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Chapter XI: Disqualifying diseases

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is nothing so well calculated to counteract this influence as rigid discipline, reasonable activity of mind and body, strict temperance, both in eating and drinking, and frequent religious worship. Every regiment should have its chaplains, not less than its medical officers, not only with a view of restraining vice and promoting morality, but of affording to the poor soldier, away from home and friends, in the hour of his mortal extremity, those consolations which the minister of the gospel alone knows how to impart. The mitigation of the horrors and miseries of war, not less than the tendencies of the age in which we live, absolutely demand such a provision.

CHAPTER XI.

DISQUALIFYING DISEASES.

Troops, whether regulars or volunteers, should include no men that are not perfectly qualified, both physically and mentally, for the hardships of the public service. They

should, in a word, be perfectly sound, or, what is the same thing, free from all defects, congenital or acquired. It is for this reason that they are always subjected to a most thorough examination by the recruiting or regimental surgeon. This examination is, as a general rule, a great deal more rigid in the regular than in the volunteer service. In the former, the regulations are such that, if the recruit is not found to be sound after he has been inspected by the regular army surgeon, the expense incident to his enlistment and transportation falls upon the medical officer who committed the oversight.

An examination of the kind here mentioned demands both time, patience, and skill. In order to make it thorough, the candidate must be completely stripped, so that if any disease or defect in the exterior of the body exist it may be at once rendered apparent. The examination, however, must not be limited to the exterior; it must embrace also the interior. The disqualifying affections may be arranged according to the organs and regions in which they are seated, under separate heads:—

1. The eye and ear. 2. The brain, as the seat of intellect. 3. The lungs and heart. 4. The stomach, bowels, anus, liver, and spleen. 5. The kidneys, bladder, and urethra. 6. The testicles. 7. The exterior of the abdomen. 8. The limbs, including the joints.

The diseases which unfit a man for military service are defects of sight, of hearing, and of speech; weakness of intellect; paralysis; epilepsy; hernia; hydrocele; varicocele; imperfect development or absence of the testes; hemorrhoids, anal fistule, and fissure of the anus; unusual protuberance of the abdomen; organic lesion of the internal organs; large tumors; aneurism; varix of the extremities; ulcers, or large scars indicative of their former existence; bad corns; bunnions; overlapping toes; flatfootedness; deformity of the hands and fingers; contractions from burns or other causes; badly united fractures; unreduced dislocations; diseased joints; loss of the incisor and canine teeth; serious disfigurement of the features; spinal curvature; ill-formed shoul-

ders; habits of intemperance; diminutive stature or excessive overgrowth.

In the regular army no man is enlisted under the age of eighteen or over that of forty-five. In the volunteer service, similar regulations obtain, although they are not so rigidly enforced.

Recruiting surgeons, after having examined a candidate for enlistment, are obliged to certify, on honor, that they consider him, in their opinion, to be free from all bodily defects, and mental infirmity, which would, in any way, disqualify him for performing the duties of a soldier.

When men become disqualified for service, in consequence of disease or accident, a surgeon's certificate is also required, in order to aid them afterward in procuring a pension and exemption from ordinary military duties. The affections which may justify a soldier in applying for a release from further service are organic visceral lesions, deafness, blindness, mental imbecility, lameness, large herniæ, and such mutilations as interfere with the proper handling of the sword and musket.