

points we should, as I said in my remarks in the paper, all the sooner arrive at a solution of the difficult problem before us; and while we are studying the bacterial question we ought to also study the various external circumstances which may influence the lying-in woman for ill. How can we tell what are these various untoward agents till we search round, as I have often urged, each case and note every factor liable, from our knowledge of surgery, to act detrimentally, and then out of this information from a large number of cases deduce a result approximating to the truth? Till this is done each one is giving his solitary experience only, in place of the universal.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

J. BRAXTON HICKS.

George-street, Hanover-square, W., Dec. 2nd, 1893.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Dr. Wallace has drawn attention to the fact—which I regret, after a lapse of six years, had escaped my memory—that I had already referred to the case mentioned in my recent letter to you in my paper “On Defective Sanitation as a Cause of Puerperal Disease.” I must have had some good reason at the time for describing it in a way which would not identify it as having occurred in my own practice—possibly in order to avoid the chance of the husband, who was then alive, recognising it. There is no essential difference in the two records, except that in the one the patient’s illness is described as commencing within twenty-four hours and in the other on the third day. Writing from memory after thirteen years, this inaccuracy is perhaps intelligible, although not excusable; but the inference I draw from the facts is not thereby altered. The courteous letter of my friends Drs. Herman and Cullingworth, as well as those of your other correspondents, do not appear to call for a reply. My object in writing to you was to insist that defective sanitation is an important cause of puerperal disease. That does not now appear to be contested. The question whether such disease should be classed, as I think, with puerperal septicæmia until it is proved to be something else, or whether, as some of your correspondents think, it should be assumed to be something else *ab initio*, seems to me to be of altogether secondary importance.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

George-st., Hanover-sq., W., Dec. 3rd, 1893. W. S. PLAYFAIR.

\* \* We have received other letters on this subject which we have been compelled to temporarily hold over.—ED. L.

## SALVATIONISTS' SHELTERS AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The decision in the late appeal case, Colclough v. the Vestry of St. George-the-Martyr, Southwark, is of so much importance that I venture to draw the attention of the readers of THE LANCET to the following facts:—

(a) As to the magistrate’s finding: 1. That there was exposure of a small-pox patient in the Blackfriars shelter. 2. That many persons were admitted to the shelter on the same and following nights. 3. That the disinfection alleged to have been carried out in the shelter was inefficient in the face of a dangerous infectious disease. 4. That the magistrate decided that there was a letting for hire of part of a house and that the medical certificates produced were not in accordance with the Act. He fined the defendants £10.

(b) As to the appeal: 1. The judges decided that there was not a “letting” of the house and dismissed the appeal on that point. 2. Mr. Justice Wills said it was clearly a case in which the Act ought to apply, but does not. I will remind the readers of THE LANCET that Mr. Fowler, the President of the Local Government Board, in answer to a question in the House of Commons, stated that the shelters were under the control of the medical officers of health and that if entry were refused they could gain admission on a magistrate’s order. This seems like chaos. Mr. Justice Wills says that the Act does not apply. Mr. Fowler appears to have a contrary opinion. Meanwhile small-pox is rapidly extending, and these shelters, while unregulated, form a standing menace to the public safety. Legislation, in my opinion, is urgently required.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

F. J. WALDO, M.A., M.D. Cantab.,

Medical Officer of Health, St. George-the-Martyr, Southwark, Inner Temple, and Middle Temple.

Plowden-buildings, Temple, E.C., Dec. 4th, 1893.

## “THE SO-CALLED PARASITIC PROTOZOA OF MAMMARY CANCER.”

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Owing to a temporary absence from London I did not see Dr. Herbert Snow’s reply to Dr. Cattle at the time it appeared. Although I have no wish to enter into a controversy on the main question, yet I feel bound to remove a misapprehension under which Dr. Snow labours. Dr. Snow states in his last letter that “the slide in question was some time since submitted to Dr. Armand Ruffer, who pronounced the most characteristic cell-forms therein to be particularly well-marked examples of the ‘protozoa.’” Passing over the fact that Dr. Snow has thought it right to report in a public paper a private conversation without asking my leave to do so, I beg to state now that his statement conveys an entirely erroneous impression as to what actually occurred. The facts are as follows. Dr. Snow had at various intervals shown me as identical with the parasites of cancer various structures, none of which had the remotest resemblance with the protozoa which my collaborators and I have depicted. In one slide, however, I at once recognised as parasitic certain structures absolutely different from those which Dr. Snow had demonstrated to me on previous occasions. It would appear, however, that he has not yet been able to see these parasites in his own slide, for the structures depicted by him in THE LANCET of Nov. 11th do not bear the slightest resemblance to the parasites contained in the slide above referred to. Hence I cordially agree with Dr. Cattle’s statement that “among Dr. Snow’s figures there is not one which would be accepted as a typical parasitic body by anyone who has devoted special attention to these structures.”

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

York-terrace, N.W., Dec. 4th, 1893.

M. ARMAND RUFFER.

## HANWELL ASYLUM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In a recent letter published in the *Standard* a guardian of St. Saviour’s Union stated that in his opinion this asylum was entirely unfit for the “curative treatment of the insane”; this conclusion being drawn from an hour’s visit, in which he observed that one patient had a hole in his boot and that there was a “terrible smell in the wards,” which last he did not discover as arising from recent paint. The representative of Bumbledom also complained that the medical superintendent did not wait on him, although notice had been given of the august visit—*hinc ille lacrymæ*. The want of value and even the absurdity of such an opinion is so obvious that it is astonishing that the London County Council should deem a special report on it necessary. This report alluded to the discourtesy of the guardians at their visit and further shows that in the last ten years the percentage of recoveries at Hanwell compared favourably with that of the other London asylums, while the death-rate for the same period was lowest of all. If Hanwell, therefore, is unfit for the treatment of the insane the other asylums are as bad, or worse. The London County Council, it is to be hoped, will not be induced by such peevish reports to expend the ratepayers’ money in futile attempts at alteration of the old structure; the best change that can be made is to reduce the number of patients and to increase the means of treatment. The idea that the treatment of the insane rests on their brick-and-mortar surroundings has been disastrous to the patients as well as to the ratepayers’ pockets. The truth is, as both Bethlem and Hanwell Hospitals demonstrate, that treatment can be as successful in an old building as amidst the most palatial and architectural extravagance if the necessary means be provided.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

Dec. 2nd, 1893.

MEDICUS.

## “SOME POINTS WITH REFERENCE TO THE DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF TYPHOID FEVER.”

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Dr. Hood has had full particulars as to all the cases treated for typhoid fever at the London Temperance Hospital. I ask him again to publish a proper table of his 103 hospital cases, so that we may have before us the particulars which will enable us to consider the individual patients the dates of epidemics, and the localities from which