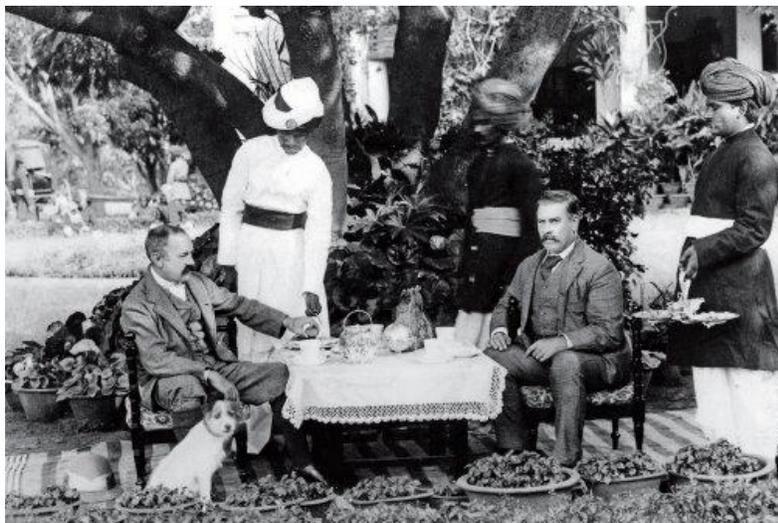




The following was taken from: <http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/3.1/gilbert.html>

Mad Dogs and Englishmen

Colonial insecurities extended well beyond dietary concerns. Dane Kennedy of George Washington University has examined the clothing worn by late nineteenth and early twentieth century colonial settlers and officials. He found that British and American colonizers were obsessed by the fear that without special clothing they would be subject to the penetrating the rays of the tropical sun; the rays were thought to account, at least in part, for the laziness and other bad habits of the colonized. They even purchased "spine pads" to shield their nervous systems from these invisible enervating forces. We are fortunate that there is an audio file available of Noel Coward singing his own rendition of the first verse of his famous song, "Mad Dogs and Englishmen" (1932), in which he illuminates the determination of British rulers in Asia to get about in the tropic heat in the face of these invisible dangers in a manner that they believed served to single themselves out favorably from those they ruled. The audio file and the text produced here may be found at <http://www.sabrizain.demon.co.uk/malaya/coward.htm>.



Mad Dogs and Englishmen

by Noel Coward

In tropical climes there are certain times of day
When all the citizens retire to tear their clothes off and perspire.
It's one of the rules that the greatest fools obey,
Because the sun is much too sultry
And one must avoid its ultry-violet ray.
The natives grieve when the white men leave their huts,
Because they're obviously, definitely nuts!

Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun,
The Japanese don't care to, the Chinese wouldn't dare to,
Hindus and Argentines sleep firmly from twelve to one
But Englishmen detest-a siesta.

In the Philippines they have lovely screens to protect you from the glare.
In the Malay States, there are hats like plates which the Britishers won't wear.
At twelve noon the natives swoon and no further work is done,
But mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun.

It's such a surprise for the Eastern eyes to see,
that though the English are effete, they're quite impervious to heat,
When the white man rides every native hides in glee,
Because the simple creatures hope he will impale his solar topee on a tree.
It seems such a shame when the English claim the earth,
They give rise to such hilarity and mirth.
Ha ha ha ha hoo hoo hoo hoo hee hee hee hee

Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun.
The toughest Burmese bandit can never understand it.
In Rangoon the heat of noon is just what the natives shun,
They put their Scotch or Rye down, and lie down.
In a jungle town where the sun beats down to the rage of man and beast
The English garb of the English sahib merely gets a bit more creased.
In Bangkok at twelve o'clock they foam at the mouth and run,
But mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun.

Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun.
The smallest Malay rabbit deploras this foolish habit.
In Hong Kong they strike a gong and fire off a noontday gun,
To reprimand each inmate who's in late.
In the mangrove swamps where the python romps
there is peace from twelve till two.
Even caribous lie around and snooze, for there's nothing else to do.
In Bengal to move at all is seldom ever done,
But mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun.