

THE ALLEGED POISONINGS AT RUGELEY.—TRIAL OF W. PALMER.

Central Criminal Court, May 14.

The long-deferred trial of William Palmer, which, owing to the necessity of passing a special Act of Parliament to enable it to take place in this court, has been delayed for a period of several months since the finding of a true bill by the Grand Jury of Staffordshire, commenced to-day at the Old Bailey; and, notwithstanding the interval which has elapsed since this extraordinary case was first brought under the notice of the public, the intense interest and excitement which it then occasioned seem in no degree to have abated.

At a very early hour every entrance to the court was besieged by persons of respectable appearance, who were favoured with cards giving them a right of entrance. Without such cards, no admittance could on any pretence be obtained, and even the fortunate holders of them found that they had many difficulties to overcome, and many stern janitors to encounter before an entrance to the much-coveted precincts could be obtained. On the whole, the arrangements of Under-Sheriffs Stone and Rose were excellent.

Among the distinguished persons who were present at the opening of the court were the Earl of Derby, Earl Grey, the Marquis of Anglesey, Lord Lucan, Lord Denbigh, Prince Edward of Saxe Weimar, Lord W. Lennox, Lord G. G. Lennox, and Lord H. Lennox. The Lord-Advocate of Scotland sat by the side of the Attorney-General during the trial.

At five minutes to ten o'clock the learned judges, Lord Chief Justice Campbell, Mr. Baron Alderson, and Mr. Justice Cresswell, accompanied by the Lord Mayor, Aldermen Sir G. Carroll, Humphrey, Sir R. W. Carden, Finnis, Sir F. G. Moon, and Sidney, Mr. Sheriff Kennedy, Mr. Sheriff Rose, Mr. Under-Sheriff Stone, and Mr. Under-Sheriff Rose, took their seats on the bench.

The prisoner, William Palmer, was immediately placed in the dock; and to the indictment which charged him with the wilful murder of John Parsons Cook, who died at Rugeley upon the 21st of November last, he pleaded, in a clear, low, but perfectly audible and distinct tone, "Not guilty." The prisoner is described in the calendar as "William Palmer, 31, surgeon, of superior degree of instruction." In appearance, Palmer is much older, and, although there are no marks of care about his face, there are the set expression and rounded frame which belong to the man of forty or forty-five. His countenance is clear and open, the forehead high, the complexion ruddy, and the general impression which one would form from his appearance would be rather favourable than otherwise, although his features are of a common and somewhat mean cast. There is certainly nothing to indicate to the ordinary observer the presence either of ferocity or cunning, and one would expect to find in him more of the boon companion than the subtle adversary. His manner was remarkably calm and collected throughout the whole of the day. It was altogether devoid of bravado, but was respectful and attentive, and was calculated to create a favourable impression. He frequently conversed with Mr. Smith, his professional adviser, and remained standing until the close of the speech for the prosecution, when, at his request, his counsel asked that he might be permitted to sit—an application which was at once acceded to by Lord Campbell.

The counsel engaged in the case were:—The Attorney-General, Mr. E. James, Q.C., Mr. Bodkin, Mr. Welsby, and Mr. Huddleston, for the Crown; and Mr. Serjeant Shee, Mr. Grove, Q.C., Mr. Gray, and Mr. Kenealy, for the prisoner.

A most respectable jury having been empanelled, and all the witnesses, with the exception of the medical men, having been ordered out of court,

The Attorney-General opened the case in an address which occupied upwards of four hours in delivery. Several witnesses were afterwards examined; and the trial was adjourned, at 20 minutes to 6 o'clock, until the following morning.

We shall give an account of this interesting trial next week, or when it is concluded.

TESTIMONIAL TO DR. KIRKMAN. It is not very often that we have to record presentations to medical men; but we have been favoured with a sight of a very beautiful English Hexapla Bible, handsomely bound, which has been presented to Dr. Kirkman, from the relatives of a patient lately under his care. It must be a very gratifying testimony to a gentlemen whose known religious principles will lead him, we have no doubt, feelingly to estimate the gift. (*Ipswich Journal*, May 10th.)

MEDICAL BENEVOLENT COLLEGE. On Tuesday last, the third annual meeting of the governors of this institution was held at their offices, Soho Square—Earl Manvers in the Chair. The report mentioned that the promoters of the College saw the undertaking enjoying continued success and receiving increased subscriptions; the building was now completed; the schools were in operation; the pensioners were in their home; and the institution incorporated by Act of Parliament. On the 25th of June last, Prince Albert opened the College; and on the 19th of July, 20 pupils and 10 pensioners were admitted into it. On the 20th of August, there were also admitted 125 exhibitors, which, with 25 foundation scholars, made the entire number for which the College was designed. It is now desirable to build a chapel for the accommodation of the inmates; and, to secure funds for that purpose, the fee of life membership has been in the case of ladies reduced from £10 to £5. There was received at the last annual festival subscriptions to the amount of £3,000; and the late Mr. Thomas Watts bequeathed £300 to the corporation, the interest to be paid in prizes to the pupils. The total receipts for the year, including £532 balance from the former year—£9,866 donations, £2,008 subscriptions, £5,865 realised by the sale of £8,500 stock—amounted to £20,105; and the expenditure—including £8,082 paid on building account, and £1,457, the repayment of a debt, and other items—to £10,008; leaving in hand a balance of £1,097. The report was unanimously adopted; and some routine business having been disposed of, a vote of thanks was passed to the Chairman, when the meeting adjourned for a week, when an election of pupils and pensioners will take place.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS. Professor Hewett commenced his course of Six Lectures on Tuesday last, on the Anatomy, Injuries, and Diseases of the Head.

ROYAL LONDON OPHTHALMIC HOSPITAL. Her Majesty the Queen has graciously been pleased to present the munificent donation of £100 towards the expenses of the recent enlargement and improvement of this hospital.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LETTERS and other COMMUNICATIONS for the JOURNAL should be directed to the private address of the Editor, 39, Curzon Street, May Fair.

TO CONTRIBUTORS. The Editor would feel glad if Members of the Association and others, would cooperate with him in establishing as a rule, that in future no paper for publication shall exceed two pages of the Journal in length. If the writers of long communications knew as well as the Editor does, that lengthy papers always deter the reader from commencing them, this great evil would never arise. Brevity is the soul of medical writing—still more than of wit.

Members should remember that corrections for the current week's JOURNAL should not arrive later than Wednesday.

AN ASSOCIATE.—Under the new Medical Bill, the double qualification will not be essential for holding the appointment of Poor-Law Medical Officer. Every one who is registered, even though he may have but one qualification, will be eligible.

Communications have been received from:—MR. THOMAS B. ANSTIE; DR. DAY; MR. F. H. HARTSHORNE; MR. J. V. SOLOMON; AN ASSOCIATE; MR. CHARLES WILLIS; DR. WOODHOUSE; MR. GRIFFIN; J. L. HOBBS; MR. R. COE; DR. P. H. WILLIAMS; DR. CORBETT WHITTON; MR. WM. MATTERSON; MR. JOHN WINDSOR; DR. KIDD; DR. F. J. BROWN; MR. AUGUSTIN PRICHARD; DR. C. R. HALL; A MEDICAL STUDENT; MR. PROPERT; MR. J. C. S. JENNINGS; MR. DEAN; MR. S. H. SWAYNE; DR. R. H. POWELL; DR. HANDFIELD JONES; MR. ELLIS JONES; MR. E. F. DEHANE (Wolverhampton); and MR. JAMES COOPER.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

[* An Asterisk is prefixed to the names of Members of the Association.]

1. A Handbook of Organic Chemistry for the use of Students. Fourth Edition, corrected and much extended, by William Gregory, M.D., F.R.S.E., Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh. pp. 627. London: Walton and Maberly.
2. Essays on State Medicine. By *Henry Wyldbore Rumsey. pp. 424. London: John Churchill.
3. The Ferns of Great Britain. Illustrated by John E. Sowerby, proprietor of Sowerby's English Botany. The Descriptions, Synonyms, etc., by Charles Johnson, Esq., Botanical Lecturer at Guy's Hospital. pp. 84. London: John E. Sowerby.
4. The Fern Allies, a Supplement to the Ferns of Great Britain. Illustrated by John E. Sowerby, proprietor of Sowerby's English Botany. The Descriptions, Synonyms, etc., by Charles Johnson, Esq., Botanical Lecturer at Guy's Hospital. London: John E. Sowerby.
5. British Poisonous Plants. By Charles Johnson, Botanical Lecturer at Guy's Hospital. Illustrated with Twenty-eight Coloured Plates transferred from English Botany. pp. 55. London: John E. Sowerby.