

Mr. J. Netten Radcliffe on the proposed site of a cholera hospital in Liverpool.

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Mr. J. Netten Radcliffe on the Proposed Site of a Cholera Hospital in Liverpool.

THIS Report refers to an inquiry directed to be made in consequence (1) of a Memorial addressed to the President of the Local Government Board by certain ratepayers of Liverpool as to the site selected by the Health Committee of that Borough for the erection of a cholera hospital; and (2) of a request, arising out of this Memorial,) from the Health Committee of the Council of the Borough for an inspection of the site referred to by one of the Inspectors of the Board.

The Memorialists (all of whom, the Memorial states, were "residents in the locality fixed upon by the Health Committee for the erection of a cholera hospital") alleged that the site selected had been for many years a pestilential swamp, and that it was thus described by eye-witnesses.* They also stated that "whilst fully alive to the importance of preparing for the reception of cholera," and desirous "to see a proper hospital erected," they considered "that the place chosen was altogether unsuitable and could never be made suitable." Further, they expressed the belief "that a cholera hospital on this site would be dangerous to human life."

In the letter from the Health Committee of the Council of the Borough preferring the request for an inspection of the site, it was stated that the Health Committee had that day (September 28) "inspected the land, and had, therefore, owing to the recent heavy rainfall, seen it under the most unfavourable circumstances, and they fully concurred in the opinion of their Medical Officer of Health and Acting Engineer that the site is most suitable, and that one affording equal advantages cannot be obtained in the Borough."

I visited Liverpool on the 3rd October, and in the course of that day and the day following I inspected the site selected for the cholera hospital three times; once in company with the Chairman of the Health Committee (Dr. Taylor), the Medical Officer of Health (Dr. Trench), and an Assistant Surveyor in the Borough (Mr. Coogan); a second time with Mr. Coogan; and a third time in company with several of the Memorialists and others interested in the subject.† During the inspection with the Memorialists the objections which they entertained to the contemplated site were stated in detail; and at the close of the inspection I visited with them a plot of ground in Sandhill Lane, which they considered to be better fitted for the site of the hospital to be erected.

Before stating the results of my inspections and the conclusions at which I have arrived, it is requisite to give a brief account of the circumstances which have rendered it necessary that the Health Committee of the Borough Council of Liverpool should either erect now, or be prepared to erect, or to provide in some other way, at the briefest notice, a place for the reception of cholera patients.

The Order of Council of the 29th July last, as to cholera, requires that the Nuisance Authority of a port (in the case of Liverpool the Borough Council) shall, in the event of a case of cholera being brought by a ship into its district, remove the case from shipboard to a hospital or place to be designated for its reception. On the 31st July I visited Liverpool in accordance with instructions from the Lords of Her Majesty's Privy Council, to confer with the Town Clerk and the Medical Officer of Health, on the measures to be adopted for carrying out the requirements of the

* Extracts from several local journals descriptive of the place at the time when the Memorial was written were appended to the Memorial.

† The gentlemen present at the commencement of the inspection here referred to were the Rev. Messrs. Watkinson and Ross, of St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church; Messrs. Fairhurst, McArdle, and Jno. Yates, members of the Borough Council; and Colonel Bidwell.

Order of Council in this port. The application of the Order to the port of Liverpool differs very materially from that of other ports, particularly the ports on the east coast. Liverpool has to guard itself against a contingency similar to that which happened in 1866. Early in the year referred to emigrants from infected districts on the Continent, who had been landed at Hull, and had traversed the kingdom to Liverpool, embarked for America in the latter port, and a few hours after putting to sea were attacked with cholera, the ships carrying them returning to the Mersey after the appearance of the disease. The question which the Health Committee of the Borough Council of Liverpool had chiefly to consider was not, as in the east ports, that of arresting and isolating occasional cases, or groups of cases of cholera brought into the port, but that of dealing with grave outbreaks of the disease among masses of emigrants crowded together on shipboard, the separation and isolation of the sick being but one, and that, perhaps, the least difficult problem to be solved.

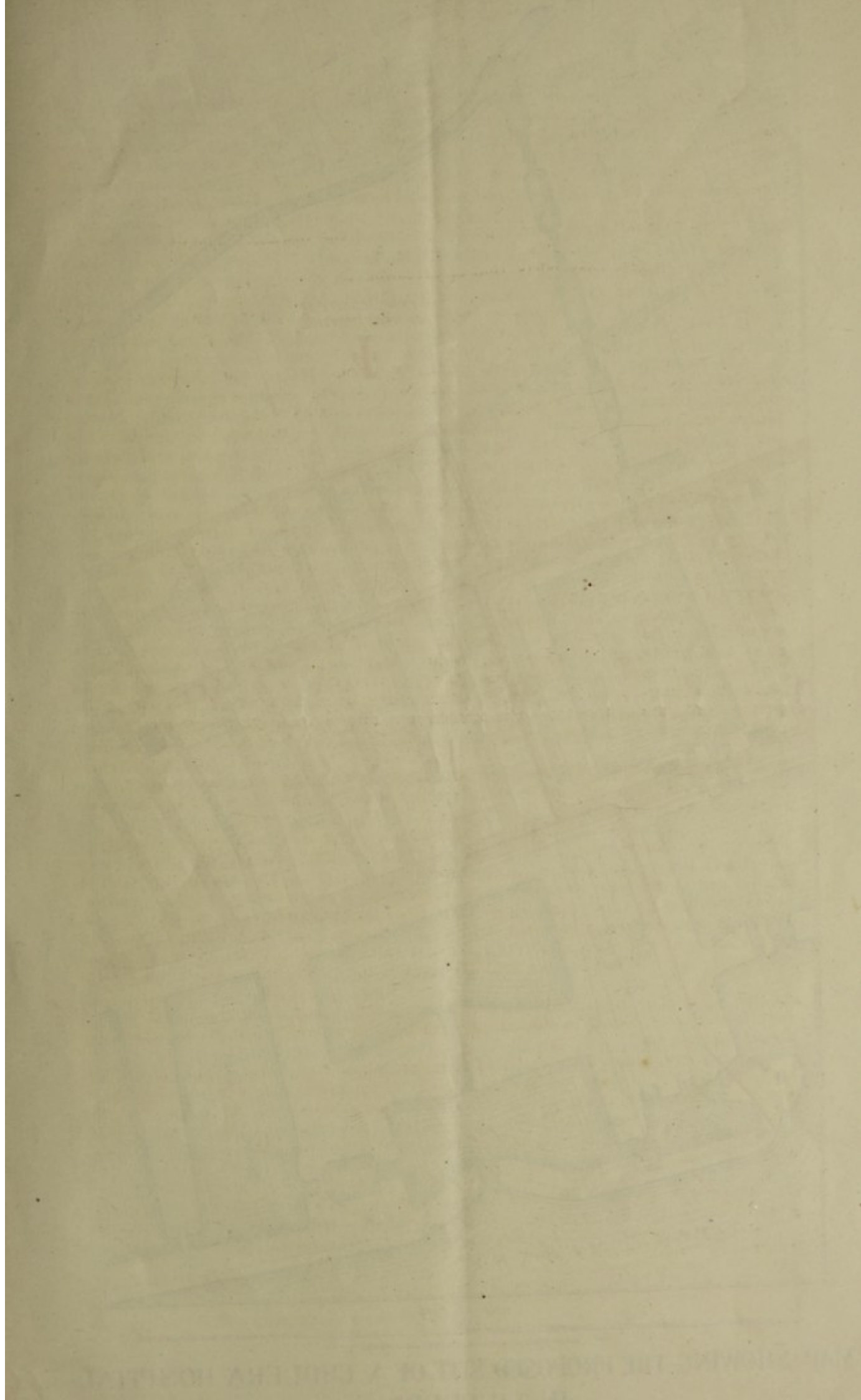
In conversation with Dr. Trench, the question of providing floating hospital accommodation for cases of cholera brought into the Mersey (as being the form of hospital accommodation which, when practicable, admits of the completest isolation of the sick) was discussed. He informed me that the experience derived from the use of hospital ships to meet the emergency of infected emigrant vessels in 1866 was, in his opinion, decisive against a repetition of this kind of hospital provision in a like contingency. Notwithstanding a lavish expenditure, it had been found impossible to adapt or extend the floating hospital accommodation in accordance with the requirements of the outbreak. The hospital accommodation afloat had to be supplemented by hospital accommodation ashore, and no practical gain had been obtained from the floating hospital at all proportionate to the difficulty involved in its administration. The use of the workhouse hospitals, as in the outbreak among the emigrants in 1866, was, on account of the distance of these hospitals from the river (assuming that the use of these hospitals could be obtained), highly objectionable for the purpose of the order of Council. He could not, therefore, having regard to his previous experience, advise the Health Committee to provide floating hospital accommodation to meet a threatened contingency similar to that of 1866, or to seek for hospital accommodation within the precincts of the workhouses. His opinion was, after mature consideration, that the proper course to pursue was to secure a plot of ground, convenient of access from the river, upon which to erect hospital huts of wood. He was prepared to recommend this course to the Health Committee, and he believed that it was practicable to obtain a plot of ground near to the river of sufficient area to meet any probable requirements of the port.

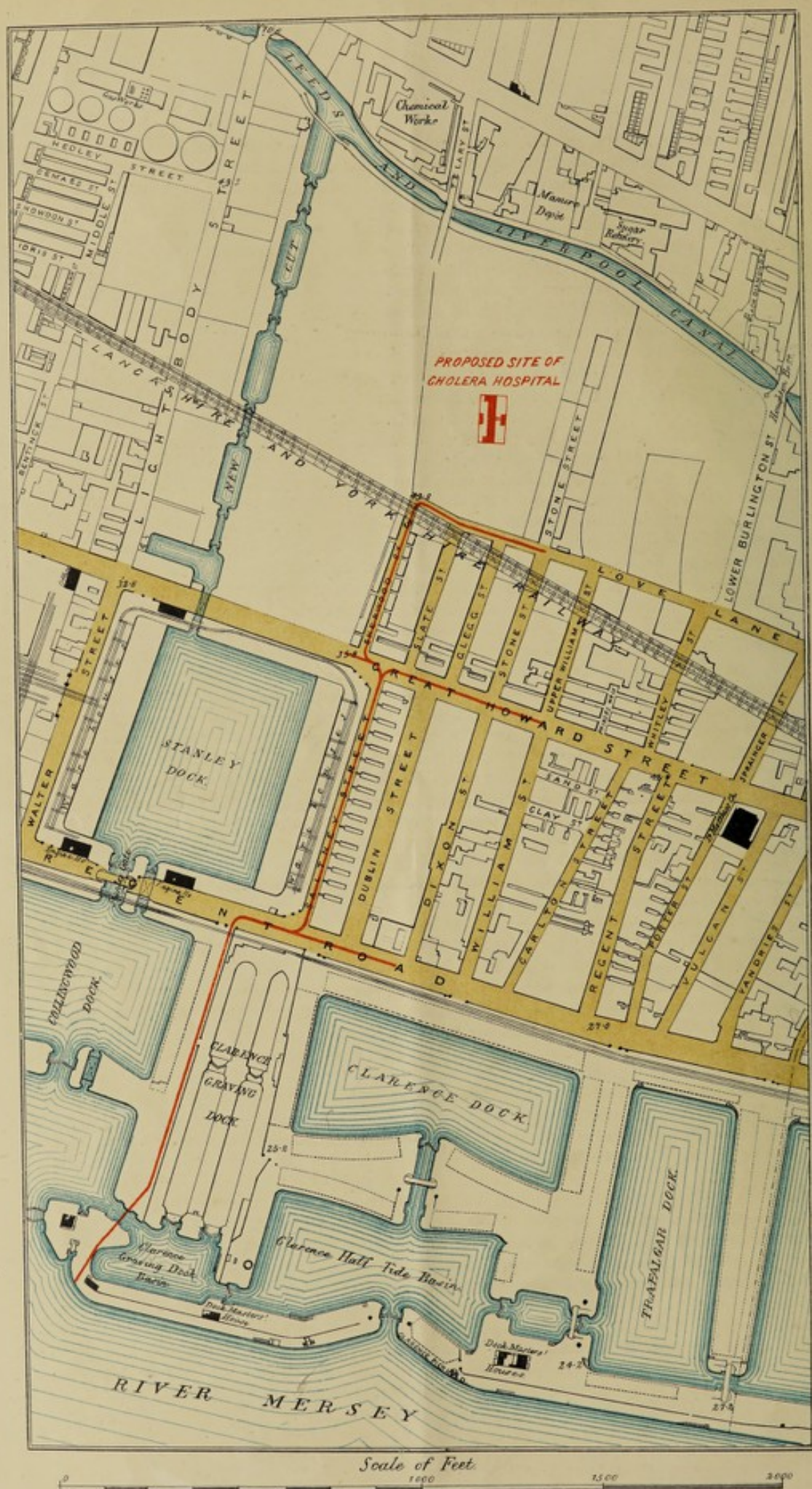
I fully concurred with Dr. Trench in opinion; and in a subsequent interview between the Mayor, the Town Clerk, Dr. Trench, and myself, Dr. Trench was authorized provisionally to at once secure the plot of ground he had in view, and to make such necessary preliminary arrangements for temporary hospital accommodation as he might deem necessary. This authorization was confirmed by the Health Committee at a meeting held on the 3rd August. I did not inspect the plot of ground which Dr. Trench held to be suitable, holding this to be altogether unnecessary. The kind of hospital accommodation to be provided was considered, and Dr. Trench proposed (which was subsequently approved by the Health Committee) to adopt the suggestions and plans for a hospital-hut published in the Memorandum of the Department on "Hospital Accommodation to be given by Local Authorities."

It is almost superfluous to add that, as regards the supervision of foreign emigrants, in regard to cholera, during their brief stay in Liverpool before embarkation, and the general precautionary measures required for the borough (subjects concerning which I was directed to inquire as to the arrangements proposed to be made), the foresight of the authorities had rendered it unnecessary that I should make any suggestion.

The site which Dr. Trench had in view for the erection of hospital huts, at the time of my visit to Liverpool on the 31st July, was a plot of ground, the property of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. Immediately after my visit, this Board generously placed at the command of the Health Committee of the Borough Council a part of this plot for the purpose contemplated. The fitness of the site thus obtained and the objections alleged to it by the Memorialists formed the subjects of the present inquiry.







MAP SHOWING THE PROPOSED SITE OF A CHOLERA HOSPITAL
IN LIVERPOOL.

The entire plot of ground (*see Plan*) of which the Docks and Harbour Board has permitted a portion to be used to meet the present exigency of the port and town has an area of about sixteen acres. It is of irregular shape, and is divided into two unequal portions by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, which traverses the ground from north to south, being carried across it on a viaduct about thirty feet in height. The portion of the plot west of the railway has an area of three acres. It is separated from Stanley Dock by Great Howard Street (no houses or buildings intervening); and it is used, as well as the arches of the railway viaduct at this point, for dock purposes. The portion of the plot east of the railway has an area of $12\frac{1}{2}$ acres, is unoccupied, and it is bounded on the east by the Leeds and Liverpool Canal; on the west partly by the railway viaduct and partly by Love Lane; on the north by the New Cut (a series of basins and locks, by means of which the Leeds and Liverpool Canal communicates with Stanley Dock); and on the south by warehouses which have no opening towards the plot. On the further side of the canal are extensive chemical works, a yard for the deposit of manure, and a large sugar refinery. On the opposite side of the New Cut are spacious gas-works. This portion of the plot is separated from Love Lane, and from the towing-path by tall brick walls,* and from the portion west of the railway by the arches of the viaduct being closed; but it is open to the New Cut. The part of the plot thus described is divided from north to south, near the centre, by a partially-completed wall. A bridge across the canal connects the plot with Telary Street, Vauxhall Road, the communication now being cut off by a high brick wall. Before the plot of ground became the property of the Docks and Harbour Board, it had been proposed to construct a street from the bridge described to Love Lane, and the roadway was partly completed. The division of the ground south of the wall which traverses it, and furthest from the New Cut, is the site lent to the Health Committee by the Docks and Harbour Board for the erection of hospital huts. This division has an area of $6\frac{1}{4}$ acres; it is not overlooked by a single dwelling-house; and the nearest dwelling-house, situated in Sherwood Street, is twenty-five yards distant from the wall separating the division from Love Lane, and eighty yards from the proposed site of the hospital, the railway viaduct intervening. The entrance to the site is from Love Lane; and, running longitudinally between this lane, within the limits of the site, and the Clarence and Graving Docks, are five streets,† chiefly containing crowded tenemented houses, and crossed about midway by Great Howard Street.

The objections raised by the Memorialists to this site for hospital purposes were—

1. The nature of the soil and the swampy character and noxiousness of the surface.
2. The lowness of level and difficulty of drainage;
3. The nuisance from the smoke of the adjacent manufactories and from the vapour of the chemical works, and the annoyance from the rattle and whistling of the engines of very numerous passing railway trains;
4. The contiguity of, and stench from, the manure dépôt on the banks of the canal;
5. The deficiency of ventilation from the site being closed in on all sides by buildings and the railway viaduct;
6. The approach to the site from the port through a densely populated district; and, finally,
7. The danger, if a hospital were placed on the site, of passing the evacuations of cholera patients into a tide-locked sewer common to a large population. I propose to touch upon the different objections separately.

1. The soil is a dense impervious clay which there forms a bed of, probably, thirty feet in thickness, above the red sandstone. An impervious clay soil is an argument for careful drainage, but its unfitness for the site of a hospital can hardly be seriously maintained apart from other considerations, particularly when, in the present case, a site otherwise than on clay (assuming other sites to be available) could not be obtained. The swampy character of the site and the conditions from which noxiousness had been inferred, had been much modified by the measures of purification and drainage which had been adopted by the Health Committee, in the

* The wall which separates the proposed site from Love Lane varies from 9 feet 8 inches to 11 feet 8 inches in height above the Lane; the wall which separates the site from the Canal is 9 feet 6 inches in height above the towing path.

† Sherwood, Slate, Clegg, Saltney, and Dublin streets.

preparation of the site for the purpose for which it was designed, during the interval which had elapsed between the presentation of the Memorial and my inspections. But the state of the ground adjoining the site enabled me to form a tolerably accurate notion of the conditions which had alarmed the Memorialists.*

Clay has been excavated for brickmaking from the whole area of the site and from the adjacent ground to an average depth of about 6 feet below the level of Love Lane, and of 14 feet below the level of the surface of the canal. Certain deeper limited excavations also existed, made in the process of, and used for the purpose of, working the clay. These excavations have been filled up. An open sewer crossed the ground upon which the hospital is to be erected which received the waste hot water from the sugar refinery before referred to. This sewer has now been re-placed by a stoneware pipe-drain. When the Docks and Harbour Board purchased the land several years ago the manufacture of bricks ceased; and since that time, pending its use for the extension of docks or buildings, the ground has been left untended and without drainage. As a consequence, rainfall and the contents of certain surface drains collected in the hollows, forming filthy-looking pools; and the ground, from the imperviousness of the soil, was in a constant sloppy condition during wet weather. It is asserted that much filth of various kinds was thrown into the deeper excavations and deposited upon the surface; but the evidence of this was not clear. My own examinations showed little more than the remains of the collections of "breeze" used by the brickmakers, and such fouling of pools as was apparently due to some form of manufacturing refuse, and to incidental sources not easy to escape in the crowded districts of large towns and the vicinity of manufactories. The objectionable conditions which I observed could be removed without difficulty, and, from the impervious nature of the soil, were necessarily limited to the surface. The adaptability of the soil for the foundation of buildings was abundantly shown by its state where the brick-kilns had been placed. Here the surface had been levelled and covered with a layer of furnace cinders; and notwithstanding the long neglected state of the ground, it was firm, dry, and fit, without further preparation (if the necessity had arisen) for the erection of a hospital hut. The following extract from a Memorandum prepared for me in the Borough Engineers' Department, contains additional particulars as to the condition of the site before the alterations now in progress were begun, and states the measures already carried into effect by the Health Committee.

"At the upper south east end of the land there was an open drain or sewer, which flowed along a ditch cut in the firm clay, and leading to the town sewer at Love Lane. The period when this open drain was formed is very uncertain, but it is found that on Gage's map of Liverpool, published in 1835, the entrance of this drain from beneath the canal is delineated. This open drain carried off the drainage or washings from the sugar refinery, but was not used for carrying off any house, privy, or water-closet drainage. At the north of the drain or open ditch, and distant from it about 20 yards, were two brick pits, the one 25 yards by 18 yards, and the other 28 yards by 18 yards. These pits received frequently the washing and the hot water of the sugar refinery. They did so, not by reason of their position, but because boys, in order to get warm water for their amusement in bathing, occasionally dammed up the open drain, and cut a channel for the water to go into the pits. These pits have been drained and filled up by the Health Committee.

"This was done as soon as the open drain was converted into a pipe sewer. In order to guard against the possibility of any bad organic matter (from dead dogs or cats, &c.) being left at the bottom of the pits, the whole of their contents down to the clay was mixed with slacked lime and carted away. No remains of animals of any kind were found. The surface of the land is so firm that although, in removing the contents of the two pits, it became necessary to draw carts (weight when full, 53 cwt.) over the land, there was no perceptible track formed. It was while preparing the covered pipe drain from the sewer to its junction with the culvert from under the canal, and when the water was temporarily diverted into the pits, from whence it flowed over the land, that the objectors to the position of the proposed site first visited the land. The covered pipe now carries away all the drainage, and the two pits are filled up with the mould surface of the original soil, before the brick-field was formed."

2. The site has been surveyed by the Borough Engineer's Staff, and the following results as to the level and the capability of drainage obtained:—The level of the site is 42 feet above the Old Dock sill (Liverpool datum), 26 feet above the average height of the tides at high-water; 22 feet above the average height of the equinoctial spring tides, and 49 feet above mean low water-mark. The nearest common sewer is in Love Lane, and the invert of this sewer is 10 feet below the level of the site. Into this sewer the site itself and any building which may be erected

* The inspections were made at the close of the very wet weather which occurred during the last fortnight of September, when the state of the site would be seen at its worst as regards moisture and a swampy character. The warehouses which bound the site on the north are without rain-spouts, and the rain caught by the large area of roof towards the site pours upon the ground beneath, keeping it in a constant swampy state during rainy seasons—a condition removed readily by the construction of an ordinary surface drain.

upon it can be drained with facility. The surface of the site has a slight fall from east to west, the line of the natural drainage of the locality coinciding with that of the artificial drainage.

3. The smoke from the adjacent manufactories, and the vapour from the chemical works, constitute a very objectionable nuisance. The annoyance from the noise and shrill whistling of passing railway trains is considerable. I deal with these objections together, because it is most convenient to do so. At the time of my first inspection of the site, the nuisance from smoke, chemical vapours, and noise, was perhaps observed in its most intensified form. The atmosphere was muggy after heavy wet, and a slight north-easterly wind drifted the smoke and vapour into the hollow formed by the site, while the noise seemed to cling to it. If personal feelings had alone to have been considered, the nuisance from these sources might have led to a condemnation of the site. But the nuisance from smoke and vapour, and the annoyance from the noise of railway trains, are conditions under which large masses of the population of Liverpool adjoining the docks habitually live; and they could hardly be permitted, on the ground of personal feeling or theoretical assumption to outweigh more pressing considerations, unless it could be shown that they would probably exercise a manifestly pernicious influence upon the sick placed in a properly constructed hospital. On this question, however, it fortunately happens that definite information is accessible. Half-a-mile to the east of the proposed site for a cholera hospital is a large general hospital, containing 146 beds (the Northern Hospital). This hospital, I satisfied myself, is placed under conditions very similar to those of the proposed site as to nuisance from smoke and chemical vapour, and the railway is a source of greater annoyance than could be expected there; for, while the main line runs about 120 yards from the hospital, adjacent to it on the north, and overlooked by several of the wards, is an extensive goods station of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. In this station the loading, coupling, and shunting of the trucks and goods trains, with all the attendant noises and accompanying shrill whistling of locomotive engines, goes on throughout the day and night. It was not suggested by the Memorialists, and, no evidence is forthcoming to show, that nuisance from smoke and chemical vapour, and the annoyance from the noise on the railway, are so hurtful to the patients in the wards as to counterbalance the more positive advantages derived from the position of the hospital and to render its closure desirable. In the absence of evidence to this effect, the objection to the proposed site for a cholera hospital founded upon the nuisance from smoke and chemical vapours, and the annoyance from the railway to which it is exposed, cannot be admitted to counterbalance the cogent reasons which are advanced for its selection.

4. The stench from the manure dépôt on the east bank of the canal was considerable at the time of my third inspection. Much manure, and apparently a quantity of slaughter-house refuse, had been deposited there, and was in process of being placed in barges for removal. The liquid filth from the accumulated refuse was also trickling largely into the canal. The objection to the site from this position of the dépôt would have been serious, had not the source of objection been removeable. But as the state of the dépôt at the time of the inspection was illegal, and must have arisen from an evasion of the law by the proprietor, and an oversight on the part of the officers of the Health Department of the Borough, the objection cannot be sustained. Apart from the question of the proposed hospital site, the nuisance from the dépôt would require to be abated, and no difficulty ought to be experienced in preventing its recurrence.

The water of the canal did not give off any offensive odour at the time of the different inspections I made. If any manifest injury to the sick from this source is to be apprehended, it should be obvious in the wards of the Northern Hospital, which are situated close to the terminal basins. The cases treated in that hospital are, for the most part, surgical. Patients suffering from wounds and injuries are at least as sensitive to the effects of foul effluvia as patients suffering from acute disease. In the absence of evidence from the wards of the Northern Hospital, showing the probable ill effects of emanations from the canal upon the sick treated there,* the objection to the proposed site from this source cannot reasonably be sustained. As the construction and appliances of the Northern Hospital have

* I have no reason to believe that the results of treatment in the Northern Hospital are less favourable than in the Infirmary, which is situated in an open space, at a higher elevation.

reduced to a minimum the evil effects of the local conditions in which it was necessarily placed, in order that it might meet the wants of the population for whose benefit it was designed, the same may certainly be done for the cholera hospital, the position of which is equally determined by the necessity of the case.

5. The alleged want of ventilation of the proposed site requires only the briefest mention. The area of the open ground east of the railway (12½ acres) is sufficient to obviate any serious difficulty on this score. But, in addition, beyond the screen of the viaduct, the ground is fully open, through the large basins of the Stanley and Collingwood Docks, to the river.

6. The objection to the site on account of the approach to it from the port being through a densely populated district is of greater apparent importance than the objections previously considered. If a site could have been obtained more removed from populous streets, yet possessing the other advantages sought for by the Health Committee in the site under consideration, it would no doubt have been desirable to forego the proposed site. This question I carefully considered in reference to the site suggested by the Memorialists in Sandhill Lane, and the conclusion I arrived at, after a review of the whole subject, was, that the disadvantages attaching to the latter site (which will be discussed in a subsequent paragraph) were more serious than the disadvantage which attaches to the former from the approach to it from the port. I may add that the arrangements which the Health Committee has made for carriage of patients from the river to the hospital, deprive the objection of much practical importance.

7. The final objection urged, that of the danger which would arise from the evacuations of cholera patients being poured into a sewer common to a large population, would have been of weight only in the event of so obvious a danger having been overlooked by the Health Committee. This objection, together with the further objection arising from the quantity of hot water poured into the Love Lane drain from the sugar refinery on the banks of the canal overlooking the site, had received full consideration. If the danger was obvious, the remedy was equally so. The plans for the hospital hut to be erected will provide for an intercepting tank being placed between the hospital drain and the common sewer. Into this tank all the hospital sewage will first pass, and, in addition to the ordinary routine disinfection applied in the hospital wards and offices, it will there again be submitted to the action of disinfectants. No sewage from this tank will be allowed to enter the common sewer except at a time when the tide is ebbing and the sewer emptying itself, when the hospital sewage will pass directly to the outlet.

Of the different objections which I have thus discussed in detail (in deference to the Memorialists rather than to meet the actual requirements of this Report) the more important refer to conditions which either are entirely removable or can be deprived of any harmful influence; others to conditions which are largely peculiar to the district of the town in which it is desirable that the cholera hospital should be placed. The latter conditions cannot be regarded as insuperable objections, unless it can be shown, with reasonable probability, that they would seriously militate against a patient's recovery (a conclusion which can hardly be hazarded in presence of the experience of the Northern Hospital); or unless a site were available, which, while free to a greater or less extent from these conditions, would be as fully adapted as the site selected to secure the primary object for which the hospital is to be erected, namely, the isolation of the sick. To what extent the site suggested by the Memorialists meets the requirements here noted, I have now to state.

This site, as already described, is in Sandhill Lane. It is a portion of a large open space, also the property of the Docks and Harbour Board. A considerable portion of this space has been included in the port of Liverpool, for the purposes of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, by an Order of Council of the 10th August, 1869, and it is used as a quarantine ground for cattle. The portion suggested as a site for a temporary hospital is bounded on the east by the great thoroughfare to Bootle; on the south by Sandhill Lane, also a great thoroughfare; and on the west it is separated from the road outside the docks, the principal business thoroughfare of Liverpool, by several workshops. The ground is fenced from the Bootle Road and Sandhill Lane by low open railing, and its level is several feet below these roads from the clay having been removed for brick-making over the whole area. The level of this suggested site is 21 feet above the old dock sill, 28 feet above low water-mark, and 5 feet above mean high tide; the level is, indeed, 21 feet lower than the level of the site in Love Lane. The soil consists of the same kind of stiff impervious

clay as that which forms the Love Lane site, and it would require similar measures for drainage as are needed in the last-named site before it would be proper to erect a building upon it; whilst this drainage, though quite practicable, could not, from the lowness of the land, be so readily and thoroughly effected. In other respects, the surface of the suggested site presented fewer indications of foulness than the Love Lane site; and the position exposes it less to nuisance from smoke and from the vapour of chemical works. The annoyance from the rattle and whistling of railway trains would probably be also much less here, although a line of railway passes the ground at 160 yards distance. More important advantages of this site are the absence of any dwelling-houses in the immediate vicinity, and its close contiguity to the docks; but in respect to the last-named alleged advantage, I am given to understand that it is only practicable to land patients at all states of the tide through the "Half-Tide Docks," and that the Love Lane site is nearer to the Clarence Half-Tide Dock than the Sandhill site is to the Wellington Half-Tide Dock.

Notwithstanding the advantages possessed by the Sandhill Lane site of a purer atmosphere and greater separation from dwelling-houses, these are counter-balanced by its position adjoining three important thoroughfares. Unless altogether unavoidable, it is objectionable that a cholera hospital should be placed in a position necessarily exposed largely to common observation. The state of panic dreaded by the Memorialists among the inhabitants of Saltney, Slate, and adjoining streets through which cholera patients would be conveyed from the Clarence Half-Tide Dock to Love Lane would probably be developed in a much more serious, because wider-spread, form by the erection of an hospital on the Sandhill Lane site. But a more serious objection presents itself to this site in the difficulty of maintaining that efficient isolation of the hospital and control over its communications with the town which the experience of the outbreak of 1866 has shown to be requisite. It may be argued that the Sandhill site could be closed from observation and made secure in its isolation by hoardings of sufficient height. But the Health Committee might justly hesitate to incur the considerable cost which would be required for this purpose when it had at its command a site already in great part shut in, better fitted in every respect to secure the primary objects which it was the duty of the Committee to seek, and against which no objection can be sustained that ought to outweigh the obvious advantages attaching to it.

Having regard, therefore, to the whole of the considerations I have submitted, and after careful inspection of the proposed hospital site in Love Lane, I am of opinion that this site is adapted for the erection of a cholera hospital, and that it has peculiar advantages in regard to the particular requirements of the port of Liverpool under the Order of Council of the 29th July.

During the inspection of the plot of ground which has been described at the commencement of this Report, and of which the proposed hospital site in Love Lane forms a part, a subject was forced upon my attention which I do not hesitate to mention here, although it did not come strictly within the limits of the inquiry. The plot of ground in question forms a large open area extending from Stanley Dock into the midst of, and almost to the centre of, the most densely populated portion of North Liverpool—of that part of the town in which the houses are crowded more closely together, in which the different houses are packed with a greater number of families, and which is the principal field of those disastrous epidemics that have ravaged Liverpool from time to time. The plot of ground was originally bought by the Docks and Harbour Board for the purpose of making a new dock, but the project has not been carried out; and except the small portion of the plot west of the railway viaduct, the ground has remained unused since the time of its purchase. It is now understood that this land may at any moment be placed in the market, to be sold for building or other purposes.

On the first inspection of this ground I was painfully struck with the fact that while Liverpool was becoming richly fringed on its outskirts with extensive public parks*—a noble and far-sighted work of the Corporation—this fine, open space in the very midst of the population most needing an airing and recreation-ground, had been for years a neglected dirty waste, accessible to the people only as trespassers.

* Liverpool has now six parks or pleasure grounds, completed or in progress of completion, on its outskirts.

It would be disastrous to the sanitary progress which Dr. Trench is slowly compelling in this locality under indescribable difficulties, and to its future health-state, that this space should be covered with buildings.

I venture, therefore, earnestly to recommend for the consideration of the Borough Council the question whether this plot of ground cannot be secured in permanence as an open area for the benefit of the town of Liverpool. I urge the consideration of this question for two reasons, both of which I trust will commend themselves to the Health Committee. First, the value of the ground as a breathing-place for the part of Liverpool in which it is placed would be immeasurably augmented if it could be thrown open to the adjacent population as an airing and recreation-ground; secondly, this ground, if in the hands of the Corporation, would prove of inestimable value in future epidemics, should the necessity arise, for camping out in huts or tents, either the sick or the families of the sick.

In the opinions which I have thus advanced, I believe that I am in full accord with Dr. Trench; and I am hopeful that the generous manner in which the Docks and Harbour Board has met the wishes of the Health Committee in respect to the site of the cholera hospital, is a good augury of the practicability of the suggestion I have made.

*Medical Department of the Local Government Board,
October 31, 1871.*