

BACILLI AND BULLETS

AN ADDRESS TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN IN THE CAMPS AT CHURN

I HAVE been asked to say a few words on the question of health in war-time, that you may realize its importance. Formerly an army marched on its belly ; *now* it marches on its brain. Only by utilizing existing knowledge, in all grades from Commander-in-Chief to private, is the maximum of success available. To put the largest number of the enemy out of action with a minimum of loss to his own men is the aim of every general. While in one way modern war merges the individual in a great machine, on the other hand the intelligent action of the unit has never been so important a factor in making the machine work smoothly and efficiently. After all, it is the man behind the gun who wins the victory.

What I wish to urge is a true knowledge of your foes, not simply of the bullets, but of the much more important enemy, the bacilli. In the wars of the world they have been as Saul and David—the one slaying thousands, the other tens of thousands. I can never see a group of recruits marching to the dépôt without mentally asking what percentage of these fine fellows will die legitimate and honourable deaths from wounds, what percentage will perish miserably from neglect of ordinary sanitary precautions ? It is bitter enough to lose thousands of the best of our young men in a hideous war, but it adds terribly to the tragedy to think that more than one-half of the losses may be due to preventable disease. Typhus