

*Witness* : At all events, it is one of the cases that have been put down as deaths from erysipelas in the Hospital, and it has no business to be there.

*Mr. Solomon* : So far as we are concerned, it is nothing of the sort, and I never heard of it until Dr. Copland put it in as part of his list.

*The Chairman* : It was entered in the house surgeon's list as one of the ten cases that occurred in the Hospital, but he has explained it away himself.

*Witness* : That man certainly did not die of erysipelas ; it was not a case of surgical erysipelas. I am doubtful whether it can be classed among those cases at all.

5150. *Mr. White.*] I understand you wrote on the subject of an outbreak of erysipelas?—Yes, I did write on the subject. Do you wish me to read what I said. It appeared in the April (1890) number of the *Medical Journal*, before any question of this inquiry arose. You will find it at page 186. That was merely in reference to what may be called an influenza epidemic. Our sanitary condition at that time was not good, owing to there being such a large number of strangers here, and to there having been a long spell of dry weather.

5151. *The Chairman.*] Was the outbreak of erysipelas common in the town?—Well, I have had cases since the beginning of the year, three or four of the cases occurring close together. I believe that at the period to which we refer there was more erysipelas than is usual in the town.

5152. Were they close to one another?—They were pretty near.

5153. Were they in the same month?—No ; I should say they dated from January to April.

5154. They were simply in the same locality?—They were in Dunedin, but not necessarily in the same street.

5155. *Mr. White.*] What did you mean just now when you said they were near one another?—In point of time, to such an extent as to give me an impression there was more septic trouble about than usual.

5156. And what about them in point of distribution?—Well, they were in different parts of Dunedin, but one was in Mornington.

5157. Is it at all likely or unlikely that such cases should arise out of the Hospital?—One must distinguish between medical and surgical erysipelas. What we recognise as medical erysipelas is a thing which occurs in men and women who are predisposed to it by family inheritance or by previous attacks, and in every case I have been able to trace that form of erysipelas. Surgical erysipelas is an intensely infectious disease, and is due to bad hygienic conditions.

5158. Do you know any hospital in which erysipelas has not arisen from time to time?—My experience of the Dunedin Hospital is that we may have an attack of septicæmia from time to time, but as soon as antiseptic precautions are taken they become much rarer. Individual cases of septic disease occurs in the Hospital, but anything like a general outbreak of septic disease is very rare indeed. There has never been such a thing in the Dunedin Hospital.

5159. There is a case that has been in the Hospital for over three months : would you say that would indicate an insanitary state of the building?—I should say all cases I have seen in Dunedin may be explained by the condition of the patients themselves. I think Dunedin Hospital certainly had nothing like a serious attack of septicæmia.

5160. Do you think it is impossible under the present system of Listerism that there should be such a serious attack of septicæmia, or that Listerism will prevent it?—I think that our knowledge now teaches us how to avoid it.

5161. Our Hospital might be in an insanitary state, and the absence of Listerism be quite sufficient to cause serious trouble?—Yes ; without careful attention, or with carelessness on the part of the officers of the Hospital, you would certainly have an outbreak of septicæmia.

5162. *Mr. Solomon.*] You have told us that the draft report, which states in detail that an insufficient quantity of air is introduced into the Hospital, that the beds are necessarily too close for the health and comfort of the patients, and that the floors of the Hospital are made so as to be specially adapted to the presence of germs—?—Did we say much about the floors?

5163. I am quoting from the report, and it says these things are necessarily a source of danger to the health and comfort of the patients. Now, we have been told of all these various things, and we also know that the Hospital has existed for about twenty-five years. Do you think that, that being the case, the wards in the Hospital at the present time can be in a fairly healthy condition?—I have already stated my opinion, which is that the Hospital is not a perfect hospital, but I think that the rotation of the wards has been a great safeguard. If it had not been for that it would have only been a matter of time when the floors would have been saturated with germs.

5164. Leaving out of consideration the question of rotation, do you mean to tell me that, under present circumstances, the wards can fail to be in an unhealthy condition when they are continually crowded with patients, when they have no proper system of ventilation, and when the floors and ceilings encourage the reception of germs?—That is a comparative term. I think the Hospital is a vast improvement on the majority of homes in Dunedin, although it is by no means a perfect institution. There are many things in want of change, and that ought to be changed, but it is altogether a misuse of language to say that the Dunedin Hospital is a hotbed of septic disease.

5165. Do you mean to tell us, then, that it would be quite safe to allow things to remain as they are?—I think it would be very unwise to do so. Although no serious accidents have occurred in the Hospital, I think it would be unwise to wait until one did occur before anything is done.

5166. Now, as to the defects which exist at the present time : are they a source of material danger to the patients, do you think?—I think that, with the precautions that have been adopted, they have been in the past a source of comparatively little danger. The patients, on the whole, would have done fairly well under the circumstances in the Dunedin Hospital, and I have already given you my reasons for holding that view.

5167. *The Chairman.*] You mean that the precautions hitherto taken in the Hospital have prevented accidents?—Yes.