedly.

It is not as though the man were condemned to death by law of man, for there is hope of pardon and reprieve with them. The law can do nothing for unfortunate Early unless it grants the pension he asks for his nine years of army service and the loss of his health in the Philippines.

### Case of Father Damien.

Early, like Father Damien, who is now devoting his life to missionary work among the leper colony of Moloai, is a martyr to duty. The story of Father Damien, who has become one of the loathed sect in order that he might do the bidding of the Master, is one of the most heroic self-sacrifice in historical annals.

"Have you read Ben Hur, or have you seen the never to be forgotten scene in the immortal play wherein the Nazarene cleanses the leprosy mother of Hur and his sister, Tirzah, as they languished in the valley of Cedron," the modern leper of the Nation's Capital, was asked. He had not,

he said, and perhaps 'tis better so, for there was never a more graphic picture of human misery painted than that by Gen. Lew Wallace, when he wrote of Tirzah and her mother: "When she began to think, mother-like, it was not of herself, but her child. She buried her knowledge in her heart; hopeless herself, she redoubled her devotion to Tirzah and with wonderful ingenuity continued to keep the daughter ignorant of what they were beset with, and even hopeful that it was nothing. She repeated her little games and retold her stories, and invented new ones, and listened with ever so much pleasure to the songs she would have from Tirzah, while on her own wasting lips the psalms of the singing king of their race served to bring soothing of forgetfulness and keep alive within them both the recollection of the God who would seem to have abandoned them—the world not worth a thought or utterance."

### Marks of Disease.

"Slowly, steadily, with horrible certainty, the disease spread, after a while bleaching their heads white.

and covering their body with scales; then it fell to their throats, shrilling their voices, and to their joints, hardening the tissues and cartilages—slowly, and as the mother knew, past remedy, it was affecting their lungs and arteries and bones, at each advance making the sufferers more and more loathsome, and so it would continue till death, which might be years before them.

"Still as is the force of habit, these so afflicted grew in time not merely to speak composedly of their own disease; they beheld the hideous transformation of their persons as of course, and in despite clung to existence.

"And yet the old happy life could never be again. If she went near the house called home it would be to stop at the gate and cry 'unclean, unclean.' She must go about with the yearning of love alive in her breast strong as ever, and more sensitive even, because return in kind could not be. The boy of whom she had so constantly thought, and with all sweet promises such as mothers find their delight in, must meet her, stand afar off. If he held out his hands to her and called: 'Mother, mother!' for very love of him, she must answer: 'Unclean, unclean.'"

And so it was in the days of Hur, in the days of the Christ, nearly 2,000 years ago. And so it is today, for the touch of leprosy is death, and despite science, a leper is a leper still.

## WHAT IS LEPROSY?

By EVELYN G. MITCHELL (Author of "Mosquito Life").

IN the misty past, more than three thousand years ago, leprosy reared its terrible head amid the jungles of Africa. The ancient records tell us how, from the "elephant country," it followed the colored traders and captives to the domain of the Pharaohs. India, too, in her remotest history, tells of the dread scourge and today stands cursed with 400,000 victims. From Africa and Asia the disease, with merchants and conquerors as bearers, spread to Greece, where it was known, to some extent, 345 B. C. Like a Nemesis it traveled with the spoils of the Roman cohorts to the Eternal City, and thence followed her armies from Europe. There it increased with the wanderings of the barbarians and rose to an appalling pitch immediately after the Crusades.

The Portuguese and Spanish ex-

posed, in particular, having an enormous percentage of lepers.

### Origin of Leprosy.

Leprosy is caused by a germ, bacillus leprae, discovered by Armauer Hansen and A. Neisser, of Norway. Apparently it does not live free in nature, but always in a living body or in excreted matter. It is doubtful if the pure culture can be inoculated. On animals it has practically no effect, save on rats, producing leprosy-seeming effects on these. In form the bacillus is a rod, similar to the bacillus of tuberculosis, and leprosy appears to be closely connected with this disease.

While isolation of lepers certainly checks the spread of the disease, as the procedure proves in Hawaii there is almost no danger by communicating with a leper. Why, we shall see later. Not more than two or three of the many attendants of lepers are reported as having contracted the disease. It is almost never taken from leprosy husbands or wives. Children are never born lepers; they become contaminated after birth. The great leprologists of the world assert that the disease is infectious and not hereditary. Not over 8 per cent of known lepers have leprosy parentage.

Then how is the disease spread. It is to be noted that its greatest ravages are in countries where the population dwells under unsanitary, crowded conditions and where salt fish, dried in a partially putrefied and evil-smelling condition, or raw fish forms a great dietary staple. The lower classes are the worst affected. Climate seems to have nothing to do with it. Tropical Hawaii and frigid Iceland alike are affected. The connection with the eating of fish was noted as far back as 1778, by one Gilbert White, an Englishman. The fish are infected apparently by insects, with bacilli originally in the body of some leper.

### By Bites of Insects.

The insects can also carry the disease directly, from man to man, by their bites. It is known that in Colombia and Argentina fleas are responsible for the spread of the disease. Bedbugs, also, are on the list as having transmitted the malady. The bacilli have been demonstrated in the intestines of both these insects, as well as in the stomachs of the common house mosquito, and of other mosquitoes. It is perfectly possible that any biting insect might secure a supply of germs from a leper and inoculate one or more victims. A case of a Japanese is reported in which a mosquito, crushed on broken skin, transmitted the infection.

The ill-odored fish, above referred to, is doubtless a great attraction to insects and easily infected, both by the bacilli rubbed from their backs and the deposition of their germ-laden feces upon it. This, of course, would hold good of other food, infection to insects. So that, to contract leprosy proportional to its attractiveness, it is not necessary that one should ever have seen a leper.

In Havana many lepers, abhorring confinement in the great Government Hospital, says Dr. Ashmead, hide in their homes. Then they frequently follow the cigar-making trade, rolling the cigars with their leprosy fingers. Not only this, but the final touch consists in wetting the tip of the wrapper of the cigar that it may stay in place. This the leper frequently accomplishes with his tongue! As the secretions of the mouth and nose

(Continued on Fourth Page.)