

New York City Henry Low Ducathe

A

STATEMENT OF FACTS

RELATIVE TO THE LATE

F E V E R

WHICH APPEARED IN

BANCKER-STREET AND ITS VICINITY.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH.



NEW-YORK:
...

PUBLISHED BY ELAM BLISS, 208 BROADWAY
.....

J Seymour, Printer.
.....

1821.

BOARD OF HEALTH, January 23d, 1821.

The President stated that he had called this meeting at the request of the Commissioners of Health.

A communication was presented from the Commissioners of Health, on the subject of a publication made by the incorporated County Medical Society of this place, in relation to the fever which prevailed in Bancker-street and its vicinity during the past summer and autumn—

Which being read, it was ordered that the same be printed for the use of the members of this Board and of the Common Council.

BOARD OF HEALTH, January 29th, 1821.

The communication from the Commissioners of Health, which was presented on the 23d instant, was called up and amended.

Whereupon, on motion,

Resolved, That the Board of Health approve of the Statement of Facts, and concur in the opinions contained in the Report submitted for their consideration by the Commissioners of Health.

Also Resolved, That their Report be published.

By order,

J. MORTON, Clerk.

A STATEMENT,

&c.



AT a meeting of the Board of Health, January 23d, 1821, the following communication was read from the Commissioners of Health :

Whereas a pamphlet has been recently published by the incorporated County Medical Society, of this place, purporting to show :

1. That an epidemic yellow fever prevailed during the summer and autumn of 1820, in Bancker-street, and its vicinity. (*See note A.*)

2. That the Board of Health, although made acquainted with the existence of this yellow fever, did not give publicity to the same, or take efficient measures to prevent the disease from spreading over other parts of the city. (*Vide note B.*)

3. That many persons fled, from fear of the fever. (*Vide note C.*)

4. That the disease was particularly prevalent among people of colour, seeing that that description of persons constituted a majority of the population within the aforementioned district. (*Vide note D.*)

And whereas the said Medical Report goes to impugn the motives of the Board of Health, to mislead, and to diminish the confidence of the public, in this Board, and

to injure the reputation of this metropolis, in the opinion of persons abroad :

THE COMMISSIONERS OF HEALTH beg leave to lay before the Board, the following statement of facts, in relation to this subject, and which facts they conceive to be amply sufficient to justify the opinion which they have heretofore given of the nature and causes of the disease which prevailed in Bancker-street, and its vicinity.

1. That, so far from the black population exceeding that of the whites, during the last summer and autumn, as has been erroneously asserted, the whites were more than three times the number of blacks in the very limits within which it is stated the disease chiefly prevailed. (*Vide note E.*)

2. That notwithstanding the white population so much exceeded that of the blacks, yet the disease has been almost exclusively confined to coloured persons, and particularly to that description of blacks who lived in crowded apartments, especially in cellars, and who were depraved in their habits, and indigent in their circumstances: inasmuch as the black population of that district is almost exclusively composed of persons of that description, and that the indigent and worthless class of whites bear but a very small ratio to the whole number of white inhabitants. (*Vide Note F.*)

3. That those persons who fell victims to this disease, were scattered over the district, for the most part, in insulated places, and that the disease did not spread from one side to the other side of the same street, nor from

one house to the adjoining house, nor even, in many instances, from the cellars to the other parts of the same house; by which it is apparent that this fever was not entitled to the appellation of an epidemic; which is furthermore confirmed by the fact, that those persons, whether black or white, who lived a becoming and regular life, and did not associate with the dissolute and intemperate, almost always escaped, although inhabiting an adjoining house, and, in some instances, living under the same roof with those who were the victims to it. (*Vide note G.*)

4. That after the most diligent inquiries, we have not been enabled to discover that one reputable white person died of this disease, with the exception of a girl recently arrived from the country, who died of fever in the latter part of October, at No. 130 Bancker-street*. But on the other hand, have satisfactorily ascertained that such whites only have fallen victims to it as were in extreme poverty, crowded in small filthy apartments, and who led a profligate life, or associated, or lived with the worthless class of coloured persons. (*Vide note H.*)

5. That out of the numerous respectable white inhabitants who have continued to reside in this district since May last, only one family of nine persons (viz. Mr. Gifford's, at No. 139 Bancker-street,) removed into the country from fear, but returned again as early as the 20th of September. And that not an instance of the disease took place in any of these families. (*Vide note I.*)

* Catharine McKean.

6. That the Board of Health were early apprised of the crowded and filthy condition of Bancker-street and the streets in its vicinity, and put into immediate execution measures to abate the nuisances, and to relieve the distresses of the inhabitants. (*Vide note K.*)

7. That the existence of this disease was familiarly known to the public at large, as appears by the presentment of the Grand Jury of this city, a body consisting of 24 persons ; and who, so far from considering it an alarming epidemic, actually visited, accompanied by the resident physician, the most offensive and unhealthy houses in that district. (*Vide note L.*)

8. That as a further proof that no apprehensions existed in the community, a great number of cases of this disease were received, even during the warm weather, into the New-York Hospital, an institution placed in the heart of the city. Whereas it is an established rule of that house to admit no patient ill of yellow fever. (*Vide note M.*)

From the foregoing statement of facts, and the proofs which are subjoined, and from our own personal observations, we are irresistibly led to the conclusion :—

That this disease was generated by human effluvia, confirming the opinion heretofore given, that its predominant character was Typhus ; assuming, in some instances, the form of typhus gravior, jail or ship fever ; and in other instances, attended especially by bilious symptoms, particularly during the extreme and continued heat of the weather.

1. Because the disease prevailed almost without a single exception, among those persons who were excessively intemperate, in extreme poverty ; and who were crowded together in filthy and confined apartments ; especially in low, damp, and ill-ventilated cellars : a combination of circumstances which, it is universally admitted, produces fever of a putrid or typhoid character. Which is furthermore confirmed by the fact, that where this combination of circumstances existed in other parts of the city, the disease made its appearance there also. Whereas yellow fever makes no distinction of persons, and is equally fatal to the rich and to the poor.

2. Because, those persons who were comfortably accommodated, who were regular in their lives, and did not enter into the infected apartments or dwellings, escaped the disease ; which is diametrically opposed to the known laws of epidemical diseases : and it is well known to every inhabitant of this place, that no such exceptions were observed in those portions of our city where yellow fever has prevailed.

3. Because, on the removal of the sick from their contaminated apartments to the New-York and Bellevue Hospitals, where they were placed in clean and airy wards, the disease became, in conformity to the laws of typhus, milder in its character, and more manageable in its treatment. Whereas, in yellow fever, no evident abatement of the symptoms have heretofore been observed in persons sick with that disease, when removed to the public institutions, established for their reception.

in the vicinity of this city. But, on the contrary, the records of such establishments show as great, and in some instances a greater, mortality, in proportion to the number of sick, in such places, when compared with those who remained in the city. And when we compare the deaths to the number of sick, of the cases occurring in Bancker-street after being removed to the New-York and Bellevue Hospitals, with those which took place from yellow fever in such institutions in 1803, 5, and 19, we find that in the latter disease nearly one-half died. Whereas, of this disease, the proportion of deaths to the sick in the infected district was as 1 to 3; in the Hospitals at the Alms-house as 1 to 5; and in the New-York Hospital as 1 to 6. (*Vide note N.*)

4. Because, notwithstanding the white population was three-times the number of coloured persons in the district where this disease occurred, yet was the disease almost entirely confined to blacks. While, on the contrary, in yellow fever blacks have always been considered to be less susceptible of the infection than whites, insomuch that coloured persons have, for this very reason, been employed in nursing the sick, and in the interment of the dead.

5. Because, out of 237 cases, the total number which occurred of this disease, no symptom presented itself different from those which usually attend typhus fever under similar circumstances. As it is not even pretended, that out of all this number more than 8 cases have occurred of black vomit, some of which are stated to

have been ascertained *after* the *death* of the patient!* Whereas, in yellow fever, at least one-half of those who die have this characteristic symptom.

6. Because, a high grade of typhus, attended with bilious symptoms, has oftentimes occurred in this as well as in other countries, at the same season of the year at which this disease prevailed. And a very remarkable instance of it took place in the year 1801, when many vessels, unusually crowded with passengers, arrived at this port from Ireland during the summer and autumn. Out of at least 750 patients who were admitted into the Marine Hospital, almost all of whom were sick of this disease, nearly 300 died, besides a great number who perished on their passage. The disease, which was simply typhus, on board the ships which first arrived became, as the vessels progressively arrived later and later in the season, (from the same ports,†) combined with bilious symptoms, which acquired more and more intensity as the season advanced.

7. Because, the disease has continued to prevail in this same district, and among the same classes of people, notwithstanding the prevalence of constant cold and of repeated frosts and snows; cases having been received into the New-York Hospital as late as the last day of December, 1820, and attended with the same symptoms and circumstances. Whereas, in yellow fever, it is

* See Pamphlet of the Med. Society, pp. 12, 13, and 26. This is on the supposition, that the aforesaid black vomit consisted of the flaky or coffee-ground matter, which characterises yellow fever; but of this there is no evidence given.

† Chiefly from Belfast.

established beyond a doubt, that frost invariably and effectually extinguishes the disease. (*Vide note O.*)

8. Because, cases of this disease have not only been brought to the New-York Hospital since the commencement of freezing weather, but when the severity of the cold would not admit of free ventilation in the wards of the house, the disease has, in conformity to the laws of typhus, been in many instances communicated to the nurses and patients of that institution. As appears by the Report of the Governors to the Board of Health. (*Vide note O.*)

The undersigned Commissioners of Health, after a careful examination of the foregoing facts, deem it their duty to submit the same to the consideration of the Board of Health.

DAVID HOSACK, M. D.

Resident Physician.

P. S. TOWNSEND, M. D.

Health Commissioner.

JOSEPH BAYLEY, M. D.*

Health Officer.

NEW-YORK, January 22d, 1821.

* My public duties at Staten Island did not admit of my being in the City until November; therefore, I did not see any of the cases which were reported to the Board of Health, as malignant fever, during the summer and autumn: but in relation to the facts, herein contained, (as I have been personally engaged in procuring them,) and in the inferences deduced from them, I fully coincide with my colleagues.

J. BAYLEY.

NOTES.



A.

“ Although numerous cases of malignant fever occurred in the adjacent streets, yet they were most frequent and most malignant in Bancker-street, from Pike to Catharine-street, and in Lombardy-street on the side next to Bancker-street.”

—*Report of the Medical Society. p. 4.*

“ From this period, [August 21,] the disease, which will be hereafter faithfully described, continued to rage in Bancker-street, from Catharine-street, *including two blocks*, up to Pike-street, till late in October.”—*Ib. p. 13.*

“ In fine, as to the denomination of the disease, the causes and character of which has been the subject of your Committee’s investigation, we do not hesitate to declare our conviction of the *identity* of Bancker-street fever, with the malignant fever of authors from Hippocrates to the present day, and the *yellow fever of tropical climates and our own harbours*; and that this fever varies *only* in degree of malignity, intensity, and extensiveness of operation, proportioned to local exciting causes.”—*Ib. p. 30.*

B.

“ To the state of things related above, the attention of the Board of Health was solicited as early as the 7th of September; in a letter addressed to the President, informing him of the fact, that malignant fever prevailed to an alarming extent in and about Bancker-street. He was apprised that a formal petition to the Board was contemplated, to induce it to a speedy exercise of its authority in the furtherance of such measures as alone appeared to promise security to the neighbourhood; and which measures, it was supposed, were a primary motive in the institution of a Board of Health; viz. *The removal of the sick and cleansing of the infected district.* An entire and exclusive confidence in the Resident Physician

was deprecated as impolitic and unjust; inasmuch as it was well known that he earnestly contended for the exclusive foreign origin and importation of malignant fever, and it was asked 'whether under such impressions, and the existing circumstances of Bancker-street, he would be willing to admit the existence of a malignant type of fever unequivocally of a domestic origin.' It was particularly urged, that some respectable and experienced member of the Medical Faculty, not wedded to those opinions entertained by the Resident Physician respecting fever, a gentleman in whose integrity and ability of discrimination full reliance could be placed, should be associated with him, to investigate the epidemic of Bancker-street and its vicinity."—*Report of the Medical Society, p. 28.*

"That these reasonable demands were not heeded, may be accounted for in the well known fact, that the Resident Physician has selected and held up in derision to public view, and sneeringly branded with the epithet, 'yellow fever of Bancker-street,' the minor grades of fever, the common every day occurrences of our city; while cases of a decidedly malignant character have been no less artfully concealed from *so public* an exhibition; and a long and lingering disease, *originating from a different cause*, and distinguished by a totally different train of symptoms, a fever generated in a cold and extinguished by a hot temperature, has, to the repugnance of reason and common sense, been called in to account for a mortality unprecedented except in epidemic periods; and the epidemic fever of Bancker-street has, by these gentlemen of authority, been denominated '*Typhus Fever.*'"—*Ib. p. 29.*

"We must be permitted on this occasion to remark, although with regret, that those *preventive measures* which had been so wisely devised and liberally provided for by the *municipal authority of the city of New-York*, during the last season, have been so *unaccountably neglected in Bancker-street and its vicinity*; and this is the more *wonderful and more to be lamented*, as, at an *early period* of the season, the filthiness, immorality, and wretchedness of the people in that district had been the subject of formal inquiry and present-

ment by the Grand Jury of the County of New-York.”—*ib.* pp. 31, 32.*

C.

“Since the commencement of the fever, exclusive of those who have died, many have been removed, and *many have fled from fear of the fever*; consequently the population is now considerably reduced.”—*Report of the Medical Society, p. 8.*

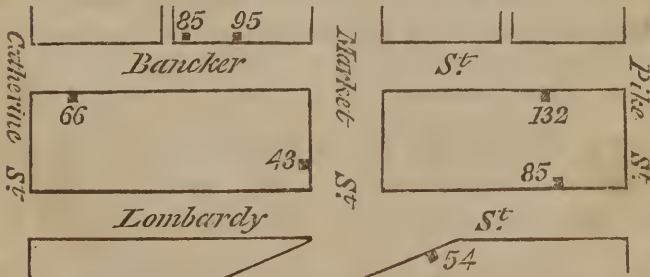
D.

“From the documents obtained by your Committee, it appears, the number of blacks affected by the epidemic in Bancker-street and its vicinity, to the whites, is in the proportion of *three of the former to one of the latter*; and among the blacks, the disease has certainly exhibited a greater degree of intense malignity and fatality.

“This remarkable circumstance has induced many persons to believe, that the Bancker-street fever having stricken those *who were, in fact, by far the most numerous inhabitants of that district*, was nothing more than an ordinary fever, as it occurs in jails, camps, or hospitals; or else being a distemper peculiar to the African race and people of colour, it could bear no resemblance to the ordinary bilious remittents of our cities, and much less to the yellow fever.”—*Report of the Medical Society, p. 17.*

E.

Sketch of Bancker-street and its vicinity.



* It will be seen by Note K, that the Board of Health had adopted rigorous measures in regard to Bancker-street, as well as other parts of the town, long before the presentment of the Grand Jury, or the suggestions of any persons whatever.

Population of the District, from the 1st of August to the 1st of November, 1820.

On the northernmost side of Lombardy-street, contiguous to the lots of Bancker-street, be- tween Catharine and Pike-streets, . . .	Whites.	Blacks.
	432	125
On the southernmost side of Bancker-street, between Pike and Catharine-streets, . . .	491	254
On the northernmost side of Bancker-street, between the beforementioned streets, . . .	513	162
On the east side of Catharine, and west side of Pike-streets, and that part of Market-street between Lombardy and Bancker-streets . . .	246	21
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	1732	562
	562	
	<hr/>	
Majority of whites	1170	

F.

1. Out of the whole number of blacks in this district, viz. 562,—119 lived in cellars, of whom 54 were sick of the prevailing fever, 24 of whom died at their homes; while, out of the remaining number of black inhabitants, viz. 443, 101 were sick, of whom 46 died at their homes. From which it appears that out of the 443 who were better lodged, only 101 were sick of this disease; while out of 114 living in unwholesome *cellars*, that *nearly one half* were taken down with the disease, and that nearly one half of that number died at their places of dwelling.

2. Out of the whole number of white inhabitants in this district, viz. 1732, only 11 whites died out of 82 sick.

G.

1. The total number of sick in the whole district appears to have been, as nearly as we can ascertain, about 237; of which the greatest number sick on particular lots, was—(See *Sketch, Note E.*)

At No. 66 Bancker-street, which is on the southernmost side of the street, and at the western extremity of the district, and near Catharine-street—sick, 8 blacks.

At No. 95 Bancker-street—sick, 34 blacks and 9 whites ;

At No. 85 Bancker-street—sick, 9 whites ; which numbers are on the opposite side of the street to No. 66, and near the middle of the district.

At No. 132 Bancker-street—sick, 22 blacks and 2 whites ; which is at the eastern extremity of the district, and near Pike-street.

At No. 43 Market-street, between Lombardy and Bancker-streets, 6 whites were sick, the only persons sick in the street.

At No. 85 Lombardy-street, which is at the easternmost extremity of the district, and remote from all the other places mentioned. Here 9 blacks were sick, and 1 white.

By which it appears, that notwithstanding there are 148 lots in this district, 100 cases (nearly one *half* the whole number of cases) occurred on 6 lots, situated in *different* parts of the district, and *remote* from each other ; each place constituting a distinct focus for the generation of disease.

2. In that section of Market-street, embraced between Lombardy and Bancker-streets, and which is the centre of this district, containing 127 whites and 4 blacks, living on 13 lots, there were sick 6 whites, who all lived an irregular life in confined and filthy apartments, in the back building of No. 43 ; while *no other person* in that street had the disease.

3. On the southernmost side of Bancker-street, between Pike and Market-streets, occupied by 303 inhabitants, there occurred 58 cases ; while in the houses *directly opposite*, on the northernmost side of the street, and not more than 60 feet distant, occupied by *two hundred and forty inhabitants*, of whom one only was a coloured person, out of this number *four persons only*, (whites,) who had led a very intemperate life, sickened and died. Two of them lived at No. 135, a neat wooden building, occupied altogether by only five persons, situated in the rear of the lot, with a clean yard of at least 80 feet in front.

4. Out of 48 blacks, living in 10 cellars, (viz. Nos. 139, 98, 96, 89, 87, 79, 84, and 78 Bancker-street, at No. 53 Lombardy-street, and No. 36 Pike-street,) 33 were sick, of whom 14 died ; while out of 120 *whites*, living *immediately over*

their heads, in the apartments of the same houses, not one even had the fever!

5. On the lot 95 Bancker-street, 34 blacks and 9 whites were sick of the fever; on the lot 66 Bancker-street, 8 blacks were sick; and on the lot 35 Lombardy-street, 9 blacks: while in the *houses immediately adjoining these lots* lived *sixty-one whites and twenty-three blacks, who being all of good character, and having no intercourse with the intermediate buildings, all escaped the disease.*

6. On the side of Lombardy-street, next to Bancker-street, and between Pike and Catharine-streets, and where the lots are contiguous to, and much lower than those of Bancker-street, receiving of course no small part of their putrefying animal and vegetable filth, there were 607 inhabitants, (of whom 125 were blacks,) and 19 only sick; while on the contiguous lots of Bancker-street there resided 740 inhabitants, of whom 248 were blacks. Out of the 740, 115 were sick of the fever, of whom 23 were whites.

H.

As at the back building of No. 43 Market-street, already spoken of, where there were 28 whites of low character crowded into small apartments, living in the most filthy condition. Out of this number, 6 were sick.

At No. 35 Lombardy-street, in the third story, were 5 white females, and a black man, husband to one of them, and all of whom were sick of the fever.

At No. 58 Bancker-street, where a drunken white woman, with one child, lived in the same cellar with a black woman, all of whom had the fever.

At No. 38 Bancker-street, where a poor distressed family of 10 whites, occupied the same small room, and were all sick with the fever.

At No. 89 Bancker-street, in the front cellar, where a white woman and her black husband lived as boarders in a black family consisting of 6 persons, all of whom had the fever, and 4 of the blacks died.

At No. 95 Bancker-street, where 30 blacks and 6 whites

lived in the same back building, and all were sick of the fever.

At No. 102 Bancker-street, where 4 white women kept a brothel in the *cellar*, and had constant intercourse with negro men. Two of these women had the fever, and one died.

At No. 124 Bancker-street, where a white woman and her black husband lived together in the front cellar, and the black man died of the fever.

I.

Out of 148 lots in this district, 45 lots were occupied by 359 respectable white persons, of whom not one individual was sick with this fever.

K.

Proceedings of the Board of Health, in relation to the condition of the poor in various parts of the City, and at the Penitentiary, before any sickness existed in Bancker-street, or elsewhere.

The Board of Health were so sensible of the danger of crowding together a great number of the poorer classes in confined apartments, that they directed their attention to the condition of the Penitentiary, although situated in the country, and three miles from the city, as early as July 5th, 1820. The following letter of the Resident Physician, read at the meeting of the Board at that date, will show the object which the Board had in view on this subject :

“ NEW-YORK, July 5th, 1820.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ In obedience to the order of the Board of Health, passed at their meeting on the 3d instant, I visited the Penitentiary on the afternoon of the same day, accompanied by the House Physicians, Dr. Westervelt and Dr. Belden. I examined most of the apartments of the institution, more especially those which were most crowded, and from which most danger from disease was to be apprehended.

" I was first introduced into Hall No. 2, containing 50 coloured females. The air of the apartment was exceedingly confined and offensive, as was to be expected from so great a number of persons immured within a space of 45 feet by 22.

" Hall No. 4 is of the same dimensions, and contains 45 white females. The air of this apartment was similar to the former, scarcely respirable. But the back Hall No. 6 was in a still more offensive state, containing both black and white females intermingled—28 of the former, and 21 of the latter.

" From thence we proceeded to the apartment allotted to the *boys*. This too was crowded with 30 boys, some coloured, others white, and all within a room not exceeding 8 or 10 feet in width, and about 40 in length, with small adjacent sleeping rooms. The inhabitants of this apartment, by breathing this confined and impure air, have lost their healthy hue, the greater part of them exhibiting a remarkably pale and sickly visage.

" In this part of the establishment, the three boys whose sudden death was reported to this Board, sickened with typhoid fever, and fell victims to this disease after two or three days illness. Their sudden death is probably to be ascribed to the unhealthy scorbutic condition of their systems, antecedent to the invasion of fever, but doubtless in part induced by the confined state of the air in which they lay sick. And it is to be apprehended, should the contagion be renewed in any other members of the same crowded apartments, the same fatal result may be expected.*

" The condition of the hospital attached to the institution, instead of being well ventilated, is no less crowded and injurious to the sick.

" Upon inquiry, too, it was found that a very unusual number, especially of females, have been recently taken up as vagrants, and sent to the Penitentiary.

" To this cause the present evils are to be attributed, the

* These predictions were fully verified. A great number, in the course of the season, were taken down with typhoid fevers, analogous to those which prevailed in Bancker-street and its vicinity.

apartments not being of sufficient dimensions for their accommodation.

“The only method by which still further fatality in that institution is to be guarded against at this hot season of the year, is either to discharge from the house some of the vagrants, or to provide additional temporary buildings for their reception; for, under the present state of things, a commitment to the Penitentiary involves a punishment much more severe than that which was contemplated by the Legislature in the organization of that establishment. I also recommend, and have expressed the same to the keeper, that the walls be again whitewashed without delay, and that this process be repeated at least monthly during the summer season; that the floors be frequently cleansed, and fresh vinegar daily sprinkled through the apartments, at the same time that the prisoners be supplied with a large proportion of fresh vegetables and fruits. But as the institution is under the care of eminent physicians, further remarks on this subject become unnecessary.

“I am, dear sir, very respectfully, yours,

(Signed)

“DAVID HOSACK.

“*The Hon. PETER A. JAY, President, pro tempore,
of the Board of Health.*”

By the following extract from the Minutes of the Board, it will be seen that a special meeting was called on the 27th of July, for the very purpose of devising some plan to avert the apprehended danger of disease from the too crowded condition of the apartments of the poor:

“*Board of Health, July 27th, 1820.*

“The President informed the Board that he had summoned them together at the request of the Resident Physician, who had some matters in relation to the health of the city to communicate to them.

“The Resident Physician stated to the Board, that he had been, in his line of official duty, called upon to visit several persons who had been reported as sick to the Health Commissioners; that he had found several poor persons sick with *typhus fever*, who were crowded in small and confined dwellings, whose

situation, so far from affording hope of relief from medicine, would become *nurseries of infectious and contagious diseases*; that from the crowded situation of the New-York Hospital, but very few could be removed there, and the Commissioners of the Alms-House were exceedingly averse to receiving into that Institution persons ill of an infectious or contagious disease. Under these circumstances, *humanity to the poor*, as well as a *regard to the health of the city generally*, imperiously required that some provision should be made for the *removal of the indigent sick, from their own confined and unhealthy dwellings, to some airy and well-ventilated place.*"—*Minutes of the Board of Health, p. 98.*

It was deferred to the next meeting, July 31st.

At a meeting of the Board, July 31st, 1820, Aldermen Allen and Tooker and Dr. Hosack were appointed a Committee, "to make arrangements with the Commissioners of the Alms House, as to providing for indigent persons who may be ill of typhus fever."—(*Minutes of the Board, p. 102.*)

So at a meeting of the Board, August 3d, 1820—

"Upon the suggestion of the President, a Committee was appointed to take into consideration the providing of suitable places, to which, in case circumstances should hereafter render it necessary, the poor of the city may be removed, and suitably accommodated.

"The Committee appointed were Aldermen Tooker, Thorpe, Anthony, Townsend, and Board.

"A Committee was likewise appointed for similar purposes, in relation to the sick poor, and consisted of the Recorder, Alderman Allen, and Dr. Hosack."

Also was read at the same meeting the following Report:

"August 3d, 1820.

"The Committee appointed to make provision for such of the poor of the city as may be ill of typhus fever, and are in such situation as not to receive the necessary comforts and means of relief at their own places of abode, REPORT, That they visited Bellevue, and, upon a conference with the superintendent and one of the physicians of that establishment, Dr.

Dyckman, have directed two of the rooms of the hospital to be emptied, by a removal of their present sick occupants to a room in the manufactory. This provision, they believe, may meet the exigencies of the present season.

“The Committee, however, take occasion to observe, that the hospitals of Bellevue are more crowded with sick than they should be in the present hot season of the year, and that, in the increasing population of the city, it will probably be necessary, in a short time, to provide a more spacious building for the reception of the sick of that institution. In such case, your Committee are of the opinion, and in this they are confirmed by the representation of Dr. Dyckman, whose communication on this subject is annexed, that it would be desirable to have a distinct building erected for the express purpose of receiving patients labouring under fevers of a typhoid or malignant character.

“This house, it is contemplated, should be of such dimensions as not only to receive the fever patients of the Alms-House, but that description of the poor of the city before referred to. The Committee also believe, that, by such additional provisions, not only the sick poor of the city would be well accommodated, but that the sick of the Alms-House, and especially the maniacs, would in that case have those benefits of which, in the present crowded state of that establishment, they are deprived.

“Such building too, it is believed, might be erected at comparatively little expense. The quarry on the ground contains an abundant quantity of stone; the Penitentiary can furnish workmen of every description that will be required; in which case, the chief expense to be incurred will be for lime and timber.

“The Committee are of opinion, that, should such an additional building be deemed necessary, the most advantageous site for the same will be either the north or south-west corner of the lot lately purchased and added to the Bellevue establishment.

“Respectfully reported by

“DAVID HOSACK,

“SAMUEL TOOKER.”

The Board did not let the subject sleep.

“At the meeting of the Board, August 16, Alderman Tooker laid before the Board a letter from the superintendent of the Alms-House, of the 12th, to Mr. Targee, one of the Commissioners, in reply to a letter of Mr. Targee of the same date, in which Mr. Furman states, that he has prepared a ward for the reception of typhus fever patients, and that about seventy can be accommodated.” (*Minutes of the Board*, p. 121.)

At a meeting of the Board, August 28th, the condition of Bancker-street especially attracted their notice.

This was before a single case had been reported to the Board, either from Bancker-street or its vicinity.

Present—The Hon. C. D. Colden, Mayor, *President*.—*Aldermen* Allen, Anthony, Board, M'Queen, Swartwout, Thorp, Tooker, Townsend.—*Doctors* Hosack, Townsend.

The Resident Physician stated to the Board, that he had lately been called upon to visit in Bancker-street, and that he found the street in such a state of filthiness as to call for public attention to it. Whereupon the Secretary of the Board was directed to communicate to the Street Commissioner the information received, and to request him to see that the contractors of streets performed their duty, and that in *failure thereof prosecutions* be commenced against them.” (*Minutes of the Board*, p. 126.)

L.

Presentment of Bancker and Lombardy-streets, by the Grand Jury.

[It will be seen that this presentment was made some time after the condition of Bancker-street and its vicinity, had attracted the particular attention of the Board of Health.]

“At a Court of General Sessions of the peace, held in and for the city and county of New-York, at the City-Hall, of the said city, on Saturday, the 9th day of September, 1820.—Present The Hon. CADWALLADER D. COLDEN, Mayor.

JOHN P. ANTHONY, Esq. Alderman.

JAMES WARNER, Justice of the Peace.

“The Grand Jury came into Court, and among other things, made the following presentment, to wit :

“The Grand Jury respectfully beg leave to call the attention of the Court to a subject which they deem of vital importance to their fellow-citizens, and which, they hope, may meet a prompt and steady exertion on the part of those whose duty it is to watch over the health and safety of this metropolis.

“Subjoined is a list, communicated by the Resident Physician, of the number of the houses in Bancker and Lombardy-streets, in which, to use his words, ‘fevers of a bilious and typhus nature have occurred.’ Thirty-eight houses are there designated, and, in a note subjoined to the list, the Resident Physician observes, ‘It is to be added, that in *each* of these houses, particularly in Slam’s buildings, a great number of persons have been taken sick.’

“The Grand Jury went in a body on Wednesday last, to examine the state of the above-named streets. They not only viewed the condition of the streets, but entered many of the houses and yards ; and they lament to state, that both within and without doors, they found an accumulation and variety of filth, disease, misery, and depravity, not only distressing to humanity, and disgraceful to our species, but which appeared imminently dangerous to both the moral and physical well being of this community, as offering encouragement to the growth of every vice, and the commission of every crime, and as affording all the materials most likely to kindle and keep alive any sparks of pestilence which might chance there to light.

“The Grand Jury do, therefore, present the above-mentioned Bancker and Lombardy-streets, in general, and the houses below designated, in particular, as nuisances of the most dangerous and alarming nature, and as demanding the immediate and unremitting attention of all the authorities constituted for the purpose of repressing whatever may endanger the health and morals of this community.

“JOHN MASON, *Foreman*.

Copy.

“JOHN W. WYMAN, *Clerk*.”

M.

Proceedings of the Hospital, in relation to the admission of the Sick into that Institution.

At a meeting of the Board of Health, September 9, 1820 :

“The Recorder laid before the Board the following resolution of the governors of the New-York Hospital, of the 5th of September :

“It having been stated by Peter A. Jay, that it had been reported to the Board of Health, that typhus fever prevailed in certain parts of this city, among the poorer inhabitants, and that it was adviseable that some of the patients should be removed to some place where they might be better attended than in their own dwellings ;

“*Resolved,* That this Board will be happy, on this and every other occasion, to co-operate with the Board of Health, and that any patients sent by the Board of Health, shall be received and accommodated in the New-York Hospital, as far as the circumstances of the Institution will permit.

(Signed) “THOMAS BUCKLEY, Junr.”

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There had already been received, as we are informed by the House Physician, Dr. Weed, a considerable number of cases from Bancker-street and its vicinity, during the month of August, and before formal provision was made for their reception by the governors.

N.

The number of sick admitted into the New-York Hospital, from Bancker-street, and other streets, from the 1st of August, 1820, to the 1st of January, 1821, was, according to the House Physician, as nearly as can be made out, 182. Of these, it is not recorded on the books of the Hospital, how many came from the immediate vicinity of Bancker-street. A very great number, however, came from that district. By the report of the governors to the Board of Health, (*See Note O,*) it appears that the aggregate ratio of deaths to the sick in this disease, was nearly as one to six. The number admitted into

the Hospital at the Bellevue Alms-House, from Bancker-street and its vicinity, cannot be precisely ascertained. About 100 cases, however, were received there, having the character of the disease which prevailed in Bancker-street; of which number one out of five died.

Whereas the ratio of deaths to the sick in the district itself, was nearly as one to three; showing a very evident abatement in the fatality of the disease, when removed to the New-York and Bellevue Hospitals.

Whereas from the official reports of the yellow fever prevailing here in 1803*,

The total number of sick in the whole city was . . .	1638
Of which there died,	606
Making the number of deaths to that of the sick as	4 to 11
The number of sick in that year taken to Bellevue, was	170
Of whom there died	100

By which it appears, that on the removal of the sick to the country at Bellevue, the disease did not become milder, but that the number of deaths was actually greater than that of the recoveries, and to the sick as 5 to 9

The total number of sick in the whole city of yellow fever, in the year 1805*, was	664
Of which there died	277
(Besides which 40 are said to have died in the country.)	

Making the number of deaths to that of the sick, nearly as	3 to 7
The number of sick of this disease, sent from the city to the Marine Hospital, in the same year, was . . .	61

Of whom there died	28
Making the proportion of deaths to that of the sick, as . . .	7 to 16

In 1819 the number of deaths to the sick of yellow fever, in the city, was nearly as	3 to 4
And, at the Alms-house, as	1 to 2

* See Hardie's Account of the Yellow Fever of 1805.

Report of the Governors of the New-York Hospital to the Board of Health.

“TO THE BOARD OF HEALTH.

“GENTLEMEN—On the 5th September last, the governors of the New-York Hospital communicated to your Board, their disposition to co-operate with you, and their willingness to receive into the Hospital such fever patients as should be sent there by direction of the Board of Health, as far as the circumstances of the institution would permit.

The necessary instructions were accordingly given, which having been complied with, a very considerable number of such patients were received; but the Board of Governors having been recently obliged to discontinue the reception of that description of patients, beg leave to refer the Board of Health to the accompanying Report of their Visiting Committee, for the reasons which have influenced their decision, which is respectfully submitted.

“By order of the Board of Governors,

“B. W. ROGERS, *Secretary, pro. tem.*

“*New-York Hospital, December 8, 1820.*”

“Agreeably to instructions from the Board of Governors of the New-York Hospital, their Visiting Committee beg leave respectfully to present the following statement of facts:

“At a meeting of the Governors, on the 5th of September last, in consequence of a communication from the Honourable Recorder of the city, that typhus fever prevailed in certain parts of this city, among the poorer inhabitants, it was unanimously resolved, that the Board would be happy on this, and on every occasion, to co-operate with the Board of Health. Directions were accordingly given to the Visiting Committee, to receive into, and to accommodate in the New-York Hospital, all patients which might be sent by the Board of Health, as far as the circumstances of the institution would permit.

“Agreeably to the above instructions, the Committee have received into the Hospital, every patient sick of fever, of any

description who offered, except on two days in October ; on one of the Visiting days, two coloured women, ill of fever, were rejected, on account of the only ward appropriated to this class of patients being at the time greatly over-crowded ; and on the 1st instant also, the Committee very reluctantly declined admitting two patients labouring under malignant typhus fever, and, in so doing, they trust that the Board of Governors will consider their conduct perfectly justifiable, after perusing the following statement :

“ During the months of September, October, and November, one hundred and thirty-one patients, ill of fever, have been admitted into the Hospital ; of this number 23 have died, 89 have been cured, and 19 remain in the house at the present time. Of the above number 5 died within 24 hours of the time of their admission, and three others within 48 hours of the said time, having been several days sick previous to their admission.

“ So great was the desire of the Committee to comply as much as possible with the wishes of this Board, as expressed in their former communication to the Board of Health, that after having filled all the medical wards as much as the Physician deemed prudent, they were induced to allow some of the medical patients to be removed to such of the surgical wards as could receive them. In consequence of this, eight of the surgical patients, and a nurse in one of the surgical wards took the disease, of whom three have died ; one of their best nurses also has for some time been in a very critical situation, but is now considered as convalescent.

“ In the medical wards also, two of the nurses caught the disease from their patients, but are also convalescent.

“ While the weather remained pleasant, so as to enable the nurses and attendants freely to ventilate the different apartments, the Committee continued to admit all fever patients that were brought to the Hospital ; but at the commencement of the present month, when it was improper to ventilate the wards as freely as had been previously done, fully convinced that the fever prevailing in the Hospital was of a highly malignant and infectious kind, the Committee thought that they could not conscientiously allow any more patients labouring

under typhus fever, to be admitted into the Hospital, and exercised the authority vested in them, by rejecting them.

“In stating to the Board that they think the fever which has prevailed in the Hospital is of an infectious kind, they have only to state, in support of the opinion, that in addition to its being communicated to the nurses, several of the surgical patients who caught the disease, had not, for a considerable time, been out of their wards; and until the removal of the medical patients into them, the surgical wards were free from fever of any kind. The Attending and House Surgeon also agree in opinion, that their patients took the disease from the medical side of the house.

“All which is respectfully submitted,

“B. W. ROGERS,

“JOHN B. LAWRENCE,

“JONATHAN LITTLE,

Visiting Committee.

“*New-York Hospital, December 8, 1820.*”