

**Inquest on Miss Sophia Dallett held at Putney on the 8th and 14th July, 1847, printed from the notes of one of the jury : with an appendix / Edited by John Rose Cormack.**

**Contributors**

Cormack, John Rose, 1815-1882.  
Royal College of Physicians of London

**Publication/Creation**

London : John Churchill, 1847.

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/g992sdbj>

**Provider**

Royal College of Physicians

**License and attribution**

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by Royal College of Physicians, London. The original may be consulted at Royal College of Physicians, London. where the originals may be consulted. 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**

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>

To the Editor of the  
"Medical Gazette"

INQUEST

18

ON

MISS SOPHIA DALLETT,

HELD AT PUTNEY ON THE 8<sup>TH</sup> AND 14<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 1847,

PRINTED FROM THE NOTES OF ONE OF THE JURY.

WITH

AN APPENDIX.

EDITED BY

JOHN ROSE CORMACK, M.D., EDIN., F.R.S.E.,

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF EDINBURGH;

LATE PHYSICIAN TO THE ROYAL INFIRMARY OF EDINBURGH;

PHYSICIAN TO THE COLLEGE FOR CIVIL ENGINEERS,

PUTNEY, &c. &c.

---

LONDON:

JOHN CHURCHILL, PRINCES STREET, SOHO.

1847.

THE

MURDER OF  
THE

ROYAL COLLEGE  
OF  
PHYSICIANS  
OF  
LONDON

BY  
THE

LONDON:

PRINTED BY G. J. PALMER, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

## PREFACE.

---

CIRCUMSTANCES have occasioned many applications to me for an authentic report of the proceedings at the Inquest on the deceased Miss Sophia Dallett. I had intended to draw up an account of the case, suitable for publication in a Medical Journal, adding a few short pathological commentaries; but in consideration of the vulgar personalities, propagated both before and after the Inquest, and the careful misreports which have been published in different periodicals, circulars, and handbills, I have judged it better to print the evidence taken by the Coroner, and allow each individual to digest it for himself. I hope that this will be accepted by the reader as my apology, for subjecting him to the perusal of several cumbrous repetitions and irrelevant details.

The following Report was taken down at the Inquest by Richard Martin, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, one of the Jury, who kindly furnished me with his notes, taken from the mouths of the witnesses, and, as nearly as possible, in their exact words. The greater part of the manuscript appeared in the morning and evening editions of the "Sun" newspaper of the 15th of July—the day after the adjourned inquest. It is now printed



*without any abridgment*: and to insure accuracy, the proof-sheets of the present publication have been revised by Mr. Martin.

Some respected friends have blamed me for noticing in any way the manifestations of the druggist and the "Medical Juror;" whilst others have remarked, that I have said too little in elucidation of the doings and motives of these persons. The Appendix will show what I actually have done, viz., writing three letters with my signature attached.

I have had no direct or indirect participation in the authorship of any editorial articles or anonymous paragraphs which have appeared on the subject. I am in no way responsible for what others have said on the subject.

Two of my three letters appeared in the "Morning Post;" and were simply intended to correct misstatements calculated to injure my professional character, which had been published in that respectable newspaper. My other letter appeared in the "Lancet" of the 7th August: and referred to a communication from Mr. Farmer; which, as it had found a place in the most influential and most generally read medical periodical, I did not think it derogatory to notice.

JOHN ROSE CORMACK.

*Essex House, Putney. Sept. 17th, 1847.*

## REPORT OF THE INQUEST.

---

THE Jury having been sworn, William Carter, Esq., Coroner for East Surrey, stated that the Inquisition was held in consequence of a letter which he had received from Dr. Cormack, of Putney, "anxiously requesting" an inquiry into the cause of the death of the deceased Sophia Dallett.

The Jury then retired with the Coroner to view the body ; after which the following evidence was taken.

MARIA ROSE DALLETT, spinster, sworn.—I am sister of the deceased, Sophia Dallett. My father is a tallow chandler. I reside with him, as part of his family. My deceased sister would have been fifteen in September. On Sunday last, the 3rd instant, at seven or eight, P.M., she was taken with shivering. I was with her at the time in the parlour. No one else was present. She had been poorly from Thursday evening, the 1st instant, but before Thursday was not unwell. On Thursday, she had a little simple medicine—pills, which she was in the habit of taking. They are Mr. Farmer's pills, and are sold in boxes as "Farmer's Antibilious Pills." On Sunday, when she had the shivering, I assisted her to undress, and sent for more medicine to Mr. Farmer. My sisters Elizabeth and Mary Anne went for it. I desired them to say to Mr. Farmer that the deceased had been seized with shivering, and felt very sick. [By sick, as subsequently appeared, witness meant nausea and vomiting.] Mr. Farmer is not a medical man ; he is a chemist. My sisters brought back a powder and a draught, which I received from them. I gave the powder to the deceased ; but the draught, in accordance with the directions, I reserved for the morning. I had no knowledge whatever of the nature or parts of the powder. The powder was given at nine o'clock on Sunday evening. She then appeared to be very poorly—by poorly I mean sick and feverish. She returned the powder ; at least, she vomited freely half an hour after taking it. At this time, she had no other symptoms except fever and sickness. She slept comfortably during the night, and took the draught in the morning at half-past seven or eight o'clock. She took it voluntarily. During Monday she was



not so well. It was not till six or seven o'clock in the evening that I observed her to be worse. Before this the draught had operated, but only a little. During that day (Monday), she had no symptoms of sickness, but was chilly. She arose from bed, and I assisted her to dress. She left her bed-room, but remained in a room adjoining her bed-room for five or six hours. She took tea to breakfast; for dinner, mutton and mutton broth, and tea in the evening. I concluded that the cause of the medicine not operating more was the powder having been returned. I had no misgivings as to the efficacy of Mr. Farmer's medicines. On Monday night I did not judge there was any necessity for calling in medical advice. She was worse and had shivering on Monday at six or seven, P.M.

What did you do?—I sent my sister Mary Anne for more medicine to Mr. Farmer. I did not send for any particular medicine. I told my sister to get what medicine Mr. Farmer thought necessary. My sister returned with a powder, a draught, and a saline mixture. Deceased took the powder immediately, and in two or three hours afterwards one dose of the saline mixture. The second powder was retained. She passed a good night. In the morning of Tuesday, she took the draught, which operated in about an hour.

Did it operate violently or gently?—It caused neither a violent nor a gentle operation. I now sent for Dr. Cormack.

Did you see any previous necessity for sending for Dr. Cormack?—No.

Why did you now send for him?—Because my sister was very low.

Did Dr. Cormack come immediately?—Immediately. Deceased had been sick, and the medicine had operated at the time Dr. C. first saw her. She had not been out of her bed that morning. The calling in of Dr. Cormack had no reference to the medicine which had been taken. At first, the medicine did not operate violently. It was at nine, A.M., on Tuesday (6th instant) that Dr. C. first saw deceased. He took her case in hand, and prescribed. The servant went for the medicine. She brought back two mixtures. One was labelled, "Half to be taken now; the remainder in two hours." This mixture was given as directed. The second mixture was labelled, "Half in an hour after the other, if the sickness continued." None of this mixture was taken till the doctor's second visit, at twelve o'clock; and there never was more than part of it taken, as it was not required for the sickness. On that morning (Tuesday) she complained of pain in her stomach; and after taking tea at breakfast time, shortly before Dr. C.'s visit, she was sick—rather violently. The intermissions between the attacks of sickness were short. Dr. C.'s second visit was between twelve and one, I think. We were told by the doctor, at his first visit, that it was probably a low fever, which might continue for some time. No intimation of present danger was given. At the second visit, the doctor ordered hot fomentations and a liniment, to be applied to the lower part of the abdomen; also three pills. The servant fetched the liniment, which was used according to the directions. These applications were first



made at half-past one, and they were continued till half-past three. The fomentation was simple hot water. After the fomenting and the use of the liniment, she was better. The servant first brought the liniment, and afterwards the pills. The pills were labelled, "A pill every *night*;" but the verbal directions of the doctor to me, and also of the doctor's assistant to the servant, was, "A pill every *hour*." I sent to inquire how the pills were to be taken, and they were given accordingly—*one every hour*, the first being taken at ten minutes after four, and the last twenty minutes after six. After the pills, she seemed better. She woke up, and, at seven, or a little after seven, took some tea, with a very little toast. She seemed much refreshed, and better. The doctor saw her again at eight, or half-past eight, when he said that she was decidedly better. He sent her some ginger-beer powders, to be taken if she complained of thirst. I sat up with her. About ten, she seemed very drowsy. About four in the morning (Wednesday), I sent for the doctor. He came immediately. He ordered some brandy and water, which she took; afterwards, some white wine. She was then insensible, and unconscious. She did not appear to know what she was doing. The doctor wished her to be roused. She was taken out of bed, and to the next room, and moved about at intervals. She died between 8 and 9 on Wednesday morning. Dr. Wane and Mr. Shillito attended, at the desire of Dr. Cormack. Dr. Wane attempted to move her on his arrival. When Dr. Cormack was sent for on Wednesday morning, he expressed surprise at her state. We had every confidence in the skill and ability of Dr. Cormack. I could not account for the stupor; but the doctor said it might be the liniment. Nothing beyond the result has caused dissatisfaction in the family. It was not expected. I understand that this inquest is held at the request of Dr. Cormack. I did not speak to the other medical men as to the cause of the sudden change. I cannot say whether my father would have had an inquest had the doctor not proposed it. The doctor was so quick in proposing an inquest that we had no time to think of it sooner. He is our usual medical attendant.

*By a Juror.*—In accordance with Dr. Cormack's directions, the liniment was applied by means of flannel at half-past one (on Tuesday). The flannel, as directed, had been soaked in hot water. The doctor did not attribute her illness to medicines given before he was sent for. He assigned no cause for her illness. He said the powder might have caused the pain. I have no conception of what caused the illness.

How many of Mr. Farmer's antibilious pills did you administer to deceased?—Two on Thursday, the 1st, and two more next day. I had the pills in the house: it was not till Sunday, the 3rd, that Mr. Farmer was consulted. I think that the illness of my deceased sister arose from natural causes, and not from the medicine. I thought the illness a bilious attack.

*By Dr. Cormack.*—I told the doctor that the medicine prescribed by Mr. Farmer, had acted as an aperient. The doctor said it



had, perhaps, been too searching. I do not recollect informing Dr. Cormack that any of Mr. Farmer's pills had been administered to deceased. I do not recollect mentioning the saline mixture to the doctor. I think I mentioned both powders and both draughts.

Do you recollect of mentioning the medicine which deceased had had, simply thus—"She has had *a* powder and *a* draught from over the way?"—I do not recollect my exact words. Dr. Cormack said, at his first visit, the pain may not be inflammatory, but only griping, from the medicine. Deceased was not always insensible, after Dr. C. came in on the Wednesday morning. She mentioned him by name when roused. I think this was in the passage, but I do not recollect the exact time. She put out her tongue when asked loudly. She named the doctor several times. She seemed better after the brandy.

ELIZABETH DALLETT, spinster.—I am sister of the deceased Sophia Dallett. My deceased sister was unwell on Sunday evening. She had been unwell some days previously. At the request of my sister Maria, I went to Mr. Farmer on Sunday evening and asked him to mix some medicine for the deceased. I told him that she was affected with headache and sickness. He gave me a powder and a draught, which I delivered to my sister Maria, in the same state in which I received them from Mr. Farmer. I know Mr. Farmer. It was Mr. Farmer himself whom I spoke with, and who mixed the medicine. I saw my sister Maria give the powder to deceased, but not the draught. Mr. Farmer directed the draught not to be taken till the morning. My sister Mary Anne accompanied me on Sunday evening to Mr. Farmer's shop.

MARY ANNE DALLETT, spinster.—[This witness was extremely agitated; and it was not without difficulty that her examination was conducted.] The deceased, Sophia Dallett, was my sister. I went to Mr. Farmer's shop on Sunday evening along with my sister Elizabeth, to get medicine for deceased. He gave a powder and a draught. Elizabeth took them. I cannot say what she did with them. On Monday I went again to Mr. Farmer's for more medicine for deceased. My sister Maria told me to go. I got a powder and a draught from Mr. Farmer, which I delivered to Maria in the same state in which I received them from Mr. Farmer. I did not tell Mr. Farmer any thing about my sister's illness, nor about the effects of the medicine which he had previously supplied.

*By a Juror.*—Did you tell Mr. Farmer how his medicine had acted?—I said that the powder had been rejected by the stomach. I gave him to understand that the medicines had not acted properly; and that deceased would require active medicine.

JOHN FARMER, chemist.—I recollect Elizabeth and Mary Anne Dallett calling at my shop on Sunday evening. I proposed to give them a powder and a draught for the deceased, who was said by them to be fifteen years of age. No particular kind of medicine was asked for. Minutely inquired into the symptoms. The powder consisted of four grains of *grey powder*, to be taken at bedtime. Grey powder is the mildest preparation of mercury. The



draught was a common black draught of senna and other ingredients. On Monday evening, Miss Mary Anne Dallett called and stated that the powder had been rejected, from sickness, and the draught had acted only once, and that mildly. She said that the deceased would require more active medicine; and that she had pain. In consequence of this statement, I gave a powder composed of five grains of grey powder, and three grains of Dover's powder. I added the Dover's powder that the dose might be retained on the stomach. I gave on this occasion a draught, the same as the former, to be taken in the morning. I also suggested and supplied a simple saline mixture, directing two table-spoonfuls to be given if the sickness came on. The quantities of the various medicines which I supplied were the usual quantities for a person of the age of deceased. I have been in the habit of supplying the family of deceased with my mild anti-bilious pills. They contain in each pill one grain of blue pill. They are mild pills. I have no objection to state of what they are composed. In addition to the blue pill, they contain extract of scammony, and the watery extract of aloes. One is an ordinary dose for a person of the age of deceased; but two are quite safe for one of constipated habit. On Sunday evening, I was informed by the sisters of the deceased, that the bowels of deceased had not been acted on since Friday, and I was told that she was complaining of headache, giddiness, sickness, and pain of the stomach. The illness was described as a little bilious attack. I do not visit patients. I do not *prescribe*. I *suggest* what medicines should be taken. I did not prescribe for the deceased; but I suggested, and dispensed the medicine for her. On Wednesday morning, I was asked by some one from Mr. Dallett's to go there. I went. The deceased was unable to walk. She was supported in an upright position. I saw there Dr. Cormack, Mr. Dallett, his three daughters, &c. From my own knowledge, I have no conception of the cause of death. I asked the medical gentlemen the cause of the illness, but got no answer from them.

*By Dr. Cormack.*—When I prescribed for deceased, I made no inquiry as to the state of her pulse.

[On this answer being given, a juror remarked that it was not usual when one went to a chemist for a dose to say anything about the pulse.]

JOHN ROSE CORMACK, M.D., Putney.—I was first called in to the deceased on Tuesday, the 5th, at nine in the morning. I received an urgent message, and went without losing a moment. I found the deceased in bed. I asked her sister Maria what the symptoms were, and was told that she had been “poorly” for some days. I was told that the disease set in with shivering. I certainly understood that no medicine of any kind had been given excepting a brown powder on the preceding evening, and a black dose that morning; and that these medicines had been got from “over the way.” I asked what the powder and draught consisted of, and was told that she supposed both to be common aperient medicines. I asked the colour of the powder, and was told that it



was brown. I could get no definite or distinct account of the medicine, excepting that the powder was *brown*, and the draught *black*. I concluded that both were ordinary aperients; and proceeded to examine the patient for myself. I found the pulse at the wrist feeble and irregular; the heart's action was feeble and irregular. The tongue was loaded, but not parched. She seemed to be in an extremely depressed state. I thought the pupils were somewhat contracted. I examined into the state of the secretions, and learned that the urine was high coloured, and scanty; and that on that morning the discharge from the bowels had been very abundant. I asked if I could see the discharge from the bowels, and was told I could not. I asked if it was thin and watery, or if it had some consistence; I was told that it had some consistence, and was "bad" in appearance and smell. I thought that this discharge was owing to the operation of the medicine. There was a natural moisture on the skin—perhaps a little more than the natural moisture. What particularly struck me was the extreme depression with the contracted pupils. These symptoms indicated, or rather I should say led me to dread, pressure on the brain, such as is seen in the course of continued fever. I learned that the disease had set in some days before with headache and shivering. This circumstance, and the state in which I found her, led me to infer that she had been for four or five days, or longer, affected with continued fever of a typhoid character—that is, low nervous fever, which (if the patient lives) runs through a definite course. I intimated this opinion to the relatives. Nervous fever of this kind is often a serious disease. In reference to the abdominal pain, which was severe, I said, "Let us hope that it is only the medicine." I did not convey, or wish to convey, the idea that the disease arose from improper medicine. I had a dread that it might be a severe form of abdominal inflammation, well known to medical men as a dangerous complication of continued fever. In prescribing, my object was to support the powers of life, and to allay the vomiting and purging. I prescribed a mixture to be taken in two doses. [The prescriptions, as written at the time by Dr. C., were produced in court at his request.] The following is the composition of this mixture. Of the Edinburgh solution of the hydrochlorate of morphia twelve drops, tincture of orange-peel one drachm (a tea-spoonful), and of camphor mixture two ounces. The morphia in this mixture may be estimated as equal to half a grain of opium. I gave so small a quantity of opium on account of the cerebral symptoms. I thought the camphor would be useful as a diffusible stimulant. I thought it would tend to support life. Along with this mixture, I sent another,—one ounce and a half of the creasote mixture of the Edinburgh Pharmacopœia. Of this I directed the half to be taken, one hour after the last dose of the other mixture. Creasote is of use in allaying vomiting. The opium was intended to check the discharges, and arrest inflammatory action, by keeping the intestines in a state of repose. I left the house, saying that I would return in a few hours, but if required, would be found at home. I went home.



My second visit to deceased was between twelve and one. The pulse was improved; the vomiting was going on; it had changed its character. I saw a chamber-pot about half full, of what at first appeared to me from the darkness of the room to be urine of a whitish colour. I said to Miss Maria, "I am glad to see she has made so much water;" and was answered, "She has made no water; all that has been passed from the bowels." On carefully examining the abdomen with the hand, I found that the pain on pressure had materially increased since my first visit, and the vomiting and purging, though diminished, still continued, in spite of the remedies. At this visit I directed one part of the creasote mixture to be taken; none of it had been taken, but both doses of the other mixture had been taken. I was still careful of how I used opium, which, but for the cerebral symptoms, would have been freely resorted to. I was anxious also not to mask the disease. In all the circumstances, I considered that the safest course was to order a stimulating liniment containing some opium, in the form of laudanum, to be applied to the seat of pain. I calculated that part of this opium would be absorbed. The composition of this liniment was as follows:—Spirit of turpentine, five drachms; liniment of the sesquicarbonate of ammonia, of London Pharmacopœia (the mild ammonia liniment), five drachms; and of laudanum, two drachms. A drachm is sixty minims, or in other words, about a tea-spoonful. I directed part of this to be applied to the abdomen by means of a piece of flannel; and I directed, that above the flannel, hot water fomentations were to be kept up for two hours. I prescribed three pills to be taken, one every hour, after the liniment had been used for two hours, in the event of the pain, purging, or vomiting remaining. When the liniment was on, and before the pills were commenced, I directed the creasote mixture to be given, should vomiting recur. I said that wine was to be given if she became suddenly faint. I said that I would call again. I did call about eight in the evening. I found a very great apparent improvement in the symptoms: the pulse, in particular, was much better, being less rapid, as well as stronger and firmer. I was told that there had been no recent purging, and almost no evacuation since my previous visit. The vomiting had not returned, in consequence of which the residue of the creasote mixture had not been given. All the pills had been taken as I prescribed. The last was taken a little after six, I was told. The liniment and fomentations had been employed as I directed. All my instructions had been fully carried out. I stated to the family that I was happy to leave her so much better. Deceased asked, if she might have more of the little pills? I said no; they are not required. As the pain was not entirely removed, I said that part of the liniment, with the fomentations, might again be used. I said that I did not see scope for any other medicine than effervescing draughts, should the thirst be urgent; and wine, if required, for faintness. I sent an aperient for the morning, to be given if there was no motion. This consisted of—[Here the Coroner said



that, as the draught had not been given or required, its composition was unimportant.] I was told that she had sat up in bed and taken tea with relish, and also a little toast. I thought more favourably of her case than I had done formerly; but I was still in great anxiety about her. I said so to my assistant. Thinking it not improbable that I might be called to her during the night, I mentioned her state to Mrs. Cormack, who was not well, and might have been alarmed had I been called away to a distance during the night. Mr. Dallett's house is near to mine. I did not anticipate such a change as took place.

I was called between four and five in the morning, just at the conclusion of the thunder-storm. I went without delay. I found the deceased in a state of great prostration, apparently listless, and drowsy. The pulse was hardly perceptible at the wrist: the hands were cold; the extremities of the fingers were blue; and the lips were livid. I administered about a tablespoonful of brandy, and three or four glasses of wine. I asked if she had been alarmed by the thunder; and was told that she did not seem to have heard it. I examined the pupils; they were much contracted. I endeavoured to converse with her, and was enabled in some degree to do so after she had wine. I at first thought that she was in a state of collapse, which would terminate in death. The good effect of the wine suggested hope. I asked how much of the liniment had been used, and was shown the bottle, which might contain one or two teaspoonfuls out of the twelve. Knowing the extreme sensibility of the Dallett family to medicine of every description, it occurred to me, *as just possible*, that the stupor and collapse might have arisen from absorption of the opium of the liniment. I had never heard of so small a quantity of laudanum, when so applied, producing such an effect. I thought it my duty, under all the circumstances, to hazard the imputation of having used improper or even dangerous medicine; as the only thing which gave the deceased a chance of life, was to view the symptoms as narcotism. I used every exertion to rouse her, by sinapisms, hot water and mustard to the feet, &c. I now treated the symptoms exactly as I would have treated narcotism from opium. I only conjectured that it might be narcotism from opium. I explained my treatment to the family, as the exertions to rouse the deceased might otherwise have appeared extraordinary. No real improvement showed itself. I desired my assistant, who was in attendance with me, to call in Dr. Wane and Mr. Shillito. Soon after, Dr. Wane came, I entrusted the case to him for a short time, as I was exhausted; and I went across the street to Mr. Shillito's house. He kindly came back with me immediately to Mr. Dallett's. Both gentlemen then co-operated with me in pursuing the same line of treatment, until death took place. Just before Dr. Wane arrived, I gave twenty grains of sulphate of zinc; it did not act, and he suggested a repetition of the dose, and tickling the fauces. We used the emetics with reference to the symptoms; not with reference only to my prescriptions. We all co-operated in using the same treatment, till deceased expired between eight and nine A.M. on Wednes-



day morning—about twenty-three hours from the time at which I was first called in. Everything which I did was done with the view of saving the patient's life. The object of my treatment was to prevent death. The treatment was adopted according to the best of my judgment.

*By a Juror.*—I would, in similar circumstances, adopt similar treatment. I do not regret my treatment. I think my treatment throughout was judicious. Opium is the main remedy on which medical men rely in certain forms of abdominal inflammatory disease. There is a great tolerance of opium in such cases. I consider my dose of morphia an extremely minute dose. I also consider the quantity of opium in the pills very small. The three pills only contained half a grain, so that if the morphia taken be estimated as half a grain of opium, the deceased only had one grain internally from me. She had only two teaspoonfuls of laudanum applied externally. I think my exhibition of opium very cautious.

*By the Coroner.*—What was the cause of death?—That question cannot be answered till we have had an anatomical inspection of the dead body.

The Coroner ordered Dr. Wane and Mr. Shillito to make an inspection, inviting other medical men to be present, if these gentlemen approved. He then adjourned the inquest to Wednesday, the 14th, at ten A.M.

---

#### ADJOURNED INQUEST.

[The Court having been constituted, Dr. Cormack's previous examination was read over. He was then asked some additional questions by the Coroner and the Jury, and also by Mr. Bushell, a medical gentleman who attended the post-mortem examination and inquest on behalf of the Dallett family.]

*By the Coroner.*—I found no abdominal swelling during life. There was no gaseous or tympanitic distension. This I regarded as a favourable symptom.

*By a Juror.*—I have been practising medicine on my own responsibility for 12 or 13 years. I was one of the physicians of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh for two years, and I was previously physician of the Edinburgh Fever Hospital. My medical studies were in Edinburgh, and also abroad. I have had very extensive opportunities of seeing and treating fever cases. Edinburgh is much subject to severe fever epidemics. I wrote an account of a remarkable epidemic which prevailed in 1843. I treated deceased according to the best of my skill, as derived from my experience of fever. It is still my opinion that my first view of the case was correct—that when I first saw deceased, she had been for some days labouring



under fever. In addition to the symptoms which I formerly stated, I was also guided to this opinion by the peculiar state or expression of the countenance, which, though it cannot well be described, is familiar to all medical men who have had much to do with fever. The facts which I have now and formerly stated, led me, at my first visit, to consider the case as one of fever, and to intimate that opinion to the family. I was present at the *post mortem* examination, and I think what I then saw confirms the correctness of my opinion as to the nature of the disease. I certainly do not think that the appearances found on dissection tend to show that I formed a wrong opinion of what the disease was. I think, on the other hand, that the appearances corroborate my original view. Such inflammation and ulceration as were found in this case are very often met with in fever. With permission of the court I will, in illustration of my statement, read the following passage from Dr. Watson's standard work on the Practice of Medicine. "Now the alterations I have last been sketching—the thickening, redness, tumefaction, and ulceration or sloughing of the glands of Peyer, and also of the solitary glands—are so common in fever, particularly in some epidemics, that many pathologists are of opinion that fever is essentially inflammation of these glands. But this I am sure is an error," &c.\* I agree with Dr. Watson in thinking it erroneous to consider fever as "essentially inflammation of these glands:" but the fact that the opinion is entertained by many shows how very common this kind of inflammation is in fever.

*By Mr. Bushell.*—I did not prescribe the salt of morphia by weight. The solution of the hydrochlorate of morphia of the Edinburgh Pharmacopœia was what I ordered. It is always kept ready made. The supply from which the deceased had 12 minims has been administered to many patients in various doses. It is not an unusual preparation to employ. Unlike the tincture of opium, it is uniform in its strength: but, speaking generally, the two preparations may be considered as equal, drop for drop.

EMMA PETO, servant of Mr. Dallett.—I went to Dr. Cormack's Dispensary to fetch medicine, and received two bottles from his assistant; which I gave in the same state as I received them to Miss Maria Dallett. I subsequently received another bottle, and afterwards three pills. I saw the assistant make up the medicine. The label on the pill-box, was one to be taken every night; but he told me verbally that one was to be taken every hour. I returned to him immediately with the pills, and he changed the label according to his verbal directions.

*By Mr. Bushell.*—The assistant said when I came back with the pills, that the error was only in the direction. It was the eldest Miss Dallett who sent me back with the pills. She did so because the written directions were different from what Dr. Cormack said about the pills to her. I only saw the assistant weigh one of the articles which he used for the pills.

\* Lectures on the Principles and Practice of Physic. By Thomas Watson, M.D. Vol. II. p. 688. London: 1843.



*By a Juror.*—I did not say to any one that there was dissatisfaction in the family at the effects of the medicine given by Mr. Farmer. I am sure of this.

HENRY HICKS, dispensing assistant to Dr. Cormack.—I was in practice prior to the act of 1815, and have had great experience in compounding medicines. I am fifty-four years of age. [Dr. Cormack's prescriptions were read over and identified by witness.] I dispensed everything with the most perfect accuracy. I am quite confident that I did. I omitted the mucilage, as it was not necessary to constitute a proper mass. I weighed both the opium and the henbane. I made no error in dispensing. I *verbally* directed a pill to be taken every hour; but *in writing* I substituted the word "night" for "hour." This mistake was rectified two minutes after it was made. It arose probably from my asking the girl about deceased. The servant came back with the pills in consequence of this error being noticed.

*By Mr. Bushell.*—I did not suppose that the ingredients ordered for the three pills were to be made into one pill. The pills in size resembled the heads of blanket-pins. I weighed both ingredients. The extract being sticky, was weighed on a bit of paper, another bit of paper being placed in the opposite scale, in the usual way.

DANIEL WANE, M.D., Putney.—On Wednesday, the 7th inst., I was sent for by Dr. Cormack to Mr. Dallett's a little before seven o'clock in the morning. I found the deceased sitting on a chair in a state of stupor. I made an examination of her state. Dr. Cormack told me that she was probably labouring under narcotism; though the quantity of medicine that had been administered was very small to produce such an effect. I co-operated with him in his treatment, on his representations, and suggested an additional emetic of twenty grains of sulphate of zinc, having been informed that a similar one had been previously administered. Neither of these emetics took effect. From what I was told, I conceived the treatment to be the best that could be adopted. The symptoms were such as might have arisen from an administration of opium. I applied a large sinapism to the abdomen, and used every means to rouse her. Strong coffee was given to her; she was loudly spoken to, and moved about the room. I also had her slapped, and pinched, and her nostrils tickled. Dr. C. had also used similar measures to rouse her before I did. I irritated the fauces with a feather. Dr. Cormack stated that very little opium had been administered internally; and thought the symptoms had been occasioned by the external application. I am not sure if Mr. Shillito assisted in the rousing. After the death, Dr. Cormack spoke of cholera. I think it was in a room, or when walking up the street after the decease that cholera was talked of. I am quite sure Dr. C. named cholera. [Here Dr. Cormack remarked that what he had said regarding cholera was *after the death*, and he believed to this effect—"that the nature of the stools, and the sudden collapse and death, were suggestive of cholera; that in any



case the symptoms justified the treatment by opium ;” but that the case was somewhat obscure, and would remain so till dissection.]

*By Mr. Bushell.*—The symptoms might have arisen from morbid or medicinal action. Cerebral congestion and peritonitis are frequently co-existent. It is impossible for me to say whether death would have resulted whatever treatment had been adopted. [The witness here handed in the *post-mortem* examination, signed by himself, Mr. Shillito, Dr. Shillito, Dr. Willis, Dr. Cormack, and Mr. Bushell. Besides the medical gentlemen who signed, there were present Mr. Thomson, (assistant to Mr. Shillito,) Mr. Farmer, and a nurse.]

POST-MORTEM EXAMINATION MADE JULY 10, 1847, HALF-PAST THREE, P.M.

*External Appearances.*—Integuments of the abdomen of a somewhat greenish hue, from decomposition ; there was some lividity of the back, arms, neck, and trunk ; the articulations of the upper extremities were flaccid ; there was rigidity of the trunk and lower extremities ; no emaciation existed ; the general habit was slender ; the mammæ were well developed ; there was hair on the pubes, and under the axilla.

*Head.*—The vessels of the dura mater were turgid, and, when cut, there was free effusion of blood ; there was very great congestion of the vessels of the pia mater ; a very slight degree of subarachnoid effusion was observed ; the consistence of the encephalon was tolerably firm. On dividing the vessels at the base of the brain, there was a copious flow of blood, mixed with fetid air. Numerous bloody points were seen on making a section of both hemispheres. There was less than the usual quantity of fluid in the lateral ventricles, and this effusion was stained with blood ; the choroid plexus and internal surface of the ventricles were congested. The base of the brain was next examined : there was general congestion of the vessels ; the encephalon was very carefully examined in every part, and it was found not to present any further appearance of disease.

*Chest.*—On opening the left pleural cavity, about two ounces of bloody serum were seen ; there was no fluid in the right cavity ; general adhesions of old standing existed between the pleura pulmonalis and pleura costalis of the right side ; cadaveric congestion of the posterior part of both lungs existed ; there was very little serum in the pericardium, which was healthy.

*Abdomen.*—The intestines, generally, were distended with gas ; the small intestines in various parts were of a bright red and blotched appearance, which appearance presented itself in a more marked degree when the intestines were raised ; adhesions from bands of a very recently effused coagulable lymph were observed, and in one part the intestine was coated with coagulable lymph ; a small quantity of turbid, bloody fluid was found in the lower part of the abdominal cavity ; the redness of the small intestines was



more remarkable towards the lower portions. On slitting open the small intestines, a very marked congested, red state was noticed on many parts of the mucous membrane—the result or evidence of inflammation. The glands of Peyer and the solitary glands were of unusual size and distinctness. This unnatural state increased as the great intestine was approached, so that the mucous membrane of the upper extremity of the small intestine, to the extent of ten or twelve inches, appeared thickened; this portion of intestine was also the seat of several distinct ulcerations. The mucous membrane of the ileo-cæcal valve was red, and much thickened; the mucous membrane of the large intestines (through their course) was in a state indicating congestion and inflammation; the peritoneal coat of the large intestines was natural; the liver was healthy, and the gall-bladder was distended with bile; the spleen was larger than natural; the kidneys were healthy; the stomach, externally, was of a reddish colour, and internally of the same hue, partly owing to congestion with blood, and partly dependent on (sanguineous?) staining. The stomach contained about an ounce of fluid. The intestines contained little but air.

D. WANE, M.D.

CHARLES SHILLITO, JUNIOR.

R. WILLIS, M.D.

JOHN ROSE CORMACK, M.D.

FREDERICK BUSHELL, L.A.C.

CHARLES SHILLITO, M.D.

[The report having been read, and the various signatures identified, the examination of witness was resumed.]

From the appearances described in our report, I am of opinion that death arose from peritonitis, together with inflammation and ulceration of the mucous membrane of the bowels, and congestion of the brain; these were most probably occasioned by fever.—[The Coroner here read the evidence of Dr. Cormack, in reference to the whole case, as Dr. Wane had not heard it all given, or read.]—Under the condition of peritonitis and inflammation of the bowels, the use of opium is most judicious. It is a general mode of treatment in such a case. There was certainly not more than a proper quantity of opium used. I am satisfied, from the facts of the case, that the death was not, in any manner, occasioned by the opium. I do not conceive that the liniment produced the stupor. I think the opiate treatment was judicious, and such as a skilful person, with an adequate knowledge of his profession, would adopt. It was not a rash treatment; it was a cautious exhibition of opium. Dr. Cormack said he believed it to be a case of fever; and the appearances have corroborated that opinion. I think the opiate treatment undoubtedly judicious in that state of abdominal affection. I think the congestion of the brain was an associated condition with the abdominal inflammation. I should not have looked for inflammation of the brain more than congestion. I have no doubt that the depres-



sion was not produced by the opium, but by the disease. I am perfectly satisfied that the death was natural, and occasioned by the causes which I have before mentioned. The depression, I am now certain, was the effect of disease, and not of opium.

[This witness was cross-examined at some length by Mr. Bushell, Dr. Shillito &c., (amidst a little confusion), but nothing different from, or additional to, the above, seemed to be elicited.]

CHARLES SHILLITO, jun., Surgeon, Putney.—I joined in the *post-mortem* examination, and from what I then said, and from all the circumstances which I have heard detailed in evidence, I am of opinion, that the cause of death was peritonitis and inflammation of the mucous membrane of the bowels. I think the congestion of the brain was not occasioned by the opium; the quantity of opium, in every way, would not have caused death. I am satisfied that it was wholly a natural death; and I think the views of Dr. Cormack as to its being occasioned by "fever," are correct. I agree with Dr. Wane in his opinions.

*By a Juror.*—I think "that the treatment was judicious, skilful, and cautious, and such as a gentleman, with an adequate knowledge of his profession, would have adopted." I speak of the case only from the appearances on dissection, and from the evidence;—for deceased was moribund when I saw her first, and died in half an hour from that time.

[At this stage of the proceedings, several of the Jury expressed themselves perfectly satisfied; but, at Dr. Cormack's request, Dr. Willis, of Barnes, was also examined.]

ROBERT WILLIS, M.D.—I attended the *post-mortem* examination, and fully agree with Dr. Wane and Mr. Shillito as to the cause of the death. In my opinion, the opium was most judiciously and discreetly used. I think that when Dr. Cormack first saw deceased, the use of opium afforded her the only chance she had of recovery. Under the opinion that the stupor might have been produced by the effects of a narcotic, I think the "rousing" was judicious; and I am convinced that it had no injurious effect on the young lady. I think that Dr. Cormack was not only authorised, but required to use these means, and that he would have done wrong if he had not done so. I have seen a case within the last month, where a party died under nearly similar symptoms, although no opium had been exhibited. I think that the treatment was judicious, skilful, and cautious, and such as a medical man, with an adequate knowledge of his profession, would have adopted.

The CORONER briefly charged the Jury, stating that there were two questions for their consideration—*first*, whether the deceased died from natural causes, or whether her death was in any manner accelerated by the treatment adopted; and, *secondly*, whether Dr. Cormack's treatment was such as a medical gentleman, acting with due caution and without culpable rashness, would have adopted.

The Jury, after a brief consultation, unanimously found—

“That the Deceased died a Natural Death from peritonitis ; and we are of opinion that the Treatment of Dr. Cormack was skilful, judicious, and cautious, and such as a medical gentleman with an adequate knowledge of his profession, would have adopted.”

In announcing the verdict, the CORONER, addressing Dr. Cormack, said, that he had great pleasure in stating, that the unanimous finding of the Jury exonerated him from all blame ; and that he hoped that it would silence for ever any unfavourable reports which had got into circulation. He thanked the Jury for their attendance, and then closed the Court.



The first, after a brief introduction, is a general survey of the  
 history of the country, from the first settlement to the present  
 time. The second part is a description of the country, its  
 natural resources, and its present state of civilization. The  
 third part is a description of the people, their habits, and  
 their mode of life. The fourth part is a description of the  
 government, and the laws which regulate the country. The  
 fifth part is a description of the commerce, and the  
 industry of the country. The sixth part is a description of  
 the military, and the naval forces of the country. The  
 seventh part is a description of the education, and the  
 sciences of the country. The eighth part is a description of  
 the arts, and the manufactures of the country. The ninth  
 part is a description of the religion, and the moral  
 state of the country. The tenth part is a description of  
 the climate, and the seasons of the country. The eleventh  
 part is a description of the diseases, and the medical  
 practice of the country. The twelfth part is a description  
 of the agriculture, and the husbandry of the country. The  
 thirteenth part is a description of the mining, and the  
 metallurgy of the country. The fourteenth part is a  
 description of the commerce, and the trade of the country.  
 The fifteenth part is a description of the navigation,  
 and the shipping of the country. The sixteenth part is a  
 description of the public works, and the improvements  
 of the country. The seventeenth part is a description of  
 the public buildings, and the monuments of the country.  
 The eighteenth part is a description of the public  
 institutions, and the charities of the country. The  
 nineteenth part is a description of the public  
 offices, and the magistracy of the country. The  
 twentieth part is a description of the public  
 revenue, and the finances of the country. The  
 twenty-first part is a description of the public  
 debt, and the interest of the country. The  
 twenty-second part is a description of the public  
 credit, and the confidence of the country. The  
 twenty-third part is a description of the public  
 opinion, and the sentiment of the country. The  
 twenty-fourth part is a description of the public  
 spirit, and the patriotism of the country. The  
 twenty-fifth part is a description of the public  
 glory, and the honor of the country. The  
 twenty-sixth part is a description of the public  
 shame, and the dishonor of the country. The  
 twenty-seventh part is a description of the public  
 disgrace, and the infamy of the country. The  
 twenty-eighth part is a description of the public  
 contempt, and the scorn of the country. The  
 twenty-ninth part is a description of the public  
 derision, and the mockery of the country. The  
 thirtieth part is a description of the public  
 ridicule, and the derision of the country. The  
 thirty-first part is a description of the public  
 contempt, and the scorn of the country. The  
 thirty-second part is a description of the public  
 derision, and the mockery of the country. The  
 thirty-third part is a description of the public  
 ridicule, and the derision of the country. The  
 thirty-fourth part is a description of the public  
 contempt, and the scorn of the country. The  
 thirty-fifth part is a description of the public  
 derision, and the mockery of the country. The  
 thirty-sixth part is a description of the public  
 ridicule, and the derision of the country. The  
 thirty-seventh part is a description of the public  
 contempt, and the scorn of the country. The  
 thirty-eighth part is a description of the public  
 derision, and the mockery of the country. The  
 thirty-ninth part is a description of the public  
 ridicule, and the derision of the country. The  
 fortieth part is a description of the public  
 contempt, and the scorn of the country. The  
 forty-first part is a description of the public  
 derision, and the mockery of the country. The  
 forty-second part is a description of the public  
 ridicule, and the derision of the country. The  
 forty-third part is a description of the public  
 contempt, and the scorn of the country. The  
 forty-fourth part is a description of the public  
 derision, and the mockery of the country. The  
 forty-fifth part is a description of the public  
 ridicule, and the derision of the country. The  
 forty-sixth part is a description of the public  
 contempt, and the scorn of the country. The  
 forty-seventh part is a description of the public  
 derision, and the mockery of the country. The  
 forty-eighth part is a description of the public  
 ridicule, and the derision of the country. The  
 forty-ninth part is a description of the public  
 contempt, and the scorn of the country. The  
 fiftieth part is a description of the public  
 derision, and the mockery of the country.

# APPENDIX

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. OF THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER II. OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER III. OF THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER IV. OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER V. OF THE COMMERCE OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER VI. OF THE MILITARY AND NAVAL FORCES OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER VII. OF THE EDUCATION AND SCIENCES OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER VIII. OF THE ARTS AND MANUFACTURES OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER IX. OF THE RELIGION AND MORAL STATE OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER X. OF THE CLIMATE AND SEASONS OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XI. OF THE DISEASES AND MEDICAL PRACTICE OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XII. OF THE AGRICULTURE AND HUSBANDRY OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XIII. OF THE MINING AND METALLURGY OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XIV. OF THE COMMERCE AND TRADE OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XV. OF THE NAVIGATION AND SHIPPING OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XVI. OF THE PUBLIC WORKS AND IMPROVEMENTS OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XVII. OF THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND MONUMENTS OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XVIII. OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND CHARITIES OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XIX. OF THE PUBLIC OFFICES AND MAGISTRACY OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XX. OF THE PUBLIC REVENUE AND FINANCES OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXI. OF THE PUBLIC DEBT AND INTEREST OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXII. OF THE PUBLIC CREDIT AND CONFIDENCE OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXIII. OF THE PUBLIC OPINION AND SENTIMENT OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXIV. OF THE PUBLIC SPIRIT AND PATRIOTISM OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXV. OF THE PUBLIC GLORY AND HONOR OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXVI. OF THE PUBLIC SHAME AND DISHONOR OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXVII. OF THE PUBLIC DISGRACE AND INFAMY OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXVIII. OF THE PUBLIC CONTEMPT AND SCORN OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXIX. OF THE PUBLIC DERISION AND MOCKERY OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXX. OF THE PUBLIC RIDICULE AND DERISION OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXXI. OF THE PUBLIC CONTEMPT AND SCORN OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXXII. OF THE PUBLIC DERISION AND MOCKERY OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXXIII. OF THE PUBLIC RIDICULE AND DERISION OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXXIV. OF THE PUBLIC CONTEMPT AND SCORN OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXXV. OF THE PUBLIC DERISION AND MOCKERY OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXXVI. OF THE PUBLIC RIDICULE AND DERISION OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXXVII. OF THE PUBLIC CONTEMPT AND SCORN OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXXVIII. OF THE PUBLIC DERISION AND MOCKERY OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XXXIX. OF THE PUBLIC RIDICULE AND DERISION OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XL. OF THE PUBLIC CONTEMPT AND SCORN OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XLI. OF THE PUBLIC DERISION AND MOCKERY OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XLII. OF THE PUBLIC RIDICULE AND DERISION OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XLIII. OF THE PUBLIC CONTEMPT AND SCORN OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XLIV. OF THE PUBLIC DERISION AND MOCKERY OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XLV. OF THE PUBLIC RIDICULE AND DERISION OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XLVI. OF THE PUBLIC CONTEMPT AND SCORN OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XLVII. OF THE PUBLIC DERISION AND MOCKERY OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XLVIII. OF THE PUBLIC RIDICULE AND DERISION OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER XLIX. OF THE PUBLIC CONTEMPT AND SCORN OF THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER L. OF THE PUBLIC DERISION AND MOCKERY OF THE COUNTRY



## A P P E N D I X.

### MANIFESTATIONS OF THE MEDICAL JUROR AND THE DRUGGIST.

---

- No. I.—PARAGRAPHS AND LETTERS FROM THE MORNING POST.  
No. II.—LETTERS FROM THE LANCET.  
No. III.—EDITORIAL ARTICLES FROM THE LANCET.



1844

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE  
THE PREGNANT  
AND THE PREGNANT

APPENDIX

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE MEDICAL JUDOR  
AND THE PREGNANT  
The first part of the Appendix contains a list of the names of the authors of the papers which have been selected for publication in this volume. The names are arranged in alphabetical order, and the titles of the papers are given in full. The second part of the Appendix contains a list of the names of the authors of the papers which have been selected for publication in this volume. The names are arranged in alphabetical order, and the titles of the papers are given in full.

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE MEDICAL JUDOR  
AND THE PREGNANT  
The first part of the Appendix contains a list of the names of the authors of the papers which have been selected for publication in this volume. The names are arranged in alphabetical order, and the titles of the papers are given in full. The second part of the Appendix contains a list of the names of the authors of the papers which have been selected for publication in this volume. The names are arranged in alphabetical order, and the titles of the papers are given in full.



# APPENDIX.

---

## MANIFESTATIONS OF THE "MEDICAL JUROR" AND THE DRUGGIST.

---

### NO. I.—PARAGRAPHS AND LETTERS REPRINTED FROM THE MORNING POST.

---

#### INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

AT the suggestion of a friend I wrote to the *Morning Post* to give the *verdict of the jury* in substitution for what the "Medical Juror" promulgated as the "correct verdict;" and to contradict an assertion of the same person that I had had "*the sole medical charge of the case from beginning to end.*" My rectification of these misstatements, the Medical Juror terms "advertising my medical skill and abilities in the public prints."

The correspondence, as well as the paragraphs which occasioned it, are now reprinted by me, at the request of several friends, to whom the Medical Juror's last letter was sent in the form of a handbill, on the same day on which it appeared in the *Post*. It is now displayed in Mr. Farmer's shop window.

I will not discuss that handbill, or any of the proceedings of the coalition who have written and circulated so many fabulous statements. The character of the authors is depicted in their own writings: so that every one is left to form from them his own estimate of the manifestations of the Medical Juror and the druggist.

---

#### FIRST PARAGRAPH IN THE MORNING POST.

##### *Suspected case of Cholera at Putney.*

Yesterday, Mr. William Carter held an inquest at the Queen's Head, Putney, on view of the body of a young lady named Sophia Dallett, whose death had taken place a few days previously.

\* This paragraph appeared, more or less curtailed and modified, in some weekly papers.



The excitement in Putney and its neighbourhood had been very great, rumours of a very unpleasant character having for some days past been circulated, both with reference to the medical gentlemen engaged, and the deceased, whose parents hold a highly-respectable position in the town. Among the accusations broadly made, both in the inquest-room and out of doors, was, that the grossest mismanagement had been exhibited by the medical gentlemen who attended the deceased lady; and another rumour prevailed that the lady had died from a violent attack of cholera. The inquiry excited much interest, the inquiry being promoted by the resident surgeons of the neighbourhood, who, it appeared, had used their best influence to make it a great medical case.

Dr. Willis, Dr. Shillito, Dr. Wane, Dr. Freeman, and other eminent physicians, were present. Dr. Bushell applied to watch the case on behalf of the relatives of the deceased. Mr. Martin, barrister-at-law, was foreman of the jury.

Dr. Wane, who had made a *post-mortem* examination of the body, was examined.—When he first saw the deceased, he found that she was labouring under the effects of poison. In order to relieve her, he prescribed an emetic of twenty ounces of the sulphate of zinc, which produced the desired effect. When he first saw the deceased, he thought opium had been administered—a supposition which was afterwards confirmed, as he had ascertained that pills, consisting of opium and henbane, had been prescribed.

The Coroner (to Dr. Wane)—After making yourself acquainted with the facts of the case, to what do you believe is the death of this young person to be attributed?

Dr. Wane—I believe to an attack of cholera. (Great sensation.)

In answer to questions from the Coroner and jury, Dr. Wane expressed his conviction that Dr. Cormack's treatment of the patient was "cautious and judicious;" and the jury in returning a verdict of "NATURAL DEATH," recorded that conviction.—*From the Morning Post of July 15th, 1847.*

\* \* \* The above absurd paragraph furnished a pretext to a surgeon in Putney, to write the following extraordinary narrative.

SECOND PARAGRAPH FROM THE MORNING POST, BEING THE  
FIRST BY THE MEDICAL JUROR.

*The Alleged case of Cholera at Putney.*

It appears from a communication we have received from a medical gentleman at Putney,\* who was one of the jurors on the late inquest, that the evidence taken before the Coroner touching the death of Miss Sophia Dallett has been most incorrectly reported, not only by ourselves, but by several of our contemporaries.

\* Mr. Whiteman, Surgeon, Putney.



In an article inserted in our impression of Thursday, the 15th instant, it is inferred that the resident surgeons had too officiously busied themselves in promoting the inquiry, in order to make it "a great medical case;" and further, that Dr. Wane and other medical gentlemen, parties who, it appears, had taken no part whatever in the actual medical treatment of the deceased, had exhibited "the grossest mismanagement" of the case. Another incorrect statement in our report is, that an emetic of *twenty ounces!* of sulphate of zinc had been administered to the deceased. We are happy in being able to fully correct these several misstatements, by directing attention to the following facts, as elicited at the Coroner's inquest:—

1. That none of the medical gentlemen, with the exception of Dr. Cormack, the professional attendant on the deceased, entertained the least suspicion that the patient had laboured under the symptoms of cholera, so that Dr. Wane did not make any such statement as that "he believed cholera to have been the cause of death."

2. That the resident surgeons could not be said to have "promoted" the inquiry, nor to have used any extraordinary exertions to make it "a great medical case," since it was solely through a letter of Dr. Cormack to the Coroner, written upon his own responsibility, that the inquest was ordered to take place.

3. That it was Dr. Cormack, and not Dr. Wane, who acknowledged to having committed an error of judgment, in mistaking the effects of disease for narcotism by opium.

4. That it was *twenty grains* and not *twenty ounces* of sulphate of zinc that was administered to the deceased as an emetic.

5. That no rumours of an unpleasant character, imputing gross mismanagement to the medical gentlemen called in by Dr. Cormack, have been known to prevail at Putney.

6. That if such rumours had prevailed, neither Dr. Wane nor Mr. Shillito, nor indeed any other medical gentleman concerned, could be fairly charged with faults of either omission or commission in reference to the treatment of deceased, since *Dr. Cormack had the sole medical charge of the case from beginning to end*, and sent for the advice and assistance of the two gentlemen above named, at a period when the case was deemed by him all but hopeless, and when the patient, in fact, was *in articulo mortis*.

It may be remarked that the attendance of Dr. Wane and Mr. Shillito was an act of kindness to Dr. Cormack, and that, therefore, these gentlemen have the greater reason to complain of the imputation cast upon them by the paragraph in question, of the gross mismanagement of the case on their parts.

One or two of our contemporaries, we understand, in making up their report from several sources, have done considerable injustice to a Mr. Farmer, a chemist, at Putney, by attributing the death of Miss Dallett to some domestic remedies (simple aperients) which were purchased of him by the family of deceased, and administered by them, upon their own responsibility, a few days prior to the calling in of regular medical aid. The chemist, as appears to us, has been fully exonerated from blame by the following statement



made by Dr. Cormack himself at the late inquiry:—"I did not convey, nor do I wish to convey, the idea that the disease under which I found the patient labouring, arose from improper medicines procured from the chemist."

Dr. Wane also gave similar testimony. The correct verdict was, that "Deceased died a natural death from peritonitis and inflammation of the bowels."—*Post*, July 28.

---

DR. CORMACK'S NOTE IN REFERENCE TO THE TWO PARAGRAPHS ABOVE QUOTED.

*To the Editor of the Morning Post.*

SIR,—Two paragraphs have appeared in your paper referring to the recent inquest at Putney, which tend to mystify what a two days' patient investigation by an intelligent jury had, I thought, made a very plain matter. In neither of the paragraphs to which I refer is the verdict correctly given, and all the essential particulars of the case are omitted. In these circumstances I think I may, as one of the parties interested in the investigation, (and at whose solicitation it was undertaken by the Coroner,) request your insertion of this note as a necessary supplement to what you have already said on the subject.

The deceased became my patient *only twenty-three hours before death*, having for some days previously been treated by a druggist. When I was called in, as dissection revealed, the time for doing good had gone past, but I did all that could be done; or, as Dr. Willis, of Barnes, stated in his examination before the Coroner, my treatment "afforded the young lady the only chance she had of recovery." The following is the deliverance of the jury after a patient and protracted investigation, embracing the information derived from an anatomical inspection of the body by competent physicians and surgeons. They unanimously found:—"That the deceased died a natural death from peritonitis; and we are of opinion that the treatment of Dr. Cormack was skilful, judicious, and cautious, and such as a medical gentleman with an adequate knowledge of his profession would have adopted."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant.

JOHN ROSE CORMACK, M.D.

*Essex House, Putney, July 28, 1847.*

*Morning Post, July 30.*

---



On the 7th of August, the following letter from the writer of the second paragraph, (the "Medical Juror") appeared in the Morning Post.

THE MEDICAL JUROR'S FIRST LETTER.

*To the Editor of the Morning Post.*

SIR,—I have just had my attention drawn to the letter of Dr. Cormack, inserted in your last Friday's impression, strangely complaining of an attempt on my part to mystify the facts connected with the late inquiry at Putney. Since I merely supplied you with authentic data, by which you were enabled to fully and completely correct an unfounded report, that had reflected most unfairly upon some of Dr. Cormack's professional brethren, I am a little curious to know in what part of the statement furnished by me to the "Morning Post," the Doctor detects any mystification. Viewing as every one must do, the deliverance of a coroner's jury, so far only as relates to the cause of death, to be essentially the verdict, I must still contend that the return of the jury was correctly stated by me in the instance complained of.

The complimentary *addendum* to the verdict, as bearing in no way upon the points I desired to establish in my late communication, I certainly did omit; but in that omission, I may safely assert, no one concerned in this matter, with the exception of Dr. Cormack, has been able to discover the least attempt to mystify.

If there has been any leaning to mystery in the matter, it is surely Dr. Cormack alone who is deserving of censure, inasmuch as he most unwarrantably, nay, most ungenerously suffered your incorrect report, and the equally incorrect reports of other papers, to prevail for days without taking any steps whatever to contradict them; a neglect which I can assure the Doctor has been much censured by those of his professional brethren who have had good reason to complain of the unjust imputations cast upon them by the reports in question.

Another very mystic feature in Dr. Cormack's explanation is the charge which he reiterates against the chemist, when, in his sworn testimony, we find him saying, "I did not convey, nor do I wish to convey, the idea that the disease under which I found the patient labouring arose from improper medicines procured from the chemist." Whether the mystery which hangs over those two very opposite opinions of the same gentleman can be explained away, must be left to Dr. Cormack to determine, but they certainly savour of no very nice sense of justice.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THE MEDICAL JUROR ON  
THE LATE INQUEST.

*Putney, August 4.*

\* \* \* In reference to the above I addressed the following



letter to the Morning Post. Other papers containing similar accounts of the inquest were sent to me, but I noticed none of them, as they all seemed to proceed from the same quarter.

DR. CORMACK'S SECOND NOTE.

*To the Editor of the Morning Post.*

SIR—My attention has this day been directed to a second communication, in your journal of the 7th inst., from “The Putney Medical Juror.”

In my former note, correcting *some* of his errors, I stated that I had not “the sole medical charge of the deceased from the beginning to the end of her case,”—*having been only called in twenty three hours before death.* The previous treatment was conducted by the druggist, and occupied some days. Secondly, I gave the correct verdict, which was unanimously and unhesitatingly returned by the Jury; and to which “the Medical Juror” was therefore himself a party. In the statement which was furnished to you by “the Medical Juror,” *that portion of the verdict which declared my treatment to have been “skilful, judicious, and cautious” was suppressed, and “certain errors of judgment” were imputed to me.* This has appeared to others besides me as uncandid; and it will be hard to convince the public, that my exoneration by the Jury was a mere “compliment,” the suppression of which was justifiable in what was furnished to you as “the correct verdict.”

“The Medical Juror” does not rest satisfied with concealing who had the “sole medical charge of the case” when skill might have availed, and of suppressing my exoneration by the Jury; but he even makes it appear by inuendo, that I testified in favour of the treatment adopted by his friend the druggist. I was not asked at the inquest whether Mr. Farmer’s medicines and neglect of other therapeutic means were proper or improper. In answer to two questions by the Coroner I said, “I did not convey” (to the family); and “I do not now wish to convey the impression that the disease *arose* from improper medicines furnished by Mr. Farmer.” It was because the disease *had arisen* that the druggist was consulted; it was because it had *progressed unfavourably* that he was again consulted; and it was (to use the words of the evidence of the sister of the deceased) because she was “*very low*,” that I was first hurriedly sent for twenty-three hours before death, at a time when—as dissection revealed—nothing could have saved her. I have no objection to Mr. Farmer being defended; and till he and his equally indiscreet friends deemed it necessary to misrepresent me in their attempt to make out a case for him, I refrained from expressing, publicly or privately, my sentiments regarding his conduct. I cannot now, however, allow my evidence to be perverted, so as to make



it appear, that I testified at the inquest in any way in favour of his treatment. Had I been asked, I would have said, that no one—be he of the highest eminence and skill—could, except by pure accident, have prescribed proper treatment for Miss Sophia Dallett by merely (like Mr. Farmer) “minutely inquiring” the symptoms at a third party.

I have yet to learn that it was necessary or proper for me to defend my “professional brethren” from any imputations cast on them; and perhaps their self-constituted champion, (“the Medical Juror” himself,) like Tom Thumb, raised this giant, that he might have the glory of killing him. The paragraph about “cholera” and “the great medical case” was as much directed against me as against any one else. I did not see it till many days after publication; and never fancied it deserving of notice, as utter absurdity was stamped upon almost every part of it.

Believing that the present statement, and the verdict of the jury, (as *correctly given in my letter*, in your paper of the 30th ult.,) will satisfy you and all whose opinion I value, I hold myself excused from noticing any farther communication from “the Medical Juror,” or his friend the druggist.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN ROSE CORMACK, M.D.

*Essex House, Putney, August 9.*

*Post, Aug. 11.*

---

\* \* \* The following is the Medical Juror’s reply, which simultaneously with its appearance in the Post, on the 24th of August, was circulated in Putney among all classes of the community, as a handbill, and is now displayed as a shop-window advertisement by Mr. Farmer.

#### THE MEDICAL JUROR’S SECOND LETTER.

*To the Editor of the Morning Post.*

SIR,—I had really looked upon Dr. Cormack, and the method he has recently adopted to advertise his medical skill and abilities in the public prints, of such trifling importance, that his angry rejoinder to my last letter, inserted in your journal some days since has, until this day, escaped my notice.

I can, of course, have no sort of objection to the doctor making himself popular in any way; but I cannot suffer him, or any other person, to slander me with impunity; nor can I permit him (even by inuendo, of having “raised a giant that I might have the glory of killing him”) to charge me with being the actual reporter of the misstatements which originally appeared in your journal, touching the above inquiry.\*

\* The giant which I supposed the “Medical Juror” had raised, that he might



I apprehend, sir, that you must be fully aware from whom you received your report of the late inquest, and could, therefore, readily acquit me of so vile and dishonourable an act as that of which I am accused.

And here I must beg to remind your correspondent that I am rather a friend of justice than of the chemist individually, never having, before this occurrence, exchanged half a dozen words with Mr. Farmer upon any subject whatever. I would have the doctor also understand that I am as much opposed to druggists' prescribing, medical retailing, and quackery of every description, as himself. I have for some years written against it, and lectured against it; and I am, therefore, the last person to uphold it, or to associate myself with it, in the manner the doctor would have the public believe I am now doing.

There are a few other points in Dr. Cormack's last letter that I feel, in a measure, called upon to notice very briefly, since I do not deem them to be strictly in accordance with truth and facts. They are:—

1. Your correspondent's insinuation, that *the druggist's treatment of the late Miss Dallett was extended over a period of many days,\** is not only untrue, but most uncandid. The family have this morning assured me, that the chemist was applied to but *twice* for their deceased relative, viz., once on the Sunday, and once on the Monday following. On both these occasions, I must do Mr. Farmer the justice to say, that I think the most rational remedies, all circumstances considered, were sent the deceased, and in this opinion I am borne out by that of my professional brethren who were examined at the inquest. Of two evils, it may be asked, which is the least? amateur practice, or chemists' suggesting? Mr. Farmer satisfactorily explains the meaning of the term "suggesting," as used by him at the inquest, by stating that he is in the habit of pointing out what he conceives the most efficient pharmaceutical preparations of popular remedies, previously indicated by the applicants. He states that he did this in the case of the late Miss Dallett.† A mercurial and an aperient were indicated, and he sent the mildest form of both, making the most minute inquiries (much to his credit) with a view of ascertaining whether there really existed anything more than the slight functional disorder suspected. If a druggist does not go beyond this in his practice of medicine, he is surely rather to be commended than censured, for preventing ignorant parties from purchasing powerful drugs with the actions of which they may be totally unacquainted.

kill, was,—his stating that the first report of the inquest which appeared in the Morning Post might injure certain medical gentlemen. I did not charge the "Medical Juror" with writing that first report—a report which, from its very absurdity, was harmless: but I said that in redressing wrongs which he fancied or alleged to be therein inflicted on two medical neighbours, he was acting as their unasked and unneeded champion.

\* This is another giant: "some" is magnified into "many days," and then the many is contradicted as "untrue and most uncandid."

† Vide the evidence of the Misses Dallett, and of Mr. Farmer.



2. The most selfish idea broached by Dr. Cormack in his last letter, I take to be that embodied in the following sentence:—"I have yet to learn that it was *necessary* or *proper* for me to defend my professional brethren from the imputions cast upon them!" Is not this strange language from a gentleman who must have been well aware that both Dr. Wane and Mr. Shillito had complained to their friends of the injurious tendency of these incorrect reports? \* Dr. Wane has just assured me that he and Mr. Shillito both thought it *proper* that Dr. Cormack should be the party to contradict them; and it was because he (Dr. Cormack) did not appear to be impressed with a proper sense of his duty, that I undertook, with the full approval of the above gentlemen, to do it for him. And this is what is ungenerously termed becoming "a self-constituted champion," as though that kind of championship was a reproach.

3. With regard to my suppression of the mere *addendum* to the verdict, I am afraid, if I now give that *addendum*, and the correct reading of the same, it will redound but very little to the Doctor's credit. From a review of all the evidence, the fair inference is, that the opinion of the Jury (it was at least mine), as to the Doctor's "skilful, judicious, and cautious treatment," applied *alone* to the administration of the opium for the relief of the abdominal inflammation. Had the treatment of the mere creatures of the Doctor's imagination (*the supposed narcotism and the supposed cholera*) been designated as cautious, &c., it would not only have appeared ridiculously fulsome, but positively contrary to the medical testimony. No one but the Doctor could imagine that the Jury intended to compliment him upon an error of judgment that gave rise to so much unnecessary torture of the poor patient. †

4. All the facts which I furnished you in my first communication remain unrefuted, and in all their original integrity. I re-assert them as facts, and I defy Dr. Cormack, or any one else, to gainsay them.

Will the Doctor be now satisfied? It appears that he has determined, and, perhaps, wisely so, to "hold himself excused from any more communications." Although this oft-repeated resolve is a

\* Excepting from the above statement of the "Medical Juror," I have not learned that Dr. Wane and Mr. Shillito "had complained to their friends" of my not having anticipated that individual in contradicting the "incorrect reports." I must have better evidence of this, than the mere assertion of the "Medical Juror," before I can believe these gentlemen to be capable of pursuing such a course. As I was never asked by them to notice the absurd paragraph—as the "Medical Juror," had actually written his defence of them (or what he called his "correct data"), before I knew of the existence of the incorrect paragraph—is it possible to believe that the alleged "complaints" were made? Mr. Shillito and Dr. Wane had no reason to doubt my willingness to co-operate with them in making conjointly or separately any rectification of the "incorrect reports;" and how could they make "complaints" of my not doing so till I had been apprised of their wishes, and had refused to comply with them?

† Vide Mr. Martin's Letter to Dr. Cormack, p. 28.

The Coroner addressed Dr. Cormack in these words when he announced the unanimous finding of the Jury: "I have much pleasure in intimating this verdict by which you are exonerated from all blame; and by which I trust any unfavourable reports now in circulation, may be for ever silenced."



matter of as little importance to me as to the public. I cannot avoid remarking that it is a somewhat inflated way of getting over a difficulty—

“As who should say—I am Sir Oracle,  
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark.”

Although his (Dr. Cormack's) letter has provoked these remarks, he may be assured that I bear him no malice or hatred. I take all his satire in good part. I even consider him a most valiant knight to engage with—but when I, “*Tom Thumb*,” (surely the Doctor forgot himself when he descended to such a vulgar means of detraction as the calling of names!) oppose *facts* to his *mere words*, I would have him recollect that the Samsonian weapon with which he appears to fight will, in the long run, stand but a sorry chance against the two-edged sword of truth and justice, though that sword be wielded by a *pigmy*.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
THE MEDICAL JUROR.

Putney, August 23.

\* \* Of course I did not reply to this last manifesto. Many copies of this letter in its separate form were sent to me by patients and friends to whom Mr. Farmer had addressed it. None of them almost had seen or heard of the previous letters in the *Morning Post*, and some were curious to learn what had formed the excuse for issuing the slandering missive.

My friend, Mr. Martin, in transmitting to me his copy, wrote the following letter which I print with his permission.

LETTER TO DR. CORMACK FROM RICHARD MARTIN, ESQ.,  
BARRISTER-AT-LAW, ONE OF THE JURY.

Putney, 25th August, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,

An envelope, directed to me, and bearing on the corner the signature of “J. Farmer,” was left at my house this morning. It contained a printed letter, addressed to “The Editor of the *Morning Post*,” and signed, “The Medical Juror,” which I now enclose.

I should not in any manner have noticed that document, but for the following paragraph contained therein:—“*From a review of all the evidence, the fair inference is, that the opinion of the jury (it was at least mine), as to the Doctor's ‘skilful, judicious, and cautious treatment,’ applied alone to the administration of the opium for the relief of the abdominal inflammation. Had the treatment of the mere creatures of the Doctor's imagination (the supposed narcotism, and the supposed cholera,) been designated as cautious, &c., it would not only have appeared ridiculously fulsome, but positively contrary to the medical testimony. No one but the Doctor could*



*imagine that the jury intended to compliment him upon an error of judgment that gave rise to so much unnecessary torture of the poor patient."*

Now, as one of the jury, I feel it necessary to protest against its being said, that I intended to find anything different from the plain and ordinary acceptation of the words in which the verdict was couched. We found *in the precise words of the medical witnesses*, that your conduct was "skilful, judicious, and cautious, and such as a medical gentleman, with an adequate knowledge of his profession, would have adopted." Had I disapproved of any part of your conduct, I never could have consented to such a verdict. Dr. Wane co-operated in the rousing; Mr. Shillito, who arrived at a later stage, also approved the views under which you and Dr. Wane were acting: but I recollect being especially struck with the evidence of Dr. Willis regarding "the rousing," as well as with the decided manner in which that evidence was given.—"*I think*," said he "*the rousing was judicious, in consideration of the symptoms; and I am convinced that it had no injurious effects upon the young lady. I think that Dr. Cormack was not only authorized, but required to use these means: and that he would have done wrong had he not done so.*"

Your whole conduct was, in express terms, submitted by the Coroner, to the jury. He said, that "there were two questions for our consideration: *first*, whether the deceased died from natural causes; or, whether her death was in any manner accelerated by the treatment adopted: and *secondly*, whether Dr. Cormack's treatment was such as a medical gentleman acting with due caution, and without culpable rashness, would have adopted?" In this address of the Coroner there was no limitation: but your conduct in the affair, from beginning to end, was submitted to us. The jury unhesitatingly and unanimously returned their verdict, answering both the questions of the Coroner; and no part of that finding can be regarded as a merely "complimentary addendum." You were practically on your trial; your professional skill had been impeached; unfounded rumours had gone forth; and had I, as a juror, contented myself with simply stating the cause of death, without vindicating your character from these unwarrantable imputations, I should have felt that I had committed an act of gross injustice. The Coroner participated in this feeling; for I well recollect, that in announcing the verdict, he called you forward and said, that he had great pleasure in intimating to you, that you had been unanimously exonerated from all blame; and that he trusted any unfavourable reports in circulation would now be for ever silenced.

You are at perfect liberty to show this letter to any one, or to make any other use of it which you please.

I am,

My dear Sir,

Ever very truly yours,

RICHARD MARTIN.



## NO. II.—LETTERS FROM THE LANCET.

## MR. FARMER'S LETTER.

SIR,—As the person directly implicated by your remarks in the last number of the "Lancet," in reference to the unfortunate event recently the subject of inquiry at Putney, I feel called upon to trouble you with the following remarks, trusting to your sense of justice for their insertion; for I cannot persuade myself you can, after so personal an attack, refuse the reasonable request I make, to be allowed to defend myself through the same channel. In entering upon this detail, I am perfectly well assured that I expose myself to further censure at your hands if I mis-state even the most unimportant facts; but inasmuch as I am borne out by the family of the deceased, as well as by the medical gentlemen who gave their testimony at the inquest, I have no hesitation in asserting, plainly and distinctly, that the statements in the "Lancet," which serve as a basis to your editorial article, are at variance with the truth in very many important particulars; and the report, as a whole, garbled, incomplete, and partial.

The facts, even if correctly stated, would, in my humble opinion, apply as well to Dr. Cormack as myself. That gentleman, though a physician, is the proprietor of a druggist's shop, as like my own in appearance and objects as is possible to render it; he would be a bold man to deny this; and I will venture to assert, had any one gone to that shop before this melancholy occurrence, and asked the assistant to supply medicine for a person labouring under a supposed bilious attack, that drugs of a similar description to those supplied by me to the deceased, Miss Dallett, would have been handed over the counter with as little hesitation, and perhaps in exchange for as few pence. Will Dr. Cormack, then, or any one else, be good enough to point out to me why a mild mercurial, and an equally mild aperient, coming from one shop, should be set down as "rank poisons," and as "razors placed in the hands of suicides;" whilst out of another shop, two or three hundred yards distant, the same drugs should be deemed efficient and proper remedies for disease? I shall be told, perhaps, that the medicines in the one case being dispensed by a mere pharmacist, and in the other by a person who had the distinguished privilege of mixing salts and senna together before 1815, makes all the difference. It may be so, but common sense refuses to mark this distinction; but even without having recourse to an hypothesis, it may be remarked that there is still in the possession of Mr. Dallett an aperient mixture, prescribed and sent by Dr. Cormack, to be taken by the unfortunate deceased on the very



morning which closed her existence. If, then, medicines of this description, at the outset of a malady, when merely functional disturbance is suspected, surely the intended exhibition of a similar medicine, at a time when organic lesion ought to have been evident to a "gentleman having an adequate knowledge of his profession," must be open to strictures of a much severer character. But admitting that druggists act illegally in administering to the relief of the most simple ailments,—admitting, too, if you will, that, as a druggist, I have no right to supply even a black draught to an individual applying for the same, is it fair, is it honest, to place the whole onus of such a case as that of Miss Dallett—the mistake about the narcotism—the misdirection of the pills, &c.—upon my shoulders?

I may know but little of the practice of medicine, (as a druggist;) you seem to think I cannot possess capacity enough to embrace even the first rudiments of the science, but I flatter myself I may know sufficient to form a judgment, in common with the public, upon the possible result of a different mode of treatment, had it been pursued, in the unfortunate case that has given rise to so much discussion; that is to say, had the patient been treated, during her latter hours, for the prostration and collapse consequent upon fever, instead of being hurried from room to room, slapped, pinched, &c., under the impression that the poor young girl was labouring under narcotism, by the doctor's own confession, and, as he said, arising from his own remedies.

Again, Sir, permit me to ask, Is the sworn testimony of the medical witnesses, in reference to the medicines furnished by me to Miss Dallett, to go for nothing? What says Dr. Cormack himself? "I did not convey, nor do I wish to convey, the impression that the disease arose from improper medicines furnished by Mr. Farmer." If this alone does not acquit me of all blame in the transaction, I have still the testimony of Dr. Wane in my favour: although the following important part of Dr. Wane's evidence has been suppressed in the reports of the inquest in the public papers, I am fortunate in having it in my power to give the substance of it, (from the notes of a gentleman present at the inquiry,) kindly furnished me. "Does not think the medicines furnished by Mr. Farmer were of that nature to produce any of the appearances he had described. Does not consider them dangerous medicines, or medicines that were in any way hurtful to the deceased; and certainly were not such as were calculated to hasten the result." Now, in the face of such evidence as this, and bearing in mind that no imputation was cast upon me, either in the charge of the Coroner, or in the verdict of the jury, among whom were a medical man and a barrister, I think I have a right to ask, on what grounds I am directly charged with a crime little short of homicide, in fact, with the death of a young lady, for whom, on being applied to, I furnished a mild mercurial and a black draught, medicines which persons in every station of life are in the daily habit of procuring from chemists, upon their



own responsibility, albeit, they may be within reach of multitudes of medical men of first-rate talents.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

JOHN FARMER.

*Putney, July, 1847.*

\* \* \* [We have thought it right to insert the foregoing letter from Mr. Farmer. Of course it does not alter our opinion of the impropriety and danger of druggist-practice. Our remarks applied to the system of suggesting or ordering medicine over the counter for patients labouring under dangerous or fatal diseases, or indeed at all.—ED. L.]

---

DR. CORMACK'S REPLY.

SIR,—Mr. Farmer, the druggist &c. of this place, in attempting to defend himself from your sharp strictures on his treatment of the deceased Miss Sophia Dallet, has gone aside to malign me, and to calumniate the jury, who, after two days' patient and searching investigation, (embracing the information derived from an anatomical inspection of the body, by competent physicians and surgeons,) unanimously found, "That the deceased died a natural death from peritonitis; and we are of opinion that the treatment of Dr. Cormack was skilful, judicious, and cautious, and such as a medical gentleman with an adequate knowledge of his profession would have adopted." It is not necessary for me to defend the respectable gentlemen who formed the jury, but it is as well to let you know one of the causes of Mr. Farmer feeling annoyed at the view they took of the case. He had requested the constable to summon him as a juror, having, on the same day, insinuated publicly in his shop, that my conduct in the case was the very opposite of what it ought to have been, and the very opposite of what the Jury so explicitly declared it to have been. The constable came to me to ask what witnesses I wished to be summoned. Upon my mentioning, among others, the name of Mr. Farmer, the constable said, "Mr. Farmer has just been with me, to request that he might be put on the Jury." To this my reply was, "Consult the Coroner, and tell him that I will formally object to Mr. Farmer acting as a juror, because he has already expressed his opinion on the case, and is, moreover, a party deeply interested in the decision to be arrived at." In consequence of this Mr. Farmer was summoned as a witness.

Were the subject of this letter merely a personal one, I assure you I would not write one line in answer, or in reference, to Mr. Farmer, knowing well that my character as a gentleman and as a physician cannot by possibility be affected by anything proceeding from his mouth or pen. You will, however, I think, agree with me, that it is my duty, for general edification, to make the following comments on his letter, which appeared at p. 136 of your last number.



The first sentence or statement requiring notice from me runs thus:—"That gentleman, [Dr. Cormack,] though a physician, is the proprietor of a druggist's shop, as like my own in appearance and objects as it is possible to render it: he would be a bold man to deny this."

My Pharmacy has one window; and in that window there is nothing whatever but a wire blind, with the word "Dispensary" written on it. Upon the door is a brass plate, with these words—"Dr. Cormack's Dispensary: when shut, ring the bell." There is no other sign or writing. Above the door is a lamp. The sole object of this place is the preparing and dispensing of the articles of the *Materia Medica*; and without such a place, I could not carry on my practice in this village, to the satisfaction of myself or my patients. This, then, is what Mr. Farmer calls my "druggist's shop, as like his own in appearance and objects as it is possible to render it." Let us see.

Mr. Farmer's shop is a sort of general mart, as is evidenced by his various signs, and the miscellaneous goods displayed in the window. Above the shop is inscribed, in large letters, "Medical Hall;" and in another conspicuous part of the frontage is painted, "Farmer and Co., Wine Merchants." In and around the window are various framed placards and notices, announcing for sale, "perfumery," "cigars," "genuine patent medicines," &c., &c. In the window I this day observed, as usual, piled amid glaring bottles and sundry transparencies, a motley group of sponges, pickles, bottles of "Persian Cream," soap, nail-brushes, tooth-brushes, boxes of "Farmer's Antibilious Pills," "Farmer's Cough lozenges," "Malibran's Voice Lozenges," and a variety of other quack medicines. You will observe, then, that I do not require to be a *very* "bold man" to deny the veracity of Mr. Farmer's comparison. I may add, in passing, that I agree with all that you have recently so ably and earnestly written regarding quack medicines; and were I to act in reference to them as Mr. Farmer does, I should be doing what—as a teacher of Forensic Medicine, and formerly as the editor of a medical journal—I was in the habit of denouncing in my lectures and writings as immoral and fraudulent, and what I never cease, in my intercourse with society, to stigmatize as one of the most pestilent abominations of the age—I mean, the traffic in quack or patent nostrums.

The second sentence calling for observation immediately follows that which has now been commented upon. The words are these:—"I will venture to assert, had any one gone to that shop [Dr. Cormack's] before this melancholy occurrence, and asked the assistant to supply medicine for a person labouring under a supposed bilious attack, that drugs of a similar description to those supplied by me to the deceased, Miss Dallett, would have been handed over the counter with as little hesitation, and perhaps in exchange for as few pence.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, no assistant of mine has ever done anything so monstrous and so criminal. Had such symptoms been reported to my present assistant, (who, by the way,



is a practitioner of thirty-four years' standing,) as were named to Mr. Farmer, by the sisters of the deceased, (and into which, he stated on oath to the Coroner, he "minutely inquired, before he" suggested the treatment,) a different course would have been adopted. No attention whatever would have been paid to the diagnosis of the young ladies, that it was "a slight bilious attack;" no medicine or medical treatment of any kind would have been suggested till the patient had been visited; and then, assuredly, such measures as were deemed good by your correspondent would not have been relied on. The paragraph from which the above sentences are taken is scarcely worth more comment; but your readers may look back at it for a moment, as a good specimen, in its way, of a druggist's pathology, literature, and logic. They may there notice, at the same time, how the "minute inquiries" and the various drugs are spoken of, as if only one "black draught," and as if there had been no prescribing, but simply the selling of a certain drug asked for. Mr. Farmer fancies that his allusion to "misdirecting pills" may confuse some people who have not read or heard all the evidence; but this is not likely to be the case with the regular readers of *THE LANCET*, who rely on your not having suppressed any one essential fact in your report. Mr. Farmer knows quite well that all my medicine was proved to have been given exactly as I prescribed; and that neither in time of administration, nor in what was administered, did any deviation from my instructions arise, through "misdirecting pills," or from any other cause whatsoever.

The next paragraph, I beg you to reprint entire, as it must be viewed as containing, *inter alia*, the verdict which Mr. Farmer thinks ought to have been given; and which my cruel conduct, or dislike of Jedburgh justice, prevented his recommending, in the capacity of a jurymen. "I [Mr. Farmer] may know but little of the practice of medicine, (as a druggist;) you seem to think I cannot possess capacity enough to embrace even the first rudiments of the science; but I flatter myself I may know sufficient to form a judgment, in common with the public, upon the possible result of a different mode of treatment, had it been pursued, in the unfortunate case that has given rise to so much discussion—that is to say, had the patient been treated during her latter hours for the prostration and collapse consequent upon fever, instead of being hurried from room to room, slapped, pinched, &c., under the impression that the poor girl was labouring under narcotism, by the doctor's own confession, and, as he said, arising from his own remedies." Had I known that the deceased had had so much of Mr. Farmer's purging medicine to contend against along with her disease, (fever and supervening inflammation of the intestines,) the probability is, that I should not have imagined it possible (for "possible" was all I said) that the stupor and contracted pupils arose from opium; but were such symptoms to occur this hour, in the course of a case to which I might be called, in like desperate circumstances, I could not conscientiously act otherwise. The insinuation of Mr. Farmer



as to the possible result of a different mode of treatment was fully met by all the medical witnesses, but more particularly by the testimony of Dr. Willis, who stated "that he was convinced that the rousing had no injurious effects upon the young lady, and that he thought me authorized and required" (believing her to be under the influence of opium) "to have used such means, and that I should have done wrong had I not done so." I think it would be impertinent in me to say more on this point, as it might seem as if I thought it necessary to defend the real Jury from one who only wished to be a jurymen. You must not suppose that Mr. Farmer conceives the appearances seen on dissection to militate against his notions about the cause of death; for it was only by the decided intervention of the medical gentlemen present at the autopsy, that he was deterred from signing the report then subscribed by Dr. Wane, Mr. Shillito, Dr. Shillito, Mr. Bushel, Dr. Willis, and myself. Mr. Farmer was present by request of Mr. Bushell and the family; and that circumstance he seemed to think enough to entitle him to assume equal rank and knowledge with educated physicians and surgeons!!

Mr. Farmer vauntingly alludes to the "sworn testimony of the medical witnesses" in his favour. The evidence said by him to have been given by Dr. Wane, I have no recollection of; and as it does not concern me, I will not remark on. I was not asked at the inquest whether Mr. Farmer's medicines and neglect of other means were proper or improper; and I cannot avoid saying, that Mr. Farmer is indiscreet in now calling upon me to answer this question, by his correctly quoting, and then perverting, two of my answers to the Coroner—viz., "I did not convey," (to the family,) and "I do not now wish to convey the impression, that the disease *arose* from improper medicines furnished by Mr. Farmer." Why, Sir, it was because the disease *had arisen*; because the shivering, headache, &c., *had arisen*, that the druggist was consulted; and it was because the disease had *progressed unfavourably* that he was again consulted; and it was because the deceased young lady was "very low," (to use the words of the evidence of deceased's sister,) that I was hurriedly sent for, twenty-three hours before death, at a crisis when—as dissection revealed—the time for saving her from the depression of typhus fever, and the associated ravages of inflammation on the mucous and serous tunics of the intestines, had long gone past. I correctly told the family, when I first saw the deceased, that the disease was fever; and my treatment consisted in trying to support the powers of life, and to meet the suspected abdominal disease, by diligent fomentations with hot water, and the cautious use of opium externally and internally. These means caused a temporary improvement.

No man shall pervert my evidence to make it appear that I testified to Mr. Farmer's medicines being harmless. Had I been asked, I would have said, that no one—be he of the highest eminence and skill—could, except by pure accident, have prescribed proper treatment for Miss Sophia Dallett, by merely "minutely inquiring into



the symptoms" of a third party ; and farther, had I been pressed, I would have said, that what Mr. Farmer did, and what he omitted to do, was not the way to give such a serious and complicated case a reasonable chance of recovery.

The publication of Mr. Farmer's letter in the "Lancet" has extorted from me these observations ; but I must be held excused from noticing any farther communication from him which may appear in your pages or elsewhere.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN ROSE CORMACK, M.D., F.R.S.E., &c.

*Essex House, Putney, August, 1847.*

P.S.—*Thursday* : The "Pharmaceutical Journal," in an editorial article defending Mr. Farmer, (which I have seen this day for the first time,) contains certain libellous statements regarding me, which have rendered it necessary to take the usual means of defence in such cases.—J.R.C.

*Lancet, 7th August, 1847.*

---

### NO III.—EDITORIAL ARTICLES FROM THE LANCET.

---

#### FIRST ARTICLE OF THE LANCET.

The report, in another column, of the proceedings at an inquest held at Putney, forcibly illustrates some of the evils of druggists' practice. It shows that, unless druggists are willing, for the sake of gain, to hold themselves, in a certain proportion of cases, responsible for the death of those who are silly enough to commit themselves to their hands, they must give up their favourite counter practice *in toto*. We do not envy the feelings of any man who, stepping out of his proper province of a tradesman, undertakes the treatment of disease of which he is utterly ignorant, and sees death follow upon his morally and legally unjustifiable conduct. Those who defend the illegal practice of medicine *in petto*, say, "What harm can result from recommending a dose of medicine for a slight ailment?" "How can druggists refuse to say what this or that is good for?" Here is a case which, as we have said, illustrates most forcibly the consequences of this line of argument. A patient is taken ill of what proved to be a severe and fatal malady. The first symptoms were not very remarkable, as often happens at the onset of some of the most dangerous disorders, and for these symptoms the druggist recommends drugs, makes them up, and sends them to the patient, waiting for a further account of the progress of the case. Of course there was no diagnosis, no knowledge of what the disease really was, and probably if it had been one of a hundred other dis-



orders than that which it proved to be, the drugs sent would have been exactly the same. Of course their fitness or unfitness were matters of the merest chance. It was, on the part of the druggist, a pure gambling with disease, the life of another party hanging on the issue, as must ever be the case when the druggist steps beyond his proper calling. In the present instance, the die was against the unfortunate patient, and no one will hesitate to say, that with impending ulceration of the intestine, two purges of senna and salts were much the same as putting a razor in the hand of a suicide.

We lay it down as an axiom—that no man having a conscience would ever prescribe, order, or suggest, medicine for a sick person, without a professional education, be he meddling friend, quack, or chemist. As we have often urged, the beginnings of many dangerous maladies are small,—the dangers are latent,—it requires the nicest tact and skill to read them rightly; and frequently this period is the only one in which a successful foundation can be laid for the happy termination of the case. No druggist can possibly discriminate between the slight symptoms which shall end in health to-morrow, or death at the end of the week; he should therefore leave off *all* tampering with disease in any form, and confine himself to the preparation and dispensing of medicine under professional direction. Homicide is the only alternative—homicide of the worst kind; and that for the paltry, pitiful gain of a few pence.

Look at the disadvantages under which both the unfortunate patient, Miss Dallett, and the medical attendant, Dr. Cormack, were placed by the treatment of the case by Mr. Farmer, the druggist. The poor young girl had no medical man to watch the first symptoms of her malady, and apply appropriate treatment or regimen. Sunday, Monday, and the better part of Tuesday, were lost without proper attendance—nay, with the administration of improper drugs. The patient—a respectable person, within a few miles of the metropolis, and within reach of multitudes of medical men—was worse off than as though she had been in Australia, three days' journey from any civilized settlement.

The medical attendant, too, was placed under the most unfavourable circumstances: he was called to the termination of a serious disease, with a heavy responsibility attaching to him, and no medical man from whom to derive a knowledge of the medical history of the case. The natural symptoms were perverted by the drugs—for we refuse to call them medicines—which had been administered. Every man knows how difficult it is to take up the treatment of a disease of this kind in the middle, and to be called upon to act, without any time or means for obtaining data beyond the bare case as it lies before him. Under these unfavourable circumstances, Dr. Cormack was at once right in the diagnosis, and in his treatment; but it can hardly be wondered at that he should have mistrusted his own management under the symptoms which arose. The uncertainty and the error, if any, in Dr. Cormack's proceedings, lay, not with this gentleman, but with the friends who had permitted, and the druggist who had tampered with the case in the first instance. We



say this because we have received more than one communication calling Dr. Cormack's conduct in question. Those who do so, forget that they may themselves at any time be placed in similar circumstances.

We consider Dr. Cormack to have been quite right in calling for an inquest. It would be better for the profession, better for the public, if an inquest were demanded in every case in which death occurred after druggist treatment. Medical men will admire Mr. Farmer's distinction, at the inquest, between *prescribing* and *suggesting*. Because he *suggested*, and *gave*, and *made up* the medicines, without actually writing a prescription for the patient, within a day or two of her death from the disease he was mismanaging, he supposes himself less obnoxious to condemnation than if he had visited and prescribed. Flirting with death over a counter is not so bad, according to this logic, as taking an illegal walk in his company out of doors! We hope the result, with that of the numerous other cases we have had to record, will prove a lesson to druggists who are guilty of treating disease. It all came of "the habit of supplying the family of deceased with my mild antibilious pills;" or, as the sister of the dead person called them, "'Farmer's Antibilious Pills,' sold in boxes." When chemists sell quack medicines, and become, in their own proper persons, nostrum-mongers, other and worse practices are sure to follow.

In concluding our remarks upon this case, and they apply to all cases of druggist-practice, we cannot help saying that the evil lies radically at the door of those who prevented the enactment of the Medical Registration Bill.—*Lancet*, July 24, 1847.

\* \* \* The above is the article which furnished Mr. Farmer with a pretext for his letter to the *Lancet*, reprinted at p. 30. The *Pharmaceutical Journal* (the organ of the druggists), adopted, in an editorial article, the same tactics as Mr. Farmer. That article I referred to my solicitor, who, after taking the opinion of counsel, has communicated with the author.

---

SECOND EDITORIAL ARTICLE FROM THE LANCET.

We insert, in another page, a letter from Dr. J. Rose Cormack, which proves the most striking of the allegations of Mr. Farmer, relating to the inquest at Putney, to be entirely devoid of foundation. This communication speaks for itself. We have also received a letter from Mr. John Bushell, of Kennington-lane, a medical friend of Mr. Dallett, expressing his opinion, that our former strictures on the improper conduct of Mr. Farmer, the chemist, would have been quite sufficient, without any remarks tending to increase the distress of the family, by imputing neglect to them.\* Mr.

\* I agree with Mr. Bushell. The relatives erred, as thousands do daily, in



Bushell urges us to reprint the whole of the evidence adduced before the Jury. Its length precludes this; but we have the short-hand notes of the reporter before us, and if the whole were printed, we should feel bound to increase, rather than to diminish, the severity of our remarks. We have, therefore, not one word to retract. It is painful to have to impute blame anywhere in cases of death during medical or non-medical treatment; but when the duty arises, we must not shrink, or we should be encouraging other parents and other chemists to tamper with dangerous diseases. Here is a case of serious disease treated, with the sanction of the relations of the deceased, by an unqualified person, during the early days of the disorder, when alone medical skill might have stayed the disorder. The blame must be divided, whatever its amount, between the friends of the patient and the "suggesting" chemist. Our readers will remember that, in our remarks on the conduct of William Rowe, the Plymouth chemist, who prescribed purges for a patient suffering from strangulated hernia, we said, that other diseases of an opposite character, in which the same symptoms were present, would probably be treated, by chemist practitioners, in the same dangerous manner. Mr. Rowe gave purges in strangulated hernia; Mr. Farmer gave purges in impending ulceration of the bowels. A fatal result followed in both instances. In the one case, there was a trial for manslaughter; in the other, only a coroner's inquest. The chemist in the latter case may consider himself not a little indebted to fortune.—*Lancet*, August 7th, 1847.

---

\* \* \* The following article points out, among other things, the discrepancy between Mr. Farmer's evidence in the Coroner's court, and the version of the facts given by the *Pharmaceutical Journal*. That periodical also quotes the Medical Juror's defence of Mr. Farmer's mode of practice.\* The *Pharmaceutical Editor* is more cautious, it will be seen, than the Medical Juror in some of his deviations.

#### THIRD ARTICLE OF THE LANCET.

The current number of the "*Pharmaceutical Journal*" contains an article in which we are accused of an unjust attack upon a chemist. The chemist referred to is, of course, Mr. Farmer, of Putney, the particulars of whose prescribing or suggesting for the

supposing that good medical advice can be given by a druggist in incipient disease without seeing the patient; but then, from the moment they supposed the complaint to be serious, they sent for me, and their assiduity and affection in seconding all my endeavours, could not be surpassed. In these circumstances, to see blame so strongly imputed to the afflicted father and sisters, grieves me more than I can describe. The editor, however, wrote as a public man, discharging a painful public duty; and while I differ from him on this point, I do not presume to censure him. Upon the general question we are at one. Drug-ging by guess is far more deadly than disease.

\* This will be found at p. 26.



deceased, Miss Sophia Dallett, the profession are already acquainted with. We repel, emphatically, the implied charge, that a medical journal cannot act fairly when a chemist is concerned. We have constantly maintained that the profession should give up the retail of drugs entirely to the chemist, and that the chemist should give up the treatment of disease, whether by proxy or hearsay over the counter, or by visiting the sick, to regularly educated professional men. Abstractedly considered, the unfairness is equal on both sides, when the qualified practitioner and the chemist wilfully trench on the respective provinces of each other; but it cannot be gainsayed that the consequences of the two faults to the public are very different indeed. We do not see that fatal results can follow to any one because a professional man sells perfumery, or retails rhubarb and jalap by the halfpenny-worth, however he may injure the profession, and damage his individual respectability: but we do see many ways in which death may follow to patients, and death, too, caused indirectly, or even directly, by the system of chemists prescribing for, or by attending on, the sick. And when, therefore, we see a case in which we conscientiously believe such mischiefs have ensued, we should fall short of our duty to the public health if we failed to denounce it in the most severe terms of reprobation.

The version of Mr. Farmer's prescribing or suggesting, in Miss Dallett's case, given by the "Pharmaceutical Journal," is as follows:

"Application was made to him for a dose of medicine for what was supposed, by all the parties concerned, to be a slight bilious attack, and he gave the most simple and rational remedy—four grains of grey powder and a mild aperient draught. This proving not sufficiently active, he was applied to for a stronger dose, but prudently sent a dose no stronger than the former one, adding to the powder three grains of Dover's powder, on account of the sickness."

The report given in the "Sun" newspaper was somewhat different, and we quote it:—

"JOHN FARMER, chemist: I recollect Elizabeth and Mary Anne Dallett calling at my shop on Sunday evening. I proposed to give them a powder and a draught for the deceased, who was said by them to be fifteen years of age. No particular kind of medicine was asked for. Minutely inquired into the symptoms. The powder consisted of four grains of *grey powder*, to be taken at bed-time. Grey powder is the mildest preparation of mercury. The draught was a common black draught of *enna* and other ingredients. On Monday evening, Miss Mary Anne Dallett called, and stated that the powder had been rejected, from sickness, and the draught had acted only once, and that mildly. She said that the deceased would require more active medicine, and that she had pain. In consequence of this statement, I gave a powder composed of five grains of grey powder, and three grains of Dover's powder. I added the Dover's powder that the dose might be retained on the stomach. I gave on this occasion a draught, the same as the former, to be taken in the morning. I also suggested and supplied a simple saline mixture, directing two table spoonfuls to be given if the sickness came on. \* \* \* On Sunday evening, I was informed by the sisters of the deceased, that the bowels of deceased had not been acted on since Friday; and I was told that she was complaining of headache, giddiness, sickness, and pain of the stomach. The illness was described as a little bilious attack."

We have before us the notes of the reporter at the Coroner's inquest; it tallies exactly with the above; and in a private communication he says, "I can vouch for their accuracy, and that they



contain the substance of everything taken down by the Coroner, or that was stated by the witnesses."

Will any candid person say that Mr. Farmer, in these two consultations, first with Miss Elizabeth and Miss Mary Anne, on Sunday, and next with Miss Mary Anne alone on Monday, did not take the place of a properly educated professional man? Putting aside all question of the differences between directing, proposing, attending, dispensing, visiting, suggesting, &c., is not the grave and minute inquiry into symptoms, the dodging about between "constipation," "sickness," "headache," "giddiness," "pain of the stomach," and "the *little* bilious attack;" with "grey powder" and "black draught," "grey powder," "Dover's powder," and "black draught" repeated, and the "simple saline mixture," "suggested and supplied,"—quite enough to prove that Mr. Farmer undertook the medical treatment of a serious case of disease, and that he must take his share of the consequences of the unfortunate termination. Why, if he had only happened to be *right*, the President of the College of Physicians could not have been more alert and watchful against every evil sign. Of course, at all counters where drugs are to be sold, there is a natural tendency to consider any disorder as "a *little* bilious attack," or something of the sort, and to inquire with sufficient minuteness, and to suggest with sufficient attention, to make the patient or the patient's friends believe the chemist is sufficiently a medical man, or has sufficient medical knowledge for their purposes. The only safety to chemists and to the public consists in their leaving disease, whether in its beginnings or endings, to qualified medical men. The higher class chemists must give up their semi-professional publications,—their "Medicine-chest Companions," "Domestic Management of Diseases," "The Simple Action of Medicines," and so forth; and the ordinary chemists must give up trifling with disease as long as the human body is what it is, or there will be such inquests as those at Plymouth and Putney continually coming before the public and the profession. If they knew their true interests, all respectable chemists would be interested in putting down druggists prescribing or suggesting. If they are not put down, the whole body of chemists must suffer. Medical men will send to the Coroner in suspicious cases; and a few more such inquests will do greater harm to their body than a generation of pharmaceutical societies or pharmaceutical legislation can compensate for. We say this in all friendliness to the chemists.

One line of argument taken by the *Pharmaceutical Journal* is so peculiar, that we cannot pass it over. It contains the GALENICAL reason, why persons who are slightly disordered should apply to the druggist rather than to the doctor; and as it is reduced to a shilling and pence argument, it is very convenient to deal with. It sets forth that—

"Ten thousand persons may take a mild aperient, and derive benefit, but if one of these persons happen to be at the time labour-



ing under the stage of a fatal malady, the blame is attributed to the vendor of the medicine, and a principle is laid down, which implies equal blame to the vendors of the 9,999 doses which prove beneficial. If each of these persons had sent for a physician, ten thousand guineas would have been paid to the profession, while only one patient required medical advice."

We might demur to these statistics, and appeal to the reports of the Registrar-General, to show that a good many more than one fatal case in ten thousand is attended throughout by chemists and druggists. But this is not our intention at the present time.

Setting aside the absurdity of supposing there is no other alternative for "the little bilious attacks," save the chemist's counter, or the physician's consulting-room,—an absurdity answered in the self-same page by a complaint that medical advice may be obtained in Putney for "one shilling,"—we proceed to turn the flank of our pharmaceutical opponent. He admits that there may be one fatal case in ten thousand submitted to unskilled aperient treatment; but the fatal case must take its chance, lest ten thousand guineas should go to the doctors. But take the matter the other way. A "mild aperient," say a dose of "my mild antibilious pills," with minute inquiries, according to the code of Mr. Farmer, may be bought of a suggesting chemist for a penny. Ten thousand persons may buy them, and one unfortunate die of enteritic fever. What then? Are not ten thousand pence paid to the trade? It is, therefore, not so much a question of ten thousand hypothetical guineas paid to the profession, as of ten thousand real pence paid to chemists, which, if we are right in our sum, is just estimating the chance of the lost life among the ten thousand, £41 13s. 4d., chemists' profits, minus the cost of "blue pill, extract of scammony, and the watery extract of aloes," as per Putney formula!—*Lancet*, August 28, 1847.

LONDON:

G. J. PALMER, PRINTER, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY  
540 EAST 57TH STREET  
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637  
U.S.A.



