that my professional brethren who do not know me may understand that I am not the man "got at the cheapest possible expenditure," and "according to circumstances" which the trustees may dictate, or take such fee as they choose to give me.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH PEARSON, M.D.,
Medical Officer of Health of the town and
Harbour of Maryport.

Maryport, March 17th, 1873.

* * * We regret unwittingly to have given Dr. Pearson any cause of offence, and we are glad to hear that his agreement as to remuneration with the Maryport local authority is not "according to services," as that term is usually employed, but according to a proper estimate to be arrived at after Dr. Pearson has satisfied himself of the amount of work to be done. It reflects no little credit on the Maryport trustees that they should have been guided by Dr. Pearson's opinion in this matter. The phrase "according to circumstances," reported to us evidently represented inaccurately the nature of the agreement between Dr. Pearson and the trustees.—ED. L.

ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Referring to a statement in your paper of last week, that "a patient is refused admission at this hospital if he lives in the parish of Lambeth," we think it right, as the officers to whom the duty of admitting patients has been entrusted, to state that you have been misinformed. No patient has ever been refused admission on such grounds; but, as might be expected, a very large proportion of those admitted are inhabitants of Lambeth parish.

We think it due to the authorities of this hospital that this correction should be placed in as prominent a position in your columns as that occupied by the statement above mentioned.

We are, Sir, yours obediently,

GEORGE H. EVANS,
Resident Assistant-Physician.
W. W. WAGSTAFFE,
Resident Assistant-Surgeon.

March 18th, 1873.

THE SANITARIUM OF SOUTH AFRICA.

(From a Lay Correspondent.)

No. II.

In my last letter I gave a slight sketch of the geography of part of this country. I now propose to describe the seasons, and to give some details as to the country near the sea, and in the lowest part of the imaginary line I drew across the colony in my last letter.

Of course, so far as heat and cold are concerned, the seasons here are the very opposite of the European seasons. January is about the hottest, and July the coldest month; and this holds good over the whole colony. But as regards wet and dry seasons, there is a vast difference in different parts of the country. The wet season in what is here called the "upper country"—that is, the country near Cape Town, and reaching as far as the Hex River Mountains (which, as far as actual height is concerned, is the lower country),—is the winter season, while the summer is the wet season in the eastern parts of the colony, and in the higher ground generally.

This is to be accounted for in the following way. The wet in the "upper country" is caused by rains which come in from the sea. These rains always come in the winter months, and are very severe, the more so the nearer the sea. In Cape Town and its neighbourhood the proportion of wet days to fine in the winter season is about three to one. These rains begin about May, and end towards the close of August or the beginning of September. They extend over the whole country as far as the Hex River Mountains, though they are not quite so severe in the Worcester and Robertson districts as they are in Cape Town.

The Hex River Mountains form a barrier beyond which these rains do not extend, and on the other side of these mountains we come at once into a different order of things. Here and in the rest of the high ground the winter is the dry season, and the country depends chiefly for water on the thunderstorms which take place in the summer months. These thunderstorms are most terrific, and I shall have something to say upon them on another occasion. In the meantime it is important to bear in mind that in the "upper country" the winter season—i.e., the months of May, June, July, and August—is the wet season, and the summer the dry season; while in the really high ground the winter is the dry, and the summer the wet, season.

I wish now to give some description of the "upper country," beginning with Cape Town. Cape Town itself is a town composed of ugly and mean-looking buildings, placed in what I suppose to be one of the finest situations in the world. No doubt the first view of Table Mountain would give most Europeans at all accustomed to mountain scenery a sensation of disappointment; but when one has had time to study and realise all the features of the grand old mountain, I can scarcely fancy anyone being otherwise than delighted with it. As, however, the object of these letters is not to describe scenery, I must not dwell upon this point.

There is plenty of very good accommodation to be obtained in Cape Town. The hotels, of which there are several, are very fair, and there are many excellent boarding-houses (the only form of lodgings known in the colony), at which accommodation can be obtained at seven or eight guineas a month.

For an invalid the great recommendation of Cape Town is that the best medical attendance to be obtained in the colony is to be had there, as also all the little delicacies which invalids require; but on the whole I cannot recommend it as a residence for invalids. In the first place, Cape Town is on the seaside, and is, therefore, necessarily low; and, as in all seaside places, the air is always more or less damp. Then in summer time the streets are very hot, and the air oppressive, and, owing to the *quasi* fashionable tone of the place, and the mimicry by a certain portion of the inhabitants of European manners and dress, it is difficult to adopt a light and cool costume without at the same time making oneself the object of remark. In the winter time Cape Town is, as I have already said, very wet and rainy. In summer time, too, Cape Town is rendered very unpleasant by the constant occurrence of "south-easters." These winds are excellent for the general sanitary health of the town, and are popularly known as the "Cape Town doctor." They cleanse the town of bad smells, and prevent cholera and fever, but they are very bad for consumptive subjects, and would certainly confine patients of this description to the house for days together. No one who has not experienced them can have any idea of the force of these winds. It is often as much as a strong man can do to keep his feet, and the inhabitants are driven to take refuge in cabs from the fury of the gales. Sometimes these winds last for days at a time, and then they become an intolerable nuisance, even to a perfectly healthy person. After a day or two all the loose dust in the place is blown away, and then the wind catches all the small pebbles, and blows them into the faces of all who venture out of doors, in a way that is really most painful. There is another point connected with Cape Town which for invalids must not be overlooked. The drainage of the town is most defective. Owing to these south-east winds, up to the present time there has been a wonderful immunity from epidemics, choleraic or otherwise; but this cannot last for ever, and unless measures are taken by the authorities, disease must sooner or later make its appearance. Another point is that, in building many of the houses, leaden cisterns have been used. The water of the town is remarkably soft, and so contracts much of the poisonous qualities inherent in lead, and many cases of lead-poisoning have occurred. Against both these evils the late Dr. Abercrombie protested to the utmost of his power, but I regret to say that though much has been done in the latter instance by private persons, very little has been done by the public authorities to remedy the former evil.

The suburbs of Cape Town—Wynberg, Rondebosch, and Constantia—are much more suitable as places of residence for invalids than Cape Town. They are situate on the other side of the spur of table-mountain, which forms an