

Correspondence.

ENTERIC FEVER AT AMBALA, 1880—1905.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS."

SIR,—In a letter from Major N. Faichnie, in the March number of the Journal, that officer refers to an article by Lieutenant-Colonel S. G. Allen on the above subject, and records his opinion that the fact of the introduction of a new piped-water supply from deep wells at Ambala, in 1905, should have been mentioned by Lieutenant-Colonel Allen, apparently considering that the new water supply was the chief factor in reducing the incidence of enteric fever at that station during 1905 and 1906.

Regarding the latter assumption I beg to bring forward the following facts:—

(i.) The new water supply was not brought into use until the autumn of 1905; not a single case of enteric fever occurred until July of that year. A severe epidemic of the disease prevailed during the autumn of 1904, and had continued until the middle of December.

(ii.) In February, 1904, a severe epidemic prevailed among two regiments in standing camps; the camp was shifted to a new site, and the epidemic ceased almost at once. The same water supply (old aqueduct) was used at both camps, and the means for boiling, storage and distribution were the same.

(iii.) The source of the old water supply at Ambala is deep wells, situated about five miles from cantonments.

No organism resembling the *Bacillus typhosus* was separated from the supply in 1904.

(iv.) Paucity of supply, and not impurity, was the chief cause of a new supply being introduced.

Major Faichnie sticks with astonishing pertinacity to his theory that enteric fever in India is *solely* propagated by water, and in doing so directly opposes the recorded opinion of a large number of his brother officers who have most carefully worked out the causation of the disease on the spot. Surely their unbiassed and deliberate opinion should have some little weight with Major Faichnie.

Lahore Cantonment,
March 31st, 1907.

I am, &c.,
T. P. WOODHOUSE,
Lieutenant-Colonel, R.A.M.C.