

2244. Now, you have been asked in a vague sort of way, by Mr. Chapman, if you think that from the facts you yourself observed at the *post-mortem* examination the woman exhibited any symptoms of disease. I ask you is there any possibility of her having had a previous disease masked by acute endometritis?—I think not.

2245. A good deal has been made about this report, which I think is unfortunate for the Hospital. By this report of October, 1884, you tell of two cases of erysipelas that arose in the Hospital, and you could not account for their origin at all. You also say that in the same week there is a case of blood-poisoning in the case of a man who is admitted for an injury to the thigh, and who was progressing favourably until he was moved near the closet, and you express a doubt as to whether this was caused by the defective system of ventilation. Now, since October, 1884, has the condition of the Hospital improved or not?—I should say it has.

2246. I now draw your attention in 1890—after six years' experience of these cases—to one week in the Hospital. There are two cases of erysipelas arise in the Hospital for which you can give no cause, and in the same week there is a case of blood-poisoning which unaccountably arises. Does your subsequent experience since 1884 throw any light on these septic troubles?—My knowledge of the condition of the Hospital throws a light on the cause, and I could say vaguely it was owing to the insanitary conditions. I cannot go further than that.

2247. But you do not say that in your memorandum?—I expressed a doubt in the letter about the closet.

2248. Well, recalling these circumstances to your mind now, are you in a position to form an opinion as to the cause of the septic troubles?—Yes.

2249. *The Chairman.*] I do not think the closets were altered?—I do not think they were.

2250. You express doubt in your letter as to whether the closet caused the mischief?—Yes.

2251. *Mr. Solomon.*] Is it your opinion now, as to the insanitary condition of the Hospital being sufficient to account for these cases?—I think it is sufficient.

2252. Although in 1884 you were not in a position to account for it, you think, with your subsequent experience, you are in a better position to give the cause of the trouble?—Yes.

2253. Thank you. That is about the strongest evidence of my case I have yet got. I want to call your attention to the fact that these two cases arose in the Hospital, and were absolutely unaccountable. That means that they arose in the ward itself?—Yes.

2254. And you could not give a reason for them?—No.

2255. Would or would not the insanitary condition of the Hospital account for it?—Certainly it would.

2256. Now, here is your experience of 1884. Is there any practical difference in your experience of that week in 1884, and Dr. Batchelor's experience in the week ending the 22nd July, 1890?—I should say they were very similar experiences.

2257. But in 1884 you did not feel competent to come to a conclusion as to what was the cause? You were doubtful?—Yes. Perhaps I did not like to make sweeping assertions.

2258. But in the light of your subsequent experience?—I am able to speak more definitely.

2259. By the light of your subsequent experience, what is your opinion as to the origin of those three septic cases of septic poisoning then?—I should say the general unsatisfactory state of the hygiene in that ward was the cause.

2260. You mentioned in this letter that wounds got well very satisfactorily?—Yes.

2261. At that time were you familiar with Listerism?—Yes; it had been before me some time.

2262. That is, by comparison with your experience at Home?—Yes.

2263. By the light of your subsequent experience, as to what can be done by Listerism, you know what it should effect?—Yes. It means that you should be able to exclude all danger from the wound when it is carried out in its entirety.

2264. In former times did wounds do well here?—Yes, and they still do well. Here and there you get a case that should not occur. The whole object of antiseptic treatment is to diminish the risk of wound infection, and the greater the risks the less effective are the antiseptics. Of course we are all human, and errors will creep in now and again, but the fact remains that if the hygienic conditions are unsatisfactory the chances of you failing are increased.

2265. While you were house surgeon, did you ever find fault with the drains?—Well, they are not so defective as I thought they were.

2266. Did you ever draw up a design for improving them?—I do not recollect.

2267. *Mr. Chapman.*] Do you know that the drains have been altered since the date of that letter to the Trustees?—Yes, I know they have been, and alterations have also been made to the watercloset arrangements. I think there were ventilators put in.

2268. *The Chairman.*] During the years you were house surgeon was it the practice to set aside empty wards?—Yes.

2269. How long did the wards remain unoccupied?—Perhaps two or three weeks. In this matter the point I lay stress on is that the ward was whitewashed, scrubbed, and purified in a very thorough manner, and I think that those steps have largely combated what evil results might have occurred. It was an excellent system, although it involved overcrowding, but if it had not existed the results would have been worse.

2270. What was done besides that?—The floors were scrubbed with carbolic acid and water, and the wards were sometimes fumigated with sulphur, but I do not attach much importance to that.

2271. Were the furnishings removed?—Yes, everything was taken out, including the beds, and the floor-cloths were taken up.

2272. Is that practice still followed?—I cannot answer for that.

2273. Up to what period can you speak?—Up to 1887.