

2731. Please turn to page 756 of "Buck," and tell us how he illustrates your argument?—I can tell you without looking at the book, because I might confuse myself. The block system is the system adopted by most of the oldest hospitals in the Old Country, and the reason of its adoption was that they generally utilised as hospitals old, unoccupied buildings, convents, and sometimes churches.

2732. What is the objection to it?—The great objection to the block system is that there is an agglomeration of buildings, all opening perhaps into a central hall, as here, so that the air which pervades one ward will pervade all the wards, and if one ward becomes contaminated, the wards throughout the hospital are liable to become contaminated also. That is the great danger of the block system, and also of the corridor system. You cannot have perfect cross-ventilation either in the block or in the corridor system. The air which you generally get under the block system is what is called "hospital" air. If there should happen to be only one septic case in the institution, the whole air of the institution may become infected from that case. Under the system that has been adopted in the Dunedin Hospital all the wards open into a central hall, and the air is conveyed by means of a number of gratings or ventilators near the ceiling of each ward from this central hall, so that what is called "hospital" air is apt to pervade the whole building. Besides, you cannot isolate a ward perfectly under either the block or corridor system.

2733. We have been told that the pavilion system provides good light all the day—gives the morning and afternoon sunlight?—By it you have the sunlight at some part of the day; you have it on one side of the building in the morning, and on the other side in the afternoon; and for a portion of the day you would have it flooded with sunlight.

2734. Is it possible to have that in this Hospital?—No, it is impossible.

2735. Do you approve of the site of this Hospital?—The site is a convenient one—convenient for the patients, and for the friends of the patients, which is an essential thing. It is convenient for the surgeons who attend the Hospital, and it is convenient for the Medical School. It is also a convenient site, because it is sufficiently large to admit of the erection on it of a hospital on the pavilion system. We have got five acres of ground there, which is quite large enough for a pavilion hospital, which is supposed to be the most perfect system of hospital you can have. We have got ample room for a hundred and fifty patients.

2736. You are connected, are you not, with the Medical School of the Otago University?—Yes.

2737. You are a lecturer at the University?—Yes, the Lecturer on Surgery. I think that the connection of the Medical School with the Hospital has been of great advantage to the Hospital, and my reason for saying so is this: it has shed a very intense light on the defects of the Hospital, that perhaps would not have come prominently before the public if the Hospital were not connected with the Medical School. It has certainly shed what I might call a burning and shining light on those defects, and, while not magnifying them, has brought them very prominently forward. The work done in a hospital connected with a medical school must be thorough work, and in accordance with the most advanced medical and surgical science, and no work can be thorough in a defective hospital.

2738. Can you do thorough work in the Dunedin Hospital at present?—You cannot do any thorough work unless you have a perfect hospital, because, I say, if you have the greatest medical and the greatest surgical skill in the world, and at the same time have the best nursing system in the world, together with the best surgical appliances and the best food attainable, it will avail little if you have bad sanitary conditions surrounding your hospital.

2739. Now you have told us that you think that the sanitary conditions of the Dunedin Hospital are unsatisfactory? Do you think that the defects which exist in its sanitary condition are trivial or serious?—I think that the defects are most serious. I know from time to time we have been urging on the Trustees to make extensive alterations, and, knowing the pecuniary difficulties that the Trustees have always had to contend with, we should not have thought of urging these changes if we had not thought that they were absolutely necessary, because we knew that the Trustees' difficulties are purely pecuniary ones. We have found that the Trustees are quite as anxious for these changes as we are ourselves, and that the only difficulty which has presented itself to them has been the pecuniary one. It has been simply a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence. I was connected with the Trust myself for twelve months, and I know the earnest way that the Trustees considered every question that was brought before them. During the period that I was a member of the Trust one of the best works in connection with the Hospital—the building of the operating-theatre—was carried out. That was the only creditable part of the institution, and the only place which we bring strangers to see. We are really proud of it, and the Trustees are proud of it, and it is a monument of which they may well be proud, yet we were abused up hill and down dale by the whole Press of the place. But I am pretty thick-skinned myself, and but for that I should possibly have been inclined to have left the Trust on account of the abuse we met with.

2740. Do you approve of the construction of the flooring and walls of the wards as they are at present?—As regards the flooring of the Hospital it should be made non-absorbent, and of the hardest wood.

2741. What about the state of the floors now?—They are full of holes, very rough, and not closed in any way as they should be.

2742. Do they discourage or encourage the collection of germs?—I should say that they are pretty well saturated with microbes—with pus-globules.

2743. And the walls?—The walls are very absorbent, with the exception of about four or five feet up from the floor that has been painted and varnished, but the rest of the walls have not been plastered.

2744. I suppose you agree with the general consensus of opinion which we have had during this inquiry, that the presence of pathological organisms in the atmosphere is a source of danger to the patients?—Yes, they always run a certain amount of risk.