

# **Report of the Weekly Board, respecting certain charges brought against St. George's Hospital.**

## **Contributors**

St. George's Hospital (London, England)

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**REPORT**

OF

**THE WEEKLY BOARD,**

RESPECTING

**CERTAIN CHARGES**

BROUGHT AGAINST

**ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL,**

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## ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL.

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THE WEEKLY BOARD\* OF GOVERNORS OF ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL deem it incumbent upon them, for the information of the Governors and Subscribers in general, to draw up a correct and authentic statement of facts, in regard to certain Inquests held in the course of the present year, before the Deputy-Coroner for Westminster, the reports of which appear to them calculated to excite a prejudice, in the minds of the public, against the mode in which the affairs of that Hospital are conducted.

The Weekly Board do not flatter themselves, that they have at all times been able to avoid errors in the management of an institution of so great extent; but they appeal to the numerous subscribers, who are joined with them in supporting this valuable charity, and to the public at large, whether any instance of such errors has come to their knowledge, which, if reported to the Weekly Board, has not been immediately redressed; and they further con-

\* For the information of the Subscribers who have not made themselves acquainted with the mode in which the affairs of the Hospital are conducted, it is right to mention, that the Weekly Board is an open Committee, which meets every Wednesday in the Board Room of the Hospital. All Governors are Members of the Weekly Board; and it is considered that they add very materially to their benevolence, by attending its Meetings.



fidently appeal to all who have had opportunities of conversing with patients who have been in St. George's Hospital, whether they have not uniformly found them satisfied with the kindness and attention which they had there experienced.

The Weekly Board can, on their parts declare, that they have devoted their time to the business of the Hospital, solely in the hope of forwarding the objects of the charity by their attention, even more effectually than by their pecuniary contributions; and that they have endeavoured to carry into effect every measure which they thought likely to promote the comfort and welfare of the patients. They further declare, that they have not only been ready to listen to complaints, but that they have done all in their power, even where none have been made, to discover if any grounds for them existed. With this view, they have, at each of their meetings, particularly requested those who were leaving the Hospital, to state to the Board, if they were fully satisfied with the treatment they had received, or had, on any occasion, either met with, or observed the slightest degree of unkindness or neglect\*. At the end of every three months, also, a special examination or review of the patients then in the Hospital takes place, of which notice is sent to all the Governors. On these occasions, the different wards are carefully inspected, and strict inquiry is made into the state of each individual. The nurses are then directed to withdraw, and in the absence of the officers of the establishment, the patients are urged to communicate any cause of complaint which may have occurred to them, either

\* Questions to the following effect are regularly put to those who are leaving the Hospital:—Have you any complaint to make? Have you observed any thing improper? if so, tell us, for the good of those that are in the House, and of those that may come hereafter. Have you been treated with kindness and attention by the nurses and those that had to attend you? Have you or your friends given the nurses any money, or any thing else, or been asked for any? &c. &c.



in regard to their medical attendance, their provisions, or their general treatment; and are particularly questioned as to the attention and kindness of the nurses.

The Weekly Board can therefore fairly assert, that they have, to the utmost, exerted themselves to prevent, and to detect abuses; and where they have found, as they almost universally have, the objects of their bounty not only contented, but grateful, they were not, they confess, prepared for the serious charges lately brought against an institution, the duties of which they believe to be so conscientiously discharged, that it may at all times challenge the strictest investigation.

They trust, however, that a plain statement of the grounds on which these charges rest will fully satisfy the public mind of their injustice, and secure to St. George's Hospital a continuance of that liberal support, which the daily increasing demands upon it, and the necessity for a new and considerably enlarged building, so essentially require.

This statement is made under the influence of no angry feelings. They are willing to believe, that those by whom the clamour was first excited, while they laboured under a misconception, were not influenced by any unworthy motives; and it will be seen that the Weekly Board have abstained, as much as was in their power, from introducing any observations, or alluding to any topics, which might give to this document the appearance of an attempt at recrimination.

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THE first case to which the Weekly Board have to advert, is that of James Wheeler, who died in St. George's Hospital on the 27th of last February, and on whom a Coroner's Jury was held, on the 3rd day of

*Case of*  
*James Wheeler.*



March following, which returned a verdict, "*that he died from the accidentally opening an artery in the arm, and from the want of proper attention.*"

The facts of this case are as follow :—The man applied at the Hospital with an out-patient's letter, on Wednesday, the 23rd of February. He was suffering from inflammation of the lungs, and was seen by Dr. Chambers, who prescribed such medicines as he judged proper for him, and directed him to be bled. This was done by one of the dressers, and, the vein which was opened lying over the artery, the latter was most unfortunately wounded in the operation\*. The accident was immediately reported to the House-Surgeon (Mr. Cowell), who stopped the bleeding by the application of a bandage, and directed the man to remain in the Hospital, where, in case of its return, immediate attention could be paid him. He was accordingly sent to bed; the medicines ordered by Dr. Chambers were administered; and he was visited regularly, at least twice in the day, by the house-apothecary, and by the house-surgeon.

On the following day, the symptoms of inflammation of his lungs appeared more moderate, but on the 25th he was much worse. On that day, Dr. Chambers again saw him, and gave it as his opinion, "*that from the severity of the disease of the chest, an operation was not advisable†.*" The bleeding was repeated by his directions; but the disease

\* Where patients are ordered to be bled, that operation is performed in St. George's, as in other Hospitals, by the dressers; and it is right to mention, that the gentleman who bled Wheeler was one of the most diligent and best-informed students of the Hospital. He states, and his statement is confirmed by a person who was present, that the patient suddenly jerked forward his arm, at the instant of his being bled, so as to cause the lancet to penetrate deeper than had been intended.

† These are the expressions sworn to, as Dr. Chambers's opinion, by Mr. Cowell, in his evidence before the Coroner's Jury.



gained ground\*, and the man died on the night of the 27th of February.

With regard to the state of the arm, a small tumour was formed under the tendinous expansion, covering the wounded artery, from a little blood having been effused into the cellular substance. Prior to the man's death, this tumour had attained the bulk of a common hazel-nut, and was accompanied by a slight degree of redness, or inflammation of the skin, the puncture in which had healed. Mr. Jeffreys, to whom the surgical care of the case belonged, saw the man on the second day after the accident, and on each of the two succeeding days. Mr. Keate and Mr. Brodie were consulted on the 25th; and all coincided in the opinion, that, there being nothing urgent in the state of the artery, the danger apprehended by the physician, from the disease of the lungs, rendered an operation for securing it, at that time, inadmissible. The propriety of this opinion was manifested by no ill effects resulting from the state of the arm, up to the period of the unfortunate man's death.

On the day after that event, the body was opened, in the presence of several of the Medical Officers, and of a considerable number of the Pupils. Very extensive inflammation was found along the whole course of the bronchial lining of the lungs, fully sufficient to account for the man's death. An incision was then made over the fore part of the bend of the arm, and a considerable portion of the skin, including that through which the point of the lancet had passed, as well as the artery, the vein, and aneurismal tumour, with the tendon of the muscle, an expansion from which covers the artery, were cut out, for the purpose of examining more particularly the wound of the artery, and

\* It has been asserted that wine and brandy, as much as the man could drink, were administered.—This assertion is absolutely false. A little wine and water were given him when the powers of life were nearly exhausted, and when, from that cause, he was becoming unable to clear the air-passages of the copious secretions thrown into them from the inflamed membrane.



its relative situation to other parts. This last circumstance is mentioned on account of the singular mistake into which it seems to have led an apothecary, who afterwards saw the body, by desire of the widow; and whose evidence, probably, so completely deceived the Jury, as to induce them to suppose that the appearances left by this section, made after death, were the consequences of some operation which had been performed, or of mortification which had taken place, whilst the man was alive.

The above is a plain statement of the circumstances which led to, or accompanied this man's death; in producing which, the wound of the artery had most unquestionably no share whatever, unless by alarming the poor man's mind, it may have tended to aggravate the disease of his lungs. The Weekly Board most sincerely lament the accident which befel him, of which but one other instance has occurred in the last thirty years in St. George's Hospital, notwithstanding the numbers who are daily bled there. But the Weekly Board must add, that within the last seven or eight years, they have received into the Hospital five such cases, where the accident had happened in the hands of private practitioners. All these were cured by a simple operation, *viz.* securing the artery by a ligature; and in none of them was any alarm felt as to the result. It is needless, therefore, to point out how absurdly, in the reports about Wheeler, the nature and consequences of the accident have been exaggerated.

It remains to be inquired, upon what grounds a verdict was returned by the Jury, so much at variance with the facts above detailed; and as a copy\* (which they suppose to be correct) of the notes of evidence taken before the Coroner, with the signatures of the different witnesses, has been made public, the Weekly Board proceed to a brief examination of

\* The Evidence is printed in the APPENDIX, from the *Morning Chronicle* of the 28th of July, 1825.



it. They are aware of the delicacy of this part of their task; but as the verdict conveys the strongest charges against those to whom the care of the patients in St. George's Hospital is intrusted, they feel that they are justified in undertaking it.

The witnesses examined are four in number, *viz.*:—

*First*,—Mr. Richardson, an apothecary, who was called upon, as he states, by the widow of the deceased, to see the body, after she had removed it from the Hospital to a house near Wilton Place. This gentleman deposes, that, "*on examination, he saw that mortification in the middle of the arm had ensued; and that there was an incision in that part, as if for the purpose of taking up an artery.*" Now, as no mortification, nor any thing approaching to, or resembling mortification had ensued, the Board can only account for this gentleman's evidence, by the supposition that his examination of the body had been so extraordinarily careless, as to lead him to mistake a little blood, effused into the cellular membrane, which necessarily resulted from the wound in the artery, for mortification; or to consider, as its effects, the incision left in cutting out the parts after death, which he strangely describes to be like that made for the purpose of taking up an artery.

*Secondly*,—Mr. Eggleton, a friend of the deceased, who saw him in the Hospital an hour or two before his death. To this man the deceased said, *that he was sensible he was dying; that he was a murdered man, and that it was by having been bled in the arm.*

The Board have no reason to question the accuracy of this man's testimony, more especially as it is in a great degree confirmed by that of the widow. It shews the strong impression which the accident had made on the poor man's mind, and should have all the weight due to it, as the opinion of the *cause* of his death, entertained by the dying man himself, though it proves certainly *nothing but that opinion.* As evidence, indeed, of any matter of fact, a



declaration, under such circumstances, would have been very conclusive; but in regard to causes, *of which the dying man could be at no time a competent judge*, it is not entitled to such consideration.

*Thirdly*,—Mr. Cowell, the House-Surgeon, who describes the disease for which the man first applied at the Hospital, and the accident which occurred, giving the name of the dresser, who was the unfortunate cause of it. He describes also the progress of the disease, and the result of the examination after death. He tells the Jury, that *there was acute inflammation found in the chest, and some swelling and effusion in the arm—the latter not necessarily dangerous*; and he gives it as his opinion, *that the man died from the joint causes of inflammation of the chest, with the irritation produced by the wound in the arm*.

In determining on their verdict, the Jury must evidently have set Mr. Cowell's evidence entirely aside. His opinion, that disease of the lungs was one, at least, of the causes of death, met with no credit: it does not even seem to have excited any doubt in their minds, else they would probably have called before them the Physician or Surgeon under whose care, they were informed, the man had been, which, by adjourning for a few hours, they might easily have done.

*Fourthly and lastly*,—Martha Wheeler, the widow of the deceased. Her evidence agrees with that of Eggleton, in regard to an impression having been made on the mind of her husband, *that his arm would kill him, and that he should not recover from it*.

She states, that "*her husband was admitted an out-patient of St. George's Hospital with a kind of cough*." It could not surely have escaped the notice of the Jury, that this kind of cough was such as to induce the Physician to order him to be bled. Yet, notwithstanding this, and although Mr. Cowell's evidence had been so positive of the existence of severe inflammation of the lungs, with which the presence of cough was certainly very consistent, the Jury



made no inquiry on the subject, and their verdict shewed that they had altogether disregarded it.

Of the *want of proper attention*, which is the last part of the verdict, not a single particle of evidence, either direct or indirect, appears; and the contrary is so decidedly the fact, that the attention paid to the man's arm was, probably, the sole or principal cause of the alarm he had felt and expressed respecting it.

*Case of  
John Hammond.*

THE next case is that of John Hammond, who was admitted into the Hospital on the 15th June, 1825, under the care of Mr. Jeffreys, having received a wound on the knee, in consequence of having fallen on a broken glass bottle. From the effects of this injury, he died about six weeks after his admission. On the 25th July, an Inquest was held on the body of this patient, and the Jury delivered the following verdict: that “the deceased had died from the effects of a cut on the knee, in consequence of his not receiving proper surgical attention after he entered the Hospital\*.”

No individual connected with the Hospital had received any intimation that the slightest suspicion existed of the neglect or ill-treatment of Hammond, until the verdict of the Jury was made known to them, the day after the Inquest, through the medium of the newspapers. On the following day, Wednesday July 27th, the Weekly Board directed that a Committee should be summoned by public advertisement, for the purpose of investigating the circumstances of a case, which appeared to reflect so much discredit on the character of the Hospital. The Committee was open to all

\* The evidence is printed in the APPENDIX, from a copy of the notes of the Deputy Coroner, furnished by himself.



the Governors ; a number of other persons were also present, including the reporters for the public press. The Committee sat between four and five hours on each of two succeeding days (Friday and Saturday, July 29th and July 30th) ; and Mr. Bailey, the proprietor of Thomas's Hotel, in Berkeley Square, who had been the master of the deceased, attended the meetings of the Committee, in the character of plaintiff, or accuser. A number of witnesses were examined and cross-examined, and the whole inquiry was conducted in the most deliberate and impartial manner. At the conclusion of these proceedings, Mr. Bailey presented the sum of £.100 to the building-fund of the Hospital, and the Committee came to the following resolutions :—

*First*,—" After a full and mature consideration of the evidence adduced in support of the charges of neglect and inattention on the part of the nurses, and want of proper cleanliness and food, and also of want of due surgical treatment to the deceased John Hammond, it is the opinion of the Committee that these charges are in no way substantiated ; that, on the contrary, every possible attention was afforded to him by the Hospital ; and every thing done for his benefit which surgical skill could dictate.

*Secondly*,—" That this Committee cannot separate without conveying to Mr. Jeffreys their fullest approbation of his conduct, during the whole of the period in which he has acted as Surgeon to this Hospital ; and in particular, their high sense of the professional skill and humanity which he exhibited towards the deceased John Hammond."

*Thirdly*,—" That the Secretary do convey to Mr. Bailey the best thanks of this Committee, for his conduct during the present investigation ; and also for his very liberal donation of one hundred pounds to the building-fund of the new Hospital, which was stated to be ' in consideration of the result of this investigation.' "

In the course of the investigation, Mr. Bailey observed,



that soon after the admission of the deceased into the Hospital, he found reason to believe that he was neglected.

It is unfortunate, that during the long period which elapsed between that and the death of the patient, it did not occur to him, that it would have been but justice to the Hospital in which his servant was maintained by the benevolence of others, and might have been of advantage to the poor man himself, had he represented this opinion to some of the medical or other officers, or to the Weekly Board, or any of the Governors, or other Subscribers to the Charity. It is unfortunate, also, that when, on the decease of the patient, he judged that the proper period had at length arrived for complaining of the real or supposed neglect, he should have desired the constable to summon him as one of the Jury (of which he was afterwards appointed Foreman), instead of appearing before the Coroner as witness.

At the Committee, some of Mr. Bailey's servants, who appeared in support of the charges, deposed that Hammond was allowed to lie unwashed and dirty ; and that his bed-linen was changed only once during the time of his being in the Hospital.

But these persons were only occasional visitors, and their evidence was contradicted in the most satisfactory and positive manner :—

*First*,—By the testimony of the patients who had been in the same ward with Hammond, who stated, that they saw his linen frequently changed ; that, during the last week, he had a clean sheet almost daily ; that they frequently saw the nurses assist in washing and cleaning him ; and that they shewed him every attention and kindness.

*Secondly*,—By the testimony of the nurses, who declared that in the six weeks, during which Hammond lived after his admission into the Hospital, the sheet on which he lay was changed (on account of the profuse discharge of matter) as often as fifteen or sixteen times ; and the other sheet, as often as was necessary.



*Thirdly*,—By the testimony of the matron, who did not recollect the name of the patient, but who distinctly remembered that the nurses of Oxford ward (in which Hammond was) applied to her very frequently for clean sheets, saying that a great many were required for the man who had a cut on his knee.

*Fourthly*,—By the general practice of the Hospital, which is that of allowing a change of sheets to those who are confined altogether to bed, once in a fortnight; to those who are not confined to bed, once in three or four weeks; and as often as may be required to those whose complaints are of such a nature as to cause their linen to be soiled, or rendered otherwise offensive.

*Fifthly*,—By the circumstance of the purulent discharge having been for a considerable time so copious, that without a frequent change of linen his bed would have been absolutely intolerable, and would have rendered the whole ward in the highest degree offensive, which alone is a positive proof that the assertions made by Mr. Bailey's servants were unfounded.

The Weekly Board believe that, with considerable allowance for exaggeration on the part of Mr. Bailey's servants, they are able, in some measure, to explain the contradictory statement of the latter, and of the Matron, Nurses, and Patients of the Hospital. When a patient is under the same circumstances with Hammond, that is, having abscesses or sores, from which there is a profuse discharge, the bed is made up, as usual, with a blanket over the mattress, and a sheet over the blanket: but over this bottom sheet is placed a piece of oiled cloth, and between the oiled cloth and the patient another sheet, folded up: the two latter being so situated as to cover that part of the bottom sheet which is liable to be soiled by the discharge from the abscesses, or in other ways. This arrangement makes it unnecessary that the bottom or lowest sheet should be changed in the case of such a patient, oftener than in others; as it is kept



clean by the folded up sheet and oiled cloth, which are laid over it.

Another charge preferred against the Hospital was, that “a short time before Hammond’s death, an old man, a fellow-patient, died in the next bed; and that as soon as the corpse was carried away, Hammond was removed to that bed, or placed between the same sheets, where he also expired.” This charge, when inquired into, was found to be entirely false. The following facts appear to be those which led to the fabrication of the story:—In consequence of the great number of applications for admission into the Hospital, the bedsteads are never unoccupied; these are constructed of iron, and, when the bedding is changed after the removal or death of a patient, are of course again fit for immediate use.—Whenever a patient dies, the sheets are taken away to be washed, and the bed and blankets to be cleaned: and, a clean bed, blankets, and sheets, having been placed on the bedstead, it is used for another patient.—This occurred in the case of Hammond, who, on one occasion, when he required a change, was placed on a bedstead, the last occupier of which had died on the preceding day, but with a clean bed, sheets, and blankets; and this of course is no more than must happen in every hospital where the applications for admission are so numerous in proportion to the means of accommodation\*.

\* It was said that neither Hammond’s shirt nor bedclothes were changed during the six weeks that he lay ill; and the evidence of some of Mr. Bailey’s servants, if believed, would have gone as far to prove the dirty condition of the one as of the other. It is therefore right to mention, that patients are expected to be provided by themselves, or their friends, with every article of clothing. When, however, a patient is wholly destitute and friendless, and thus thrown entirely on the compassion of the Governors, the matron is authorised to furnish him with shirts and some other absolute necessities. Hammond’s friends having neglected to bring him any linen in the first instance, the nurse made application in his behalf to the matron; and his first clean shirt was in consequence supplied from the stores of the hospital. This afterwards continued in use with those belonging to himself, and a shirt given him by his master, Mr. Bailey. One of these was brought



The last charge preferred against the Hospital was, that "Hammond had not received proper surgical attention;" and this charge was divided under two heads. It was said, that great injury had been done by the application of a *tight bandage*; and that sufficiently active measures had not been adopted in the beginning for the purpose of preventing or moderating inflammation.

With respect to the first point, it was positively ascertained that no *tight bandage* had ever been applied. There was a wound on one side of the knee, and it was uncertain in the first instance whether the capsule of the joint had or had not been divided. Stripes of adhesive plaster were applied, with a view to approximate the edges of the wound, and procure union by the first intention; and a bandage was employed, merely with a view to prevent the displacement of the stripes of plaster. This bandage was loosely applied; and immediately on the limb beginning to swell, and the patient to complain, it was altogether removed; *this being about sixty-three hours after the accident.*

With respect to the second point, it appears that, in this case, the inflammation proceeded in so insidious a manner, and was attended with so few of the usual symptoms, that no one would have been led to suspect the existence of it to any considerable extent, until its effects were rendered manifest by the formation of abscess. The copious loss of blood, which immediately followed the accident, probably contributed to render the subsequent symptoms of inflammation more obscure than they would have been otherwise; and also superseded the necessity of taking away blood immediately after the wound was inflicted. That there had been a large hæmorrhage, is shewn by the evidence given before the Committee; and is confirmed by that of Mr. Palmer, lately one of the House-Surgeons, who is now re-

him clean by his friends about once in a week. If this change of linen was insufficient, the fault was certainly not that of any persons connected with the Hospital.



turned to London, having been absent at the time of the meeting of the Committee. Mr. Palmer states, that he was present when Hammond was brought to the Hospital, and that he assisted Mr. Pitman in applying a ligature round a bleeding artery\*. Mr. Palmer thinks that Hammond himself declared that he had lost two quarts of blood; but this is undoubtedly to be regarded as an exaggerated statement. However, from the appearance of the patient's dress, and from the time which had elapsed between the occurrence of the accident and his arrival at the Hospital, he was satisfied that the quantity lost had been very considerable.

In concluding this account of Hammond's case, the Weekly Board feel it due to Mr. Jeffreys, that they should mention, that the investigation was instituted, not only with his most perfect concurrence, but in consequence of an application for that purpose made expressly by himself; and they are satisfied that it is not the wish of any of the Physicians or Surgeons of St. George's Hospital, to avoid the strictest scrutiny of their conduct as to the treatment of the poor patients entrusted to their professional care and kindness. At the same time, they also feel it due to them, and to the public, to observe, that nothing more can reasonably be expected or required of a medical practitioner, than that, possessing the natural endowments requisite for his profession, he should have availed himself of the opportunities which he has had of obtaining knowledge, to the utmost in his power; and that he should then afford the assistance of his art to those who stand in need of it, with humanity, consideration, and attention. Notwithstanding that the best efforts of the human mind have been directed, during many centuries, to the improvement of medicine and surgery, those sciences are very far from

\* This point was a good deal disputed at the Inquest; but after what is stated above, it cannot be necessary to trouble the Governors with any further observations respecting it.



having arrived at such a degree of perfection, as can enable even the most enlightened individual to estimate, with mathematical precision, the nature and extent of those changes which injury or disease may produce in the living body ; or exactly to determine, in all instances, what are the remedies which may be employed with the greatest possible advantage. At the termination of a case, some circumstances may become disclosed, which it was impossible to discover while the case was still in progress ; and, whenever that termination is unfavourable, it will not be difficult for another person, whether acquainted or unacquainted with the subject, to insinuate that some method of treatment, different from that which had been adopted, might have succeeded better. Let it be considered what would be the effect on society at large, if it were the custom for a Coroner's Jury, selected and summoned entirely at the discretion of the parish constable, to regard themselves as a tribunal competent to discuss and settle questions relating to professional skill and conduct. Practitioners would be unwilling to extend the benefits of their experience to such unfortunate individuals as were likely to become the subjects of an Inquest ; because, in so doing, they might give to a few prejudiced, or unthinking persons, the opportunity of injuring, for a time at least, that fair fame and character which it had required many years of thought and labour to establish. If such a principle were to be generally received and acted on, the Subscribers to Hospitals would feel themselves called on to consider, whether the gates of these institutions, supported by their charity, for the relief of the lower classes, ought not to be closed against a large proportion of those sufferers, who are now admitted freely into them. Nor would the evil be confined to persons who seek relief from Hospitals ; but would ascend to those other classes of society, which, although more fortunate in some respects, are equally subject, with the rest, to the dangers arising from apoplexy, poison, or accidental injury.



*Case of*  
*Nicholas Dawkins.*

A THIRD case, respecting which the Weekly Board deem it right to make a few remarks, is that of Nicholas Dawkins, one of the Marlborough Street Police Officers, who was brought into St. George's Hospital on the 24th May last, with a compound fracture of the right leg, occasioned by a carriage having been driven against him, while he was keeping order in the court-yard of Lord George Cavendish's house, on the night of a party. The injury which this poor man had sustained, was, from the first, of a most serious and alarming character. Erysipelas, and large abscesses followed, accompanied with profuse discharge, and hectic fever. He gradually sunk, and died on the 11th of August, nearly three months after his admission into the Hospital.

It being reported that the accident had arisen from the wilful violence of a coachman of the name of James Collins, then a servant of Lady Lambert's, a strict investigation of the circumstances attending his death, took place on the 12th, and, by adjournment, on the 15th of August, before a Coroner's Jury, who returned a verdict of *wilful murder* against Collins.

At the Inquest, Mr. Price attended as attorney, on behalf of Collins, and with a view to his client's defence, insinuated *that the deceased had been neglected in the Hospital, and ignorantly or improperly treated in not having his leg amputated as soon as erysipelas began.*

The first of these insinuations had evidently been suggested by the inquiry just concluded, respecting the case of Hammond. The attorney told the Jury, "*he was instructed that the poor man had been greatly neglected, that his person and his sheets were most filthy, and that mushrooms actually grew on the dirty sheets as he lay on them* \*." One of the Jury cautioned him "*not to state what*

\* Vide report in the Morning Chronicle, Aug. 13th, 1825.



he was unable to prove;" but Mr. Price replied, "*that he wished to elicit the facts by the evidence of the witnesses,*" several of whom he cross-examined accordingly.

A police officer of the name of Clement, informed the Jury "*that he had visited the deceased, who told him that mushrooms had grown in his bed.*" This absurd story, no doubt, originated in a trifling circumstance, which was communicated to the Jury by Mr. Jeffreys, whose patient Dawkins had been, and who had visited him regularly every day, from the time of the accident to that of his death. Upon one occasion, when dressing the fractured limb, Mr. Jeffreys observed a small fungus on the pillow, to which he directed the attention, both of the patient and of the pupils, and which had evidently adhered to the pillow, when placed in the garden to dry. It is to be observed that the deceased had not mentioned this to Clement in the way of complaint, but merely in the course of conversation, for Clement concluded his evidence by stating, "*that the deceased spoke in the highest terms of the treatment he received in the Hospital\*.*" With regard to maggots, the same witness stated that "he had seen none, but that the deceased spoke of them as having been, either in his own bed, or in some bed near him," and, considering the profuse discharge of offensive matter, which was continually taking place, it does not seem impossible that a few may, upon some occasion, have been found there: it seems, however, very doubtful if this was really the case, as no other of Dawkins's friends (several of whom visited him daily, and particularly observed how clean his bed was at all times kept,) either heard of, or saw them. It is needless to dwell on this subject, as those who have observed the impossibility of preventing the ova of flies from being deposited on every animal substance, and the rapidity with which, in sultry seasons, those pass into the state of maggots, will not by any means wonder if a few had

\* Vide report in Morning Chronicle, Aug. 16th, 1825.



been occasionally met with on the pillows and dressings of a bad compound fracture, in a room filled with the worst surgical cases; and it is well known that the same thing may happen to a person in any rank of life, suffering from such an accident, though he enjoy all the advantages which wealth can purchase. That, in the case of Dawkins, care was taken to prevent these, and every thing that could add to his sufferings, his own repeated expressions of gratitude, which were borne testimony to before the Jury, and the evidence of his family, and all who visited him, most fully established. His brother visited him regularly every day, and *stated to the Jury*\* “*that he was kept clean, that his leg was dressed daily, that he spoke of Mr. Pitman, the House Surgeon, in a very kind manner, and that he also spoke well of the nurses;*” and he added, “*that his brother actually cried on hearing that Mr. Pitman was about to leave the Hospital.*” The wife and son of the deceased were in attendance on the 15th of August, on purpose, as they stated, to give their evidence to the same effect, and to contradict the false aspersions which, they heard, had been thrown out against the Hospital on the first evening of the Inquest; but the Jury were perfectly satisfied, and did not think it requisite to examine them.

It ought to be observed, that those who only occasionally visit patients, suffering under compound fractures of the lower extremities, are not aware of the peculiar difficulties of such cases, and can therefore give no competent opinions respecting them. Where these proceed unfavourably, the discharge is so profuse that perfect cleanliness cannot possibly be preserved. That degree of it alone is to be sought for which is compatible with the safety of the patient, to whom the utmost quiet is so essential that a frequent change of bedding would be both painful and injurious.

\* Vide report in Morning Chronicle, Aug. 16th, 1825.



As to the attorney's notion of the surgical error committed in not amputating Dawkins's leg, when erysipelas had begun, but "*allowing the erysipelas*," as he said, "*to spread up the limb*," it will not be necessary to make any comment; the Weekly Board being informed that, under such circumstances, an operation would be certainly fatal.

—◆—

Case of *Daniel Taylor.* } THE fourth case to which the Weekly Board have to advert, is that of Daniel Taylor, who was received into St. George's Hospital on the 2nd of last August, with a lacerated wound of his hand; and died on the 20th of the same month. A Coroner's Jury sat on the body on the evening of the day on which he died, and returned a verdict—"Accidental death from a horse."

It was acknowledged, that, during the time Taylor remained in the Hospital, proper attention had been shewn him;—but, at the end of a week, he quitted it without leave; and though, on an urgent petition from himself and his wife, and on the report of his being in imminent danger, he was re-admitted, after the lapse of only five days, yet in that short period his symptoms had become so much aggravated, that his death could not be prevented.

One of the witnesses examined before the Jury, was the wife or female friend of the deceased, *who had joined in the petition for his re-admission into St. George's Hospital.* This woman stated, that Taylor had quitted the Hospital in consequence of being abused by one of the patients for refusing to carry coals, and being ill-treated by a nurse.

The Jury requested the Deputy Coroner to transmit this



charge to the Governors of the Hospital, which he did ; and the Weekly Board acknowledge their obligations to him, and to the individuals who composed the Jury, for the communication. To the Deputy Coroner they are further obliged, for the readiness with which he answered the questions with which the Weekly Board judged it expedient to trouble him ; and as all the circumstances connected with this accusation, and with the inquiry instituted in consequence of it, are fully detailed in the letters which passed between that gentleman and the Secretary of the Hospital, a copy of these letters, as a fair abstract of the case, is subjoined.

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( A. )

Copy of a Letter from Thomas Higgs, Esq. Deputy Coroner, to Joseph Gunning, Esq. Secretary to St. George's Hospital, dated—

*“ Cloisters, Westminster Abbey,  
“ August 22, 1825.*

“ SIR,—At an Inquisition taken before me, on Saturday evening last, on view of the body of Daniel Taylor, then lying dead in St. George's Hospital ; the Jury, on delivering their verdict, requested me to acquaint you, for the information of the Managers of the Hospital, that the misconduct of two individuals there, was the cause of the deceased's elopement from the house, which it seems led to his death ; as it appeared, that either from want of proper medical assistance, or due care as to regimen, those unfavourable symptoms ensued, which ended in his death, notwithstanding in five days' time he was again admitted into the Hospital, where he received every attention and kindness.

“ The persons complained of, were a man, Allen, said



to be an in-patient, but who assumed an active part in directing the other patients; and a female nurse, Armstrong.

“ Mr. —, the Hospital Apothecary, heard the evidence of the deceased's widow, and can give you every information, and to whom I beg to refer you; or if you wish me to explain, as far as I can, on a subject in which I do not like to presume to interfere, I would wait on you some evening about eight o'clock, on receiving two days' notice, as I am, in the main part of the day, engaged in important, and a kind of public business, which I cannot neglect.

“ I am, &c. &c.

(Signed) “ THOMAS HIGGS, Deputy Coroner.”

“ JOSEPH GUNNING, Esq. Secretary,  
St. George's Hospital, &c. &c.”

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( B. )

Copy of a Letter from Joseph Gunning, Esq. to Thomas Higgs, Esq. Deputy Coroner, dated—

“ *St. George's Hospital, August 25, 1825.*

“ SIR,—I have laid your letter of the 22nd instant before the Weekly Board of Governors of St. George's Hospital; and am directed to convey to you their thanks for the communication respecting the Inquest held before you on the late Daniel Taylor.

“ The Weekly Board have carefully inquired into the alledged misconduct of the patient Allen, and the nurse Armstrong, and have collected the best evidence which they could obtain on the subject.

“ They learn from your letter, and from other sources, that the wife, or female friend of the patient Taylor,



expressed herself, to the Jury and others, as perfectly satisfied with the surgical attention shewn to the latter, while in the Hospital, but that she complained of some ill-treatment from the nurse and patient above mentioned.

“ On further inquiry, they are informed :—

“ *First*,—That Taylor was admitted under the care of Mr. Keate, with a wound of the hand ; and that Mr. Keate, although there were no urgent symptoms at the time, being apprehensive that such might occur, directed him to remain constantly in bed.

“ *Secondly*,—That, in opposition to these directions, Taylor left his bed on the day preceding that on which he quitted the Hospital ; but the nurse Armstrong, having remonstrated with him, he returned to his bed, previous to the hour of Mr. Keate’s visit.

“ *Thirdly*,—That on the following morning, having persisted in disobeying the orders as to keeping his bed, the patient Allen, who met him in the hall of the Hospital, called upon him to assist in carrying some coals into the ward, which Taylor properly refused to do.

“ *Fourthly*,—That Taylor, immediately after this occurrence, returned to his ward, and went to bed ; and that Allen, on observing this, used some harsh expressions to him.

“ *Fifthly*,—That upon this, the wife of Taylor persuaded him immediately to leave the Hospital.

“ *Sixthly*,—That the nurse Armstrong, strongly opposed Taylor (in the situation in which he was) doing this, until he had been seen by his surgical attendants.

“ *Seventhly*,—That these circumstances led to an altercation between the nurse and the other woman, when the nurse ordered the latter to leave the ward, after which, Taylor quitted the Hospital.

“ *Eighthly*,—That after the lapse of five days, Mr. Keate, on the earnest application of Taylor and his female



friend, and on hearing that dangerous symptoms had shewn themselves, directed that Taylor should be re-admitted; although the rules and usage of the Hospital prohibit the re-admission of a patient who has quitted the Hospital in an irregular manner.

“ *Ninthly*,—That Taylor, when re-admitted, was in a state of extreme danger, which terminated in his death.

“ From the consideration of these circumstances, (of which they are informed, that many were stated to the Jury, on oath, by the beadle of the parish, who happened to be accidentally present at the dispute between the nurse and Taylor’s friend, as well as by the nurse and others,) the Weekly Board do not find reason to impute blame to the nurse Armstrong; neither can they impute any serious blame to the patient Allen, the latter not having been aware of Taylor’s real situation, and having no reason to apprehend that his disease was dangerous, from seeing him out of his bed, and even out of his ward.

“ It appears to the Board, that if blame is to be imputed to any one, it should be to the unfortunate patient himself, and his wife or female friend, either of whom must have been aware, that if there had been any real ground of complaint, such complaint would have been attended to, if stated to the resident Chaplain, or any one of the Medical Officers or Governors of the Charity.

“ Moreover, it appears to the Weekly Board, from the anxiety manifested by Taylor and his friend for the re-admission of the former into St. George’s Hospital (instead of his being sent, as he might have been under his peculiar circumstances, into some other hospital) that the patient must have been conscious he had not suffered from ill-treatment.

“ From the observations of the Jury, however, conveyed by your letter, the Weekly Board must suppose, that you and the Jury have obtained some information, to which they



have not had access ; as they cannot believe that otherwise any body of men would have considered these observations as warranted.

“ I am directed, therefore, by the Weekly Board, to request, that you will favour them with a copy of the minutes of evidence taken by you on this occasion, as well as any observations which you may have to make upon them, the Board being anxious thoroughly to investigate all the circumstances of this transaction.

“ I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

(Signed) “ JOSEPH GUNNING, Secretary.”

“ THOMAS HIGGS, Esq.

“ Deputy Coroner for Westminster.”

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( C. )

Copy of a Letter from Thomas Higgs, Esq. Deputy Coroner for Westminster, to Joseph Gunning, Esq. dated—

“ *Cloisters, Westminster Abbey,*  
“ *August 26, 1825.*”

“ SIR,—I feel much obliged by the favour of your letter of the 25th instant, detailing such information as had been obtained by the Governors of St. George’s Hospital, as to the alleged misconduct of two persons there towards Daniel Taylor, deceased, on which I wrote to you at the request of the Jury.

“ You inform me, that the Weekly Board do not impute blame to the nurse, nor serious blame to Allen ; but they seem to reflect on the Jury.

“ I am not aware that the Jurors were acquainted with the discipline of St. George’s Hospital. They heard, on oath, that the deceased had been scolded and sworn at, because he could not carry coals ; that his wife humanely



interfered, and blamed the man for speaking in that way to a sick person; that the nurse then forced her out by the shoulders, and told the porter not to admit her again.—If such conduct was not sufficient to tempt the deceased to elope, I do not know what could, unless the cause was increased by the same nurse having before told the deceased, when he requested her to put a fresh poultice to his hand (which had been ordered two hours before,) that she, to *punish* him, would keep him six hours without it,—that circumstance was also sworn to before the Jury.

“ I presume, on the above being stated to the Board, they will retract their observations on a Jury, both respectable and impartial.

“ I send a copy of all the evidence I took, as far as regards the Hospital.

“ I am, Sir, &c. &c.

(Signed)

“ THOS. HIGGS, Deputy Coroner.”

“ TO JOSEPH GUNNING, Esq.  
Secretary, &c. &c.”

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‘ [COPY.]

‘ William Cowell, House-Surgeon of St. George’s Hospital, on his oath deposeth :

‘ The deceased was admitted on the 2nd August instant; he had severe lacerated wound in the palm of the right hand—every thing proper was done for him—he went on very favourably until the 9th, when he thought proper to leave the Hospital.

‘ I heard nothing more of him till Monday last, the 15th, when I was informed his hand was much inflamed, and that he was in a state of great danger. I therefore reported it to Mr. Keate, the Surgeon (in whose care he was, when in the House): Mr. Keate, on account of the danger, allowed the deceased being admitted, although against the rules, as he had eloped. He was brought the same evening; he was



then in a state of the greatest danger, and beyond all hope of recovery ; he sunk and died this morning from the irritation of the wound.

(Signed)

‘ W. COWELL, House-Surgeon.’

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‘ Mary Taylor, of 21, Gray’s Buildings, Duke Street, Manchester Square, widow, on her oath deposeth :

‘ That the deceased went next morning to the Hospital ; he came home in seven days—his hand was then very bad—he was then delirious. I had seen him between ten and eleven that morning in the Hospital, he was then very ill—a man who was called Allen, and who sits in the hall, and appeared to be a patient, then desired the deceased to assist in carrying the coals—he said he was not able to carry coals.—Allen then, with an oath, said he would report him for a lazy scamp ; this aggravated the deceased, and I interfered, and blamed Allen for calling a sick person such names. The nurse then forced me out by the shoulders, and I heard her tell the porter not to admit me again : the deceased desired me to send him his top coat ; and he came home the same evening. He afterwards told me, he was sorry he came away from the Hospital, where he could have made complaints. Mr. Lightfoot’s assistant afterwards attended the deceased, who became worse : he lived in a regular way, such as on broth, and slops,—he became much deranged ; and at my request, he was afterwards re-admitted in the Hospital, where every attention and kindness were shewn him \*.

‘ *Verdict*,—Accidental death by a horse.’

\* This was the evidence, upon which—(as the Board are informed by a respectable individual who was present), one of the Jury gave his opinion that the case was one little short of murder ; and recommended his brother jury men to bring in as strong a verdict as possible, that it might get into the newspapers, which, he said, was the best mode of drawing attention to it. It is clear that the good sense of the Jury made them disregard this proposal.



( D. )

Copy of a Letter from J. Gunning, Esq. to T. Higgs, Esq. Deputy Coroner, &c. &c. dated—

“ *St. George's Hospital, August 31st, 1825.*

“ SIR,—I am directed by the Weekly Board of Governors of St. George's Hospital, to thank you for your letter of the 26th of August, and for the copy of some notes taken by you at the Inquest held on the late Daniel Taylor, with which you have been so obliging as to furnish them, and which you state to contain ‘*all the evidence which you took, as far as it regards the Hospital.*’ In these notes they find no other evidence than that of Mr. Cowell the House Surgeon, and of Mary Taylor; and the Weekly Board observe, that the statement of the latter is at variance, in some essential points, with that of the persons who were examined before them, in the very careful investigation, which, I have already informed you, that they had instituted. The Board have this day proceeded to consider to which of these accounts they ought to attach the most credit. Upon this point it appeared to them, *first*, that other things being the same, the testimony of many is to be preferred to that of a single individual; *secondly*, that the testimony of Mary Taylor is to be received with some suspicion, because it was at her persuasion that Taylor left the Hospital, to which circumstance the poor man's death is attributed; and it is not unlikely that she would be disposed to represent what occurred in such a manner, as to cause the blame of this very imprudent action to be transferred from herself to other persons. The Board, moreover, cannot help observing that the declaration of Mary Taylor, that Taylor was delirious when he left the Hospital, besides, being opposed to the evidence of Mr. Cowell and others, is in manifest contradiction with her own story; and they consider that



the anxiety of Mary Taylor for the re-admission of the deceased into St. George's Hospital, instead of taking him, as she might have done, to another hospital, affords a strong presumption, that she had no just grounds to complain of his having been there ill-treated.

“Influenced by these considerations, the Weekly Board do not find that the evidence in support of this charge is such as to warrant them, consistently with justice, in dismissing the nurse Armstrong, or discharging the patient Allen.

“With respect to the other circumstance mentioned in your letter, namely, that the nurse said to Taylor, that ‘she would keep him without a poultice six hours longer to punish him,’ the Board have not been able hitherto to obtain any other information or evidence. *Nothing whatever relating to it, is contained in the notes of evidence, which you have given them,* as all that was sworn before you relating to the Hospital. The nurse positively denies it : but if, on further inquiry, the Board can obtain any proofs of this charge being well founded, they shall consider her as totally unfit for her situation.

“The Weekly Board direct me further to state, that they have no reason to doubt the impartiality of the Jury. It is their earnest wish, as it is that of all the Governors and other subscribers to the Hospital, to watch the concerns of the large Institution over which they preside, and the expenses of which are maintained by their contributions, with the most jealous attention, so as to render it as useful as possible to those classes of society for whose benefit it has been established. They know that some irregularities and abuses may occasionally exist, where so many individuals, a considerable proportion of whom are wholly uneducated, are collected together : but they will continue to use their best endeavours to make them as few as possible : and they will always feel grateful to you, or to any other unprejudiced persons, who will furnish them with such information as will



enable them to detect the misconduct and negligence of any one connected with the Hospital.

“ The Weekly Board have been made acquainted with a complaint, which some of the jurors made at a late Inquest, of a want of proper attention to them on the part of the servants of the Hospital. They are fully aware how much inconvenience a large Hospital necessarily entails on all persons in the neighbourhood, who are liable to serve as jurors on a Coroner’s Inquest; and they would be sorry not to contribute all in their power towards rendering that inconvenience as trifling as possible. They have given such directions to the porters as will, they hope, prevent there being any grounds for such complaints in future.

“ I have the honour to be, Sir,

“ Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) “ JOSEPH GUNNING, Secretary.”

“ To THOMAS HIGGS, Esq.

“ Deputy Coroner for Westminster.”

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( E. )

Copy of a Letter from Thos. Higgs, Esq. Deputy Coroner, to J. Gunning, Esq. &c. dated—

*2nd September.*

“ Mr. Higgs presents his compliments, and he thanks Mr. Gunning for his favour of the 31st August ult.:—The contents thereof are convincing.

“ Mr. Higgs laments, that the Governors of the Hospital should have had so much trouble. Their institution is undoubtedly one of the best and most useful in the kingdom; and it is proved that they have done every thing possible to carry into effect their charitable good intentions.

“ Cloisters, Westminster Abbey,

“ 2d Sept. 1825.”



*Charge of Changing a Body.* } A VERY absurd story still remains to be noticed, which the Weekly Board would not have felt themselves called upon to bring before the Governors, had it not occupied a conspicuous place in the columns of the newspapers, at a time when, in consequence of other attacks, a prejudice had been excited against the character of the Hospital, whilst the refutation of the charge was in many papers not inserted at all, or given in such a way as to escape observation.

“ On the 8th of August, a young woman made application to Mr. Minshull, the sitting magistrate at Bow Street; and stated, that her brother, who had been long ill, died in St. George’s Hospital on Saturday morning. She went to the Hospital, when an undertaker, who had already brought a coffin, told her that she could not see the body, but that she could attend the funeral on Monday morning. She attended at the time mentioned by the undertaker, when she found that her other brother, and a male friend, with the same undertaker, had already left the Hospital in attendance on the funeral. She overtook them, however, before they reached the church-yard of St. Paul’s, Covent Garden. On the coffin being uncovered, she felt at once convinced that it could not contain the body of her deceased brother, who was a very tall man, and having died of a dropsy, was very bulky; whereas the coffin was short and narrow. After the funeral was over, application was made to the sexton and vestry-clerk to have the coffin disinterred; but some doubts were entertained, whether it was in their power to accede to her request.”

The above statement is an abstract of the account contained in the *Morning Chronicle* of the 9th of August. The conclusion of the story is to be found in the same paper of the following day, under the head of “ BOW STREET.—The church-wardens of St. Paul’s, Covent Garden, having reconsidered



“ the application made at this office on Monday, relative to the  
 “ body of a man which was brought to the parish burying-  
 “ ground from St. George’s Hospital, determined on open-  
 “ ing the ground; and this ceremony was performed  
 “ yesterday evening, when the relatives having seen the  
 “ corpse, immediately said it was that of their kinsman, and  
 “ that they were perfectly satisfied:—here the matter  
 “ ended.”



THE WEEKLY BOARD have, in the preceding pages, given a perfectly correct, and they hope also, a plain and impartial statement of all the circumstances, connected with St. George’s Hospital, to which the public attention has of late been so much directed; and, in concluding it, they can positively assert, that every thing, which they have there advanced, has been substantiated by evidence the most complete and satisfactory.

The repeated attacks, which have been made upon that Hospital, have, in their opinion, rendered such a statement necessary; and they feel assured it will convince every unprejudiced mind, how entirely unjust these attacks have been, and upon how little foundation so much clamour has been raised.

It is the wish of the Weekly Board, and they know it to be that also of all the Governors and Subscribers, to allow every suitable indulgence, and afford every attention and kindness to the suffering individuals who come recommended to them for relief. They will continue to use their very best exertions for the attainment of these objects, and for carrying into effect the valuable purposes of so noble an institution; and they earnestly entreat all who join with them in contributing to its support, to judge of their success, and of the mode in which its affairs are conducted, not from



vague reports, but by visiting the Hospital, or inquiring of the patients themselves, what is the treatment which they have received within its walls.

That the reputation of St. George's Hospital stands high with those for whose benefit it is instituted, the Weekly Board have abundant proofs, in the numerous applications which are continually made to them for admission into it; applications so far beyond what the present Hospital has the means of accommodating, that two out of three are often necessarily rejected. On a late occasion, they received the public testimony of two individuals, distinguished for their liberal support of different charities\*, that they had found among the poor, the strongest preference given to St. George's over every other Hospital. The Weekly Board are aware how much attention is required to maintain this character, especially where the building itself is so ill adapted for ventilation, and so deficient in many important respects. These objections they hope soon to see removed, by the liberality of the public; and, in the mean time, they entreat all those Governors, whose avocations will permit, to join them in a vigilant superintendence of this most useful Institution.

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\* The Bishop of London, and Henry Drummond, Esq.







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## APPENDIX.

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(N<sup>o</sup> I.)

### INQUEST ON JAMES WHEELER\*.

*(Copy of the Coroner's Depositions.)*

Information of witnesses examined touching the death of  
JAMES WHEELER, before JOHN HENRY GELL, Esq.  
Coroner, taken on the 3rd day of March, 1825, at the  
White Horse, Knightsbridge.

“JAMES RICHARDSON, of 73, Sloane Street, Surgeon, on his  
oath deposeth: In the beginning of this week, I do not  
recollect the day, the deceased's widow called on me, and  
requested I would see his body; I went the following day, and  
found the body in a house near Wilton Place. On examination,  
*I saw that MORTIFICATION in the middle of the arm had ensued.*  
There was an incision in that part, as if for the purpose of  
taking up an artery; this was in the part of the arm where it  
is usual to open a vein.

“JAMES RICHARDSON,

“Surgeon.”

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\* From the *Morning Chronicle*, July 28, 1825.



“ WILLIAM EGGLETON, servant to the widow of the deceased, on his oath deposeth : The deceased is thirty-two years of age. I was sent for last Sunday night, to attend to his business, as he was unwell. I saw him in St. George’s Hospital that evening, between five and six. I afterwards went betwixt nine and ten, and staid. He told me, about a quarter of an hour before he died, *that he was sensible he was dying*, and he then said, he was “ A MURDERED MAN.” I did not inquire who had murdered him, nor did he explain who had; he died about five minutes after twelve o’clock of that night. I have omitted to state, that when he said he was a murdered man, he added, *that it was by having been bled in the arm.*

“ WILLIAM EGGLETON,

“ his + mark.”

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“ WILLIAM COWELL, House Surgeon to St. George’s Hospital, on his oath deposeth : The first time I saw the deceased was Wednesday the 23rd of February last, he was then an out-patient ; he had inflammation of the lungs ; he was a physician’s patient. About four o’clock in the afternoon of that day, I was told there was an accident in the Oxford ward. I went there directly, and found *an accident had happened in BLEEDING the deceased ; I then was convinced that an artery in his right arm was wounded ;* this artery was directly under the vein which is usually opened ; I stopped the hæmorrhage, and ordered the deceased to bed ; he was tolerably well for the next twenty-four hours. Symptoms of inflammation of the lungs gained ground, and I requested a Physician to see him : this was on the following Friday evening. I explained the state of the case to the Physician, (Dr. Chambers,) who said, that from the severity of the disease of the chest, an operation was unadvisable. The Surgeon (Mr. Jeffreys) saw the deceased the same evening ; he yielded to the opinion of the Physician, that no operation could be performed. The operation alluded to was the tying the artery. The deceased, after this, sank and died, partly from the disease of the chest, and partly from the inflammation which ensued in the arm, *from the tightness of the bandage which had been applied*



*to stop the bleeding.* He died on Sunday night, before twelve o'clock. I told Mr. Jeffreys the *nature of the accident* on the next morning after the accident. Since death I have examined the body; there was acute inflammation found in the chest, which certainly did a great deal towards killing the man; some swelling and effusion in the arm, not necessarily dangerous. I am of opinion that he died from the joint causes of inflammation of the chest, with the irritation caused by the wound in the arm. The dressers are in the habit of bleeding patients. The name of the dresser who bled the deceased is — Bease, he appears about the age of two or three and twenty years; he came to St. George's Hospital about two or three months ago; he has constantly attended the Hospital. He was dresser to Mr. Ewbank.

“ W. COWELL.”

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“ MARTHA WHEELER, widow of the deceased, on her oath deposeth : My late husband was admitted an out-patient of St. George's Hospital last Wednesday week; he had a kind of cough; he went there that day; I did not accompany him. Soon after he sent my little girl home, and sent word he should soon return home; he remained there a long time, and I went to the Hospital and saw him standing in the ward; his arm was bandaged up; he shook his head, and said, he knew it was all over with him. I saw him again in the evening of that day, he then said his arm would kill him. I saw him again on Thursday, and every following day; he always said he should not recover from his arm, and begged I would not fret. I have applied at the Hospital to know who it was that bled my husband, but have always been refused the name of the person.

“ MARTHA WHEELER.”

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“ *Verdict.*—Died from the accidentally opening an artery in the arm, and from the want of proper attention.”

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(N<sup>o</sup> II.)

## INQUEST ON JOHN HAMMOND\*.

[COPY.]—"City and Liberty of Westminster, in the County of Middlesex, to wit.—Informations of witnesses on the behalf of our Sovereign Lord the King, taken and acknowledged on the twenty-fifth day of July, 1825, at the house of Joseph Franklin, the Triumphant Chariot, situated in Pembroke Mews, in the Parish of Saint George, Hanover Square, in the said Liberty, at an Inquisition then and there taken, on view of the body of John Hammond, then in the said Parish, in the said Liberty, lying dead.

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"HENRY PITMAN, House Surgeon of St. George's Hospital, on his oath, deposeth: The deceased was brought into the Hospital on the 15th of June last; he had a deep cut on the right knee, which he said was done by a piece of glass bottle; he was attended to—a great deal of inflammation of the thigh and knee joint ensued in about three or four days. He complained of great pain before the bandage was taken off; lotions were applied, the cut was deep, and a small branch of an artery was wounded, which I took up. He died on the 23rd instant, from the inflammation of the joint, caused by the cut.

(Signed)

"HENRY PITMAN."

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"SAMUEL RUGGLES, servant to Mr. Bailey, of Old Brompton, in the Parish of St. Mary Abbots, Kensington, on his oath deposeth: The deceased, who is twenty-one years of age, was under-gardener at my master's. Six weeks ago, come Wed-

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\* From a Copy of the Notes of the Deputy Coroner, furnished by himself.



nesday, when I was there with him in the laundry drying-ground, he was moving a flower-stand, which was on some rubbish, such as broken milk pans, broken bottles, garden pots, and crockery, when he accidentally slipped down, and his right knee went against the said rubbish; I inquired if he was hurt, he said he was not, and he jumped up. Soon afterwards I saw blood running down his trowsers; he put his hand there, and said he felt pain—he bound it up with rags given to him by the laundry-maid. I went to Mr. Jackson (an apothecary, corner of Brompton Square) who recommended the deceased's going to St. George's Hospital—he did not see the deceased—I took him to the Hospital—he was instantly admitted, it being an accident. I visited him there every day—he complained for the first four days of great pain; on the fourth day his thigh was swelled above the bandage, and afterwards, on that day, it was loosened; and next morning, when I saw him, he said he was much easier—he did not complain of pain after that; but he daily got worse.

(Signed) "SAMUEL RUGGLES."

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"MARY FREEMAN, a day-nurse of the Oxford ward, in St. George's Hospital, on her oath, deposeth: I recollect the deceased being led into the Oxford ward; lotions were applied—I do not remember when the bandage was taken off—I did not apply leeches.

"MARY FREEMAN,  
"Her + mark."

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"HENRY JEFFREYS, of Clarges Street, Surgeon, on his oath, deposeth: The deceased was a patient of mine. I saw him the day next after his admission; the wound, I found, was then properly dressed and bandaged. I did not see him again until Saturday, the fourth day, when I found that considerable swelling had come on; I removed the dressing, and examined the wound; there was not more inflammation than could be expected—the outer surface of the wound was healed—the next day I found that matter was formed within, and I opened



it. I then saw that he was in danger, and the case excited considerable attention; the matter ascended within the thigh, and ran under the leg, and other unfavourable symptoms appeared; he sank under this, and death ensued. The tightness of the bandage had nothing to do with his death.

(Signed) "HENRY JEFFREYS."

"*Verdict.*—The deceased died from the effects of a cut in the knee, in consequence of not receiving proper surgical treatment, after he entered the Hospital."

FINIS.