

the nineteen Frenchmen who reached Panama in January, 1881, think that the secret of success lay 7,000 miles away with a young countryman of theirs, an army surgeon in Algiers called Laveran, unknown, solitary, unrecognized, who was quietly studying malaria in a military hospital in Algiers, doing work which alone could make possible the completion of their plans.

From the outset the chief obstacle proved to be the fevers. It is a sad record. Within seven months from beginning work the mortality had risen to the rate of 119 per 1,000 for the month. As the number of employees rose, so in a certain measure did the death-rate, which reached the maximum in the month of September, 1885, in the appalling figures of 176.97 deaths per 1,000. This would appear to be about the maximum death-rate of the British Army in the West Indies in the nineteenth century. The average in Jamaica for the twenty years ending 1836 was 101 per 1,000. At several stations it reached as high as 178 per 1,000. But this is nothing to some of the seventeenth-century records, which show that a regiment of 800 lost two-thirds of its strength in a fortnight.¹ The maximum number of employees was in 1887 and 1888 from 15,000 to nearly 18,000. The maximum mortality in these two years was 72.48 per 1,000. Then for a period of eight or ten years the work lagged, and the total number of men employed annually was for many years under 1,000; a large proportion coloured and the whites chiefly immunes. Only once in these years did the mortality rise above 133 per 1,000, which was in the month of January, 1903, and this seems largely to have been due to an epidemic of small-pox. Yellow fever, malaria, and dysentery were responsible for the large proportion of deaths. From 1890 yellow fever practically disappeared, with the exception of a small epidemic in 1897. During the French occupation 6,283 of the employees died in hospital; thousands died

¹ Maunsell, Jamaica branch of the British Medical Association, *Proceedings*, Year 3, No. 12.