

Third vindication of the General Penitentiary : showing that there is no ground whatever for supposing that the situation of that prison had any share in producing the late disease among the prisoners confined there. Being an answer to some observations contained in a work published by P. Mere Latham, entitled "An account of the disease lately prevalent at the General Penitentiary." / by George Holford.

Contributors

Holford, George, 1768-1839.
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Publication/Creation

London : Rivington, 1825.

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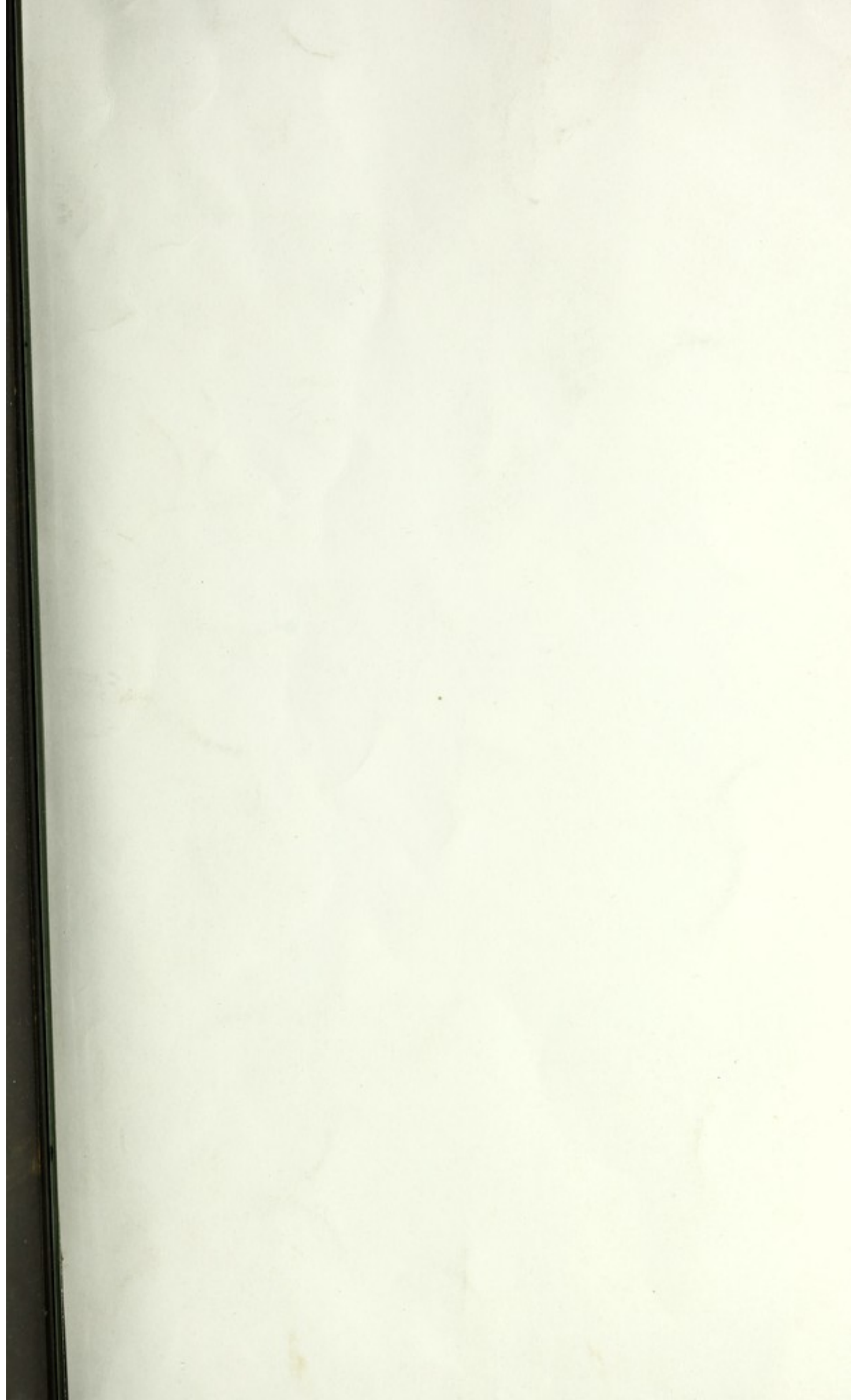
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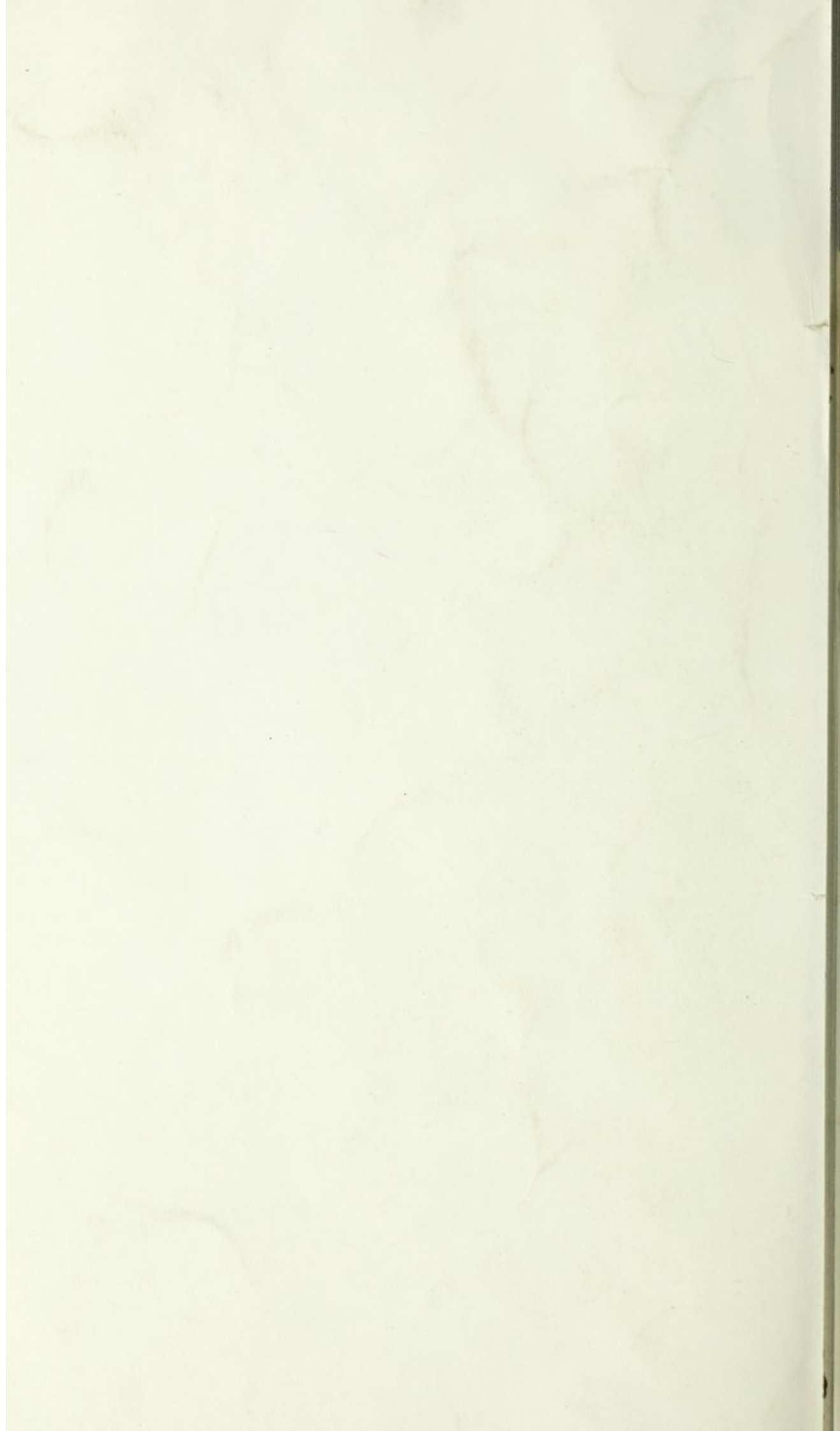
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THIRD VINDICATION
OF
The General Penitentiary,

SHEWING

THAT THERE IS NO GROUND WHATEVER FOR SUPPOSING THAT
THE SITUATION OF THAT PRISON HAD ANY SHARE
IN PRODUCING THE LATE DISEASE AMONG THE
PRISONERS CONFINED THERE.

BEING AN

ANSWER TO SOME OBSERVATIONS

CONTAINED IN A WORK PUBLISHED BY

P. MERE LATHAM, M.D.

ENTITLED

*"AN ACCOUNT OF THE DISEASE LATELY PREVALENT AT
THE GENERAL PENITENTIARY."*

BY

GEORGE HOLFORD, M.P.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. & J. RIVINGTON,
WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL,
AND ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;
AND J. HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY.

1825.

THIRD EDITION

On the General Principles of the Art of Medicine

By

JOHN HENRY CLARKE, M.D., F.R.S., F.R.C.P.,
FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY, AND OF THE
ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, LONDON.
AND OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

LONDON: PUBLISHED BY R. GILBERT, ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

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AN ACCOUNT OF THE DISSEMINATION OF THE
DISEASES OF THE LUNGS, AND OF THE
MEANS OF PREVENTING AND CURE.

21

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CHAPTER I.

Report of the Physicians attending at the Penitentiary, addressed to the Committee of that Establishment on the 11th October, 1823—New Circumstances stated by Dr. Latham in aid of that Report—Remarks on such Statement.

PERHAPS the best answer, that can be made to those who are inclined to suspect the existence of some influence injurious to health in the site of the Millbank Penitentiary, is, that the prisoners who now inhabit it are healthy, many of them being much better in health than they were when they came there*. But as the healthiness of a place, in which so many individuals are to continue for a long time in confinement, must be matter of much interest to the public at large, as well as of great anxiety to the friends and connections of the persons confined, it is desirable that

* The Penitentiary was re-opened for the reception of prisoners on the 9th of August last. Convicts have been coming in gradually since that time, and there are now between 150 and 160 in the prison.

no part of the cloud which the Report of Dr. Latham and his colleagues to the Committee of the Penitentiary, (dated on the 11th October, 1823) raised about this building, should be suffered to rest upon it, if the whole can be dispelled ;—and as Dr. Latham has now attempted to maintain the positions contained in that Report, by publishing certain comments on some observations which I addressed upon it to the Committee of the Penitentiary in February, 1823, and which he admits to have been at that time “ *considered by those to whom they were addressed to be a complete refutation of all that the physicians had advanced concerning flux, as the predominant disorder of the Penitentiary since its foundation,*” I shall take the liberty of replying to those comments in my turn, and of endeavouring to destroy a second time the authority of that Report thus unexpectedly brought again to life. The Report alluded to is as follows :—

To the Committee of the General Penitentiary.

GENTLEMEN,

11th October, 1823.

THE severity of the disease prevalent at the Penitentiary having greatly abated within the last few weeks, we have had more time to turn our attention from the imme-

diate care of the sick, and to make further inquiry into the origin and progress of the epidemic. We beg leave to lay before the Committee all the details of our investigations.

We have perused all the written communications of the medical officers to the Committee, from June 1820, when such communications were first regularly made, down to the present time.

These communications consist of Reports made quarterly by the medical superintendent and the apothecary; of Reports made monthly by the apothecary; and of numerous special Reports made by one or other, or by both of them, at various times, and at uncertain intervals.

The quarterly and monthly Reports contain observations upon the state of health of all the prisoners in the Penitentiary; the condition of those in the prison at large, ascertained at their general inspection, as well as the condition of the sick in the infirmaries, who were under constant observation and care.

The special Reports consist of returns made by the medical officers, of all deaths that occurred, of notices of the diseases that proved fatal, also of answers to inquiries respecting the health of individual prisoners; and they contain, moreover, various requests, suggestions and observations, relating to circumstances connected with their department.

In these communications we find the healthy state of the Penitentiary announced after a general inspection in June 1820, and constantly and uniformly confirmed after every quarterly and monthly general inspection, down to the commencement of the present year; we find its exemption from disease again and again insisted upon, as something striking and peculiar, and we also find comparisons drawn between the health of those in common life

and the health of the prisoners in the Penitentiary, and conclusions deduced to the advantage of the latter.

Nevertheless, diseases did occur from time to time in the Penitentiary; but we discover in these communications no opinion expressed by the medical officers, that any one disease was predominant, or any one disease of a peculiar character.

Throughout these communications, the only notices of disease resembling that which has lately prevailed in the Penitentiary, are the following:—

In a Report after a general inspection, dated October 2d, 1820, among 47 cases of various diseases then in the infirmary, five cases of diarrhœa are mentioned without further comment. No trace of this disease is afterwards found, until in a Report, after a general inspection, dated November 2d, 1821, a single case of diarrhœa is mentioned, which proved fatal, but without comment. Again, no trace of this disease is met with, until in a Report, after a general inspection, dated January 6th, 1822, one dangerous case of dysentery is mentioned; and again, in a Report, after a general inspection, dated February 2d, 1822, one fatal case of diarrhœa. Here the dangerous case of dysentery in one month, and the fatal case of diarrhœa succeeding, refer to the same individual.

No allusion to the disease is afterwards made, until in a Report, after a general inspection, dated June 4th, 1822, two fatal cases of diarrhœa are mentioned; and among the dangerous cases then in the infirmary, one of diarrhœa is noticed, which, in a special Report made the next day, is said to have proved fatal.

Afterwards, in a Report, after a general inspection, dated July 1st, 1822, one dangerous case of diarrhœa is mentioned, which terminated fatally, as we learn from a

special Report on the following day. From July 1822 to January 1823, there is no allusion made to a single case of diarrhœa, when in a Report, dated the 10th of the latter month, "a few more cases of diarrhœa" are spoken of; in the following month, viz. February, scurvy and flux are said to be gaining ground, and in the beginning of March these two diseases pervaded the whole prison.

Thus, in these authentic records of the health of the Penitentiary, regularly drawn up by the medical officers, and regularly presented to the Committee for their information, we can only find, during the period of two years and eight months which immediately preceded the declared existence of the epidemic, eleven cases of any diseases at all similar to that epidemic, in its character and symptoms. Of these eleven cases, six proved fatal.

From these fatal cases, however, occurring as they did at periods remote from each other, or indeed from all of them, mentioned as they were at the time of their occurrence, without any special comment by the medical men who observed and treated them, we should not now be justified in drawing any inference. As far then as any information can be obtained from these documents, we should still attribute this disease which has prevailed in the Penitentiary, entirely and exclusively to the influence of diet, and to a severe and protracted winter.

But we have thought it our duty to have recourse to other documents, and we have extracted from them, facts of unquestionable importance, which were hitherto unsuspected by the medical men who have watched the course of all the diseases that have occurred in the Penitentiary since its first establishment.

We have examined the Apothecary's Day-Book, and every paper upon which any record has been preserved, of

medicines ordered for the sick, from the year 1816 to the present time, including every prescription for the severe ailments of those in the infirmary, and for the complaints of those who were still well enough to pursue their ordinary occupations in the prison. We have also examined the bills of charges for different kinds of medicines that have been furnished to the Penitentiary within the same period.

By the help of these documents, and inferring, as we could with safety, the nature of diseases from the medicines that have been procured, and the kind of remedies prescribed for individual cases, we have endeavoured to form the most reasonable conjecture whether any, and what disease has been predominant in the Penitentiary before the last twelvemonth ; and if any, whether it has been at all similar to the epidemic that has recently prevailed there.

The following table gives the number of Prisoners in the Penitentiary every year since the year 1816, with the number of cases treated as diarrhœa in every year.

	* 1816	1817	1818	1819	1820	1821	1822
Prisoners - - -	72	212	246	351	609	798	866
Cases of Diarrhœa	23	104	106	82	85	87	88

We are aware that inferences concerning the nature of a disease deduced from the remedies employed for its cure would, in general, be hasty and inconclusive. But, as in the present case, the nature of the disease is unequivocally indicated by the particular remedies used, we may, with certainty, conclude that diarrhœa has existed in the Penitentiary from its first establishment, and that it has prevailed in various degrees of extent at different pe-

* The numbers in this year refer to a period of six months only.

riods; that, proportionably to the number of prisoners, it prevailed to the greatest degree during the year immediately after its establishment, and that it has prevailed in a less and less degree each succeeding year, down to the period when the present epidemic was discovered.

From the same documents we discover certain peculiarities belonging to this disorder; peculiarities which become more and more remarkable in each succeeding year, (even although the numbers decrease) evidently distinguishing it from the disorder of the same name which proceeds from common and accidental causes.

Common diarrhœa is easily curable; and by the simplest means, and in constitutions otherwise healthy, we are not aware that it is at all liable to recur habitually.

But this disorder (we find) did not readily yield to the methods of treatment employed. These records show how pertinacious and intractable it was in many whom it attacked. The same prisoners were again and again brought under medical treatment for it in the same year. Many of the patients of one year are found to have been the patients of the preceding year; and as the period becomes more and more remote from the first establishment of the Penitentiary, we find prisoners still suffering diarrhœa, who had already endured it one, two, three, or four years.

The following Table gives the gross number of cases treated as diarrhœa in every year; and also the number of cases continued from preceding years to the succeeding, the latter being included in the gross amount; it furnishes also the number of new cases in every year, by subtracting from the gross amount of each year the cases continued from preceding years.

	1817	1818	1819	1820	1821	1822
Gross number of cases of Diarrhœa in each year }	104	106	82	85	87	88
Number continued from preceding year - - }	11	32	31	23	20	17
Number of new cases in each year - - - }	93	74	51	62	67	71

The following Tables show how far back each case of diarrhœa that was continued from one year to another can be traced.

In 1817: of 104 cases, 11 are traced back to	- 1816
In 1818: of 106 — 32 - - - - -	26 to 1817
	6 — 1817 & 1816
In 1819: of 82 — 31 - - - - -	18 — 1818
	13 — 1818 & 1817
In 1820: of 85 — 23 - - - - -	12 — 1819
	6 — 1819 & 1818
	4 — 1819 & 1818
	& 1817
	1 — 1817 & 1816
In 1821: of 87 — 20 - - - - -	7 — 1820
	4 — 1820 & 1819
	5 — 1820 & 1819
	& 1818
	1 — 1819 & 1818
	1 — 1818
	1 — 1818 & 1817
	1 — 1817 & 1816
In 1822: of 88 — 17 - - - - -	8 — 1821
	4 — 1821 & 1820
	2 — 1821 & 1820
	& 1819
	2 — 1820
	1 — 1821 & 1820
	& 1819 & 1818

Upon the whole, we think the facts adduced warrant us in concluding,—

That a disorder of the bowels, of a peculiar nature, at all times difficult of cure, and of the same general character with that which has constituted the late epidemic, has prevailed in the Penitentiary ever since its establishment; but that until the commencement of the present year it became gradually more and more limited in its extent, and that although it has been always difficult of cure, it has not upon the whole been attended with much hazard to life, until the breaking out of the late epidemic.

Such are the details of our investigations, the facts they have disclosed, and such the conclusions to which they have conducted us; but as the existence of any local influence productive of disease can only be presumed from certain effects, it is also only from these same effects that the degree and sphere of its activity can be estimated. Whatever noxious influence peculiar to the Penitentiary may be suspected to exist, this influence must have abated of its activity in proportion as the disease became more limited; that is, as the period was more remote from the first establishment of the prison. It was therefore (as every thing seems to testify) when this disorder was reduced within narrower limits than at any former period, that suddenly the same disorder became much more extensively prevalent than it had ever been, that it assumed the form of an epidemic, and went far beyond its former character, in the severity of its symptoms, and in its fatal consequences.

Our belief is, that but for the change of diet and the severe and protracted winter, the disease never would have assumed the form of an epidemic. The universal debility produced by these causes, rendered the prisoners more obnoxious to an influence which, as far as we can

judge, had become less powerful in itself for the production of disease.

(Signed)

P. M. LATHAM, M.D.

P. M. ROGET, M. D.

CLEM. HUE, M. D.

WM. MACMICHAEL, M. D.

H. H. SOUTHEY, M. D.

Before I proceed to consider what Dr. Latham has said in regard to my observations on the Report itself, I will make a few remarks on some new matter, by which he conceives himself to have given it additional support.

Dr. Latham says—" *We were in possession of other circumstances tending to establish the same conclusions,*" (viz. the conclusions in the Report) "*which might have been introduced into the Report, but which were purposely withheld, because they were of a nature which medical men alone could justly appreciate. At least, they could not have been made intelligible to others without certain explanations, which would have been inconsistent with a simple statement.*"

“ These circumstances, however, must now be added, that medical men (whom I consider myself now addressing) may give them the weight to which they are entitled. ”

“ Long before the books were brought to light, which furnished the facts upon which the Report is grounded, we were morally convinced (as all physicians must have been) that complaints, which had flux of the bowels for their prominent symptom, had been frequent in the Penitentiary during former years ; and this conviction was founded upon certain recorded statements of the apothecary. In the minutes of evidence before a committee of the House of Commons in the Session of 1823, we found that Mr. Pratt, in his examination, had referred to a particular letter of his, written in March, 1822, when a change of diet was contemplated at the Penitentiary. The letter contained a prediction that, in the event of the change contemplated being carried into effect, those disorders, which actually did take place, would be the consequence. This warning was not forgotten when the evil became manifest. Mr. Pratt was acknowledged by all to have predicted truly,

and allowed considerable credit. He was himself accustomed to refer us to this prophecy and its verification, not without some exultation; and indeed, well he might; for if, without any help or suggestion from what had already occurred, he really foresaw, not that disease or other, but expressly the very disease would follow the change of diet, which actually did follow, it is one of the most splendid instances of medical anticipation upon record. Nevertheless we were slow to allow him more than the credit due to a sensible man, rightly conjecturing what would take place hereafter, from what had heretofore fallen under his own observation. In short, we were quite certain, that the prophecy could have had no other foundation than in the bonâ fide experience of the prophet.

“ But convinced (as we were) of the fact, from the course in which things are accustomed to happen in our own profession, we could not insist upon it until some proof could be obtained, which would be convincing also to others. We continued, therefore, in search of this proof, suppressing still our own persuasion, until we had discovered it.

“ At length the books in question came to light ; and in them it appeared, by the testimony of Mr. Pratt's own hand-writing, that at the very time he was prophesying to the committee, that certain diseases would take place upon their projected change of diet, he had already been prescribing most largely for those very diseases ever since the foundation of the prison, for six years in succession.

“ Knowing that bowel complaints always had been prevalent in the Penitentiary, he came to the obvious and just conclusion, that they would become still more so, if the diet was rendered less nutritive than it was. Whatever would debilitate must render the prisoners more obnoxious to disease generally, and especially to those complaints to which they had hitherto always been liable.

“ With us, then, the facts stated in the Report only came in confirmation of a belief which circumstances had already led us to entertain, and which, as physicians, we must still have entertained, whether those facts had been brought to light or not. These cir-

cumstances, taken alone, were not calculated (we knew) to conduct others to the same belief. But being added, as they now are, to the facts of the Report, it will be at once seen how much they strengthen its conclusion.

“ Another circumstance deserves to be mentioned, which gave additional weight to the same conclusion. Before the books in question were produced, we had no difficulty in seeing how the apothecary came to foretel the disease of the Penitentiary just as it came to pass. But we had the greatest difficulty in conceiving how he alone should happen to foretel it, and the medical superintendent have no such anticipation. His books, however, soon cleared up this perplexity. For in perusing them we found, that the apothecary alone was fully acquainted with the facts upon which the anticipation was grounded, and therefore that he alone could confidently entertain it. The prisoners for whom chalk mixture, &c., was so largely employed were, for the most part, under Mr. Pratt’s exclusive care. More than half the number had medicine given to them while they were following

their ordinary occupations in the prison. The functions of the medical superintendent and the apothecary were so far divided, that while the daily business of the former was only with the prisoners in the infirmaries, in prescribing for their severer maladies, that of the latter was moreover with the prisoners in the Penitentiary at large, in prescribing for various ailments which did not require their removal into the infirmaries. Further, the medical superintendent had nothing to do with the prison, except to make a general inspection of it, accompanied by the apothecary, once a month, when it is probable that the numbers taking chalk mixture were not so regularly reported to him, as to make him sensible how constant and extensive the prevalence of diarrhœa had been within its walls."

With reference to the latter part of this long quotation, I beg to remind Dr. Latham, that the medical superintendent, Dr. Hutchison, (who is here supposed not to have received such regular reports of the numbers of prisoners taking chalk mixture in the Penitentiary, as to be sensible how constant and extensive the prevalence of diarrhœa had been

there,) saw * and examined every prisoner on each of his monthly inspections ; and he was not only in the habit of signing the monthly reports, but he also drew up himself a report in every quarter concerning the general health of the prison, under written instructions, by which instructions he was moreover bound to sign every demand on the Committee for medicines to be kept in store, and to examine and sign the accounts of the ex-

* The following evidence was given by Dr. Hutchison, on his examination before a Committee of the House of Commons. See printed papers, 1824—p. 52, 53.

Question—Were you not in the habit of going round the prison at the beginning of every month, with Mr. Pratt, accompanied by the Governor, in the part of the prison occupied by males, and by the Matron in the part occupied by females, and examining every prisoner personally as to the state of his health ?

Answer—Yes, I was.

Question—And were not most of the Monthly Reports signed by yourself as well as Mr. Pratt ?

Answer—They were undoubtedly, till June 1822, when, according to my instructions, the Quarterly Reports only were signed by myself.

Question—Is it possible, that a diarrhoea of a peculiar character, difficult of cure, could have escaped your observation during that time ?

Answer—It is impossible.

penditure of such medicine, a circumstance from which it is but fair to presume that he was not so ignorant of the quantity of chalk mixture expended in the prison as Dr. Latham would have us believe.

I have read over the passages in Dr. Latham's Book, cited above, with great attention several times, being very anxious to discover the new circumstances, which, Dr. Latham tells us in the beginning of it, were *purposely withheld* in the report made to the Committee of the Penitentiary, *because medical men alone could justly appreciate them*; and which must now, he says, be added, *that medical men may give them the weight to which they are entitled*; and I must own that I do not find there any circumstances upon which men, not initiated in the mysteries of the medical science, may not exercise as sound a judgment, as the oldest members of the College.

I find a statement, that *long before Mr. Pratt's day-books were brought to light*, the Physicians had *a moral conviction* of the frequency of flux in the Penitentiary, (*founded*

upon certain recorded statements of the Apothecary,) and a reference to a letter of Mr. Pratt's, dated in March, 1822, with inferences drawn from that letter, in which inferences I think I can detect error without taking out a diploma. The statement is certainly new, and seems not quite consistent with the language of the report, which appears to describe with scrupulous minuteness the different kinds of papers examined by the Physicians.—The report does not mention any recorded statements of Mr. Pratt's as leading to the moral conviction which Dr. Latham asserts to have been founded on them, previous to the examination of the day-books; but on the contrary, I collect from it, that, until the Physicians had examined the day-books, the prescriptions, and the bills for medicines, (which was after they had gone through “the authentic records of the health of the Penitentiary, regularly drawn up by the medical officers,” viz. Dr. Hutchison and Mr. Pratt) they continued to “attribute the late disease entirely and exclusively” (to use their own expressions) “to the influence of diet, and to a severe and protracted winter;” and saw no ground to suspect that bowel

complaints had been frequent in former years. But, however this may be, we now hear for the first time of "*certain recorded statements of the Apothecary,*" which produced a certain conviction upon the minds of the Physicians, and the mention of these recorded statements is ushered in with an intimation, that Dr. Latham is now addressing himself to medical men, and that he is about to mention circumstances, to which they alone are capable of giving their due weight, such mention, however, being unaccompanied by the slightest explanation or hint of what these recorded statements contain. He does not even tell the medical gentlemen, to whose decision he is appealing, of what nature these statements are, or where they are to be found. I readily admit that neither I nor any other member of the Committee of the Penitentiary, or of the Committee of the House of Commons, could appreciate the value of these recorded statements, without some information of their contents; and if I thought that medical men could do so, I would retire at once from this discussion, and confess, in silent admiration of the powers of science, that physic bestow-

ed upon its votaries some mental faculty of perception, which persons who had never been admitted within the hallowed precincts of the College, did not possess, and were not even capable of conceiving.

With respect to the other new circumstance brought forward in the passages quoted above, we have the good fortune to be better informed. Mr. Pratt's letter of March, 1822, was written to the Committee of the Penitentiary while the change of Dietary was under consideration, and contains his observations upon that subject. Mr. Pratt gave it as his opinion in that letter, that the then existing Dietary was too abundant, but argued against the total disuse of solid meat, proposing that the meat days should be reduced from four days in the week to three; and in the event of its being determined to exclude solid meat altogether from the Dietary, he recommended the substitution of soup, and gave directions for making it, concluding his letter with these words, "At the same time I am fearful, that a long continuance of soup, however strong, might create affections of the bowels."

Upon this single observation, which, according to Dr. Latham, would be "*one of the most splendid instances of medical anticipation on record*," if it were not founded on some previous knowledge on the part of Mr. Pratt, of the proneness to flux in the Penitentiary, is built the conjecture, (amounting to conviction in the mind of Dr. Latham*,) that Mr. Pratt knew of the existence of flux as a predominant disease in the prison from 1816 to 1822, although no other person was in possession of this secret. I own I cannot see any thing so sagacious or profound in this re-

* Dr. Latham says, in his Preface, "*Dr. Macmichael, in perusing the evidence given by Mr. Pratt, the Apothecary, before a Committee of the House of Commons, (of 1823) found a statement from which he took occasion to suggest to us a new train of inquiry.*" The statement here alluded to, was this letter of Mr. Pratt's, of March 1822, which, as Dr. Macmichael mentions in his evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons, in 1824, led to a conjecture that Mr. Pratt might probably have known of the existence of diarrhoea in the prison when he wrote the last line of it, and induced him (Dr. Macmichael) to suggest the inquiry into the contents of the day-books, &c. But it is one thing to form a conjecture which shall lead to an inquiry, and another to exalt that conjecture into a conviction, and to dignify the circumstance which gave rise to the conjecture with the consequence of a complete proof, as Dr. Latham has done.

mark of Mr. Pratt's, as to drive me to such a conclusion; nor am I prepared to admit that the discovery of its being probable, that a Dietary, composed of brown bread and two liquids; viz. soup and water gruel, without any solid meat, would shew its bad effects in the shape of flux, if it disagreed at all with the prisoners, lay so deep in truth's well, as to be beyond the reach of Mr. Pratt and of all those with whom he might converse upon the subject, at a time when the probable effects of low Dietaries were much discussed among medical men; On the contrary, I should argue, that if Mr. Pratt, who was from the day on which he first entered the Penitentiary, an advocate for giving the prisoners much more and better food than any body else thought they ought to have, had known in March, 1822, of the prevalence of flux in the prison, he would not have proposed any reduction in the Dietary at all; and I cannot discover, on what ground it is to be presumed that when he was contending in favour of the use of solid meat in the Dietary, he concealed a fact which would have added great weight to his arguments.—If it is intended to impute to Mr. Pratt, that knowing this fact,

he purposely withheld it, in order that the Committee of the Penitentiary might adopt a still lower Dietary than that which he recommended, and that in the event of the sickness which should ensue, he might come forward with the credit of prophecy, the charge shews a want of knowledge of Mr. Pratt's character, which I should not have expected to find in any person who had ever seen and conversed with him. Whatever may have been the merits or demerits of Mr. Pratt, he was not a man of deep designs and cautious concealments ; he told most freely all he saw, or heard, or thought, and was much more in the habit of giving to his conjectures the dignity of facts, (as some others have done) than of suppressing or withholding any fact which he really knew.

I return now to Dr. Latham's Pamphlet, which goes on thus from my last quotation.

“ There remains yet another circumstance to be insisted upon, which bears upon the question of a noxious influence peculiar to the place, and strongly confirms the conclusion of the Report.

“ From the description of the disease lately prevalent in the Penitentiary, it has been already seen, that an affection of the brain and nervous system formed as much a part of that disease, as did the bowel complaints themselves ; that it was co-extensive with the bowel complaints, and consisted, for the most part, of head-ach and vertiginous sensations, which, in many instances, were aggravated into tremors, convulsions, and frenzy.

“ By help of the Apothecary’s day-books, we were enabled to shew, that one part of the disease (the bowel complaints) had prevailed extensively in the Penitentiary since its first establishment. We could, moreover, have shewn from the same books, that another part of the disease (the affection of the brain and nervous system) had prevailed there almost co-extensively, and during the same period. This latter fact (I say) was also derived from the day-books ; not, however, from the books alone, but from them coupled with the explanatory testimony of the Apothecary himself.

“ We needed nothing but the record before

us of the medicines prescribed, to ascertain the prevalence of bowel complaints in the Penitentiary since its foundation; but we were indebted to the voluntary suggestion of Mr. Pratt, for enabling us to trace out retrospectively head-ach and vertigo through every page of his own books. So confident was he, from a knowledge of his own methods of prescribing, that certain remedies there recorded were given by him for head-ach and vertigo, that he undertook to draw up, and actually did draw up, a list of the numbers afflicted with these disorders from the establishment of the Penitentiary to the present time. These numbers were almost as great as of those who suffered the bowel complaints in every year. They were arranged in a tabular form, and were to have made part of the Report presented to the Committee. But, upon deliberation, it was thought better not to offer any thing to the Committee which was not self-evident, or which stood in need of explanation beyond the mere statement of the fact.

“ Chalk mixture and tincture of opium could

only have been prescribed for a flux of the bowels, and therefore unequivocally denoted the disease. But emetics might have been prescribed for various other complaints besides head-ach and vertigo, and therefore could not be shewn to denote their existence in the present instance, without further explanation, and without the express testimony of the prescriber himself.

“ Now, concerning the circumstance last stated, it is too little to say, that it merely confirms the inference of the Report—it does more. If you admit as evidence that only which the books, upon the very face of them, unquestionably prove, you must conclude that a disorder of the same general character with the late epidemic has prevailed in the prison since its establishment ; and we went no further in our Report. But if, moreover, you admit the explanatory testimony of the Apothecary, you must go near to allow, that the disorder which so prevailed there was identical with the late epidemic.”

Now it must be recollected, that a long

and laborious inquiry took place before a Committee of the House of Commons, in March 1824, (five months after the Report of the Physicians was made), into the state of the Penitentiary, of which inquiry, one of the principal objects, perhaps I should say, the principal object, was to ascertain whether there existed any influence injurious to health, in the situation of the prison,—that the affirmative of that proposition rested solely on the Report so often alluded to, fortified by such explanatory or confirmatory evidence as the Physicians were able to give in aid of it.—That each of these learned Gentlemen were minutely examined on the matters contained in that Report, and one or two of them on the manner in which it had been framed,—that for the more thorough investigation of the subject, the Report itself, and my observations on it, were printed separately in the first instance, and sent round to each member of the Committee, in order that every member might come to that inquiry with some knowledge of the points to which it was to be directed,—and yet it never occurred to any of the Physicians, during the whole course

of these investigations, to hint one word about these head-aches and vertigos, or to suggest a single question concerning them to Mr. Pratt, who was repeatedly under examination—the observation of its being thought proper by the Physicians to omit the mention of them in the Report of October 1822, and to withhold the knowledge of them from the Committee of the Penitentiary, because members of that committee, not being medical men, would not have been competent justly to appreciate them, could not apply to the concealment of these mysteries from the Committee of the House of Commons, who had the means of calling in the assistance, and did call in the assistance, of Physicians of the highest eminence in the profession, to aid their judgment. But this is not all—How will Dr. Latham reconcile the importance which he now attaches to the support of these secret auxiliaries, the head-aches and vertigos, with the following evidence given by his colleagues and himself, before the Committee of the House of Commons, in 1824?

Evidence of Dr. Roget *.

Question.—Do you think that there is any evidence of the existence of this peculiar species of dysentery, between the opening of the prison and the commencement of the present disorder in autumn last, or in winter last?

Answer.—It appears, from the Report that we gave in on the 11th of October, that we had obtained evidence, that a disorder of the bowels has been very frequent in the Penitentiary from the earliest period.

Ques.—Does that disorder appear to bear any other affinity to the present disorder than a common diarrhœa bears to that which has the peculiar character of the present disease?

Ans.—We have had no evidence of the precise symptoms accompanying that disorder; the only inference we can draw from the document we have examined, is, that there has been a diarrhœa, or disorder of the bowels.

Evidence of Dr. Hue †.

Question.—Might not the disorder have been produced, as was originally supposed by the Physicians first employed, by cold and by injurious diet, and afterwards be continued by contagion?

Answer.—I should have thought it might have originated in those causes, had we not had access to the records, which have been alluded to, by which we trace the existence of the disease to a much earlier period.

* Printed evidence annexed to the Reports of the Committee of the House of Commons in 1824.

† Ibid. p. 27.

Ques.—Is the notion of noxious local influence entirely founded upon the use of the chalk mixture and powder ?

Ans.—It is entirely founded upon the bowel complaint ; and the existence of the bowel complaint is inferred from the medicine that is given.

Evidence of Dr. Macmichael *.

Question.—It is stated in the Physician's Report of the 11th of October, that the diarrhœa which is supposed to have prevailed, was of a peculiar character—is any thing more meant than that it appeared to the Physicians to be difficult of cure ?

Answer.—I understood it to mean its obstinate character—that it was extremely difficult of cure.

Ques.—Did it imply, that it had any other characteristics of the disease, which has since been prevalent ?

Ans.—No ; we had no means of judging of any thing but its existence.

There is no answer precisely to the same effect in Dr. Southey's evidence ; but he does not hint, in any part of it, that the list of complaints on which the notion of local influence was founded, could have been swelled by adding to the list of diarrhœas that of affections of the head, considered as forming part of the same disorder.

I will conclude this part of my remarks

* Printed Evidence, &c. p. 62.

with Dr. Latham's own evidence, which I have reserved for the last, as being much the strongest against his present statement.

Evidence of Dr. Latham *.

Question.—When you examined those books from which you have drawn your Report of the 11th of October, did you inquire of Mr. Pratt as to the nature of the diseases which the prisoners had, to whom he had given the medicine, which you described as the chalk medicine?

Answer.—Yes; Mr. Pratt could give us no further information than that they were cases of diarrhœa.

Ques.—Did he tell you that they were simple cases of diarrhœa, which, in common language, might be known by a pain in the bowels; or did he tell you that they were that species of diarrhœa, which you have had recently under your care?

Ans.—He said nothing concerning the species of diarrhœa being the same with that which has lately been epidemic there; but he said it was a flux of the bowels. He admitted that they were cases of diarrhœa.

Ques.—Have you applied the generic name diarrhœa to all cases in which the chalk powder had been given, whether they lasted three days, or three weeks, or any other period?

Ans.—Unquestionably.

Ques.—Is there not the greatest possible difference between that case of diarrhœa for which the chalk medicine may be given, a looseness of the bowels for one day, and

* Printed Evidence, &c. p. 30.

different stages of that disease, which you had under your care ?

Ans.—With respect to the two diseases, we do not pretend to say more than this, that they were of the same general character ; that that was a flux, and this was a flux.

Ques.—Are any common disorders of the bowels, which every body has, to be considered as a disease of the same character, though not pushed to the same extent as the disease that you had under your care.

Ans.—Medical men would say, that they are as like each other as one fever is like another.

In another part of his evidence upon this point, Dr. Latham says—

“ We presume nothing further respecting that disorder, which we did not see, but that it was a common diarrhœa.”—See printed Evidence, p. 36.

To return now to the work under consideration.

“ I wish to add a few remarks concerning the books in question, as bearing testimony to the existence of flux alone within the Penitentiary, and concerning the use we have made of them for that purpose. It was at first our intention to have taken the books themselves to the Committee, and to have turned over the

leaves in their presence, pointing out, in one page after another, and frequently in the same page, the abbreviated marks which signified the compound chalk mixture and the compound chalk powder; to have stated that such medicine could only have been given for disorders whose prominent symptom was flux of the bowels, and then to have left the Committee to draw their own inference. But it was thought more respectful to present a formal Report, and it was foreseen that such a Report would be required for the information of government. Accordingly, in endeavouring so to frame it, as to convey the most accurate notion of the extent to which flux of the bowels had prevailed in the Penitentiary, we could conceive no better method than that of the numerical tables which have been given. Nevertheless these mere figures do not convey so much as the books themselves. The form of certain entries which appeared there, gave perhaps a more certain assurance that diarrhoea was the predominant complaint of the prison, than any that could have been derived merely from their numbers.

“ Among frequent entries of medicine deli-

vered to individuals by name, there were occasional entries of chalk mixture, sent by quarts and half gallons, to companies of prisoners working together at their various employments. Thus we find, without any specification of the individuals who were to take the medicine—

In 1816,	an entry of	1	quart bottle of mixture for	the kitchen women.
—	ditto	1	ditto	Mrs. Clarke's women.
In 1817,	ditto	2	ditto	Mrs. Clarke's women.
—	ditto	1	ditto	Mrs. Evan's women.
—	ditto	2	ditto	the laundry.
—	ditto	1	ditto	the carpenter's cell.
In 1818,	ditto	1	ditto	Mrs. Croome's women.
—	ditto	1	ditto	Mrs. Gould's women.
—	ditto	1	ditto	Laban's men.
—	ditto	3	ditto	Brett's men.
In 1819	ditto	1	ditto	Mrs. Clarke's women.

“ Here it is quite evident, that among these several companies there was a predominant disorder, requiring to be treated by one and the same remedy, and that, from the nature of the remedy, the disorder was diarrhœa. It is evident, also, that, in each company, the cases of diarrhœa were so numerous, that it became needless or impossible to specify the individuals who should take the medicine. The medicine, therefore, was delivered out in

large quantities, with general directions (we may presume), that it should be taken by all, or by as many as required it.

*“ These are all the facts and circumstances within my knowledge, which bear upon the two questions of * contagion and of a noxious influence peculiar to the place, as causes engaged in the production and continuance of the disease prevalent at the Penitentiary.”*

The conclusions, which I draw from the form of these entries, are very opposite to those, which Dr. Latham founds upon them. Instead of inferring from such entries as these, that whole companies of prisoners were affected at once with diarrhœa, I collect from them that Mr. Pratt poured out his medicines without discretion, or made very careless records, and that his accounts of the expenditure of medicine are very little to be relied upon as evidence of disease. It is observable, that the latest of these entries is in

* I have not quoted any part of Dr. Latham's work, which relates to contagion, as I wish for the present to confine myself to the question of noxious local influence.—
G. H.

the year 1819 ; and it should be recollected, that in that year Dr. Hutchison, who had till then been only our consulting Physician, acting gratuitously, was appointed Medical Superintendent with a salary, and received regular instructions in writing, to take upon him “ the superintendence and control of the whole medical department of the prison,” the Committee having by that time discovered that it was unadvisable to leave this branch of our concerns under the management of Mr. Pratt. Dr. Hutchison was directed by the 6th article of his instructions “ to sign, as approving thereof, all demands for medicine, &c. &c. made by the Apothecary, and to examine and sign the accounts of expenditure, in which he was to be careful to check all waste and abuse.”

To the appointment of Dr. Hutchison with these instructions, rather than to any change in the health of the prisoners, I attribute the decrease in the comparative numbers of those who were (in the language of the Physicians) treated for diarrhœa, or who (to speak in plain terms) took one or more doses of chalk mixture, or chalk powder, during the latter

years mentioned in the tables of the Physicians. It was not very likely that a Physician of long practice in the Navy and in Hospitals, like Dr. Hutchison, when it became a part of his duty to examine and check the expenditure of the medicine used in the Penitentiary, should allow Mr. Pratt to go on sluicing out his chalk mixture from his stores in quarts and gallons, and white-washing, in this manner, the intestines of a whole ward at a time. I really recollect nothing like this in modern practice, except in the case of a Physician in a farce, (one of Foote's, I believe) who having on one day ordered the right ward to be purged and the left to be bled, prescribed on the next day the bleeding for the right ward, and the purgatives for the left.

I own I am surprised to find five learned heads employed in forming calculations and constructing elaborate tables, which exhibit an appearance of great accuracy, from books, in which they met with entries of the description above alluded to, of which by the by they said nothing in their Report, nor were these entries known, till I laid them

before the Committee of the House of Commons, as part of a paper to which I shall have occasion to advert hereafter. But I am still more surprised that Dr. Latham should not have been able to tell us, when he was examined before the Committee of the House of Commons, what use the Physicians made of these entries in constructing their tables. His evidence on that point is as follows :—

Question.—Were Mr. Pratt's accounts so clearly kept, that the name of every person who had taken physic always appeared ?

Answer.—We could only reckon upon what did appear.

Ques.—For instance, if Mr. Pratt's entry is, "Mrs. Clarke's women—a mixture;" in what way is that entered in the tables ?

Ans.—I perfectly recollect that some abatement was made, but of what kind it was, I cannot state at this moment: but I know that some abatement was made upon that consideration.

Ques.—For instance, there is "the kitchen women, a mixture"—"Mrs. Clarke's women, a mixture"—and "Mrs. Todd's women, a mixture;" in what way, in forming the tables, were these entries used ?

Ans.—I know that some abatement was made, which we considered to be a just abatement; but of what kind it was I forget.

Ques.—Are you aware that Mrs. Clarke's women might be as many as 30 ?

Ans.—Yes.

Ques.—In what way was that noticed in the table?

Ans.—I quite forget; I am not even certain whether we did not exclude the whole of that.

If the Physicians excluded these entries from their tables altogether*, (which, however, from the numbers mentioned therein, as taking chalk medicines in the early years, I suspect not to have been the case,) I think a regard to consistency as well as prudence, might have prevented Dr. Latham from bringing them forward as a ground of argument now.

* Mr. Pratt's evidence on that subject is as follows:—

Question.—Are there not in those original papers some entries, in which you merely state, that the chalk mixture was sent in to the kitchen women?

Answer.—There are.

Ques.—In what manner did the Physicians proceed to enumerate those cases?

Ans.—They were frequently put down as three, or five; they asked me, what I supposed might be the number of cases, and I told them to the best of my recollection.

Ques.—In that case the entry in the tables was conjectural?

Ans.—Yes. (See printed evidence, 1824, p. 25.)

CHAPTER II.

Observations addressed to the Committee of the Penitentiary in February 1824, on the foregoing Report of the Physicians, with the Comments made by Dr. Latham on such Observations—and Replies to Dr. Latham's Comments.

THE following paper, entitled “ Observations on the Medical Report made by the Physicians, dated 11th October, 1823,” was laid by me before the Committee of the Penitentiary, in February 1824. I shall distinguish the paragraphs which Dr. Latham has cited and commented on, and add my replies to his comments as I go along.

It may seem at first sight to savour of presumption for a person, who can have no medical knowledge, to attempt to controvert opinions formed upon a medical subject by Physicians of eminence and talents ; but it may be recollected, that the conjectures (for they can lay claim to no higher character) of these gentlemen in this Report are not founded upon any thing which has fallen under their own observation, but rest entirely upon facts, which they have candidly and fully stated in the Report ; and as it appears to me that they have left unnoticed in their inquiry, cir-

cumstances and considerations which are material to be taken into the account, although of a nature not to occur so readily to persons whose attention has only been called of late to the prison, as to those who have been longer conversant with it, I think I may, without impropriety, endeavour to point out some of their omissions; and I shall be much mistaken if I do not show that the premises which they have laid down in their Report, are much too imperfect to warrant the conclusions they have drawn from them.

The Report, after examining the several communications from the Medical Officers of the Establishment to the Committee, during a period of two years and eight months, with a view to the discovery of the prevalence of diarrhœa in the prison before the commencement of the present epidemic, admits that no inference can be drawn in support of that fact from those documents. It then proceeds, however, to trace out diarrhœa by a different course, viz. by an inquiry into the remedies administered to the prisoners since the prison has been opened, and assuming (I presume correctly) that the chalk mixture, or chalk powders, can only be given for this disorder, sets forth tables, first, of the number of cases in which this medicine has been given in each year, and secondly, of the number of instances in which this medicine * has been administered to the same individuals in successive years, from which tables, the Physicians conclude as follows: "That a disorder of the bowels of a peculiar nature, at

* I take the chalk medicine and the chalk powders, to be entirely the same medicine—chalk in different forms. The Physicians proceed upon that supposition; for some of the patients, whom they set down as having had diarrhœa, had only taken the mixture, and others only the powder.

all times difficult to cure, and of the same general character with that which constitutes the late epidemic, has prevailed in the Penitentiary ever since its establishment, but that until the commencement of the present year it became gradually more and more limited in its extent, and that although it has always been difficult to cure, it has not upon the whole been attended with much hazard to life until the breaking out of the late epidemic."

The Report then goes on to state, "That whatever noxious influence may be suspected to exist, this influence must have abated of its activity in proportion as the disease became more limited," &c. &c. and concludes, by stating an opinion, "that but for the change of diet and the protracted winter, the disease never would have assumed the form of an epidemic. The universal debility produced by these causes, say the Physicians, rendered the prisoners more noxious to an influence, which, as far as we can judge, had become less powerful in itself for the production of disease."

The following paragraph is the first on which Dr. Latham makes any comment—

Before I proceed to inquire how far these tables prove the prevalence of diarrhœa of any kind, I beg to ask, how they can show that the diarrhœa, for which the medicine alluded to is supposed to have been given, was of a peculiar nature, or had any resemblance to the present disease? Can the exhibition of the chalk mixture or powder prove that this disease was preceded or accompanied by petechial spots or blotches? that it had a dysenteric character? that it was attended with tenesmus? or with the in-

flation of the lower regions of the abdomen, or the very sudden and violent pains, which were observable in the present disorder? All these symptoms will be negated by the medical man who gave the medicine; nor was the treatment of the two disorders the same; but we are called upon to infer the existence of a diarrhœa similar to the present one, merely from the supposed use of a medicine, by which the present disorder has not been cured, the physicians having, on the contrary, found themselves obliged to have recourse, for its cure, to the use of mercury, pushed in general to such an extent as to produce salivation.

On this paragraph Dr. Latham comments thus—

“ I presume that the several interrogations which here follow each other in succession, are intended to have the force of so many distinct objections; imputing to us that we really did insist, in our Report, that the diarrhœa of former years was of a peculiar nature, and had a resemblance to the present disease; and that, extending our notion of such resemblance to the minutest particulars, we really did insist, in our Report, that the exhibition of chalk mixture or powder proved the diarrhœa of former years to have been preceded, or accompanied by, petechial spots or blotches; to have had a dysenteric character, and been

attended with tenesmus, and inflation and violent pain, like the present disorder.

“ Whoever will take the trouble of referring to the Report itself, will find that the disorder formerly prevalent in the Penitentiary, is there spoken of in the most general terms, and that the name diarrhoea is used in the largest sense, and as synonymous with flux. He will find, moreover, that we strictly abstain from ascribing to it any particular symptoms or accompaniments, and that, in mentioning its peculiarities, we expressly state them to consist, not in its symptoms or accompaniments, but in its difficulty of cure, and liability to recur in the same individuals. Lastly, he will find that all the correspondence we pretend to have discovered between the disorder of the bowels which has recently, and that which has always, prevailed in the Penitentiary, is, that they were both ‘ of the same general character.’ This was a flux, and that was a flux ; and as such they were as like each other, as one fever is like another, or as diseases commonly are which come under the same generic denomination. In fact, the symptoms brought forward to mark the essen-

tial difference of the two diseases, might or might not exist without changing their nature, or altering any opinion which might otherwise be formed concerning their origin. They apply to degrees of severity and malignancy, not to the essence of the disease.

“ It is implied by the argument (otherwise the argument fails altogether), that the signs enumerated were attendant upon the whole course of the late flux, and the petechiæ, the dysenteric character, tenesmus, inflation, and violent and sudden pains were present in every case. Now, the petechiæ, if by them are meant scorbutic spots upon the skin, were, indeed, very general, as long as they lasted, but they lasted only six weeks; and if by them are meant ecchymosed spots in the intestines, they could only be known to exist where they were found, namely, in several who died and were examined after death, although they might, and probably did exist in many others. With respect to the tenesmus, and the blood (or whatever is meant by the dysenteric character), and violent pains, they did not occur in more than half the cases. So that, should these symptoms be held to constitute essential

distinctions of disease (which is impossible), the late flux was not only different from the former diarrhœa, but was itself a different disease in one-half of the prisoners, from what it was in the other half.

“ The argument from the treatment of the two disorders not being the same, proceeds upon the supposition, that diseases of the same general character and denomination are always treated by one and the same remedy ; and, further, that their being amenable or not to one and the same remedy, is the test, whether they are or are not entitled to such or such a character, and to such or such a name. The supposition is not unreasonable in itself, and very likely to occur to any unprofessional person. But Physicians (I fear) must admit, that the present state of their knowledge will hardly enable them to arrive at an axiom which presumes so precise an insight into the essence of diseases, and the operation of medicines. Although fevers, and influenzas, and erysipelas, require to be treated at different times by different, or even opposite methods, in the same place and in the same individuals, yet Physicians still talk of fevers, and in-

fluenzas, and erysipelas, and still discern a certain conformity of character in each, whenever it occurs, by which they are entitled to the same names under all circumstances. Granting, therefore, that the bowel complaints of the Penitentiary were, during six years and a half, treated with chalk mixture, and subsequently were treated with mercury, we did not (I presume to think) greatly err, either in conceiving them always to have borne the same general character, or in calling them by the same generic name, the chalk mixture and the mercury notwithstanding.

“Medical men will hardly pardon me for dwelling so long upon these observations; but I have been led to do so, from recollecting the impression they made upon those to whom they were originally addressed.”

I certainly did ascribe to the Physician's Report that it represented the disease which it stated to have prevailed in former years, as a diarrhœa or disorder of the bowels, “of a peculiar character,” because I found those expressions in the Report: and, as they were followed by the words “at all times difficult

of cure," I understood these latter words to describe an additional quality of the disease, and not to be a mere repetition of the sense conveyed in the former expressions. We all know, to speak in scientific language, that a genus is composed of several species differing in some respect each from the other, but agreeing in some common generic quality, and that consequently every disorder of the bowels, whatever peculiarities may belong to it, must, strictly speaking, be "of the same general character" with all the various kinds of diarrhoea or dysentery, which compose the genus, "disorders of the bowels;" but surely I was justified in believing that something more was meant by the words cited above, than to remind us of this truth. I certainly conceived the words, "the same general character," to be used in a popular sense, as describing some nearer resemblance between the two disorders of the bowels, of which that quality was predicated, than belongs to disorders of the bowels universally.

Under this impression, which I entertained in common with other members of the Committee, I enumerated the various peculiarities

which had appeared in the course of the existing disorder, and questioned the possibility of inferring the occurrence of them, or any of them, in the former disorder, from the use of the chalk medicines, from which alone all knowledge of that disorder was derived. This line of argument still appears to me to be correct, but it is certainly become no longer necessary, after the Physicians have declared that their Report has been misunderstood, and that they did not mean by it to assert the existence of any symptoms in the supposed former disorder, beyond such as are incident to common diarrhœa.

I deny, however, that the liability of the prisoners to diarrhœa of any kind can be estimated by the quantity of medicine administered for that disorder in the prison.

The first thing which it occurs to a prisoner in any prison to say, when he wishes to feign illness, is, that he has a pain in his bowels, and whenever such a complaint has been mentioned in the Penitentiary, the party has had the chalk mixture or powder, of course, without any previous investigation into the reality of the disease, as the Surgeon will testify. Every prisoner, therefore, who has pretended to have a pain in his bowels as an excuse for not doing work enough, or from a wish to have a few days enjoyment of better food, or of ease and idleness, in the infirmary, or from a desire to miss chapel, or plague

his turnkey to let him out of his cell to the privy in his ward oftener than was convenient, or from any other cause, even though he may have been discovered afterwards to have been shamming, is included in these Tables as a case of diarrhœa, his name appearing on the Surgeon's books among those who had taken chalk; and I believe the medical gentlemen who drew up the Report, may safely be appealed to as witnesses for this fact, viz. that the class of cases of* feigned illness is not a small one in the Penitentiary; and can speak from their own experience of the curious tricks and devices practised in support of imposture, and of the difficulty of detecting it; they can also probably remember instances, in which prisoners have purposely brought back their illness by drinking cold water and other

* It was stated by Dr. Roget and Dr. Latham, in a Report dated July 1823, that, "owing to certain suggestions made to them *by others*, they had been led to distrust the statements of prisoners respecting their own complaints, unless confirmed by other circumstances;" but that "their greater experience of the prisoners' conduct and character had led them to give further credit to the prisoners' own statements." I think it right to mention, that I was not one of the persons meant by the word "*others*;" on the contrary, I accompanied the Physicians into the prison at their desire when the testimony alluded to was disputed, and concurred entirely with them in thinking that the prisoners spoke the truth; but that testimony only related to the time at which some symptoms of the existing disease had first attracted their notice; a circumstance which they had no interest to misrepresent. That the representations of the actual state of their health when they want to go into the infirmary or to come out of the infirmary, or when they have any particular object in view, cannot be depended on, is a fact notorious to all persons connected with the prison, (and to none more so than the Physicians deputed by the college,) who were always complaining of the prisoners' mis-statements respecting their health, as well as of the extraordinary and ingenious contrivances which they resorted to, for the purposes of deceit, upon this head.

expedients; and I can tell them, that when the prisoners were employed in flax-beating some time ago, several of them were detected in chewing the flax to produce a temporary derangement in their bowels, all of whom now stand, of course, in these Tables as cases of genuine diarrhœa.

*“ The sum of the objection contained in this paragraph is, that diarrhœa was * the disorder which the prisoners were accustomed to feign, for the sake of procuring indulgences and avoiding labour; yet that all cases, real and feigned, are included in our tables.*

“ We unquestionably did not pretend to distinguish between real and feigned cases, where all were treated alike. The fact of feigned disease could only have been ascertained at the time. If it was not ascertained at the time, it cannot now be assumed; and, if it was ascertained, it is rather extraordinary that the counterfeits should † still have

* Not “ *the disorder*,” I never said that they did not counterfeit others, but “ *a disorder*.” G. H.

† This passage proceeds upon a supposition that every prisoner, stated by the Physicians to have been treated for diarrhœa, went through a long course of the chalk medicines; whereas, I shall shew hereafter, that most of the persons standing in the Physicians tables had only a single delivery of it. G. H.

*been treated as actual diseases, and * indulgences still granted as to real invalids, and fresh and fresh motives held out to counterfeits.*

“ If there is any body who, from memory, can speak to the fact of a considerable number of these cases being counterfeits, it must be the Apothecary. Now, the Apothecary was employed by us, day after day, in our investigation, and when it was completed, he was perfectly aware of the conclusion to which it led. He was ready and unreserved in his communications; yet I do not recollect, neither do any of my colleagues recollect, that he mentioned a single word about counterfeit cases, or made any objection whatever to our mode of proceeding, or stated any circumstance within his knowledge which could invalidate our conclusion. Our impression was, that Mr. Pratt regarded his own books as authentic records of medicines prescribed for real diseases. He brought these books to us

** Dr. Latham puts forth a table, a page or two hence, to shew that the greater part were not admitted into the Infirmary, and asserts that they had no indulgences. G. H.*

unsolicited, and he produced them with this memorable observation, 'How lucky it is I have kept them.'*

"But, when Mr. Holford concludes, that cases feigned, for a great variety of motives, which he specifies, and cases purposely produced in a great variety of ways, all 'stand in our tables as cases of genuine diarrhœa†,' he, to our surprise, quotes this very Mr. Pratt as the source of the information from which he proceeds to his conclusion; for he means no other person, when he says, 'as the surgeon will testify.' Yet, after all, what

** These words are in the recollection of all the Physicians; for they were the subject of frequent, very frequent remark at the time, seeming (as we thought) to intimate the Apothecary's own opinion, that his day-books contained something useful towards the object of our inquiry. Now, the object of our inquiry at the time, was some definite proof of the existence of diarrhœa in the prison prior to the autumn of 1822, a fact which we already more than suspected.*

† Of course they do so; the day-book is a book accounting for the expenditure of medicine, and not a list of diseases, real or feigned; all cases, therefore, in which the medicine was given out must stand there, and did in fact stand there without distinction. G. H.

does he quote him as testifying ? That prisoners, making certain complaints of illness, ' had chalk mixture or chalk powder, of course, without any previous investigation into the reality of their disease.' Surely this is not an announcement on the part of Mr. Pratt of the truth, as it was actually ascertained by himself, that all the prisoners who so complained were ' shamming,' but an acknowledgment of his own omission to ascertain whether they were so or not.

" I will venture to make this general observation, for the truth of which I appeal to all Physicians of public institutions, namely, that when people have an interest in seeming to be ill, they always counterfeit disorders of sensation, and sensation merely, and thus they often succeed, owing to the extreme difficulty of detecting the deceit. If a person affirms that he has pain, how can you be sure that he has not ? But never was an instance known of feigned diarrhœa, because no one was ever silly enough to believe that the pretence could go undiscovered for a moment. Surely the prisoners of the Penitentiary are

the last, one should be inclined to suspect, as the authors of a stratagem which would necessarily detect itself.

“ But let it be admitted, for an instant, that the prisoners of the Penitentiary did pretend a flux of the bowels for six years and a half in succession, yet is it not incredible, that any medical man could be so deceived as to go on prescribing, during six years and a half in succession, for any disease whatever, as if it had affected from one half to one-tenth of a certain community; while, in point of fact, the disease had not existed at all during the whole of that period? And is it not still more incredible, that any medical man should so prescribe for a disease, the characteristic symptom of which, if it had been real, must have continually forced itself upon his senses?*

* This is a comical instance of misapprehension on the part of Dr. Latham; no person, that I know of, has ever said that there were no bowel complaints in the Penitentiary; we only say that the numbers, on which alone the inferences of the Physicians are founded, are multiplied far beyond the truth, by their making out tables on erroneous principles, from documents on which real cases are not distinguished from such as are feigned.

“ But let it be admitted, not only that flux of the bowels was the feigned disease of the Penitentiary during six years and a half, but also, that feigned as it was, Mr. Pratt went on prescribing chalk mixture and chalk powder for it, as if it had been real during the whole of this period: what follows? A coincidence of the most extraordinary kind, namely, that this same disease which had been the unreal and fictitious disease of the Penitentiary during so many years, became all at once so unquestionably real, that the lives of half the prisoners were in jeopardy from it, and many actually died; and, moreover, that the very remedy which had been prescribed during so many years, for no purpose whatever, was the same which, at length, was found most necessary and indispensable.*

“ Of the motives assigned by Mr. Holford for counterfeiting a disease, which never can be counterfeited with success, I have little to say. Of the minor motives, such as missing chapel, and plaguing the turnkey, I know

** Vide page 21, where it will be seen what remedies we found the medical officers prescribing, with apparent success, when we were first called to the Penitentiary.*

nothing, and can say nothing. But concerning the principal motive, which includes every other that can be imagined, that of obtaining admission into the infirmary, where the prisoners enjoyed a better diet, idleness, ease, society, &c., I wish to make a few observations.

“ It appeared to me, when this subject was investigated last year, that those gentlemen (not professional) who dissented from the conclusion of the Physicians, respecting the existence of flux within the Penitentiary since its foundation, did so upon the presumption, that all persons for whom the medicine, considered by us unequivocally to denote the disease, was prescribed, were, during the time of taking it, treated in every other respect as invalids; that they were released from their usual labours, and brought into the infirmary, and allowed all its indulgences and comforts. Consequently, as there seemed to exist such strong motives for prisoners to pretend a trivial disease, they could not help believing that they did so. The fact, however, was not as it was presumed. Of those who took the chalk mixture and powder, some were received

into the infirmary, and some were not ; and the latter, upon the whole, were the majority. These had the medicine sent to them in their cells ; they were allowed no indulgence, and no exemption from their ordinary labours, and could have no imaginable motive for pretending disease.

“ My friend Dr. Macmichael, who took a peculiar interest in this question, and to whose acuteness the discovery of a predominant disease always existing in the Penitentiary is principally to be ascribed, has furnished me with an important document, shewing how many of those who were treated for a flux of the bowels, were received into the infirmary in each year, and how many were not :—

	1816	1817	1818	1819	1820	1821	1822
Number of Prisoners -	72	212	246	351	609	798	866
Number of those who were treated for a Flux of the Bowels }	23	104	106	82	85	87	88
Number of those so treated who were ad- mitted into the In- firmary - }	14	4	36	37	60	73	54
Number of those so treated who were not admitted into the Infirmary - }	9	100	70	45	25	14	34

“ It is remarkable that, as the disease became more limited in extent, the numbers admitted into the infirmary were proportionably greater; and that, in the three last years, the cases treated as flux in the infirmary, far exceeded those so treated in the prison. My belief is, that as the extent of the disease became less, its severity was greater, and that, from a smaller number of cases, there were more that required to be carefully treated. For, in the year 1822, between January and the 2d of July, and before the less nutritive diet was adopted, five deaths are reported from diarrhœa, or dysentery; while, during the whole year, not more than eighty-eight suffered those diseases, as far as we can judge from the remedies employed; a mortality proportionably greater than that which subsequently occurred from diseases of the same character, when they constituted a part of the epidemic.*

“ I had almost forgot to advert to the means which prisoners are said to have used for purposely procuring bowel complaints. Drinking cold water, and masticating flax, might,

** Vide page 211.*

and probably did, reproduce diarrhœa in a few, who were hardly convalescent from recent attacks. But the question is not concerning what has happened lately. It is allowed by all, that a disorder of the bowels has lately prevailed, which was capable of being reproduced by any thing that had the least power of irritating. We are inquiring what could have produced a flux of the bowels de novo in a community otherwise healthy several years ago, and continued to produce it for several years in succession. The means specified certainly could not. He who, being in perfect health, takes pure water for its purgative, or sucks out the little juice that lingers in a bit of dried flax, will surely not suffer such a commotion of the bowels, as will be mistaken for disease."*

* This is a most unlucky assertion, contradicted by Dr. Bennett, Pliny, and the fact; see Dr. Bennett's testimony (page 22 of the printed evidence of 1824); there was no flux in the prison for months, I believe I may say years, before the late disorder broke out. Dr. Latham has confounded the cases of a looseness in the bowels created by chewing flax, and of bowel complaints, which after being recently stopped had been brought back by drinking cold water; which cases I put separately, as having happened at different times. G. H.

The conduct of Dr. Latham, in appealing to all Physicians of public institutions, for the truth of his general observation, *that when people have an interest in seeming to be ill, they always counterfeit disorders of sensation, and of sensation merely*; and in asserting, *that never was an instance known of feigned diarrhœa, because no one was ever silly enough to believe the pretence could go undiscovered for a moment*, exhibits what in physick would be called “a beautiful case.”—It is the most perfect specimen, I ever knew, of an ingenious gentleman, who has bewildered himself in the mazes of conjecture, and is so completely involved in suppositions, theoretical reasonings, &c. that he has lost all perception of the facts which stare him in the face.—Dr. Hutchison, the late Medical Superintendent of the Penitentiary, is a navy Surgeon of old standing, and was for a long time surgeon to the Naval Hospital at Deal—he is also well known in his profession as a writer on medical subjects.—It appeared in the evidence taken before the Committee of the House of Commons, in 1824, (p. 81,) (which evidence Dr. Latham must, I presume, have read, if he did not hear it given)

that Dr. Hutchison published an article in the "London Medical and Physical Journal, for February, 1824," entitled, "Observations on simulated and feigned Diseases," in which, under the head *Diarrhœa*, after stating his experience in hospital practice, of men inducing (for the sake of getting themselves invalided) *diarrhœa* and dysentery, to such an extent as not unfrequently occasioned such diseases to become fatal. He goes on as follows—

"I have also known convicts in the Penitentiary at Millbank, previous to the late malady breaking out, both in their cells and in the infirmary, break down with their fingers in their urinary utensils a good figured or formed motion, and intimately mix it with their urine, so as to induce the belief that it was in reality a *diarrhœal* evacuation; but a little attention to the character and appearances, with strict watching, will in most cases lead to the detection of the imposture; the object which convicts have in such practices, is to be exempted from labour, and to be kept in the infirmary, where their comforts in every way are certainly much greater, than when in their cells in the prison."

The same fact is stated in a Report of Dr. Hutchison to the Committee of the Penitentiary, of January 1823, and another practice, connected with attempts to feign the

same disorder, is to be found in Mr. Anthony White's testimony, in the same page (81),—the whole of which testimony, on the subject of the disorders in the Penitentiary, is well worth reading.

Dr. Latham says,

"That neither he nor any of his colleagues *recollect, that Mr. Pratt ever mentioned a single word about counterfeit cases.*"

Mr. Pratt says, in his evidence—

"That he did state impositions to have been practised—that he does not believe one case of imposition was left out of the Physicians' tables on that ground;" and that "he believes many of the cases put down to have been cases of imposition." *See p. 43.*

In another place he says,

"*That he found many impostures; the major part of the cases.*"

There is some difference in the testimony of the Physicians as to what passed upon this subject*. Dr. Latham states, that nothing was stated to the Physicians about feigned illness. The evidence of Dr. Roget, the Physician next examined, was as follows—

* See printed Evidence, p. 34.

Question.—In the tables in the Physicians' Report, is any deduction made on account of supposed imposition in any of the prisoners, or is every case put down in which the creta mixture was given?

Answer.—If any imposition had been suspected, we presume we should have been informed of it by the surgeon.

Ques.—Was that subject never agitated?

Ans.—Of course all the cases of supposed imposition were excluded, because we took from the Surgeon the account only of those which he considered were real.

Ques.—Did not he give you every case, in which he had given out the creta mixture?

Ans.—He did.

Ques.—How were the cases of imposture excluded: was he asked whether he supposed the case to be a real case or not?

Ans.—He was asked as to the reality of the cases.

Ques.—How was it possible for him to state whether a case was a real case or not, which occurred six years ago?

Ans.—That we left to him: we could not exercise any judgment as to that point.

It is quite extraordinary to see how the Physicians persist in their evidence to reason by inference and supposition, instead of adhering to facts. One of them says—

The creta mixture is not given in ordinary cases, except some irritation of the bowels exists.

This evidence then goes on as follows—

Question.—Although such medicines may not be given

for a common bowel complaint in ordinary, do the Physicians know whether it was, or was not, Mr. Pratt's custom to give such medicine for an ordinary bowel complaint.

Answer.—Mr. Pratt said, that he gave it whenever a person complained of a pain in his bowels. He concurred with us in the inquiry. He knew our object. He interpreted his own book. He commented on his own text, and he procured us every information we could possibly wish.

Ques.—Do you mean that Mr. Pratt concurred in the same conclusions that you did?

Ans.—I do not know what conclusions he drew.

The most extraordinary part of the conduct of the Physicians, a part of their conduct which has never been explained or accounted for in any way, and which I own, appears to me to be quite inexplicable and indefensible, is their omission, during the whole of the important investigation, from which their Report resulted, to refer in any manner to the late Superintendent, Dr. Hutchison. His evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons seems to be quite decisive as to the circumstances under which the chalk mixture was given, and as to the absolute impossibility of making it the foundation of such inferences as the Physicians have raised upon it.

Question to Dr. Hutchison *.

The Committee have been informed from the medical reports, that the medicine, known generally by the name of chalk mixture, was given to a very considerable extent among the prisoners; what was the nature of that medicine?

Answer.—The chalk mixture, as I prescribed it for the patients in the Infirmary, was composed of a certain quantity of chalk, water, and mucilage—then there was $\frac{1}{2}$ an ounce to a $7\frac{1}{2}$ ounce mixture of the tincture of columba added, and two drams of aromatic confection, because a cordial medicine was necessary.

Ques.—For what diseases were you accustomed to prescribe that medicine?

Ans.—In the Infirmary I gave it in cases of diarrhœa, as they occurred occasionally; and also when a prisoner complained of what is commonly called heart-burn, or, in medical language, cardialgia.

Ques.—Was that a medicine, that upon the simple representation of a prisoner, being then in his cell, that he had a complaint in his stomach, was a safe medicine to give without removing him to the Infirmary?

Ans.—Yes; and a medicine that was sought after by the prisoners; because they said, it produced a glow of warmth to their stomachs; and I should also add, that, as I prescribed it in the Infirmary, (and I had no reason to suppose that it was prepared in any other shape for the Pentagons) there was likewise added to each dose of the mixture 5 drops of laudanum, to allay irritation of the bowels.

* See printed Evidence, p. 51.

In the answer to the next question, which I omit from its length, Dr. H. says,

“ That the laudanum would in some measure be a kind of dram to the prisoners, by producing more agreeable sensations than they had been in the habit of enjoying without it.”

He is then asked,

Whether he thinks that the prisoners would have shammed complaints for the sake of having that dose?

To which he answers,

Most undoubtedly I think so, and that they have done so, I am sure.

The last question and answer which I will here cite, are as follow :—

Question.—Then the Committee are to understand, that the exhibition of that medicine would not be considered as a decisive proof of a great extent of diarrhœa, in the years in which it was given?

Answer.—By no means, or any other medicine in any other disease, because it may be given under similar circumstances of feigned disease; they may complain when nothing is the matter with them, and those people, if they had not something given to them, whenever they complained, would be very sure to find fault, and blame the officer to whom they applied for relief, whether it were necessary or not.

How far such medicine as that above described should have been in general use in the prison, may be very questionable ; but it is quite clear that the distribution of such a medicine, by the lavish hand which Mr. Pratt appears to have employed upon such occasions, cannot be relied on to prove that every person who received it had a bowel complaint of a peculiar nature.

Dr. Latham objects to my reasoning, when I state as a circumstance, to prove that the two disorders were not similar, that the medicine which cured the former was not equally successful with the latter ; but he adopts a similar mode of reasoning himself upon an opposite statement of fact from that made by me. Assuming on his part, that the very remedy which had been prescribed during the former years, was found in the late disorder *most necessary and indispensable* ; in support of this fact, he refers in a note on one of the passages which I have last quoted, to a former page in his work, in which are found these words ; *the medical expedient hitherto employed, had been very simple and very successful, and we could not impute a very formidable character to a disease which*

chalk mixture and tincture of opium could cure. These were the remedies, which we found the medical officers prescribing, when we first called into the Penitentiary; and seeing that they answered so well the purpose for which they were intended, we abstained from instituting any new course of treatment.

Now I must really be allowed to call in question the accuracy of this statement;—so far were the remedies, whatever they may have been, which the medical officers were prescribing, when Dr. Latham and Dr. Roget were called in, from answering, that the disease was spreading with frightful rapidity through the prison; and so far were these Gentlemen from abstaining from any new method of treatment, that the prisoners, having by their order, four ounces of meat per day, devoured also under their direction no fewer than 86,099 oranges (many of them peel and all), between the time of their being called in (*viz.* the 1st of March) and the end of April, of which 86,099 oranges, 69,679 were so disposed of before the 5th of April, and during the very month to which the assertion in Dr. Latham's book particularly relates. At that time the check given to the disorder, which was, alas! but temporary, was attri-

buted to the improved diet and to the oranges, and Dr. Latham cannot surely have forgotten the controversy which took place before the Committee of the House of Commons in 1823, upon the relative merits of oranges and lemons, between himself and Dr. Roget on the one side, as the advocates of the former fruit, and their more numerous opponents on the other, who would have called in the aid of the lemon ; the particulars of which controversy all those who take an interest in such discussions may read in the printed evidence.

It is quite clear that Dr. Latham has given an erroneous and imperfect account of these matters. Either the oranges were really useful, or they were not ;—if the merit of service, which they rendered, is unjustly ascribed to the chalk mixture, the medical world, for whose instruction Dr. Latham writes, is misled—and if no essential benefit resulted from the 86,099 oranges, we (the Committee of the Penitentiary) were greatly misinformed, for under that belief, derived from Dr. Latham and his colleague, we went on purchasing oranges, till we had spent £300 of the public money, and raised the price of the article in the market.—I do not see how Dr.

Latham is to get off the horns of this dilemma—at all events, the employment of such a number of oranges medicinally, ought to have found a place in a work which professes to give a history of the late disease and of its medical treatment.

I come now to cases of sickness, neither feigned nor purposely produced. I believe that a great majority of the cases, for which medicine may have been properly given in the Penitentiary, would never have been brought under the observation of a Physician or Apothecary, if they had occurred out of the prison, or have been known to any but the parties affected, who would (to use a common phrase) have allowed the disorder to carry itself off, or, perhaps, have varied their food. If a medical man were to go round certain streets inhabited by poor families in a part of the town esteemed the most healthy, prepared to dole out his medicine to any individual who chose to apply for it, and this for nothing, and if he were besides to enter upon a regular examination of every inhabitant in those streets once a month as to the state of his health, I suspect he would find at the end of the year, that he had expended more medicine than had been sold in any other district of the same size from the Apothecaries' shops in the neighbourhood; but he certainly would not be warranted in drawing an unfavourable comparison between the streets under his care and the neighbouring districts. Now the wards of the Penitentiary are just like these streets.

“ Here the matter of fact, as it regards the Penitentiary, that the cases of real disease

within it were such, for the most part, as required no medical treatment, and the matter of fact, as it regards certain districts of the town, that the inhabitants have a natural love of physic, are both mere assumptions.

“ It will not, therefore, be thought disrespectful if I decline answering them, since they can have naturally no weight in determining the matter in question. I will only take the liberty of observing, concerning the latter assumption in this paragraph, that the parallel which is imagined should have been carried further ; for, as it stands, it would not, if true, lead to the inference which is intended. It is not enough for the argument, that people in certain districts should have an inherent longing for physic generally, and pretend any disease, for the sake of obtaining it, they must have an express longing for chalk mixture, and the disease which they pretend must be diarrhoea.”

The passage on which these comments are made, has no reference either to “ a longing for physic,” or to “ pretended diseases” of any kind ; it relates solely to irregularities of

the bowels, which, though real, are slight, and only asserts it to be probable, that many individuals affected by such irregularities, would take medicine for them in the Penitentiary, who would never have thought of applying to a medical man in similar cases, if they lived out of the prison ; and this probability is much strengthened, by the information given by Dr. Hutchison, that the medicine in common use in the prison, was a cordial, and grateful to the prisoners.

“ Disorders of the bowels are, I am told, not uncommonly found in prisons, or among any large bodies of men who are all fed alike, and have not the opportunity of varying their food, until there shall be an actual appearance of some derangement of the system ; and it is not improbable that diarrhœa may have been prevalent in a prison where very coarse brown bread has been the basis of the dietary ; but I deny that this fact can be inferred in opposition to other evidence, from the mere examination of the quantity of medicine sent into the prison, even if the surgeon had stood by to see it taken, which he undoubtedly was not in the habit of doing.”

“ When Dr. Roget and myself were first employed at the General Penitentiary, questions were drawn up by us, and addressed by the Secretary of State to various gaols in

England, respecting their schemes of diet, and their ordinary diseases; and, from the answers returned, it did not appear, that bowel complaints, of the same general character with that of the Penitentiary, had been prevalent in any of them. Thus much I think it proper to state, as a matter of fact. Further I am not concerned to reply to what is admitted to be hearsay."*

On the fact here stated, I must observe, that if similar questions had been sent to the Penitentiary, it would not have appeared, from the answer returned, that bowel complaints had been prevalent there.

Dr. Hutchison would never have gone to Mr. Pratt's day-book of the expenditure of medicine, in search of evidence of real disorders; but would have examined the medical Reports of the health of the prisoners, from which the Physicians themselves did not infer

* Here again we have the same phrase, upon which I have already observed, as being found in the Report of October, 1822. If it means nothing, it should not be inserted, with the chance of misleading us, and if it has any meaning, what does it mean?

the prevalence of diarrhoea. I believe there are very few prisons in which correct records could be found of medicine delivered to prisoners, who were not ill enough to be removed to the infirmary. As to the allusion to "hearsay," I am afraid, that if Dr. Latham turns a deaf ear to every thing which comes to him in the shape of hearsay, his medical information, although it may be very accurate, will be rather limited in its extent, in comparison with that possessed by his brethren of the college.

If it be true, that the number of cases in which the chalk mixture has been given, has been gradually diminishing during the period of six years and a half, alluded to in the Physicians' Report, so that comprehending one-third of the whole number of the prisoners in the first half year ending on the 31st of December, 1816, they amounted only to one-ninth or one-tenth of the number in the prison during the whole of the year 1822 (as is stated in the Tables in the Report), I certainly cannot infer from that fact, any change in the climate of the Penitentiary, or any gradual improvement in the local circumstances connected with the prison, but should rather look for the causes of the decrease in the number of patients or quantity of medicine, to the Surgeon's having discovered that he had been too lavish of his physic, or to his having become more skilful in detecting the attempts of prisoners to impose upon him, or to the greater care taken by himself or

the officers to see the medicines taken, or to such changes in the diet or discipline of the Infirmary, as may have diminished the desire of the prisoners to be removed thither, &c. &c. &c.

“ This mode of arguing, that the diminution in the cases of diarrhoea, year after year, was not real, but in consequence of the Apothecary and officers having become more skilful in detecting the tricks of the prisoners, proceeds upon an implied assumption of the whole question at issue. It is first taken for granted, that a flux never existed in the prison, and then a theory is set up to explain some deceptive circumstances which have led ‘ credulous’ people into erroneous notions upon this subject.”

It will not be necessary for me to enter into any reasoning upon this supposed gradual diminution of the proportion of prisoners taking chalk medicines in successive years from one-third to one-tenth, as I have lately discovered, (and I really take some shame to myself for not having made that discovery sooner) that this supposition is erroneous, being founded on a great blunder in the tables of the Physician, who, relying, I

presume, on their inaccurate informer, Mr. Pratt, have inserted in their tables the *gross* number of prisoners at the end of each year in the Penitentiary, (adding to them all the deaths and discharges which occurred in the course of the year) instead of the *average* number confined *during* the year. If Dr. Latham will condescend to read my table, which he has published in the 278th page of his book, and will calculate upon the numbers, he will discover that the proportion of prisoners taking chalk medicines in the four first years after the prison was opened, and during the sole administration of Mr. Pratt, was in each year about one-third, or one-half; that in the two next years it was about one-fifth; and that in the last year, during some months of which the late disorder was partially in operation, in the autumn of which (according to the statements in the original Report of the Physicians, of April, 1823)—“the health of the prisoners began visibly to decline. They became pale and languid, and thin and feeble.”—“Those at the mill could grind less corn; those at the pump could raise less water. From time to time several of the laundry women fainted under their work,” &c. &c. In this year, the number of the

prisoners taking chalk medicines, appears by these tables to have amounted to less than one-sixth of the average number of prisoners—so much for the value of inferences, drawn from the distribution of chalk medicines, concerning the general health of the prison, or the prevalence of a particular disorder in it during particular years. I may perhaps be told by Dr. Latham, that by thus correcting the tables of the Physicians I have strengthened the case against the prison, inasmuch as I make the proportion of prisoners who have taken the chalk, greater than it appeared to be before; but I am not open to that remark, as I still presume to contend (without meaning any offence to Dr. Latham and his learned colleagues,) upon grounds which will appear hereafter, that the tables of the Physicians are entirely useless.

There are, moreover, other classes of persons residing within the prison, who seem to have been strangely overlooked upon this occasion. We have a considerable number of inferior officers, male and female, within the walls of the Penitentiary, and it is well known, that bowel complaints have not been prevalent among them before the month of April last, when the disorder was evidently infectious, and several of the officers employed among the prisoners were attacked by it. We have also had, from the first establishment of the prison, families of superior

officers residing in the very centre of the building, which have been so healthy, that no individual belonging to any of them has died since the prison was opened.

“ Here is the induction of a particular fact with nothing raised upon it ; and it would be hardly fair for me to presume what was the inference intended, and thus to make an argument for myself to reply to. Surely the health of the resident officers cannot be intended either to negative the fact that the prisoners were ill, or to intimate that, of two classes of people, differing from each other in all the circumstances of their lives, although living in the same place, one could not possibly derive disease from a source to which the other might be exposed with impunity.”

Dr. Latham reasoned differently before he had got the notion of injurious local influence into his head. He said, in 1823, when he was denying that the situation of the prison had contributed to the production of the disease—

“ Had this been the case, the officers of the prison, being equally obnoxious with the prisoners to any injurious influence of situation, could not have been univer-

sally exempt, as it appears they have been, from the same disease *."

Not only the officers of the prison, but the families of the superior officers, about 40 persons in number, have continued exempt

* As Dr. Latham appears, to me, to have been a much better reasoner when he presented, in conjunction with Dr. Roget, the Report of the 5th of April, 1823, which I thought at the time, and still do continue to think, a very able performance, than he is in his present publication, I will quote the whole paragraph of that Report from which this extract is taken.

"In inquiring into the causes of the disease in question, we think it right to state our persuasion, that the situation of the prison has not contributed to its production. First, because if this had been the case, it is reasonable to suppose that the same disease would have occurred in former years; whereas it has never appeared until the present winter. Secondly, had this been the case, the officers of the prison, being equally obnoxious with the prisoners to any injurious influence of situation, could not have been universally exempt, as it appears they have been, from the same disease. Thirdly, because if the situation of the prison be injurious, it must be presumed to be so in consequence of marsh miasmata arising in its neighbourhood; yet, since its establishment, the prison has been altogether free from those diseases which marsh miasmata confessedly engender. Fourthly, because, marsh miasmata always arise during the hot, and never during the cold seasons of the year; and the diseases which they engender belong to the same seasons. Lastly, because, although scurvy and dysentery have undoubtedly been found prevalent in marshy districts, yet when marsh miasmata have produced them, they have been associated with intermittent fevers, and have occurred only at the hot seasons of the year. It may possibly be suspected that the simple dampness of the situation may have contributed something to the disease. But we can state with confidence, that every part of the prison is singularly dry; and that in no cell or passage, on no floor or ceiling, or wall of the prison, have we found the smallest stain or appearance of moisture."

from it, with the exception of 18 or 19 inferior officers, who were employed about the prisoners, and two or three individuals, whose connection with the sick is distinctly traced, and whose cases are therefore among the proofs of contagion.

To come now to the Tables exhibiting the number of patients affected by diarrhœa in each year, and of those in whom that disease is traced to successive years. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that every dose of medicine was given for a real disorder, I must still doubt, how far the principles upon which these Tables, though drawn up with great labour, have been constructed, are correct, for the purpose of showing the prevalence of diarrhœa. The first defect in them appears to me to be, that they make no distinction between cases, in which the bowels of the patient have been relaxed for a single day, and cases which have been obstinate and protracted.

“ We did not make the distinction here required, because it was not warrantable from the data before us.”

If this be so, owing to Mr. Pratt's giving out more than a day's consumption at a time, the Physicians, knowing that he gave it *“ of course without any previous inquiry into the reality of the disease,”* should have drawn no

other inference from such deliveries, but that Mr. Pratt was a very indiscreet man, and very unfit to be entrusted with the distribution of medicine. They certainly should not have laid before the Committee of the Penitentiary, tables contradicting the more "authentic records of the health of the prison," from documents disclosing such a vicious practice as that of Mr. Pratt's, without apprising that Committee of the circumstances, by which the value of such tables must even in their own eyes have been materially diminished.

If the greater number of convicts within the prison should appear to have had a looseness for one day in the course of the year, I think it can hardly be stated, from any number of such cases, that diarrhoea has been a prevalent disorder in the Penitentiary; nor if many prisoners have had relaxed bowels once in the course of each year, for several successive years, can such persons be considered as having had a disorder "difficult of cure," such repeated instances of relaxed bowels in a succession of years being nothing more than is experienced by a large proportion of the inhabitants of this country. Now there is in these Tables no distinction between the cases of patients, to whom one single delivery of medicine has taken place, and of those who may have been under a long continuance of medicine, either in the same year, or in successive years. I have been furnished by Mr. Pratt, from whose papers these Tables have been formed, with a list of the prisoners

who have taken the medicine alluded to, from the first opening of the prison, and with the daily quantity of medicine delivered out to each. I cannot make the numbers amount to those mentioned in the Report; but there are a great many cases, in which one single delivery of "a mixture," or of "chalk powder," appears to have taken place during the whole period of the prisoners' confinement. There are also a great many cases of prisoners who appear to have had medicine delivered to them on two days only in the course of two or more successive years; and there is one case of a woman who had medicine only on the 31st of December in one year, and on the 1st of January only in the next, who, I learn from Mr. Pratt, stands in these Tables as a patient for diarrhœa in the two successive years.

"From 'a looseness for one day in the course of the year,' appertaining to any number of prisoners, unquestionably it could not be inferred that diarrhœa had been the prevalent disorder of the Penitentiary; and from many instances of 'relaxed bowels once in the course of each year for several successive years,' unquestionably it could not be inferred that the disorder had been difficult of cure. But how were these facts concerning 'looseness for one day in the course of the year,' and 'relaxed bowels once in the course of each year, for several successive years,' to be ascertained?"

If these facts could not be ascertained, and are admitted to be material, it follows that all the individuals who had taken the medicine should not have been placed together under a title, which, though it may be literally true, is calculated to mislead unlearned men. It may be correct, medically speaking, to say, that any person, who has taken a dose of physic for a pain in his stomach, has been "treated for diarrhoea;" but ideas of something much more serious and formidable than such a complaint, and such a mode of cure, would arise in the minds of ninety-nine persons out of an hundred, on reading those words.

" Mr. Holford, relying on certain lists which were furnished him, seems to intimate (if I rightly understand him), that these facts might have been ascertained from the quantities of medicine therein stated to have been supplied to different prisoners ; and that a single delivery of medicine might be considered to indicate a diarrhoea of a single day, and the gross number of single deliveries to stand for the gross number of diarrhoeas of one day, in each year, for several successive years.

*“ But this calculation and its results are contrary to my constant observation, which assures me that nine people out of ten, in every condition of life, and especially among the poor, would rather run their chance with a common diarrhœa, than take medicine for its relief; and that nine people out of ten never do apply for medicine until it is gone beyond (what they conceive to be) a common diarrhœa. By no other rule can I pretend to judge concerning the disorder of the Penitentiary, and the medicines prescribed for it, than that of my own experience *; and thus so far am I from believing a single delivery of chalk mixture or chalk powder to have been always given for a single day’s diarrhœa, that I conceive nine prisoners out of ten never took even a single dose, until the disorder had already been troublesome to them during several days.*

“ But the question is not concerning a dose of the medicine, but concerning a delivery. I do not know what quantity of the chalk powder went to one delivery; but one deli-

* Surely the evidence of Mr. Pratt would be more to the purpose.

very of chalk mixture amounted to eight ounces, or five full doses*. To half an ounce of tincture of Columba, and twenty-five drops of laudanum, and two drams of aromatic confection, was added as much chalk mixture as would complete the eight ounces.

“ Now, from what obtains in ordinary practice, and especially in the practice of public institutions, I should infer that the prisoners for whom this mixture of eight ounces was prescribed, had, in the opinion† of the prescriber, something more than a common diarrhœa, or a diarrhœa of a single day‡. Since for such a disorder, in a person otherwise healthy, one dose, and one dose only, would be thought enough, and repeated doses,

* That could not always have been the case, for deliveries were sometimes made, as appeared by the day-book, on successive days.

† This may be a successful attack on Mr. Pratt's practice, but it cannot change the fact of Mr. Pratt's giving the medicine without inquiry, and consequently without the means of forming any opinion at all upon the matter.

‡ Mr. Pratt has stated, in his evidence, that he gave the medicine whenever any prisoner complained of a pain in his bowels, and the Physicians have admitted that he told them the same thing.

to the number of five, would be deemed inexpedient, and not without the hazard of some inconvenience.

“ Upon the whole, then, I must continue to believe, that the Physicians acted a prudent part in not admitting any distinctions of the kind intimated into their Report ; and that, although they were quite aware of numerous cases, for which the medicines were prescribed more and less frequently, and might suspect that such cases were more and less severe, they were still right in inferring no more than the general prevalence of a certain disorder, from the general use of certain remedies. Thus much they thought they could do with safety. But, it is said, that they cannot do even this ; while, at the same time, it is complained, that they have not done more, namely, that they have not made a distinction of cases, grounded upon the greater and less frequency with which the medicines were prescribed.

“ There is one circumstance especially pointed out by Mr. Holford in disparagement of the method of proceeding adopted by the

Physicians, upon which I must make a short remark. It is, that 'a woman, who had medicine only on the 31st of December in one year, and on the 1st of January only in the next, stands in these Tables as a patient for diarrhœa in two successive years.'

" Now, it was the purpose of the Physicians to show, by their Tables, the extent of the disease at different periods of time since the foundation of the Penitentiary; and it was natural, with this view, to fix upon the division of years. Thus they reckoned all who were treated for a flux of the bowels in each year, taking care not to count the same individuals more than once, how frequently soever any might have been under treatment between January and December; for they considered that the disease had not extended its sphere within a certain period, so long as the same individuals were attacked by it. Moreover, it was the purpose of the Physicians to show, by their Tables, how far the disease was maintained in the Penitentiary by new cases, arising at different periods, and how far by the same cases continued from one period to another; and with this view, also, it was

natural to fix upon the division of years. Thus, beginning each year as a fresh period, they reckoned in the same manner as before, all who took chalk mixture or powder in the course of it, including, however, both those who had, and those who had not, been enumerated in any former year ; yet finally distinguishing them, and specifying the numbers capable of being traced back from one year to another. Hence an individual case, being upon the confines of two periods would be reckoned twice ; while occurring at both extremes of the same period, and many times in the course of it, it would be reckoned only once ; and thus it happened, that the case of the female who was treated for flux on the 31st of December in one year, and on the 1st of January in the next, was included in two periods.

“ I have entered upon this explanation, because the instance, so expressly pointed out, seemed to impute a sort of stratagem to the*

* It imputes no stratagem to the Physicians, it is only stated to shew that the principle on which the tables are formed is an unsound one, an imaginary case would have answered my purpose quite as well as a real one.

Physicians in their mode of reckoning ; nevertheless, I am much surprised that it was not at once seen how this single fault, (if it be a fault) unavoidably arose from the structure of the Tables. And, indeed, all such Tables must, from their very nature, be obnoxious to faults of the same kind in single instances. For no form of generalizing was ever known, which could give a satisfactory view of a subject upon the whole, and at the same time do exact justice to every particular included in it.*

“ The words ‘ difficult of cure,’ are quoted from the Report of the Physicians, as falsely characterizing a disease, which in many instances seemed to require little medical treatment. Nevertheless, however mild it might have been in particular instances, yet, since it was the predominant disease of the place during many years, and since the patients of one year were traced back, in the proportion of a third, a fourth, or a fifth, as the patients of

* It was seen, and the case of Mary Sutton was cited as an objection to the structure of the Tables, and for no other purpose.

preceding years, and since it, or a disease of the same general character, finally involved all at once, both those who had, and those who had not suffered it before, namely, almost the whole population of the prison, I do not think the Physicians were far wrong in stating summarily that it was 'difficult of cure.'"

I never meant to contend that tables should have been formed on the principle of stating the quantity of the medicine taken by each prisoner, or that every delivery should be taken to contain only a single dose; but I do maintain, that the number of deliveries, and the date of each, is material, to enable us to judge of the truth of the facts which the Physicians have stated in their Report. They have said there—

"This disorder [we find] did not readily yield to the methods of treatment employed—these records (meaning the day-books so often alluded to) shew how pertinacious and untractable it was in many whom it attacked. The same prisoners were again and again brought under medical treatment for it in the same year."

Now how is it possible to judge of the

truth and accuracy of this statement from the result of an inquiry in which no distinction is made, between the case of a prisoner who has had one delivery of the medicine, and that of a person to whom it has been delivered repeatedly? I do not know precisely what the Physicians mean by the words “again and again;” but these expressions must at least imply three or four times. Now the number of prisoners who have had the chalk medicine given to them more than four times in each year, previous to 1822, when the late disorder appears to have been in operation, were as follows—

* Number of prisoners who took chalk mixture above four times.			Average number in the prison.
In 1816		2	64
1817		3	151
1818		8	224
1819		9	273
1820		3	427
1821		8	631

I am not prepared to state whether any of these took it only on successive days, or in what quantities it was delivered to them.

* See table hereinafter given, containing an abstract of the number of prisoners to whom deliveries of the chalk medicine took place in the several years, distinguishing the number of deliveries in each year.

Those who took it on successive days, were probably in the infirmary, and then each delivery may have been a single dose, and is not likely to have contained at most more than one day's consumption, from those who took it in the prison, at distant periods of the year, and who could only have taken it for a day or two each time, a material deduction must be made for imposture.

The Physicians' Report, of October, 1822, goes on thus—

“Many of the patients of one year are found to be the patients of the preceding year, and as the period becomes more and more remote from the first establishment of the Penitentiary, we find prisoners *still suffering* diarrhœa, who have already *endured it* one, two, three, or four years.”

How can the weight due to this statement be estimated from tables which contain, indiscriminately, the names of those who have taken the medicine once only in the year, and those who may have taken it repeatedly? I own I cannot acquit the language of the Report of something like misrepresentation on this head—when the Physicians talk of

“prisoners still *suffering* diarrhœa, who had already *endured* it one, two, three, and four years,” and afterwards trace cases of diarrhœa back from one year to another, giving a table of the numbers so traced, most people would be led to imagine, that they were speaking of individuals who had gone through some course of medicine for diarrhœa in these different years, through which they were traced, or had endured this disorder for some considerable time in several of these years—whereas, from the manner in which these tables are constructed, every individual who has had chalk medicine given out to him once in several successive years, is put down as having *endured* diarrhœa from one year to another—and a great majority of the cases must be of this description, as the whole number of cases in which the chalk medicine was given out once or twice only in each year, amount, during the first five years and a half*, to more than four times the number of those in which more deliveries took place. Upon the whole, then, I object

* See the table entitled Abstract of the number of prisoners, &c. I do not include 1822, because it is the year in which the late disease commenced.

to a statement, in which every individual, who has taken once or twice only in several years, the medicine commonly given in the prison for any bowel complaint, real or fictitious, is included as having been a patient for a diarrhœa, which is characterized as being "obstinate" and "difficult of cure."

From these Tables, moreover, if framed with a view to the discovery of the extent in which diarrhœa can have been produced by any local influence in the prison, should be excluded all cases in which the looseness of the bowels has arisen in the latter stage of other disorders, from the debility occasioned by consumption, &c. &c. and cases, where the patients are known to have had the digestive organs materially injured by drinking, or other vicious courses, before they came into confinement, &c. When all these shall be withdrawn, the numbers will, I suspect, be very materially diminished; at all events, so long as they stand on the file undistinguished, the Tables cannot be considered as containing the result of an investigation into the effects of local influence, even admitting, what I believe no person will be credulous enough to believe, that all the cases, for which medicine has been given, have been cases of real sickness for which physic would have been taken in ordinary life.

"When the tables were drawn up by the Physicians, they had the constant assistance of the Apothecary, and some cases were excluded for reasons which he suggested, and

which were deemed satisfactory at the time. I can therefore hardly conceive it possible that many cases are still to be found in them, which ought not to have been admitted."

This remark gives credit to Mr. Pratt for greater powers of memory than I am willing to ascribe to him—at all events, tables so made have little claim to accuracy. In the table* to which I shall refer hereafter, no cases are intentionally left out, though I could, from my own knowledge state, that there were several among the few who appear to have taken the chalk repeatedly, whose proneness to flux was connected with other disorders, and did not commence within the prison.

"Mr. Holford has added a Postscript to the 'Observations,' which I proceed to notice with great reluctance. Most willingly should it pass without a single remark from me, but that my total silence might seem to admit the censure as just, which it is its express object to cast upon my colleagues and myself. I say its express object, because the writer in the mean time loses sight of every other, and

* Entitled "Abstract of the number of prisoners," &c.

even so entirely forgets the conclusion, which he has hitherto been labouring to establish, as to bring forward facts in support of his censure, which furnish stronger grounds for the opinion of the Physicians than those which were adduced by the Physicians themselves."

I leave it to those who may read the following postscript, to say, whether it furnishes any such grounds.—It was intended to shew, that, if the extracts there referred to have any pretensions to correctness, (which it puts, as Dr. Latham truly observes, "hypothetically,") the erroneous principle on which the Physicians' tables are constructed, has rendered those tables of no value ; it appearing, by those extracts, that in a very large proportion of the cases traced back to former years, the patient has only had the medicine *once* given to him in most of the years into which he is so traced.—I did not, as Dr. Latham supposes, *forget the conclusions, which I had been labouring to establish*; but I stated facts, as I found them, when I was mentioning the result of papers with which I had been furnished.

"The Postscript is as follows :"—

Since the foregoing Observations were written, I have looked more narrowly than I had done before into part of the papers given to me by Mr. Pratt, which he assures me are faithful extracts from his books of all the entries respecting the delivery of chalk mixture, or chalk powder, since the opening of the Penitentiary (these entries being the ground of the Physicians' Report;) and if these extracts have any pretension to correctness, the Tables of the Physicians must be abandoned as entirely useless with reference to the matter in question, or indeed as to any matter. I have taken up that portion of the Tables which professes to give the whole number of the patients who took chalk in 1822, and the numbers traced back as having taken it in former years, and have examined these numbers with the entries in Mr. Pratt's books as vouched and explained by the extracts given to me. I chose the last year in the Tables (1822), because I thought the year in which the prison began to be affected with the prevailing epidemic, was that from which, if any similar disorder could be traced back to former years, it was most important to trace it, and I have no reason to suppose, that the Tables are more or less accurate in respect to the patients of that year than they are concerning those of any other year.

The Tables make the whole number of patients for diarrhœa in that year 88; I make them 90; but I find that more than the half of that number, are cases in which medicine has been delivered out only once. The Physicians make the number traced back 17; I make them 24; but in a very large proportion of these, the patient has only had the medicine once given to him in most of the

years into which he is traced. If the Physicians mean, that the number given comprises all who had taken chalk in the preceding years, they have omitted several; but if they mean, that there are 17 cases in which persons who were afflicted with diarrhœa in 1822, had been under the influence of chalk medicine in preceding years for any considerable length of time, that is certainly not the case according to these papers.

“ First, for the justice of the censure. The Apothecary furnishes Mr. Holford with certain papers assuring him, that they are faithful extracts from the day-books of all entries respecting chalk mixture and chalk powder; and Mr. Holford, comparing the numbers given in our tables for one year, 1822, with the entries of the day-books as vouched and explained by these extracts made by the Apothecary, finds they do not entirely accord; hereupon he lays the foundation of his somewhat sweeping censure, and adds, ‘ if these extracts have any pretensions to correctness,’ (putting the case hypothetically, but arguing upon it as a fact,) ‘ the tables of the Physicians must be abandoned as entirely useless with reference to the matter in question, or indeed as to any matter.’

“ The few last words contain something more of contempt than the Physicians (I am persuaded) will be thought to deserve, certainly something more, than any reasons which are apparent will be thought to justify.

“ Several times in the course of the ‘ Observations’ has Mr. Holford raised his arguments upon the sole authority of statements furnished him by Mr. Pratt; and in so doing, when those statements related to professional points, upon which Mr. Pratt had peculiar means of information, he did what was right; but in so doing, when those statements related to points which were capable of being ascertained, and verified by himself, he did, what perhaps is hardly allowable in any inquiry like the present. But, however this may be, when he finally takes upon himself to dismiss the Physicians with a sentence of very strong censure and contempt, I may be pardoned for thinking, that then especially he ought to have verified for himself the facts which are the grounds of his harsh opinion, or that at least he should not have allowed it to*

* So he did, as will appear in the sequel.

appear, that he had taken them altogether upon the credit of another. The facts were entirely within his own reach, and Mr. Holford could, and (I presume to repeat) ought to have examined for himself the original entries in the day-books, and compared them with the tables of the Physicians, before he ventured to hold up their labours to the contempt of the Managing Committee, and characterized them 'as entirely useless with reference to the matter in question, or indeed as to any matter.'

"Nevertheless the Physicians are, upon the whole, under some obligation to Mr. Holford for adding strength to their conclusion by the very facts, which he has chosen to accept from Mr. Pratt in support of his censure. For grant that, in respect to the gross number of cases in the year 1822, and the number of cases traced back from that year to preceding years, we are wrong, and that he is right. We are wrong in understating that which he is right in putting at a higher amount. We make the number of cases in the year, 88; he makes them 90. We make the cases traced

back 17 ; he makes them 24. Whence it will follow arithmetically, that he goes so much further than ourselves in imputing disease to the Penitentiary, as 90 are more than 88, and 24 are more than 17.

“ But after all it must be admitted that extracts of entries from journals of the kind in question are very liable to error. The question is to which side in the present instance the error most probably belongs, whether to that of the Physicians or of the Apothecary. If several persons should be employed separately upon a journal, containing entries of various kinds extended over many years, in extracting from it those which related to a particular subject, it is probable that the numbers as calculated by each would be different, and that in every instance the numbers would be incorrect. But, if several persons should be employed together upon such a journal, for the same purpose, and so distribute their labours, that each should be a check upon the other, it is probable that the numbers, thus calculated by all, would be correct. In a long catalogue a single entry

is very apt to escape the eye, and to go unreckoned.

“ Feeling this liability to error, the Physicians and Mr. Pratt were conjointly occupied upon the day-books in question, which contained prescriptions of various kinds, for various complaints, during a period of six years and a half, for the purpose of extracting from them the entries of chalk mixture and chalk powder. And it is no disparagement of the accuracy of any of us, to believe that the numbers thus calculated by us altogether, bear a greater probability of truth, than any numbers which each might have calculated singly. Is it too much to suppose that they are really more accurate than those so calculated by Mr. Pratt ?

“ Subjoined to the Postscript are two tables, upon which I desire to make a few observations. The first is entitled

ABSTRACT OF THE NUMBER OF PRISONERS

To whom any Delivery of Chalk Mixture, or Chalk Powders, has taken place in the Penitentiary, during the latter part of the year 1816, and during the years

1817, 1818, 1819, 1820, 1821, and 1822; distinguishing the Number of Deliveries to any one Prisoner during each year.

		1816	1817	1818	1819	1820	1821	1822
<i>Number of deliveries.</i>								
One	-	9	40	49	53	62	71	72
Two	-	7	16	13	19	18	28	21
Three	-		7	4	7	4	7	6
Four	-	3	2	3	4	2	8	3
Five	-			2	4	3	1	1
Six	-			1	1		2	
More than six	-	2	3	5	4		5	10
Total	-	21	68	77	92	89	122	113
Averagenumber of pri- soners in the Peni- tentiary		64	151	224	273	427	631	745

“ The purpose of this table is to show that of those, for whom chalk mixture or chalk powder was prescribed in each year, the majority took so much only as was contained in one delivery. But it has been already proved, that this fact, being admitted, does not go to negative the existence of diarrhœa as the predominant disorder of the prison.

“ The following table, which is the second subjoined to the postscript of the ‘ Observations,’ I have already taken the liberty of using in another place, because it seemed to me to contain, in the most succinct shape, as

strong an argument as could be imagined of a predominant disease existing in the Penitentiary, and of that disease being diarrhœa. In speaking of the day-books, I observed that the form of certain entries in them went especially to prove the fact, those namely, of chalk mixture, sent wholesale to prisoners working in companies, without any specification of the individuals who were to take it. But I had mislaid my note of the number of such entries, and had I not accidentally turned to Mr. Holford's 'Observations,' and found this table subjoined to them, I should have been at a loss how to put the argument in its most convincing form. I have yet another use to make of the same table, and therefore I now give it again in its proper place.

In 1816, an entry of	1	quart bottle of mixture for	the kitchen women.
— ditto	1	ditto	Mrs. Clarke's women.
In 1817, ditto	2	ditto	Mrs. Clarke's women.
— ditto	1	ditto	Mrs. Evans's women.
— ditto	2	ditto	the laundry.
— ditto	1	ditto	the carpenter's cell.
In 1818, ditto	1	ditto	Mrs. Croome's women.
— ditto	1	ditto	Mrs. Gould's women.
— ditto	1	ditto	Laban's men.
— ditto	3	ditto	Brett's men.
In 1819, ditto	1	ditto	Mrs. Clarke's women.

Is not noticed in the above Table.

" It is here well worthy of remark, that Mr. Holford himself, who, in one part of his ' Observations,' insists so strongly upon the motives for ' shamming' being a sufficient proof of the fact, does in this very table give the most glaring prominence to a circumstance which destroys the supposition altogether. For, by it we find the complaint, for which chalk mixture was prescribed, was so far from furnishing a claim of indulgence, that not merely those who were employed at their trades, but those who sustained the hard labour and household drudgery of the prison, were not exempt from that labour and drudgery in consequence of taking medicine.

" Thus much I have thought it my duty to say in reply to the ' Observations' of Mr. Holford. They were considered (I know) by those to whom they were addressed, to be a complete refutation of all which the Physicians had advanced concerning flux, as the predominant disorder of the Penitentiary since its foundation. The Physicians themselves, however, presumed to think otherwise, and even to believe that much was contained in the ' Observations,' which tended rather to

confirm their own opinions. The question is an important one, and it is now left for the decision of medical men.

“ In closing my review of the ‘ Observations,’ I shall refrain from passing, in my turn, any summary opinion upon them. For I feel much too strongly what is due to a man, who, during many years, and under circumstances of peculiar difficulty, has bestowed his best exertions, zealously and profitably, upon the great objects of the Penitentiary, to characterize any part of his labours as ‘ entirely useless with reference to the matter in question, or indeed as to any matter.’ ”

Dr. Latham says, that he proceeds “ to notice the Postscript to my observations with great reluctance.” I can assure him, in return, that I do not reply to the notice, which he has bestowed upon this part of my paper, with much pleasure, as he has written under great misapprehension—misunderstands my argument, and misrepresents my conduct. I did not mean to found my suspicion that the tables of the Physicians must be “ abandoned as entirely useless,” upon the differences be-

tween the numbers contained in them and those in Mr. Pratt's extracts, but drew that inference from a circumstance quite consistent with the truth of the tables, viz. I collected from the extracts, (concerning the accuracy of which I spoke with the doubt, I really felt) that there were in the prison a great number of prisoners who had taken the chalk once only, all of whom, from the principle, on which the Physicians' tables were framed, were of course included in them. I had contended in the "Observations" that this "principle was an erroneous one." I collected from Mr. Pratt's extracts, that the number of persons thus (as I conceived) improperly brought by that principle into the tables, was very considerable. Nor did I subjoin any tables to my Postscript, as Dr. Latham must have known when the Observations and the Postscript were communicated to him and his colleagues at the time they were laid before the Committee of the Penitentiary; I knew the habitual inaccuracy of Mr. Pratt in matters, concerning which he had no wish to deceive, nor any interest in deceiving, quite as well as the Physicians; and I never should have thought of drawing out tables from

“ his extracts,” or of relying upon them, in opposition to the statements of the Physicians, from the day-books themselves *.

When I laid before the Committee of the Penitentiary this Postscript, which seems unfortunately to have given offence to Dr. Latham, I did not conceive that I was “ *taking upon myself to dismiss the Physicians with contempt.*” Nor did I consider myself as recording a final judgment upon the merits of the Physicians’ Report ; I intended only to state such objections to it as should lead to further inquiry ; and my paper was communicated to the Physicians, in the expectation that they would be inclined to review their Report of October, 1822, and would perhaps

* Nor should I have thought of relying upon the day-books, as containing more accurate accounts of the health of the prisoners than Dr. Hutchison’s Reports. — Surely Dr. Latham must see, that any impeachment of the accuracy of Mr. Pratt’s extracts from his own day-books (which extracts were taken out by him, after repeated warnings of the importance of being accurate on that occasion) leads necessarily to a doubt of the correctness of the day-books themselves, which must have been made up by Mr. Pratt, either from his recollection, or from memorandums.

be willing to go over the day-book again, for the purpose of constructing a new table upon the principle which I had suggested, a task, in which I would gladly have joined them.

The Physicians, however, were not disposed to take that line*; not feeling, I presume, that there was sufficient weight in any thing I had offered, to create a doubt in their minds concerning the correctness of the conclusions stated in their Report. Upon this point Dr. Latham speaks as follows—

“The document in question was communicated to the Physicians at the time it was laid before the Managing Committee of the Penitentiary, and we ought (it may be thought) immediately to have presented an answer to it, if any was capable of being given. But

* But quere, whether this was the opinion of all the Physicians; two of them very candidly admitted, in their evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons, that statements founded upon the principle I had suggested, would have a fairer one than that given in their tables. Surely, in a matter of so much importance, no pains should have been spared which could elucidate the subject.

we knew (as all medical men must know) how difficult it is to argue upon the subjects of our own profession with unprofessional persons. This was one reason of our silence. Another, and a stronger reason, was our determination never to become a party in any of the controversies around us, and even to avoid, as much as possible, being drawn into disputes with others about our own opinions and practice ; and although the respectable quarter from which the ' Observations ' proceeded might seem to demand some notice, yet we did not think that either our credit, or our usefulness, would be increased by entering into a contest with a member of the Managing Committee. Besides, we were aware, that a Committee of the House of Commons was about to sit upon the affairs of the Penitentiary, and that we should be individually subjected to examination upon all the points, to which ' the Observations relate. ' "

When I learned, not by a formal message from the Physicians, but from a member of our Committee of the Penitentiary, who had seen them on the subject, " that these gentlemen thought they could defend their Re-

port, and meant to abide by it," I sat down to the day-books myself, with Mr. Pratt, and a clerk belonging to the Penitentiary, and made lists of all the prisoners to whom the chalk medicines had been delivered in every year, from the opening of the prison, with the dates of each delivery.—The table to which Dr. Latham has alluded, as my first table, is the abstract of such lists, which were laid before the Committee of the House of Commons, with what Dr. Latham calls my second table, containing entries of certain deliveries which could not be included in the list, or the abstract, but which, finding them in the books, I could not pass over unnoticed, without leaving the information given in those papers imperfect.

Perhaps I may be thought to have taken more pains to destroy the authority of this Report, of October 1822, than was necessary, and to have overloaded the case both with facts and arguments ; but as this Report, which is admitted by the Physicians in their evidence, to contain the only reasons for imputing any noxious influence to the situation of the Penitentiary, has been fished up by Dr. Latham from the pool of oblivion,

in which it had lain for some time, and where I hoped it had been for ever buried, I am particularly anxious to lay such a weight upon it now, that it shall never be made to rise again hereafter, to disturb the peace of those who take an interest in our prison at Millbank.

CHAPTER III.

*Statements connected with the History of the Disorder
alluded to in the foregoing Chapters.*

IF Dr. Latham's publication had not come upon me while Parliament is sitting, and the pressure of business leaves me but little time to employ in discussions of this nature, I should have been inclined to go more carefully than it is now in my power to do, into the evidence published with the two Reports of the House of Commons, of 1823 and 1824, upon the subject of the late disease, which I am satisfied was originally produced by diet * and an unhealthy season, and propagated

* The fault of the dietary was not simply the want of solid meat, but the quality of the soup given instead of it, which was not so deficient in nourishment as has been supposed, but was on the contrary injurious as being thick and heavy, and apt to pall upon the stomach when at all out of order, particularly in the evening. Having explained all this in my second vindication of the Penitentiary, published this year, I will not pursue this part of the subject now.

itself afterwards by contagion, undergoing, probably, some changes in its course. It was agreed, unless I am mistaken, by all the Physicians examined, that the causes mentioned above were fully sufficient for the original production of the disorder, and that there would be no occasion to look for any additional source of sickness, if the number of the sick had not again increased, after the disorder had appeared to yield to the treatment first adopted; and if there had not been found among them many who came into the prison after the diet, thought to be injurious, had been discontinued, and the winter had passed away.

From these circumstances, and particularly from the latter of them, the two Physicians first called in very justly inferred, in their Report of the 4th of July, 1823, that some other cause of sickness, over and above those to which the disease had been originally imputed, was in operation, which, as they conjectured, might be either some injurious influence peculiar to the place, or contagion.

It does not appear that these gentlemen had

any ground, at that time, for inclining to the former of these causes.—They had, in their Report of the 5th of April preceding, declared, in the strongest terms, their persuasion, “that the situation of the prison had not contributed to the production of the disease.” They certainly saw no reason, when they framed that Report, to surmise the existence in former years of a similar disorder; and the history of the sickness given in the Report, seems to me to be inconsistent with that fact.

If the scourge which lately afflicted the Penitentiary was in truth a diarrhoea, which had long prevailed secretly in the prison, aggravated into a scorbutic dysentery by an ill-arranged dietary, and an unhealthy season, instead of having been originally produced by those causes, it would probably have shewn itself in a very general prevalence of bowel complaints in the first instance. This, however, was by no means the course which the disorder took. For many months after the introduction of the new dietary (3d July, 1822) bowel complaints became neither more

frequent nor more severe *. Nevertheless the disorder, which broke out in the month of February following, appears, by the Report of April 1823, to have been in operation during a considerable portion of that period. Upon this point the Physicians speak as follows—

From the testimony of the officers of the Establishment, and particularly of the matron, it appears, that during the last autumn the general health of the prisoners began visibly to decline. They became pale and languid, and thin and feeble. Those employed in tasks requiring much bodily exertion, were unequal to the same quantity of work as formerly. Those at the mill could grind less corn; those at the pump could raise less water. From time to time several of the laundry women fainted under their work; and the business of the laundry could only be carried on by continually changing the hands engaged in it. Such was the general state of the prisoners throughout the winter.

Still, notwithstanding this remarkable depression of the general health, there appeared among them no manifest

* According to the deliveries of chalk medicines, in my table, (see page 104) the bowel complaints in 1822 were fewer than in the preceding year; but I mention this only by way of *argumentum ad hominem*, giving no weight whatever myself to inferences from Mr. Pratt's day-book and the delivery of chalk.

signs of any peculiar disease. The number of sick received into the infirmaries, did not much exceed the proportion which, in the winter of former years, it had borne to the total number of prisoners; and their disorders were those commonly incident to cold weather. It was not until the beginning of February, that any marks of scurvy were reported by Mr. Hutchison, as having been noticed by him on a few individuals in the infirmaries. And here it may be observed, that these marks are, at their first appearance, peculiarly apt to escape discovery, unless the attention be particularly directed towards them; and that they often exist for a long time, entirely unnoticed by the patient himself. Between the fourteenth of February and the first of March, no less than forty-eight prisoners came into the infirmaries, affected chiefly with diarrhœa and dysentery. The diarrhœa and dysentery were of a peculiar kind, and were suspected to have a connexion with the scorbutic disease. At this time, also, all these various affections were found spreading extensively, but in different degrees of severity, throughout the prison.

This appears to me to be a history of the rise and progress of an original disease, and not an account of an old flux, upon which accidental circumstances superinduced a more serious malady of the same character; and, instead of its being true that diarrhœa had been all along the predominant complaint of the prison, it seems, from this extract, that long after the new disorder was in opera-

tion, "there appeared among the prisoners no manifest signs of any peculiar disease." Now, I presume it will be admitted, that the signs of a bowel complaint are apt to manifest themselves pretty soon to an ordinary observer, although petechial spots may elude, for a long time, the observation even of a skilful medical man.—It must not be forgotten, that the attention of both Dr. Hutchison * and Mr. Pratt were particularly called to the state of the prison during the period to which I have now been alluding.

* Both Mr. Pratt and the matron wrote to me in the beginning of 1823, before I came to town, mentioning the encreased sickness of the prison, and expressing their fears that it might be in part owing to the low diet; but neither of them said one word about bowel complaints; on the contrary, Mr. Pratt stated, that the complaints then existing were "affections of the lungs," and only accused the dietary of having weakened the prisoners, and brought on "predisposition to complaint." His letter, dated 7th of January, will be found in the printed evidence annexed to the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons of 1823, (the matron's I did not preserve) I remember Mr. Pratt's telling me, about three months after the introduction of the new dietary, that he had been fearful of its producing an encreased number of bowel complaints, but was glad to see that no such consequence had followed it.

It is remarkable, that Dr. Latham, in his account of this disease, should never have adverted to the fact of scurvy having arisen in Norwich gaol during the winter of 1822-3, in which it had certainly not been known of late years, nor to the very similar result of a low dietary in the Cold Bath Field's House of Correction, to that experienced at Millbank during the same season. On the 15th of December*, 1822, the diet of the prisoners in Cold Bath Fields prison was reduced to "one pound and a half of white bread, and one pint of gruel, or the soup the beef was boiled in on Sunday, on which day half a pound of beef (after being cooked) was allowed; and no food was allowed to be brought in except for the state-rooms."—The magistrates who manage that prison, however, soon discovered that they had been led into an error by the advocates for the low dietaries, and were driven, by the appearance of a disorder among their prisoners, much resembling that which broke out in the Pe-

* See papers delivered on the 12th of June, 1823, to the Committee of the House of Commons, p. 149, of the printed Evidence of 1823.

nitentiary, to adopt a dietary with more meat in it than was contained in our original table of diet. Their present dietary, fixed on the 1st of March, 1823, is as follows:—"One * pound and a quarter of white bread, one pint of gruel; and on alternate days six ounces of beef, or a pint of soup, not that the beef was boiled in, thickened with pease, oatmeal, and ox heads, in the proportion of one to 100 persons; except Saturday, and on that day only a pound and a quarter of bread, and two pints of gruel."

On looking into the returns of the disorders which prevailed in the Cold Bath Field's Prison about that time †, it will be found that the number of cases of scurvy, in the first three months of 1823, were eighteen, there having been only seven in the corresponding months of the preceding year. The cases of bowel complaints in the three same months were ninety-three in number in 1823, and forty-two in 1822 ‡. It is very probable that

* See printed Evidence of 1823, p. 149.

† Ibid. p. 351.

‡ I have taken the months of January, February, and March, although the dietary was changed on the 1st of

this increase of scurvy and bowel complaint might have terminated in the same inveterate scorbutic dysentery, which was experienced at Millbank, if the low dietary had been continued for a period of the same length in both places; but in the Cold Bath Field's prison it was in operation for only about ten weeks, whereas it was undermining the strength of the prisoners in the Penitentiary for eight months, and was not changed till above half the prisoners confined there were more or less under the influence of the disease which it occasioned.

When Dr. Latham and his colleague examined into the state of the Penitentiary, they considered the disease to be quite as much scurvy as diarrhœa, and in their Report of the 5th of April, 1823, they concluded their statement of the result of their first dissections of the bodies of two prisoners, who died dysenteric, as follows, " We

March; because, if the dietary were injurious, the bad effects of it would not cease on the day on which its was changed.—For the numbers here quoted, see returns to the Committee of the House of Commons, printed Evidence, p. 352.

found in fact an absolute scurvy of the bowels, of which the diarrhoea or dysentery was only a symptom or consequence."

When Dr. Latham and Dr. Roget drew up this Report ; they believed that they had got the better of the disorder, but, to use Dr. Latham's own words, "*the Report had hardly been made public, when the disease, so far as it was referable to the bowels, began to re-appear : by the middle of the month of May it had again pervaded the prison ; and by the middle of the month of June, all the prisoners, without exception, who had formerly suffered ; and all, with very few exceptions, who had been exposed to its presumed causes, yet had never suffered before, and all, with very few exceptions, who had been admitted into the Penitentiary since its presumed causes had been removed, were involved in the same calamity ; and the remedies, which were formerly successful in controlling it, had not now the smallest beneficial influence. It should be remarked, that that part of the disease, which consisted in scorbutic spots and blotches, never returned. The few fading vestiges of scurvy, which were still discernible*

in some, entirely disappeared even while the patients were suffering a relapse of the bowel complaint."

It is probable that when the disease began to re-appear, as is stated above, and seemed in some degree to have changed its character, it had become contagious. It is certainly much more likely that the new prisoners, who were affected by this disorder without having been exposed to the operation of the injurious diet and the severe winter, should have contracted it from contagion, than that they should have suffered from any local influence, as will, I think, appear from the following considerations.

The Physicians, while they contend that a bowel complaint has existed in the Penitentiary ever since it was first opened, arising from a proneness in the place, in which it stands, to produce flux, have always stated themselves to be of opinion, that the disorder so generated would not have assumed the form of an epidemic, nor perhaps have attracted notice, unless it had been aggravated

into the late disease by the two causes so often referred to. Why then are we to suppose, that this proneness to produce flux, which was so weak and mild in its effects before these causes occurred, should on a sudden have become so violent, after their discontinuance, as to occasion in 103 prisoners out of 132 the same terrible malady, which it had required the concurrence and co-operation of all the three causes to produce a few months before, and should moreover have become so rapid in its operation, as to have done this in some instances within a few days after the arrival of the new prisoners?

There is the less occasion for so extravagant a supposition, because the existence of contagion was rendered nearly certain by the fact of several of the inferior officers, who were employed among the prisoners, becoming about this time involved in the disease both in the male and in the female Pentagons. It was also a circumstance strongly tending to confirm the notion of the disorder being contagious, that the belief of its being so had for some time been very generally entertained among the officers in charge of

the prisoners, several of those who had been affected by it, having felt a strong conviction, that they had caught it from the prisoners. The opinions of the officers * here alluded to, were the more important, as they had of course the best opportunities of observing, whether the prisoners, who were taken ill from time to time, had recently been in communication with other sick prisoners, or with such as had been lately sent down from the Infirmaries.

It appears from some expressions in the Report of the 4th of July, 1823, that the belief of contagion was nearly established in the minds of the Physicians then attending

* I attach considerable weight to the opinions of those persons, because they had nothing to bias or warp their judgment. Some of the Physicians appeared to me to be so fortified by past experience against new impressions, so cased up, as it were, in an armour of medical prejudice, as to be almost invulnerable to any truth which had not received the previous sanction of the college. However, the President of the College has now declared, that in his opinion the disease was contagious; and I call upon all fellows, licentiates, and extra licentiates, and all other persons, (if there be any) belonging to that learned body, upon their allegiance to subscribe to that belief.

the Penitentiary; and they seem in one part of it to be almost apologizing* for entertaining that opinion, which was in opposition to the sentiments of all the other medical men (except Mr. White) who had been examined before the Committee of the House of Commons, but who had spoken from general knowledge of the nature of scurvy and dysentery, rather than from any actual observation of the disease then in operation.

I suspect however that Dr. Latham and Dr. Roget had yielded very reluctantly to this conviction; nor am I aware that they, or the three Physicians who were afterwards called in, ever acted upon it. In no instance was the cloathing of the prisoner changed, when

* The passage to which I allude is as follows—

“ Numerous cases in the Penitentiary, to which we have already alluded, have seemed to us quite inexplicable, except upon the presumption of contagion; the fact may be otherwise, and authorities (we are aware) preponderate against the contagious nature of dysentery: nevertheless, we have not thought ourselves justified in neglecting the practical measures, which the facts before us appeared to support, until medical opinion is settled upon this point.”—Quere, what were those practical measures?

he was sent down from the Infirmary ; and when a prisoner, who had been sick, returned into the Pentagons, he always went back to the ward from whence he came, without regard to the circumstance of its being occupied by old prisoners or by new ones* ;—nor, as far as I know, were such fumigations and other operations resorted to, even in the Infirmaries, as are, I understand, in common use in cases of contagious disorders. Nor

* I should have supposed, that one of the first practical measures to be adopted, when a disorder, in which the patients who appeared for a time to be cured were subject to frequent relapses, was believed to be contagious, would have been to keep all who had once been under its influence, in the infirmary, separate from those who had not yet experienced it ; and not to send every person discharged from the infirmary back into his former ward. From the time when it was understood from the Physician first called in, that half the prisoners were more or less under the influence of the disease, the Committee of the Penitentiary considered the prison as an hospital, and did not allow any regard to discipline or manufacture to interfere with such arrangements as might be thought expedient on account of health. The only measure that I know of, which had any reference to contagion, was the throwing lime water down the privies ; for which the Physicians first called in, at our desire, gave the proper instructions, but which they did not suggest.

was any request * made to the Secretary of State to desist from sending in more prisoners till in the beginning of May, when the sick became so numerous, and occupied so much space in the Pentagons, converted in some parts into Infirmarys, that we could not easily find room for new prisoners.

An Act of Parliament having passed (18th July, 1823) authorizing the removal of any of the prisoners confined in the Penitentiary, to other places of confinement, and constituting such other places parts of the Penitentiary for the time being, 120 female prisoners were removed to the Ophthalmic Hospital in the Regent's Park between the 30th †

* The request was made on the 5th May, and no further orders were made after that time for the removal of prisoners into the Penitentiary. Those concerning whom orders had been sent to the county gaols, kept coming in till the 29th June.

† Viz. on the 30th July 30

1st August 30

5th ditto - 30

9th ditto - 10

14th ditto 20

120

Ten more were removed thither on the 4th of Septem-

of July and the 14th of August inclusive, and * 200 male prisoners were placed on board the *Ethalion* Hulk at Woolwich, between the 16th of August and the 15th of September. The prisoners, both males and females, selected for removal, were those who had suffered the most severe and the most frequent attacks of the disease in all its forms †.

The three Physicians appointed by the College to assist Dr. Latham and Dr. Roget, in consequence of the request contained in

ber, and fifteen on the 2d of October, making the whole number sent to the Regent's Park 145.—See p. 91, of the printed Evidence. There is an ambiguity in the language of the Report laid before Parliament in 1824, from which it would seem that 120 were all that were removed, by which Dr. Latham appears to have been misled.

* On the 16th August	61
25th ditto -	89
2d September	30
15th ditto -	20
	200

† This statement is copied from Dr. Latham's work; but it must be taken with some qualification, for several of the females who were most severely afflicted with the existing disease, were left at Millbank, because they were so ill-behaved as to be likely to be very troublesome at the Hospital in the Regent's Park, where we had not the same facility of keeping order, and preventing communication from without, which we had in the prison itself.

their Report of July, 1823, for further assistance, commenced their daily visits at the Penitentiary on the 26th of July.

Among the gentlemen thus added to our medical establishment was one decided anti-contagionist, and the two others (I hope they will not be offended at the observation) seemed to me to incline very much to the doctrines of the same school—when in consequence of the surmise founded by Dr. Mac-michael upon Mr. Pratt's letter of March, 1822, and of the inquiry instituted thereupon, the Physicians stumbled upon Mr. Pratt's day-books, they were probably much pleased with the thought that they had found in the contents of these books something which would relieve them from the necessity of contradicting the sentiments of the Physicians who had been examined before the Committee of the House of Commons a few months before, and of acquiescing in the belief of contagion*, and which would at the

* I am told that the cases in which contagion or infection (I use the words indifferently, though I am aware there is a medical distinction between them) operate, are so much fewer of late years than they used to be, owing

same time confer upon them the credit of an ingenious discovery.—Who is there among those engaged in scientific pursuits, who does not sometimes struggle hard against a conviction which he cannot satisfactorily reconcile with the result of his former observation? What is then more likely to lead learned men astray than the *ignis fatuus* of an ingenious discovery?—It is quite impossible to read the evidence which these gentlemen gave before the Committee of the House of Commons in 1824, without seeing, that they were then fighting against contagion, and had never been sufficiently impressed with the probability of the disorder being contagious, to have made themselves acquainted with the various facts and circumstances bearing upon that subject, which occurred at Millbank and in the Regent's Park.

to the great attention now paid to cleanliness and ventilation, that many of the modern Physicians are half inclined to doubt whether there be any such influence existing as contagion. Perhaps these gentlemen may not be prepared to go this length, but Dr. Latham thinks it very uncertain still, whether contagion had “any share at all in the production or continuance of the disease” in the Penitentiary.—See p. 238, of his book.

Nor can I account, without the supposition of some strong bias upon their minds, which prevented them from exercising their ordinary powers of discrimination, for the following Report, signed by all of them, and given in on the 20th of September, 1823, to the Committee of the Penitentiary; in which Report they speak of the Hospital in the Regent's Park and of the Hulk at Woolwich, as having had similar effects on the health of the prisoners.

In compliance with the request of the Committee, to know the result of our observations, we have great pleasure in being able to report, that the removal to the Ethalion Hulk at Woolwich, of as many male, and to the Ophthalmic Hospital in the Regent's Park, of as many female prisoners, as each could accommodate, has been productive of great benefit.—The habit of all the prisoners is strikingly improved, and the majority have recovered the appearance of robust health. In this number many are included whose lives had been brought into hazard by successive attacks of the disease, in its several forms, and who, at the time of their removal, were in a state of great debility. The disease itself, we have the satisfaction to state, has gradually assumed a much milder character, but even yet it is extensively prevalent: and it is remarkable, that many, whose general health seems entirely re-established, still experience from time to time the recurrence of their former disorder, in a mitigated form.

As it appeared in certain answers given by the Physicians on the 11th of October, to questions propounded to them, that there were only 22 prisoners in the Regent's Park, who were not taking medicines, and as I was satisfied that this Report of the 9th of September was erroneous on several points, I gave in myself to the Committee the Report following* on the health of the prisoners at our different establishments, dated the 15th of October, 1823, which, notwithstanding its length, I will here insert, as it shews the view of the subject which I then entertained, and which subsequent events have proved to have been correct.

Report by George Holford, Esq. Visitor, Oct. 15, 1823.

Having since the last meeting of the Committee, on Saturday last, the 11th instant, inspected the hospital in the Regent's Park, and the ship at Woolwich, as well as the prison at Millbank, and having had a good deal of conversation with the officers employed at those places upon the state of health of the prisoners under their care respectively, I think it right to report such remarks as have occurred to me upon this most anxious subject.

The Physicians have stated, in their Report of the 20th of September, that the removal of the male prisoners to Woolwich, and of the females to the Regent's Park, "has

* See printed Evidence of 1824, p. 97, 98, and 99.

been productive of great benefit," that "the habit of all the prisoners is strikingly improved, and the majority have recovered the appearance of robust health;" that "in this number many are included, whose lives had been brought into hazard by successive attacks of the disease in its severest forms, and who at the time of their removal were in a state of great debility;" that "the disease itself (they have the satisfaction to state) has gradually assumed a much milder character, but is even yet extensively prevalent;" and, that it is remarkable, that many whose general health seems entirely re-established, still experience from time to time the recurrence of their former disorder in a mitigated form."

In this Report, no distinction is made between the prisoners sent to the Ethalion and those removed to the hospital in the Regent's Park, but the same degree of abatement in the disorder, and of improvement in the health of the prisoners, is represented as having taken place at each of these establishments.

The Report corresponds entirely with my observation, and with the information derived from my inquiries upon the spot, as far as relates to the prisoners on board the Ethalion. Of 196 prisoners on board that ship, I found only 23 persons in the part of the ship used as an infirmary, and not one person confined to his bed by this disease*. I understood that relapses had not been frequent, and that it had not been necessary to recur frequently to the continued use of mercury†.

* There were four persons in their beds, two on whom surgical operations had been performed, one very ill of consumption, and one from some disorder, which I do not now recollect.

† I believed, till lately, that the slight cases only had been sent down to Woolwich, but this was certainly not the case; for on the 3d

Of the officers sent down to the ship, three who had been severely attacked by the prevailing disorder while at Millbank, are quite recovered, and have had no relapses since they went on board, and of the four new officers not one has had the disorder.

In the hospital at the Regent's Park, the signs of improvement are certainly much less obvious. Of 101 prisoners there, including one who has never been ill at all, and a few convalescents sent for the service of the kitchen and laundry, above 70 are now under the influence of medicine. When I attended divine service on Sunday last, 32 women were too ill to be brought into the room in which the service was performed, and there were 12 women in bed, and two more ordered to go to bed, when I visited the hospital this morning.

I am told that relapses are constantly occurring among those who seem the most healthy, in proof of which, added to the general statements made to me upon this subject, I have to remark, that of 20 prisoners, whose names were sent in, about a fortnight ago, by the Physicians, to the Committee, as being convalescent and fit to be removed to Millbank, to see if they would remain well there; 15 have since relapsed, and several are now severely affected by the disorder. But the most extraordinary difference between the Ethalion and the Regent's Park, as to the prevalence of this disease, is to be found among the officers and servants of the two establishments. The officers of the hospital consist of—

of September, only two sick men were left in the male infirmaries, and they were not left because they were too ill to be removed, but because it was in contemplation, from peculiar circumstances, to recommend them for pardon.

a Matron,	1 Male steward,
1 Female Cook,	4 Female Turnkeys,
a Task-mistress,	1 Messenger,
1 Porter.	

The matron has also a maid servant, who is not a prisoner, and who was with her at Millbank. Of these, the matron, who had the disorder slightly at Millbank, has had a severe attack of it since she came to the hospital; the task-mistress had it slightly at Millbank, and has had it severely at the hospital; of the four turnkeys, three have had it, decidedly, since they came to the hospital, (two of them more than once) and the fourth has had it, though so slightly as not to take medicine for it, or mention it to the physicians; the cook has not had it at either place. Of the male officers, the steward, who had the disorder at Millbank very severely, has had no return; the messenger, who never was in our service at Millbank, has had it very severely; the porter, whom we found at the hospital, and continued in the situation of porter there, has had it twice decidedly; and the matron's maid servant, also, who, residing at Millbank in a separate part of the building from the prisoners, never had any intercourse or communication with them, and had therefore never contracted this disease before she came to the hospital, has since been so decidedly attacked by it as to have been subjected to mercurial treatment for its cure. The only other person residing at the hospital is an assistant surgeon, who informs me, that he has himself very recently been slightly affected by this disorder.

Under these circumstances, I cannot divest my mind of the belief, that this disorder is communicable by contagion, or infection, (probably by the latter) and that the contagion or infection is decidedly in operation at the hos-

pital, though it seems not to operate so strongly, if at all, on board the *Ethalion*. How this is to be accounted for, is a point which the Physicians are more likely to discover than I am; but there is this difference between the treatment of the prisoners in the hospital and on board the ship, that in the latter a portion of the vessel is parted off as an infirmary, and the prisoners who relapse are separated from the convalescents, whereas, in the hospital, difficulties have occurred to prevent any arrangement of this kind, and every person who relapses, continues in the same bed which she occupied before the recurrence of the disease; if, therefore, there be infection in the building, it is likely to spread through every room, and, at all events, the presence of patients in bed, taking mercury, cannot but prevent the complete exposure to air to which the room would be subjected, for the purpose of ventilation, if it were entirely empty, for a portion of every day; perhaps too, the more complete change of atmosphere which takes place on board the ship, may carry off infection. The hospital in the Regent's Park, and the Penitentiary at Millbank, are both of them well ventilated, as compared with other buildings on shore; but any building consisting of courts, or contiguous ranges of buildings, or surrounded with a boundary wall, cannot, I apprehend, bear comparison, in regard to ventilation, with a ship swinging round four times in the twenty-four hours with the tide, and having nothing of the same height with itself on three sides to intercept the air for miles. If any person will observe how the smoke coming out of a chimney in London, if it happens to beat down, continues to cling to the walls and hang about the neighbourhood of the building from whence it issued; and how, on the contrary, it flies off at once from the hulk, he will, I think, be led

to suspect that any impurity floating in the atmosphere will pass away much more readily from the ship at Woolwich, than it would from the buildings at the Regent's Park or at Millbank, although in very airy situations for buildings near a town.

It will probably be said, that this is mere matter of conjecture and surmise, it is so; but it appears to me, that most of those who have attempted to reason upon this disorder, as to its causes, the mode of treating it, the time at which it commenced, or its probable termination, (including the gentlemen of the medical profession, as well as those who are not professional) have been indulging largely in hypothesis, and wandering in the regions of conjecture from the very beginning of the inquiry; and I fear that the opinion which I now venture to offer, viz. that the sick prisoners at the Regent's Park will not be cured so long as persons under the influence of the disorder shall not be kept separate from the convalescents, and even from each other, is a conjecture, with more probability for its basis than many which have been hazarded in the course of these investigations. The opinion, that the cure of the prisoners is retarded by their being kept together, seems to be much strengthened by the fact of the complete recovery (as far as we have information) of most of those who have been pardoned in consideration of their state of health, some of whom were considered as extremely ill when they were discharged.

To return, however, to facts; the favourable prospect held out in the Report of the 20th September, does not appear to me to be borne out by fact, as far as it relates to the prisoners at Millbank, any more than it is with respect to those at the hospital. Of the disorder's having assumed a milder appearance in its relapses there, as well as at Wool-

wich, and at the Regent's Park, the Physicians alone can judge; but it should be remembered, that this disorder has been growing milder ever since the month of March last, that it is not yet grown so mild as to be subdued in its re-appearance, without recurrence, in most cases, to the use of mercury; and that the number of patients labouring under this disorder, instead of being diminished, is increasing very rapidly.

On the 3d of September last, there were two prisoners in the male infirmaries, there are now 37. The statement of female prisoners under medical treatment, (that is in the infirmaries) and in those parts of the third and fourth pentagons which were then used as infirmary wards, on the 3d of July last, as given in the Physicians' Report of the 4th, was as follows:—

Stationary	-	-	-	-	-	-	22
Convalescent	-	-	-	-	-	-	37
Well	-	-	-	-	-	-	83
Ill of other diseases	-	-	-	-	-	-	22
							164

There are now 101 at the Regent's Park, and 60 have been discharged by pardon in consideration of their state of health, between the date of the Report and the end of September; two died in July, and one in August; and of 30 whose time has expired since the Report, several were among the patients included in the number of 161 above-mentioned. If the sickness, therefore, had not increased at Millbank since July the 3d, we ought to have no patients in the female infirmaries; but we have this day 37; and I can assure the Committee, that this statement does not afford any thing like a full view of the increase of sickness in the third and fourth pentagons; for of the 52 who are

pursuing their ordinary occupations in the prison, a very large proportion are now under the influence of the disease. There is so great a dread of recurring to the use of mercury among the females, and so strong a desire to enjoy the very liberal prison diet now afforded in the prison (particularly the porter in the laundry) instead of being reduced to sick diet in the infirmaries, that the prisoners will not tell of their relapses as long as they can conceal them, unless very closely questioned; and I strongly suspect, that the same considerations are operating in the other pentagons, to keep the male prisoners in their cells who ought to be in the infirmary.

Under all these circumstances, the question which naturally presents itself as requiring immediate consideration, is, what is to be done? for that something more than is now doing should be done, admits, I think, of no dispute. In regard to the male prisoners at Millbank, the course to be pursued appears to be a clear one. They may be divided into three classes or descriptions, with reference to the state of their health; the first, consisting of those who are now labouring under the immediate influence of the prison disease; the second, of those who have been ill, and of whom a large proportion may be expected to relapse; and the third, of those who never have been attacked by the disorder. The two first descriptions of persons, should, I conceive, be sent on board hulks fitted up for the purpose; and I cannot but think, that the third, which does not in all the four pentagons amount to more than between 60 and 70 individuals, should be disposed of in the same manner. Some of those may have had or may now have the disorder without complaining, and when a disorder is infectious, and is liable to re-appear after long intervals of apparent health, it is certainly de-

sirable to send away all prisoners who might be the means of reviving it, after new prisoners should be received; and in this case I should submit, that all the prisoners sent to the hulks should be fixed there permanently, by an Act to be passed for that purpose when Parliament meets.

The manner in which the women should be disposed of, is a consideration of much more difficulty; but it seems obvious, that they, as well as the male prisoners, should all be removed from Millbank before other female prisoners can be prudently received there. I am afraid they will be found to be chiefly of the first description stated above, viz. actually under the influence of the disease; those of the third description, viz. those who have never had the disorder are only eight in number.

The question with regard to the female prisoners, is not so much whether they ought to be removed from the Penitentiary, as what place can be found for them, or how they should be treated, with a view to the cure of the disorder. In the extreme exigency of the case, I own, I think the best and most humane course would be, to pardon all those (whatever portion of their imprisonment yet remains unexpired) of whose future good conduct any reasonable expectation can be formed, and who have respectable friends, able and willing to take care of them. Still, however, there would remain a long list of those who are too bad to be discharged, and who have no friends to take care of them. If the season were not so far advanced, I should think that a ship would be the fittest receptacle for these women; but I fear it would not be safe now to place females, many of whom have been under the influence of mercury, on board a ship till the spring. Wherever they may be placed, a material reduction by pardon in this

number would render it more easy to separate the sick from the convalescent, and to adopt efficacious means of protecting them from the influence of contagion or infection from each other, than it can be while their numbers continue so great. The Committee will see that this Report is very hastily written, as I have had but three clear days to inspect the establishments at Millbank, at Woolwich, and at the Regent's Park, and to frame this sketch of a Report upon the result of my inspection.

(Signed) GEO. HOLFORD.

In their answers to certain questions put to them on the 21st of October, the Physicians stated that the prisoners who had been sent to the Hulk at Woolwich*,

"Had gained a greater degree of health, and had suffered fewer relapses than those in any other situation;" but "that the females removed to the Regent's Park, though subject to frequent relapses, had on the whole gained ground considerably"—adding however, "that they had benefited much less than the men on board the Hulk."

They approved of the transfer of the male prisoners then at Millbank to another Hulk, and said, that,

"Although the period of the year was unfavourable, they should still consider that the removal of all the female pri-

* See printed evidence of 1824, p. 100.

soners from Millbank to a Hulk, if it could be soon effected, would be on the whole an advisable measure."

In conformity to these opinions, the female prisoners then in the Penitentiary (81 in number) were removed to the *Narcissus* Hulk at Woolwich on the 14th of November, and the remainder of the males (278 in number) were placed on board the *Dromedary* in the beginning of December*.

The three Physicians appointed by the College ceased to visit the Penitentiary in the beginning of November, their attendance being no longer necessary; but they were not formally released till some time afterwards. From the time of their departure, the general superintendence of the different establishments devolved entirely on Dr. Latham and Dr. Roget.

The expediency of removing some of the females from the Regent's Park to the *Narcissus*, having been suggested by Dr. Roget on the 29th of November, and it appearing

* They went down by a steam-boat, 153 on the 3d, and 127 on the 18th; two were placed on board the *Ethalion*.

on inquiry, that there was very little room unoccupied in that vessel, the following communication from Dr. Latham and Dr. Roget was received by the Committee of the Penitentiary on the 6th of December.

“ Having observed that the females removed from the Penitentiary to the *Narcissus* hulk at Woolwich, have experienced a much more rapid and satisfactory improvement in the state of their health, than those removed to the Ophthalmic Infirmary in the Regent's Park, we beg to suggest it to the Committee, as a desirable measure (if possible) to transfer the latter to another hulk in the same situation.”

Measures were accordingly taken to fit up a fourth vessel “ the *Heroine*” for this purpose; and though it was at one time doubted, whether the removal of those prisoners would be necessary, owing to an appearance of returning health in the Regent's Park, this temporary improvement was soon succeeded by a sudden and alarming return of the disease, and the prisoners, reduced by pardons and discharges from 145 to *91—were taken

* Two had been sent back to the Penitentiary as being disorderly, and fifty-two had been pardoned or discharged on the expiration of their terms of imprisonment.

down in hackney coaches to Woolwich on the 21st and 23d of January, 1824. They were all placed on board "the Heroine," with the exception of six or seven, who, being more severely affected with the disorder at that time than the rest, were sent into the Infirmary on board the Narcissus, in which ship Mr. Pratt resided.

The male prisoners received in the Ethalion and Dromedary seem to have recovered their health so rapidly from the time of their going on board, as never to have required the use of mercury for their cure, although some of them* relapsed slightly several times; nor

* Dr. Latham says, in allusion to a general recurrence of sickness among the females on board the Narcissus, in January 1824, to which I shall have occasion to advert hereafter, that "*transitions from a state of convalescence to a state of disorder, had been just as sudden among the men on board the Dromedary and Ethalion.*" See Dr. Latham's work, p. 207. I am however convinced, that Dr. Latham and Dr. Roget were much deceived by the prisoners on board those vessels. These gentlemen went down occasionally, and examined in conversation into the health of each man, but the men endeavoured to interest their feelings by narratives of pretended complaint, being at that time sufficiently conversant with the nature and

were the good effects of the change to Woolwich less visible in the cases of several of the inferior officers belonging to our establishment, who were suffering severely from the disorder when they went down, but recovered their health very soon after their arrival on board the ships.

symptoms of the disorder to know what to feign. Mr. Bayles, an experienced Surgeon, who had long attended on the ordinary hulks at Woolwich, and who had the medical care of the Ethalion and Dromedary from the time the convicts were put on board them, states in his evidence, on the subject of imposture, that one day after the Physicians came down, "the whole ship complained that there were nine-tenths of them ill;" and he mentions a particular case of a man who represented himself to have had more motions than he (Mr. Bayles) thought possible. On the next day this prisoner was put into the black hole for some misconduct, and Mr. Bayles had an opportunity of watching him, *when his disorder had disappeared*. The officer in charge of our vessels, a very intelligent man, whom we procured from the hulk establishment to be a temporary governor of our convicts while they remained at Woolwich, told me, (and I desired him to repeat his statement in the presence of another person, to prevent mistake) that the Physicians were much deceived, and that while some of the convicts were detailing their complaints to them, he had seen others turning aside to conceal their laughter.

It being thought unadvisable that any of the prisoners should be sent back to re-people the Penitentiary at Millbank, the males were transferred by an Act of Parliament, passed in April, 1824, (being 440 in number) to the ordinary Hulk establishment, and were soon afterwards drafted into the other Hulks at Woolwich, Chatham, and Sheerness, where they do not appear to have experienced any return of their former disorder, or to have differed at all in the state of their health from the other convicts, with whom they were intermixed. It is said on this subject, in the Report of the state of the Hulks, dated on the 4th of July, 1824, laid before Parliament, that "the Surgeons had not observed any peculiar illness prevailing among them." The history of the disorder therefore, as it affected the male prisoners, may be told in a few words. It was generated by an ill-assorted Dietary—it was exasperated by an unhealthy winter—it was propagated by contagion—and it was cured by removal to the vessels at Woolwich.

The same account might have been given

relative to the sickness of the female prisoners removed from the Penitentiary to the *Narcissus*, before the arrival of those sent from the Regent's Park. The *Narcissus* had been convalescent for some weeks previous to this event, although several of the prisoners who went down from Millbank, had been very ill at the time of their removal, and it was become so healthy in January, 1824, that Mr. Pratt states himself, in his evidence, not to have prescribed for more than four or five individuals daily, and he certainly used to say jestingly to me, when I went down to visit the ship, that he had now a sinecure place.—The removal however of the prisoners from the Regent's Park to the *Heroine* was not attended with the same beneficial effects with those which had been experienced on board the other vessels. These prisoners still continued to have severe relapses, and one of their female officers, who had been afflicted with the prevailing complaint at the Regent's Park for the first time, had so severe a return of it on board the *Heroine*, that her life was at one time in great danger, and she was eventually obliged

to leave our service. The Narcissus also, on board of which a few of the prisoners who came down from the Regent's Park had been placed, as has been already mentioned, became extremely sickly after they were received. Whether this re-appearance of severe disease among the prisoners on board the Narcissus was occasioned by the arrival of those who came from the Regent's Park, or these two occurrences happened by accident at the same time, may be a question among medical men, but those of us, who know nothing about the medical objections to such a supposition, may be forgiven for believing that these events had some connection with each other—and this belief is much strengthened by the fact, viz. that a Woolwich waterman, who was kept in constant employment, communicating between the Narcissus and the shore, had a severe attack of dysentery after the disease had re-appeared on board that vessel. Speaking of this case, Dr. Latham says, "*If there had been many instances of this kind—if it had been notorious, that of the many individuals, who in fact went on board the Penitentiary hulks, such as friends,*

workmen, &c. several had suffered the same symptoms with the prisoners themselves, then there would have been evidence enough that the disease was contagious, after the removal from Millbank; but this was not the case, and the single instance of the waterman cannot justify the conclusion." Here again we have conjecture for fact. I know nothing of the many workmen admitted on board the ships in which these prisoners were confined, and certainly their friends never approached nearer to them than along-side the vessel in boats.

Towards the end of March (1824) a sudden and alarming increase of sickness appeared both in the *Narcissus* and in the *Heroine* *,

* In a letter from Mr. Pratt of the 24th of March, which was the first intimation, that reached me, upon this subject, he states himself to have made up medicines on the morning of that day for 60 prisoners on board the *Heroine*, of whom 26 were in bed. The whole number in that ship could not have exceeded 85 at that time; and I found the prisoners in both vessels on the 26th and 27th of March, (on the former of which days I visited the *Heroine* before the Committee of the House of Commons met, and on the latter the *Narcissus*, before the Committee of the Penitentiary attended Mr. Peel with the Physicians)

particularly in the latter—in consequence of which, and of the apprehensions expressed by the Physicians, that it would not be possible for them to subdue the disease while these persons should continue in confinement, it was thought advisable to break up the establishment at Woolwich altogether, and to release all the female prisoners by pardon, as soon as arrangements could be made for their liberation, and for the fit disposal of them to their friends or otherwise * ; and this measure was accordingly carried into effect, and the ships finally cleared by the 18th of June. From the accounts which have been received since they left us, they seem in general to have recovered their health, by using moderate exercise, and by the aid of mild purgatives, in those cases in which further medical treatment has been found necessary.

Such are the principal facts connected with

in a state of great despondency, which must have added much to the sickness.

* Of course none were turned adrift—situations of some kind or other were found for such as had no friends, two or three were sent to their parishes.

the history of the late disease among the prisoners belonging to the Penitentiary, in the production or continuance of which, the situation of the prison had, I am confident, no share whatever. I hope the Physicians, to whom I have so often had occasion to allude, will forgive the freedom, with which I have thought myself called upon to examine their opinions, upon a question on the issue of which a great deal more has depended than the fate of the building at Millbank ; for though it may be true, that the abandonment of this building, from the supposition of its having been ill-placed, would not have afforded a just argument against erecting another prison of the same description upon some more favourable spot, yet it is also true, that the failure of our present experiment would have operated strongly to discourage any new undertaking of a similar nature, especially when it would have appeared in the course of the late investigation before the Committee of the House of Commons to be a medical opinion, that we could have no certain means of judging before-hand, whether any spot, on which a prison might be

built, would turn out to be healthy for prisoners *; and I cannot therefore but hope, that Dr. Latham and his late colleagues, when they learn, that the Penitentiary is quite free from the disease which they were misled by inaccurate information to impute to it, will experience the same satisfaction which is felt by the public at large, on finding, that the benefits which this establishment is calculated to confer on convicts, will not be purchased

* See printed evidence of 1824.

Question to Dr. Roget—Does it not follow from your opinion and the opinions of other gentlemen, that it is quite impossible, before a prison is built, to know whether it will be healthy for prisoners or not, in respect of its site?

Answer—I should think it very difficult.

It has long ceased to be disputed whether the Penitentiary is healthy for all persons except prisoners. Families consisting of servant maids and young children (generally of about 40 individuals) have lived from 1816 up to the present day in the very centre and heart of the prison, in excellent health, and 13 children have been born there, of whom two only have died, one of teething, and the other, the weakly child of a prisoner, who was in bad health when she was received, not long before her time.

at the expence of their health, and that the large sums of money expended in this undertaking, (to use the language of one of the Reports of the Committee of the House of Commons) "have not been spent in vain."

THE END.

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