

I did not permit to be put into my mouth, and combated all through.

If you will allow me, I will again state my conclusions here. They are: "I have found no reason for crediting vaccination with the lessening of the incidence of small-pox in the last 200 years. I believe it to be due, as I have endeavoured to show, to other causes. Nor do I find that, given the conditions suitable to its development, vaccination exerts any influence in preventing the extension of small-pox in modern communities, while I claim to have shown that the fatality is practically unaltered during the last 200 years. The great bulk of our hospital small-pox I have shown to be in vaccinated persons, and those persons I have shown to be bearers of every kind and degree of vaccination. I have shown that even good marks offer no protection from death by small-pox in its most loathsome and dreadful forms. That the marks classification is neither scientific nor true to the theory it is founded on. That the classification by marks sets aside entirely the legal vaccination imposed by law, and substitutes as the only valid vaccination something quite different, and only discriminated in a fever hospital, where it is to be tried and tested. That the unvaccinated are, in the confluent cases, often erroneously classed, and I have given grounds for thinking that this is done in thousands of instances. I have shown that the classification by eruption is still the only scientific classification of small-pox, and that the vaccinated appear in every shade of severity in this classification, and follow the usual expectation of the disease. It stands broadly confessed in official literature, and in evidence officially given here, that the youth and adult population who are vaccinated are severely attacked by small-pox. That the small-pox follows them further into life than the unvaccinated. I have shown that the saving of the small-pox among the very young lives in recent years is not due, as claimed, to their vaccination, but to the reduced birth-rate of children, lessening the infant mortality of which small-pox is one item. I have shown that the Public Health Acts are doing better work against disease in other forms than small-pox, the small-pox offering no superior instance of this. And I therefore conclude that the Vaccination Acts are a great legislative error and have been as unnecessary as they have been oppressive and cruel. I am convinced that it is the bounden duty of the State to repeal them entirely, and leave vaccination to private option alone." Permit me to say, in conclusion, that it is a great sorrow to me that Mr. Bradlaugh will not have a part in the further deliberations of the Commission.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Darlington, Jan. 31st, 1891.

ALEX. WHEELER.

* * We have nowhere implied that Dr. Guy's statistics were untrustworthy, but we have stated that Mr. Wheeler's "inferences" were so. As to the past century records, if Mr. Wheeler will look at the index to the third report of the Commission, he will find many entries under "As to trustworthiness of the London Bills of Mortality," &c., and if he will also refer to his own cross-examination of March 19th, 1890, he will see how largely our view is shared by the Commissioners. Even when Lord Herschell drew the "general conclusion that you cannot arrive at any accurate estimate of the (then) population of London" Mr. Wheeler had to answer, "I cannot argue it." This persistent recurrence to ancient records for the purposes of 1890 "inferences" is more than significant. Then again, Dr. Guy does not state that which Mr. Wheeler asserts above. Not only is his whole contention in favour of vaccination, but even the quotation referred to only goes to the effect that in certain epidemic years, such as 1871, vaccination (which was then almost exclusively a single primary one) did not "act as a sufficient protection." Mr. Wheeler does not finish the sentence referred to, neither does he give Dr. Guy's opinion, expressed in the same connexion, that there is nothing even in the statistics of that epidemic "which ought to shake our confidence in the preventive efficacy of vaccination." On other points Mr. Wheeler announces that he has "shown" certain things. We admit the attempt; but whether he has succeeded or failed we are content to leave to the judgment of the Commission.—ED. L.

VACCINATION IN SKIN DISEASE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—As an old subscriber to your valuable journal I wish to call your attention to a paper of mine on Vaccination in Skin Disease which appeared in 1863.¹ As a London graduate myself, and interested in the stability and welfare of British institutions, I thought well that the subject matter of this paper should not sleep any longer. Evidently Koch is not aware of the facts, or some reference would ere this have been made.—I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Elgin-street, Ottawa, Jan. 12th, 1891.

J. A. GRANT.

* * We have referred to Sir James Grant's communication to our contemporary nearly thirty years ago.² Four cases of cutaneous disease, described as "psoriasis palmaris of five years' duration," "tinea nummularis," "tubercular syphilide," and "psoriasis lepræformis," are said to have been cured by vaccination, and it is suggested that the vaccine lymph may neutralise the effects of "irritants" circulating in the blood. But we do not quite see the bearing of these (unconfirmed?) observations upon Professor Koch's work.—ED. L.

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AND HOSPITAL ABUSES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—For many years past general practitioners in London have been loud in their complaints as to the abuses in connexion with the management of our medical charities, especially in regard to the out-patient departments. At length a Special Committee of the House of Lords has been appointed to inquire into the subject, but, strange to say, now that general practitioners have the opportunity to make their grievances known, they, for the most part, treat the matter with indifference. True a few general practitioners have given evidence before the committee, but it is to be feared that their personal views will have very little weight as against those of the officials and the eminent physicians and surgeons attached to the hospitals who agree in deprecating the slightest approach to State interference with our medical charities.

I would suggest that a Committee of General Practitioners, representative of every district in the metropolis, be at once formed to prepare such evidence as may be thought desirable to lay before the Lords' Committee now sitting, and also to formulate a scheme for remedying the abuses complained of. Now is the time for general practitioners to speak, or we may as well for ever hold our tongues. Should any of your readers wish to join the proposed committee, I shall be glad if they will communicate with me as early as possible.

I remain, Sirs, yours faithfully,

GEORGE BROWN, M.R.C.S. &c.

29, Threadneedle-street, E.C., Feb. 22nd, 1891.

NORTHERN COUNTIES NOTES.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

The Housing of the Poor in Newcastle.

THE rapid increase of the population of Newcastle and the progress of railway and other extensions have displaced a very large number of poor from their dwellings during the last few years, but it cannot be said that these poor people have found anything like equivalent accommodation elsewhere, their lodgings being, as it were, always on a down grade. It is true that over 8000 new houses have been built in Newcastle during the past eight years, but they have been at rents far above the means of the poor, and by the poor I mean the working men earning low wages. It is now proposed by the corporation to erect some large blocks of one-room tenements for, say, about 500 persons. This is to be of an experimental nature, and if fairly successful can no doubt be soon extended.

Newcastle Dispensary.

The annual meeting (the 113th) of this old charity has been held, and the resident medical officer, Dr. George W.

¹ Medical Times and Gazette.

² Ibid., March 14th, 1863.