

**Letter to the Lord Advocate, disclosing the accomplices, secrets, and other facts relative to the late murders : with a correct account of the manner in which the anatomical schools are supplied with subjects / by the Echo of Surgeons Square.**

**Contributors**

Echo of Surgeons Square.

**Publication/Creation**

Edinburgh : Sold at No. 132, High Street, a little above the Tron church, 1829.

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/ujb29ut4>

**License and attribution**

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

61391/P

# LETTER

TO

THE LORD ADVOCATE,  
DISCLOSING THE ACCOMPLICES, SECRETS, AND  
OTHER FACTS RELATIVE

TO THE

LATE MURDERS;

WITH

A CORRECT ACCOUNT OF THE MANNER IN  
WHICH THE ANATOMICAL SCHOOLS ARE  
SUPPLIED WITH SUBJECTS.

---

BY THE ECHO OF SURGEONS SQUARE.

---

“What? Shall wealth screen thee from justice.”

“Good friends! let me not stir you up  
To any sudden flood of mutiny.”

MARK ANTONY.

EDINBURGH:

SOLD AT No. 132, HIGH STREET,  
A LITTLE ABOVE THE TRON CHURCH.

---

1829.

*Price Sixpence.*

351403

67/EN

£300



---

R. MENZIES, PRINTER,  
EDINBURGH.

TO SIR WILLIAM RAE, BARONET,

*His Majesty's Advocate for Scotland.*

---

MY LORD,

You are aware that, at this moment, the public feeling is strongly excited against the perpetrators of the late foul and cold blooded murders that have taken place in the very centre of a populous and civilized city. The exact extent to which this traffic in blood has been carried on, and by whom, is yet a secret. Part of the gang have been brought to light, and by a strict investigation, I have no doubt but the remainder may also be brought to condign punishment. Your Lordship is aware, that in all civilized nations, blood calls for blood. The holy religion to which we subscribe, and the God of all nature hath expressly said, "That he who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." The late horrible traffic has chilled every breast against the individuals, and it only surprises the public that such a traffic

should be carried on in the heart of a populous city, and in so open a manner, without coming to the knowledge of the men in power ; in carefully perusing this letter, your Lordship will perceive, that at one period, when a just suspicion fell upon Burke about the beginning of October last, a policeman was stationed at his door, but even then, he eluded their vigilance, and the body was safely deposited in the Lecture Room. Your Lordship will pardon me for not making farther remarks, until I give verbatim the words of some of the parties said to have acted a conspicuous part in the tragedy. My motives for setting the inquiry on foot were these, viz :—To have a candid statement from the individuals in the service of Dr Knox, who must have known when and how they became acquainted with Burke and Hare,—by what means the bodies were procured ; from whence,—and by whom are the Anatomical Schools supplied,—who are the parties that examine the bodies before dissection,—and if there is any register of opinion kept respecting them.

Your Lordship must be aware that the public eye is fixed upon you, as public prosecutor, and as the greater portion of that public is ignorant of the regular routine and evidence

required, before your Lordship can file a Bill of Indictment, with any degree of certainty as to its issue, and as it is a known trait in your Lordship's character, to lean to the side of mercy, yet, in this case, we trust you will strain every nerve, and sift this dreadful plot to its very core. I will now proceed to detail P——n's own words, which appears to me, (especially as it is supported by other proofs), to carry a considerable share of plausibility along with it.

David P——n was first in the employment of Dr K—— in the year 1824 or 1825, for about one year, and on his return from the army at the close of 1827, did apply to Dr K—— for his former situation, and was engaged in the beginning of February 1828, as the Museum keeper; his salary was very small, but from the fees paid him by the students, he contrived to make a very comfortable livelihood. He had nothing whatever to do with the subjects (or bodies) brought to the Lecture Room, his sole charge was to keep the Museum, and be answerable for articles therein; at that time he did not know how the Doctor obtained subjects. But shortly after saw Burke and Hare, (Burke was called *John*, and Hare *William*,) who had brought a subject, and delivered it to Mr M——r,

an assistant, who had the management of that traffic, and from the conversation that then passed, understood that they, (Burke and Hare) had been in the habit of supplying Dr K—— with subjects previous to that time.

During the Lectures, Burke or Hare, and sometimes both, frequently called towards evening, and informed Mr M——r that they had a subject for the Doctor, when Mr M——r would accompany them, and return in the course of an hour and a half, or thereabout, the Doctor always desiring P———n to be in the way with the keys, as it would not do to keep the parties waiting on their return, and that the rooms should be kept open until they did return. In this manner did they continue to supply, or rather assist in supplying the Lecture Room during the season, nothing particularly occurring to his notice, until they had brought a female subject. Now, my Lord, mark his own words, “ Not being in the room when the body was brought,—I found Mr M——r in close conversation with Burke and Hare, and a female subject stretched upon the floor, the beautiful symmetry and freshness of the body attracted my attention; soon after I heard Mr F———n, another assistant of Dr K——, say that he was acquainted with the deceased,

and named her as Mary Mitchell, (this was the girl Paterson,) my curiosity being roused, I was determined to enquire at the first opportunity where they had got the subject in question; accordingly, at their next appearance, which was a few days after, either informing Mr M——r that they had another subject, or requesting payment for the last, but not having heard their general conversation, could not say which, I then took the opportunity of enquiring at Burke where he had procured the last subject; when he answered, that he had purchased it from the friends of the deceased; it was rather a new thing for me to hear of the relatives selling the corpse of their friends, and I enquired where the relatives lived; at this, Burke looked very suspiciously at me, and at length said, as nearly as I can recollect, If I am to be catechised by you, where and how I get subjects, I will inform the Doctor of it, and if he allows you to do so, I will bring no more to him, mind that. Now, as I remembered that I had positive orders from the Doctor not to interfere at all with these men, I was content to be silent." To a question put to P——n, whether he had any suspicion of Burke and Hare, as to the manner they had obtained the body of the female, or if

he heard any of the students or assistants making any remarks upon it. Answered, that he had not the slightest suspicion as to the deceased having met with a premature death, but did think that it really was sold by the relatives, or by some one who kept a brothel or lodging house for paupers, from whom the resurrectionists purchase subjects; the only remark he ever heard made by either the assistants or students was, that it was a fine proportioned body, and that she must have been a very handsome woman, so much so indeed, that many of the students took sketches of it, one of which is in his possession.

About this time it appears that Burke and Hare became rather troublesome at the Doctor's house, and he not being altogether over anxious of such visitors, requested to know where they lived, and finding that they resided in Portsburgh, requested P———n, as his lodgings was in Portsburgh also, to take any message for him they might have, which he was to convey to Newington, and return an answer, this he absolutely refused, saying that he did not wish resurrectionists to be coming about his lodgings, but they ought to call at the Lecture Room; this did not suffice, for either the Doctor, or some one for him, had given P———'s address,

and in a few days they called at his lodgings, requesting a small sum, which they said the Doctor was due. He accordingly went to the Doctor and received the money for them, not at all pleased with the mission.

Previous to this period, Burke became a patient of Dr K——'s, and came to the Lecture Room to have his wound dressed. He disappeared for some time during harvest. P——n being also from home during the vacation, the rooms were under the care of Mr Angus M———n. On his (P———n's) return, he learned from (M———n) that Hare, or William as he was called, had been there a short time before with a subject, unattended by Burke, but P———n could not say whether it was male or female, as he did not see it, and although he firmly believes it to be the case—cannot vouch any farther than M———n's own words. When he again received the keys from M———n, and when the Lectures were about to commence, the Doctor made frequent enquiries at his assistants if any of them had seen John, (meaning Burke,) going about, and requested P———n to find him out, and desire him to call upon the Doctor. P———n's enquiries were fruitless; some time after Burke called at the rooms to have the Doctor's opi-

nion respecting his wound, which had assumed a dangerous appearance. He said he had been either at the country or at the harvest. The Doctor and his assistants seemed glad of Burke's visit, and he was earnestly requested by them to resume his supplies of subjects as formerly.

Burke's confession, as stated in the Caledonian Mercury, sets forth, that P———n had frequently urged Burke and Hare to procure as many subjects as possible. P———n admits that, on one occasion, he was requested by the Doctor to desire John to get as many subjects as possible, as he would require all he could get ; but denies that he ever received any fee or reward above his regular salary and students fees ; and that he had nothing to do with the procuring of subjects, that being entirely the assistants' duty, which another part of Burke's confession fully corroborates, when he says, that he never sold a subject to any other person but the Doctor or his assistants ; and that he had no more to do than leave the body at the Rooms and go to the Doctor for the money. Another proof that others were equally, if not more culpable, than P———n, is as follows :— At the commencement of the Lectures in October last, P———n overheard a conversation, rather in high words, between Mr F———n, one

of the assistants, and Messrs Burke and Hare, the import of which was, that Burke and Hare were insisting upon raising the price of subjects, whereas F———n insisted upon £8 being a fair price. The sum demanded he did not hear, nor knows how the dispute was settled. Now, my Lord, you will observe, they did not apply to P———n as to the individual they considered authorized to make a bargain; but here is a more important point, and one to which I trust your Lordship will pay particular attention. He says, “That about this time Burke called at the Lecture Room and informed some of the assistants that he had a subject for the Doctor, and requested a box and a little money, he got a trunk and a few shillings and went away. He, however, did not fulfil his promise that evening, but called on the following day, and requested me to inform the Doctor that his neighbours, or the neighbours, suspected he had a subject in the house, and that as a policeman was watching their motions, and seldom left the corner of the house, he was afraid to bring it. I went and informed the Doctor what Burke had said, when he desired me to make minute inquiry into the truth of Burke’s statement; but not knowing where he (Burke) lived, and it being rather a delicate

point to inquire after, I obtained no information ; that day also elapsed without any appearance of the subject, and the following day the Doctor got rather enraged, he remarked that John was a coward, and said, that he would write to the authorities and procure a protection for him to carry any packages safe to his Lecture Room. Burke having called at the nick of time, I told him what the Doctor had said, and in a few minutes he saw the Doctor himself. The conversation was nearly as follows : after Burke requesting the protection, the Doctor said he had not got it yet ; but that he (Burke) should bring the box, and that if he, or those employed by him, were stopt upon the street, they were for their own personal safety to suffer themselves to be taken to the Police Office along with the package. In a short time they would be relieved, and the package would assuredly be sent to him from the Office ; Burke's reply was, that if he was once taken to the Police Office he would not so easily get out again."

Did your Lordship ever hear this before ?— Did such a statement come out upon Burke's trial ? or, were such questions ever put to P——n ? If this statement therefore is correct, and information given to the Police that a corpse

supposed to be disinterred, or otherwise, was actually in the possession of Burke or Hare, why not instead of placing a policeman as a watch over their motions? I say, why should not a warrant have been granted to search the premises? If this had been done, it might have been the means of saving many victims that afterwards fell into the hands of these bloodthirsty miscreants. It may be asked, how could the authorities prove that the individuals were murdered? seeing that even our professors of anatomy could not perceive any thing like external marks of violence, or symptoms of an internal nature, to lead them for a moment to suppose that the subjects heretofore brought by Burke and Hare had met with a premature death. I am inclined to think that this part of the mystery has been overlooked, not by any means imputing any blame to Dr K—— or his assistants. But, Tyro, as I am on matters of anatomy, I have always been led to consider that suffocation or strangulation causes the blood to flow to the head, consequently makes the face of a strong livid colour, with a small discharge of blood from the mouth, nose, and ears. Now, as most of the subjects produced by Burke and Hare had suf-

ferred death by suffocation, and as these bodies were generally disposed of to Dr K——, I think it is but natural to infer, that if the Doctor saw these bodies, he is either horribly ignorant of his profession, or he wilfully withheld that information he ought to have given. I will ask any of the professors of anatomy, candidly and honestly, that if two men, of the appearance of Burke and Hare, had brought them ten or a dozen bodies, with the same appearance as those brought by B, and H. must have had, what would be their opinion? I am certain of one thing, that it would, at least, have a great tendency to rouse their suspicions, and make minute inquiries as to the manner they obtained such subjects. But we are told that Dr K—— did not know, nor had he the most distant idea, that these subjects were any thing but disinterred bodies; all the subjects brought to him by Burke and Hare, and that were examined by him, he could not even guess at the cause of their death. On these grounds we are bound to believe that no blame can be attached to the Doctor, seeing *he himself is equally as ignorant as his Students*. In respect to the words said to have been spoken by the Doctor with regard to the protection, and that

if they were stopt, to suffer themselves to be taken into custody, when they would soon be released, and the package assuredly sent to him. If such really was the case, does it not stigmatize the Police establishment in the eyes of the public.—An establishment which we with confidence look to for protection, and pay a heavy tax for its support. I am inclined to think that there must be some mistake in this part of the story, for I feel pretty confident, that if the body had been taken to the Police Office and examined, a thousand to one but the surgeon of that establishment would at once say that it had come by a premature death, and Burke seems to have been pretty much of the same opinion, as he knew that if once there, the body would be examined, and consequently an investigation would take place that might lead to a discovery of his nefarious traffic. But to proceed with P———n's narrative. One day they (Burke and Hare) called upon Mr M———n formerly mentioned, who resides in Surgeons' Square, and told him, that they had a subject for the Doctor, and requested him to be in readiness; that evening about seven o'clock I called upon Mr M———n and found him waiting in the Square, he then told me that a subject was expected for the Doctor. In

a short time three men (Burke, Hare, and M'Culloch,) made their appearance with a large box, or chest, which was deposited in one of the rooms; and as they insisted upon having money, we thought proper to look into the box previous to reporting to the Doctor. When we did so we found it contained the corpse of a stout young man, but did not examine it; I immediately went and informed the Doctor that the parties before mentioned had brought a subject, and were anxious for some money. The sum given to me by the Doctor I delivered to them, and they called the following day for the remainder, making in all L.10. When the body was examined in the morning, one of the assistants remarked, that it was very like DAFT JAMIE, in which opinion all present agreed. I myself remarked, that I did not think Jamie either so stout or robust as the subject before me, and that I did not think he was dead, as I had seen him a day or two before; but did say that there was a strong resemblance. Some discourse then took place amongst the students respecting the manner the body had been obtained, when it was generally supposed, that if it really was JAMIE, his friends must have sold him to the procurers. Dr. K—— all along persisting

that it was not Jamie; nothing more of consequence occurred until a report that Jamie was amissing reached Surgeons' Square, when the dissection of the body was ordered. It may be necessary to remark, that the usual method adopted by the students in dissecting, is to make a transverse section of the cranium, or to separate the superior portion from the base, in order to enable the student to dissect the brain. In dissecting this body the head was kept entire at the express request of one of the Doctor's assistants, but for what purpose I cannot say; Mr F——n, another assistant, seemed doubly anxious to have the feet of this subject, which he received from the students that dissected the body. It is a common practice amongst the students that when they wish to preserve the bones of any limb entire, to immerse it in a jar of water until decomposition takes place, when the soft is cleaned from the bone; but in this case, however, Mr F——n deviated considerably from the usual method, for he immediately was at the no small trouble of detaching bone from bone PREVIOUS to their being immersed in water. I do not pretend to offer any opinion upon his so doing, I merely state facts."

Now, my Lord, I will again call your attention to the above statement. It is well known

that James Wilson, or Daft Jamie, had a very peculiar physiognomy, he was also partially deprived of the use of his right side. One of his feet was very much contracted; in short, any individual that ever saw him in life would know his corpse. Again, it is usual to make use of the oldest subjects first, that is those subjects that have been longest in the possession of the lecturer. Now, my Lord, it will be observed, that on the rumour of Jamie being amissing, or thereabouts, his body was ordered for dissection, although it was the last and freshest subject in the Doctor's possession. His head was kept entire and not suffered to be lectured upon; his feet were requested of the students, and when given, instead of going through the usual preparation of immersing them in water, they were instantly separated bone from bone, although this manner of procedure was infinitely more laborious than the other. What is your Lordship's opinion? does it not look very like a concealment? In such a case I should be very apt to consider that the parties had discovered that the body actually was *Jamie's*, and that in order to destroy every trace of detection, they made away with those parts most likely to be recognized. Or did the Doctor wish to prepare the skull, knowing it

to be the head of an idiot, and along with other venerable relics of the same kind, commence a course of lectures on phrenology, and supersede Dr Combe. Be this as it may, I am certain your Lordship will agree with me, that if the Doctor is not highly culpable, and, in the true sense of the law, GUILTY art and part, he is at least deserving of public censure for his negligence in not giving that information which must have been in his power to communicate.

Paterson goes on to state, " That when the rumour of Jamie's absence was generally known, many and singular were the remarks made by the students. For his part, he then, and not till then, began to form a very different opinion of the individuals Burke and Hare, and had determined in his own mind, at all hazards, to watch the motions of these villains more minutely, and examine the next subject they brought to the rooms. He says, I did not wait long in suspense, for a few evenings after, to wit, 31st October, 1828, being invited to partake of a beef-steak supper with a friend; on my return home about 12 o'clock, and on going up stairs, I heard a knocking at the door of my lodgings. I enquired who was there twice, before receiving any answer, at length a voice answered, John, and asked if I

was Dr K——'s man ; having answered in the affirmative, he said he wanted to see me at his own house, but on my informing him that I did not know where his house was, he offered to accompany me. I knew by this time that it was *Burke*, and as I perceived him a little intoxicated, I thought it would be a good opportunity to commence my inquiries. We went down stairs in solemn silence, and conducted by Burke, got to his house, remarking to him, that he lived in a very strange and intricate situation, his answer was, that it suited his purpose. On entering the house, I observed a man, *Hare*, and two women, all more or less intoxicated. The motive for his wishing to see me at his own house, I did not then know. Just as he had got in, he tapped me on the shoulder, and pointing to a quantity of straw, said, "*there lies something for the Doctor to-morrow,*" at that instant, I fixed my eyes stedfastly upon Burke ; and, from the suspicions I entertained in my own mind, I in a moment glanced at the other individuals ; but seeing nothing to raise my suspicions, I merely answered at the time, (to the best of my recollection,) that they might send it any time to-morrow. Burke asked if I would give him some blunt, my answer was, that I had nothing to do with these matters, and that the

Doctor would pay him when he brought the subject. I did not see the body, but immediately left the house. On my return home, I found that a man answering to Burke's description, had called for me at the early part of the evening. When I retired to bed, I took a retrospective view of the conduct of Burke and Hare, I remarked their shyness in answering the questions I formerly put to them respecting the body of the girl Paterson. The subjects generally brought by them, seemed always fresher than those from other quarters. The circumstance of *Jamie* being still amissing, and no accounts whatever concerning him, rushed on my mind, the conduct of the individuals that very night, while a corpse was lying in one corner of the hovel, in the same place, the parties seemed to have been carousing in the height of jollity; another circumstance of greater moment, now passed before me, the subjects generally brought by them to the Lecture Room, were uniformly packed in a box or chest; now, thought I, if these men actually disinterred the body said to be among the straw, it is more than probable, that they would have packed it up before sending it to their own house, and not at all likely that they would have unpacked it again. However, the circumstances of *Jamie* alone, prompt-

ed me to determine, that if the subject was brought in time next day, I would satisfy myself as to any external marks of violence. Next day I impatiently waited for the package, and towards evening I began to suspect that it was a trick, in order to get money. About seven o'clock on the Saturday evening, Burke, Hare, and M'Culloch brought a package, and delivered it in the presence of Mr Jones; as they insisted for money, Mr Jones accompanied me to the Doctor's house. We told the Doctor that the men had brought the package they had promised him, and that they were clamorous for money. The Doctor gave me £5, desiring me to give it them, and they would receive the remainder on Monday. It being now late, I had no opportunity of examining the body that night, but resolved to go on the morrow, (Sunday,) and satisfy my curiosity, for which purpose I took the keys of the Lecture Room with me.

Early on the Sunday morning I was awakened by Lieutenant Paterson and Serjeant-major Fisher of the Police establishment, who informed me that they had brought an order from Doctor K—— for me to accompany them with the keys of the lecture rooms, and allow them to search for the body of a woman said

to have been murdered and sold to the Doctor. My former surmises now rushed upon me, and I inquired of Lieutenant Paterson if he really thought there was any truth in it, when he informed me, that there were some persons in custody upon suspicion ; I went with them, and on opening the rooms said, that to prevent all unnecessary trouble, I would show them the package left on Saturday evening untouched, and did so. Lieutenant Paterson then requested me to assist in opening the package, which I did accordingly, and stretched the body at full length upon a table in order to inspect it minutely. Lieutenant Paterson requested to know my opinion, but as I had no knowledge in surgery, could not give an opinion any farther than from the appearance of the face, and a little blood at the corners of the mouth, I should suppose, from what I have heard, that the person must have died by suffocation or poison ; and not perceiving any external marks of violence, could not hazard any just opinion. I however had my own thoughts ; the appearance of this body, (Campbell or Docherty,) coincided exactly with that of the girl Paterson ; and combining these circumstances with that of Jamie, and of the individuals that brought those bodies to the Lecture Room

being in custody, I delivered up the keys to Lieutenant Paterson, requesting him to take the body under his own charge; a person then arrived with a policeman who recognized the deceased, and said it was the same they were in search of.

Here Paterson remarked, that if the version of the Confession of Burke, as given in the public prints is correct, he has in many instances given the words of Dr K—— as his (Paterson's). And to show your Lordship what confidence can be placed in Burke's Confession, Paterson relates the following anecdote, as told him by Mr A. M——n, on whose veracity he can depend, and who was in the employment of Dr K—— long before Paterson was engaged: "The first time Mr M——n saw Burke or Hare was about the end of 1827, when one of them called at the Rooms during the day and inquired of him if the Doctor would purchase a subject, on being answered he would, they returned in the evening with the body of a very tall man in a sack. One carried the sack while the other assisted behind. One of the arms of the subject was hanging outside, at that time they seemed flurried and in a great hurry." Now it will be remembered, that in Burke's Confession, he

says, that the first subject ever they sold to Dr K—— was a female that died in Hare's house, this seems strange; but as they were in the habit of supplying the Doctor before my time, I cannot solve that mystery.

By reviewing the foregoing statement, and coupling it with circumstances that has since transpired, I think your Lordship will admit that there is strong circumstantial evidence existing against the parties, who have all along steered clear of this affair. I will commence my remarks as far back as February 1828; at that time, *Burke* and *Hare* had been supplying Dr K—— with subjects for at least two or three months previous; at that time, Mr M——r, an assistant, if not always, frequently went with them, and again returned in about an hour and a half with a subject. Mr M——r ought to be examined on this point; he must know where these subjects came from,—who were the individuals he saw,—possibly can tell whether the subjects were male or female. It has been said that one murder was committed in Broggan's house. Did Broggan not see a third person in his house when he left it, and on his return, found only *Burke* and *Hare*, with a package in the room, this package, it is said,

Broggan suspected to be a body, and was anxious that it should be removed. Now if Broggan saw three persons enter his house without a package, he knew the character of Burke and Hare too well, not to be acquainted with the motives that had brought them there; if, on his return, he found the third person amissing, and in his or her place a package, a package too that he suspected to contain a body, ought he not to have enquired after the party missing, and what that package contained. No, no, Mr Broggan was no novice to the trade; he was well aware that they had a *subject*, and consequently knowing, without giving information, is guilty art and part.—Probably Mr M——r, the assistant, can throw some light on this subject.

The story of the girl Paterson, or Mitchell, is still more glaring. Jess Brown states, that Paterson was in her company when they were accosted by two men, (Burke and Hare); the men would not accompany them to the house proposed by Brown, but insisted upon the girls going with them; they contrived to give Brown the slip, or Brown gave them the slip, and observed Burke, Hare, and the girl Paterson proceed towards the Canongate; they were

admitted into Burke's brother's house in the Canongate; she was seen there by Burke's brother, who is a scaffenger, and he sat carousing with them until his avocations called him away early in the morning; after his departure the murder was committed; the body was taken the same evening to Surgeons Square, and sold for £10; the next day it was recognized by Mr F——, an assistant to Dr K——; the face was of a strong livid colour, and traces of blood were observable at the mouth, nose, and ears. Here is a chain of strong circumstantial evidence against Hare, so much so, that an English jury would not have the least hesitation in returning a verdict against him; still it may be said, that there is no proof as to these men being the perpetrators of the murder.

Your Lordship must be aware that the law does not always require eye witnesses to the fact, for it justly observes, that these acts are generally done in so secret a manner, that nine cases out of ten would go unpunished; but that a chain of circumstantial evidence, well supported, taking into consideration the previous character of the parties, will be sufficient to condemn. There is sufficient proof that Burke

and Hare were seen last in Paterson's company ; there is also sufficient proof, that Burke and Hare brought the body of Paterson to Surgeons Square, fifteen hours after she was seen by Burke's brother. One witness can swear that it was her body he saw in the Lecture Room ; combine this with the circumstance of her mysterious disappearance, and, as an honest man, ask your own conscience, if there is not sufficient proof to put HARE upon his trial for the murder. I will call your Lordship's attention to another circumstance. HARE brought a subject to Surgeons Square while Burke was absent in the country, and delivered it to Mr M———. I think it would be proper to examine Mr M——— upon this point, as it possibly might be the body of the person that was murdered in Broggan's house, and the evidence obtained from Dr K——, Mr M———, Broggan, and possibly others, might be of service in the prosecution. Another chain of circumstantial evidence against HARE is this, James Wilson, or DAFT JAMIE, was seen by many, the day of that evening the murder was committed ; he was last seen in the West Port with *Burke* or *Hare* ; the night after the murder he was carried to Surgeons Square by

M'Culloch, accompanied by *Burke* and *Hare*; the observations of the students the next day, that they knew it to be JAMIE, and when the story of his disappearance became general,—the ordering of that body for dissection, instead of the uniform practice of making use of the body longest in possession of the lecturer,—and even then destroying all traces of such parts of the body as were most likely to lead to a discovery, this calls loudly upon the lecturer to give the public some satisfactory reason, why he deviated in this case from the usual mode of procedure. There is a Mr M——l, a student, who on lifting up the head of the subject, declared it at once to be Jamie, and many others coincided in his opinion. If these gentlemen will now come forward and state upon oath, to the best of their knowledge, that the body alluded to, was that of James Wilson, or *Daft Jamie*, and the parties that last saw him,—time and place; the party that carried the body to Surgeons Square,—from whom did he receive it, and from whence he carried it; the party that received the body,—from whom and by whom accompanied, with time and place; the party that paid the money for the body, and to whom did they pay it. If in this chain

of circumstances there is no proof that HARE has acted a principal part, it is not to be supposed that your Lordship can file a bill against him ; but, on the other hand, should your Lordship see the least ground of evidence that can be supported by circumstances, I trust you will, with your wonted alacrity, bring him forward to answer for those crimes of which he seems to be a principal accomplice. Public justice demands it, and the public feeling must be appeased.

In the foregoing statement, your Lordship and the public will perceive, that David P——n did not act the part assigned to him in the public prints ; it will be observed that all along it was the assistants to the Doctor that bargained with Burke and Hare for the subjects, and P——n seems to have been made a kind of scape goat ; it will also be observed, that long before P——n came into the Doctor's service, Mr M———r, an assistant, had been in the habit of going with Burke and Hare for the bodies, and it is not till very lately that P——n was employed as a go-between the Doctor and Burke and Hare ; be this as it may, let the public judge for themselves. From the inquiries I have made respecting him, I find that he is 'riendless, has uniformly borne a

good character, and has refused to return to his situation.

The public are aware that the lecturers on anatomy must be supplied with subjects; a meeting of that respectable body has already taken place on this topic, the result of which I am yet ignorant. But as the public must also be satisfied on this point, I will here detail to your Lordship what facts respecting the procuring of subjects are in my possession. It is next to impossible that any subjects can be got in or within twenty miles of Edinburgh, without the concurrence of the persons employed to watch the ground, which sometimes, but rarely, happens. But at great toil and eminent danger bodies are sometimes procured some thirty miles round, and the schemes and stratagems then employed to ensure a safe deliverance in Edinburgh are truly ingenious. From Newcastle there is generally a good supply sent in trunks and hampers, either anonymously addressed, or without any address. But previous to this package being sent to the coach office, an invoice, or a letter of advice, is sent by post, stating, that by such a coach, and on such a day, a subject inclosed in a particular box or hamper, with a certain address, or marked soft goods, chrystal, or paper, to be

kept dry, will be forwarded accordingly. A person is in waiting at the office to claim such package, pay the carriage, and it is safely deposited in Surgeons Square. Now, it must be very pleasant for an outside passenger to know, that probably he may be sitting cheek by jowl with his deceased grandmother, or perhaps covering the remains of an affectionate wife; nay, our Christmas presents are not exempt from bearing company with, and probably imbibing the effluvia of the deceased. I do not mean to say that the coach proprietors are always aware of the company they carry, but this I know, that at one time they must have been, which the following anecdote will illustrate: a porter, one day in February last, brought a box to a certain Lecture Room, and as this box was very similar to those in which subjects generally came, and without any address or mark; it was understood by the porter, and by those to whom it was delivered, that it contained a subject. Some little time after the porter was gone the box was opened, (as a subject was advised,) but to the utter astonishment of those present, instead of a dead body, there came forth a very fine bacon ham, a large cheese, a basket of eggs, and a huge clue of Hodden grey worsted,—a present, no doubt,

from a country cousin, and intended to have reached a different destination. A body in a box without address had come by the same conveyance, and had, no doubt, been changed by mistake ; but what the feelings of the party were who received it, judge ye !

I am told that sometimes the resurrection men procure bodies from the Royal Infirmary ; the stratagem they make use of is nearly this, they hear by their spies that such a person has died without friends, one goes immediately and claims kindred with the deceased, a coffin is procured, and they are generally removed to some house adjacent for interment. The body, however, does not receive this last token of respect, for with all possible speed a box is procured into which the corpse is crammed and mediately disposed of.

On one occasion, I remember to have witnessed one of the most daring scenes I ever beheld. On turning the corner of Surgeons Square, I observed two men at the trot with a coffin on their shoulders, in open day, they instantly plunged into a certain Lecture Room, the corpse of a female was rolled out on the floor, and the coffin broke in a hundred pieces ; they received very little for this body, as some person in the surgical department of the Royal

Infirmary had, with an instrument, so mangled the body, as to render it almost useless to any Lecturer. I do not mean to say, that the gentleman who has the sole charge of the surgical department, and through whose hands all the bodies ought to pass before their friends can receive them, was in any manner connected with the mangling of the body. But if it was suspected, that the persons claiming the deceased, intended it for dissection, why give it up to them, and if not, why should the body be mangled; possibly this is a new regulation of the Hospital, of which I have not yet heard. I am confident that no blame can be attached to Mr Marshall, his late conduct in tracing and recovering a body out of Mr M'K——'s Lecture Room, places him above the reach of suspicion.—So much for home, I will now take a trip to Ireland, which is the grand mart for subjects. There are several agents who supply the Edinburgh Lecturers with subjects, at about £7 each, expences included, these come in lots of ten or twelve, sometimes addressed to one individual, and when such is the case, the other professors attend and cast lots; this is when a general cargo arrives, but the more frequent is for each professor to receive his own barrel, box, or hamper. A

large hamper sometimes contains from three to four bodies, packed up with a motely assortment of Irish law papers, or liquid blacking in bottles, or as pickled beef or pork. The usual rout of conveyance is by Greenock, Glasgow, and down the Union Canal; in all this, there is nothing dreadfully appalling; bodies must be had, come from where they will, and I think were an act passed, that all those who die upon the parishes or in Hospitals, without friends to inter the bodies, were to be forwarded to the Lecture Rooms, at the professor's expence, it would in a short time, supersede every other method now in use.

Your Lordship, I trust, will pardon me for any expressions in this letter you may consider harsh or improper. I solemnly assure you that such was not my intention. I have merely stated facts, which can be supported upon oath. If I have erred in giving these publicity, it is with a desire that the public should be made acquainted with that portion of this mysterious affair they seemed so anxiously to wish for. Something ought to be done, nay must be done, to appease the public feeling; and I am confident that your Lordship will, to

the utmost of your power, endeavour to do so, for which you will not only have the thanks of a wise and discerning public, but all the information that lies in the power of

## THE ECHO.