

## CORONER'S INQUESTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND  
SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

In the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal* of August 20th, is a paper by a "Surgeon," on the necessity of a "legislative enactment to obtain from the best sources the cause of death on every inquest," and as I think your correspondent does not seem to be aware of the actual state of the law on that subject, I beg to submit the following remarks in order to prove that it is not the fault of the law, but of those who are intrusted with its administration, that the "specific causes of natural death" are not more frequently ascertained.

According to the ancient practice of Coroners, it was considered sufficient, in cases of sudden death, when the immediate cause of death was not apparent, and no evidence of violence was adduced, to state in the verdict that the deceased came to his death by the "visitation of God;" but by the Act 6th and 7th William IV., cap. 86, commonly called the Registration Act, in the 25th section it provided "that in every case in which an inquest shall be held on any dead body, the jury shall inquire of the particulars herein required to be registered concerning the death, and the Coroner shall inform the Registrar of the finding of the jury, and the Registrar shall make the entry accordingly." One of the particulars required to be registered, is the "cause of death."

I am aware that many Coroners still adhere to the old practice, and content themselves with ascertaining whether the death was natural or otherwise, without inquiring into the immediate cause; but this is an evasion of the law as it now stands, and Mr. Farr very properly observes, in the third report of the Registrar-General, for 1841, page 96, that "the Legislature has left the Coroner no discretion on this matter. The juries are bound by the Act to inquire into the particulars required, and the Coroners are bound to supply the Registrar with the results, comprising an intelligible statement of the *cause of death* as far as it can be ascertained."

Your correspondent states that the efforts of the Registrar-General are already directed to this object as a part of the scheme for the more correct registration of the cause of death. I have, as yet, neither seen nor heard of any communication from the Registrar-General to the Coroners on this subject, but should be glad if a more correct and uniform system was adopted by the Coroners generally, as from the prejudice existing amongst the people against *post-mortem* examinations, those Coroners who are desirous of obeying the law are placed in a very invidious position, and are accused of a wanton disregard of the feelings of the relatives of the deceased when, in the execution of their duty, and in the absence of sufficient evidence of the cause of death, they may require the body to be opened.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A MEDICAL CORONER.

August 23, 1845.

## THE ADVERTISING SYSTEM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND  
SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

Believing that in these times it is the duty of every member of the profession to discountenance the advertising system as much as is in his power, I request your insertion in the *Journal* of the following statement, which shows how impudently and unjustifiably the names of those who, under any circumstances, give an order for a patented article are liable to be used by the vendor.

A few weeks ago, at the request of a patient who had seen an advertisement of Maugham's Patented Carrara Water, and thought it would suit him, I applied to a highly respectable firm of druggists in London to procure me a supply for him from the vendor. A hamper, containing six dozen, "the smallest quantity sent out," was forwarded; and last week, at the request of the same patient, I applied again to the druggists to forward another supply.

Yesterday, an advertisement of the Carrara Water, in the *Times* newspaper of that day, August 18th, was shown to me, in which my name appeared as a retail agent for the sale of it in this town,—permission to make such use of my name having never been granted, and not even asked. The firm alluded to are, I am sure, totally unaware of the use which has been made of my name.

Further comment is unnecessary; and my object in asking a place for this statement in the *Journal*, is to give what appears to be a very necessary caution to my medical brethren.

I am, Sir,

Yours, most respectfully,

HENRY JACKSON.

St. James's Row, Sheffield, Aug. 19, 1845.

## SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES.

Admitted a Licentiate on Thursday, Aug. 21:—W. Docker, Southport.

## MEDICAL APPOINTMENT.

Dr. James Cowles Prichard, of Bristol, has been appointed by the Lord Chancellor one of the Medical Commissioners in Lunacy, in the place of Dr. Henry Herbert Southey, resigned.

## BOOKS RECEIVED.

Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Directors of the Dundee Royal Asylum for Lunatics. Dundee: 1845. 8vo. pp. 52.

A System of Surgery, by J. M. Chelius, Doctor in Medicine and Surgery, &c., Translated from the German, and accompanied with additional Notes and Observations. By John F. South, Surgeon to St. Thomas's Hospital. Part V. London: Renshaw. 1845.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications have been received from Messrs Dorrington and Franklin; Mr. W. Allison; Mr. Walford; Mr. Sopwith; Mr. Greenhow; a Member of the College of Surgeons.