

[DOCUMENT NO. XIV.]

**BOARD OF
ASSISTANT ALDERMEN,**

JANUARY 16, 1832.

*Report of the Resident Physician at Bellevue,
relative to the Children there afflicted with
Ophthalmia.*

B. CRANE, Clerk.

In compliance with a resolution of the Board, approved by the Mayor on the 17th December last, relative to the condition of the Children afflicted with Ophthalmia, the undersigned

RESPECTFULLY REPORTS:

The whole number of Children under treatment at the time of Doctor Cheesman's appointment, as attending Physician, was One Hundred and Ninety; of this number Eighty-six were on Blackwell's Island, at the time of his appointment, and Sixteen sent there afterwards. These were the most severe cases.

The Children not doing as well as at Bellevue, relapses being more frequent and severe, as fast as was thought prudent, they were returned to the Almshouse, and on the 4th November the establishment at the Island was closed.

Sixty-five new cases have occurred, making a total of Two Hundred and Fifty-five. Eight of the new cases were received from the city—Three of these from the Eye Infirmary.

Of the Two Hundred and Fifty-five, One Hundred and Eighty-five have been discharged cured, and Ten taken away by their friends nearly well.

There have been Forty-one relapses, Thirty-five of which have again been discharged cured.

Of the cases sent to the Island, one boy has unfortunately lost both eyes, one other one eye, and an adult one, with the vision of the other very imperfect.

In the number of cases cited as discharged cured, are included four who have some defect of vision remaining.

Sixty-eight are now under care. Although none of these are considered incurable, the condition of Eight is such as may leave a defect of vision, the degree of which cannot at present be determined.

In the Summer of 1829, when the disease prevailed in its greatest severity, there being ninety bad cases at one time, the Children were placed in a separate building, and the disease nearly subsided. Again they were separated in the Summer of 1830, and the disease was again reduced to a few cases. In the Fall, the influx of Paupers was so great, the room was taken for their accommodation, and the Children were again thrown together. A year ago, there were thirty cases under care. In March and April last, the disease rapidly increased and was very virulent; it present, it is mild. Within a few weeks past, the number has been reduced to fifty, again it increased to seventy, and is now as above stated sixty-eight.

Of the new cases mentioned, some have occurred within three days after their reception into the establishment; and in one of the most distressing cases, in which a very faithful assistant lost an eye, the disease made its appearance in twenty-four hours after exposure to the poison.

An unusual degree of care has been taken, the present year, to prevent the extension of the disease, by separating the Children, as far as means would admit, by cleanliness, by the use of disinfecting agents, and by the most unremitting attention, of the Superintendent, the Matron, and Doctor Cheesman and his Assistant.

From the facts stated, it will readily be perceived that the hope of getting rid of the difficulty, under the present accommodations, is perfectly forlorn.

As a means of separating more completely the Children, for the present, the undersigned would propose an alteration of the Nursery Buildings. It might be effected in a week, and at a very trifling expense. This would give great temporary relief.

The only plan, however, in the opinion of the undersigned, which will effectually prevent the recurrence of evils, both moral and physical, is to have an establishment for Children large enough to classify them, having no connexion whatever with adult Paupers.

ISAAC WOOD,
Resident Physician.

Bellevue Hospital, Jan. 9, 1832.

