

line, covering nearly five degrees of latitude and fifteen of longitude, and embracing an area of not less than 220,000 square miles.

With much of the widely extended and diversified territory here referred to I am personally familiar, my duties having led me on various occasions over the greater part of it; and monthly Sick Reports being regularly received by me, at Head Quarters, from Assistant Surgeons attached to the several Divisions, containing detailed statements of all diseases occurring among the men under their care, during the periods referred to; and as no member of the Force has for several years been invalidated for any disqualification, until he has first appeared before me for final examination, in order that his medical history, his present condition, and all the circumstances relating to the origin and nature of the disease for which his discharge is recommended, may be clearly understood and recorded; my opportunities for acquiring trustworthy information on the subjects to which I propose to direct your attention, have probably not been inferior to those hitherto enjoyed by any other physician in the Territories.

I trust I shall not be misunderstood;—I mention these circumstances, not from any childish desire to magnify my humble office; but because, to the majority of the members present, I must necessarily be a stranger, and the subject to which I propose more especially to direct the attention of the profession, in view of the probably rapid and extensive colonization in the near future, of these broad and fertile domains, is one, the significance of which cannot be overestimated, and which deserves, and must sooner or later receive the consideration its importance merits.

So far as we possess accurate knowledge, which is really very considerable when sought for, the aboriginal inhabitants of these and the adjoining Territories, previous to the invasion of Europeans, other than the old trappers and traders who first dwelt among them for the purposes of barter, and ultimately became assimilated with them; enjoyed as complete an exemption from contagious Zymotic diseases, as did both the natives and colonists of Australia and New Zealand prior to the introduction of steam navigation; all those from which they have since so pitilessly and calamitously suffered, having been entailed upon them by white men; but with one exception to be hereafter referred to more particularly, have not hitherto become permanently domiciled here.

In their aboriginal condition, before they became debauched by the vices and contaminated by the diseases of their conquerors, like other indigenous races whose progenitors had succeeded by a species of natural selection or adaptability of constitution in surviving the assaults of malaria under conditions which must long have proved fatal to many, the majority of the males fell in battle before they reached an advanced age; they were subject to comparatively few diseases, apart from those dependent upon wounds and injuries; and these were for the most part the result of great exposure and long abstinence from food, in their war expeditions or