

NOTE.—This year also appears in the table as "Before the Use of Pasteurized Milk." An error.

1897—July. Walker-Gordon cream was recommended.

1898—This was a revolutionary year in the history of the institution. The infants were removed to pavilions and the main hospital was practically rebuilt except the walls. There were new plumbing, new floors and new metal ceilings throughout.

Beginning in January, 1898, all the bottle-fed infants received modified Walker-Gordon cream. At the March meeting Walker-Gordon cream was mentioned with praise.

April meeting. The executive committee reported that Mr. N. Straus had given a pasteurizing apparatus for milk. This proved to be a set of eight copper boilers instead of the tin ones used until then. The committee also commended the nurse in charge of the milk.

In May, "Attending Physician Stowell reported more and better nurses than heretofore, more graduate nurses and therefore better results." The number of wet-nurses was increased from twenty to fifty and they nursed 139 babies. "No change in diet," says the paper.

Beginning in January all infectious diseases were removed from the island by the Department of Health, thus saving mortality figures at Randall's Island.

Boarding or farming-out was resumed in April, sixty-one babies being sent to country homes. "No change in hygiene was made"?

The superintendent's report to the commission contains this: "Many improvements were inaugurated and carried out."

1901—January. Dr. Neff reports a great number of infants in bad condition, and says: "The milk fed the children should come from the cows on the island" (referring to bottle-fed infants).

1903—October. "An average of thirty babies daily have received modified milk prepared from Walker-Gordon cream. Cooley creamers have now been provided and hereafter we can produce our own gravity cream." This was in the hope of having fresh cream with low bacterial count.

Thus we find that Walker-Gordon cream was in use for six years, 1898-1903, whereas the article referred to credits "a carefully selected herd on the island." Alas! the history of that herd and their tuberculosis has been published (*Medical Record*, June 20, 1908).

It is a matter of record that sterilized milk was in use there as early as 1890, and that pasteurized milk was in use through all the years of the table. "Before and after the use of pasteurized milk," are therefore contrary to fact. Instead of "no change in hygiene," there was removal of some infants to pavilions, some to the country, and all the contagious cases from the island. Instead of "no other change in diet" witness the records:

	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901
Orphans wet-nursed	21	138	152	156	159
Orphans bottle-fed	591	506	462	389	262

The percentage of deaths was at its highest point under pasteurized milk. Other factors caused the fall, not pasteurized milk.

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[A proof of the above was referred to the authors of the article criticized and they reply:]

To the Editor:—The statistics quoted in our article were taken from page 243 of the chapter on "Morbidity and Mortality Statistics as Influenced by Milk" in Bulletin 56 of the Hygienic Laboratory, entitled "Milk and Its Relation to Public Health." The article is written by Dr. J. M. Eager, Assistant Surgeon-General, Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service. No reference is made to the original source of these statistics, and we took it for granted that they were taken from the reports of the Infant Asylum at Randall's Island, by the government official. We have not had a chance to examine the original records giving the mortality figures for the Infant Asylum at Randall's Island, and are glad to note that Dr. Stowell says that the figures quoted "are correct for the most part."

The fall in the death-rate since 1879 is attributed in our article to the installation of a pasteurizing plant. The extracts from the minutes of the meeting of the medical board of the institution show that the pasteurizing plant was given by Mr. Nathan Straus to the institution in April, 1898.

Extracts from the minutes are quoted to show that before this time the milk had been sterilized, and that in 1895 the milk was heated in large steam caldrons in the kitchen, and in 1896 in wash boilers, heated over gas stoves. From the comments on the methods of "sterilization" practiced, appearing in the extracts of the minutes for 1890 and 1893 it appears that they were not carried out very satisfactorily.

The improvements made since 1897 in the sanitary conditions of the institution, and in the care of the patients are such as have been made in many other infant asylums and hospitals. In the report of the Department of Charities for 1893 there is recorded a long list, covering three pages, of improvements in the building, equipment and caretaking. Why did this not result in an immediate lowering of the death-rate in 1893?

Bottle feeding was practiced quite as extensively in 1899, as in 1897, and the percentage of deaths in the two years is 44.36 and 19.80, respectively.

After a careful study of the extracts from the minutes quoted in Dr. Stowell's letter, we are still of the opinion that the fall in the infant mortality, beginning in 1898, simultaneously with the installation of improved pasteurizing apparatus given by Mr. Nathan Straus, is due to the change in diet and cannot be explained on the basis of sanitary improvements or attributed to the other changes made in the institution.

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Not Prepared to Furnish Cancer Serum

To the Editor:—In the New York news in THE JOURNAL, January 28, it is stated that I have announced that I am prepared to supply a serum which has been shown to be effective in treating cancer. This statement is wrong. The dispatches which have appeared in the daily press referring to an interview in one of the Buffalo papers have been so changed from the original as entirely to misrepresent my position.

I have not announced a cure for cancer. Neither do I believe that vaccination will be beneficial in more than a limited percentage of cases. The results obtained in this laboratory have shown that methods which have given experimental results with animals have some applicability in human beings. There have been encouraging results in a limited number of cases. The method is not applicable in advanced cases; some patients have done badly under this treatment.

The matter is still in the experimental state, and it is not possible to place the vaccine in the hands of the profession, nor would it be desirable for patients to come to Buffalo at the present time. The results have been sufficiently encouraging, however, to warrant asking the State of New York to provide a hospital for the purpose of developing and elaborating this and other methods of treatment for cancer.

HARVEY R. GAYLORD, Director of Cancer Laboratory.

Pneumonic Plague in China

To the Editor:—Noting the pneumonic character of the plague in China and the fact that there are no dead rats, I would say that while in Siam it was my observation and knowledge that the pneumonic form of the disease was contracted from patients with the bubonic form and from rats, I have also found dead rats and dead chickens under the houses of those dead of the pneumonic form of the plague.