

such was its condition when the body was opened. It was thought by some to be unusually pale and soft. It was not weighed. The valves were perfect. No fatty degeneration or other disease of the muscular fibre could be detected by the microscope.

The only comment which I have to make on the case is that I still do not see how any precaution could have been used that was not used to ward off the unfortunate result.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,  
University-place, Chicago, April 20th, 1890. LESTER CURTIS.

## "PUBLIC VACCINATORS AND CALF LYMPH."

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—That your readers might judge of the validity and fairness of your adverse anonymous criticism of my alleged position and views as public vaccinator, they and I might claim that you should either have submitted to them my signed declaration of these, or at least have given some reference as to where that could be found. How completely you have succeeded in misrepresenting me I hope you will permit me to show. A question that affects, as I think, seriously the rights of the public (in his relations with whom it might be well if no public officer ever forget that he is one of them) was raised, not, as may be inferred, by me, but by parents in this district, who, while wishing to have their children vaccinated, insisted on the use of calf lymph, to be supplied gratis, on the ground that if the State compelled it should find all the machinery (a principle that, I take it, is conceded in the creation of the N.V.E. and the whole vaccination service). I applied to the N.V.E., stating the parents' requirements and their reasons. The lymph was supplied, but I received with it a lecture, in which I was taught that the parent had nothing to do with the choice of lymph, the responsibility for which rested entirely with me. At the same time I was informed that the N.V.E. did not undertake to supply all the lymph, calf, or human, that might be required. In reply, I accepted freely the responsibility for choice of lymph, and declared that for reasons I assigned I should often give the preference to calf lymph.

In conclusion of your annotation, permit me to say that my letter contained no reference whatever to parents who "object to vaccination;" that such have never in any form "received sympathy or support" from me, who am at constant war with the anti-vaccinationists around me, and who, to guard against any such misapprehension, expressly declared myself in the correspondence "a thorough believer in the benefits of vaccination, having had the clearest and most convincing evidences of them during a small-pox epidemic;" that the "case for vaccination" has therefore never been called into question, and any statement of it in this discussion is quite irrelevant, though I have no doubt it was not introduced without a purpose; that I have not "shirked responsibility" of any kind, or "relieved any parent of responsibility." On the contrary, I have maintained the parent's responsibility for his child's well-being, and that this ought to be recognised when, while declaring his wishfulness to have his child vaccinated, he prefers a request, based on fact and reason, that the lymph may be of a kind free from certain known risks. As for the hesitation that my censor ascribes to me, about vaccinating such a man's child with human lymph, it is either a constructive and intentional or a random surmise, without a vestige of foundation in the correspondence or in fact. I would most willingly vaccinate the child with human lymph, collected with reasonable care, and for which I could offer personal guarantee if only the terribly wrong-headed parent would let me. Thus it is not I, but the department, that insists on "relieving such parents of responsibility," and denies their right to any voice in the selection of human or calf lymph. This responsibility, "transferred" by the department to me, I thankfully accepted as a very simple and authoritative solution of "the difficulty," not "of my position,"—I had none—but of the parents'. I think from this *apologia* it will clearly appear that I have not "erected any view of mine as to vaccination into a rule for the discharge of my public duties." As a "public officer appointed to discharge a great public duty," my constant object is to procure, by any and every fair means, the widest possible application of the Act that I have to execute. This is not to be gained, I believe, by drawing the red tape with needless and irritating tightness, but by

showing every consideration for the reasonable wishes of my fellow subjects, when it is not their object to resist or evade the law, and by taking out of the hands of the opponents to a most beneficent institution, the one weapon that seems to me to have real edge or point.

There is about your criticism a fine official flavour, that almost suggests that in it I have the reply that was denied to my last communication addressed to the Department, with a scarcely veiled hint that I run the risk of finding myself one of these days "relieved" of all my "difficulties" and "responsibilities" as public vaccinator. This much is certain, that no occupation of any public office will ever cause me to divest myself of or forget my personal rights and duties as a man, a citizen, a parent, and a member of our profession, and that I will always endeavour to treat with the same human "sympathy" and consideration my public as my private patients, in entire disregard of supercilious dictation, or anonymous and irresponsible censure, based on general misrepresentation and misconstruction. Meantime, I remain, Sirs, your obedient servant,

THOS. M. WATT,  
Public Vaccinator.

May 19th, 1890.

\* \* If we have misunderstood Mr. Watt we express our regret, but we adhere to the opinion that the choice of lymph is the business of the operator, not of the parent, for the reason that the vaccinator is responsible for the proper performance of the operation. It may interest Mr. Watt to know that the writer of the comments on his letter has never held any official position whatever.—ED. L.

## PYLORECTOMY AND GASTRO-ENTEROSTOMY.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—I am glad to find that another case of gastro-enterostomy for pyloric carcinoma had been performed successfully by Mr. Mayo Robson, and I would urge the importance of all cases, whether successful or not, being reported, so that we may be able to judge as to the usefulness of the operation—(1) in relieving suffering; (2) in prolonging life. I shall be glad, therefore, if all surgeons who have performed the operation of pylorectomy or gastro-enterostomy will be good enough to report the same through your columns, or send a brief account of their cases to me. I would again draw attention to the importance of adopting either kangaroo tendon or chromicised catgut for the sutures passing through the coats of the stomach and intestines instead of Chinese silk. In the case reported by Mr. Paul in your issue of May 17th, which died on the eighth day, he reports at the post-mortem examination, "the bone-plates had entirely disappeared and the silk ligatures were hanging loose in the opening." The same state of things was found in the case of mine which died on the sixth day; this specimen I showed at the Medical Society. In another case, which died four months after the operation, the silk ligatures were still present. These ligatures, therefore, must be a fruitful source of irritation, and, situated as they are at the artificial pylorus, may be the means of arresting the passage of food into the intestine, and if the patient lives sufficiently long may become the nucleus of a gastrolith. In all my experience I used chromicised catgut, and found in every case it lasted a sufficiently long time to allow of firm union taking place between the two portions of intestine to be united. After death no trace of it was to be found. I have adopted this form of suture in my last cases of gastro-enterostomy with most satisfactory results.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,  
Upper Wimpole-street, May 19th, 1890. FRED. B. JESSETT.

## THE MORTALITY OF VAGINAL HYSTERECTOMY.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—In the account published in this week's issue of THE LANCET of the discussion on vaginal hysterectomy at the last meeting of the Obstetrical Society, Dr. Cullingworth is reported to have said: "Dr. Lewers, in comparing the mortality of the two operations (the supra-vaginal amputation of the cervix and vaginal hysterectomy) had quoted figures that were altogether incorrect. The mortality from supra-vaginal amputation was over