

manner in which medical men are treated by coroners. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WM. TAYLOR TYSON, M.R.C.S.L.

Beccles, Suffolk, Jan. 19, 1829.

On Sunday, January 6th, 9 A.M., my instant attendance was requested by Wm. Almond, to visit a young woman (his daughter), whom he said was pregnant, and soon after coming down stairs had fainted. I attended immediately, and found her supported by her mother, the jaws expanded, lips bloodless, countenance deadly pale; the artery could be felt at the wrist, though scarcely three minutes had elapsed ere it ceased to pulsate; no hæmorrhage had taken place externally. She had fainted on the previous day, when urine and fæces passed from her involuntarily; she was not married; said to be a close kind of girl, and had been in a low way for some time past. The mother could not say how far her daughter was advanced in pregnancy, though she appeared of a considerable size. The women present were unwilling to believe her dead, and, in consequence, the means likely to be of service were had recourse to; they proved useless. The friends still thinking that life had not departed, I judged it proper, under the circumstances, to send for an older and more experienced practitioner than myself. Mr. Crowfoot came, and confirmed the opinion as to life being extinct.

From inquiries made of the mother and others, nothing could be elicited that would in any way lead to a knowledge of the cause of death; its sudden occurrence without any assignable cause,—the young person being single and pregnant,—her having been in ill-health without any medical advice, with other circumstances, induced Mr. Crowfoot to suggest that an inquiry, as to the cause of death, should take place under the direction of the Coroner.

On Tuesday, January the 8th, I was requested by the constable to be at the King's Head Inn, to give evidence, as a jury was summoned, and told that the Coroner would be there by eight o'clock, P.M. About nine o'clock I was sent for by the Coroner, and I stated, that, without an examination of the body, the cause of death would probably for ever remain unknown; nevertheless the jury, after viewing the body, did, by the direction of the Coroner, return the verdict,—“Died by the visitation of God.”

On Friday, January 11th, (three hours only before the corpse was to have been buried) I obtained permission to open the body; Mr. Wm. Crowfoot kindly assisted me during the examination.

Over the upper part of the chest, neck, and shoulders the skin was of a dark greenish appearance.

Thorax.—Lungs healthy; about half a pint of red-coloured fluid in the right pleural cavity; the heart rather large and flaccid; about three drachms of red-coloured fluid in the pericardium.

Abdomen.—The uterus and its contents healthy, and she appeared to be between seven and eight months gone with child; the serous membrane covering the intestines not at all inflamed; the stomach contained about three ounces of a thick fluid; the mucous membrane was inflamed and thrown into large rugous folds; there were numerous and large deep red patches of extravasated blood, apparently beneath the mucous membrane; the pyloric extremities, with a portion of duodenum, not at all inflamed. Time would not allow us to proceed further with the examination. The stomach and its contents we were allowed to take away, and it is intended that they should be sent to a practical chemist to analyse. Mr. Crowfoot and Mr. Davey having examined the bodies of several who have died from the effects of metallic poison, are of *decided opinion* that the appearances presented by the stomach were produced by some acrid substance.

The Coroner (Mr. Grosse, of Ipswich) did not arrive at Beccles till after eight o'clock, and about ten o'clock (when most people in the country think of going to bed) the jury viewed the body, some of whom appeared extremely anxious to get home; the Coroner, evidently desirous to leave Beccles by the coach early the next morning, did not think it necessary that the body should be opened, as he would have been detained here the next day; but insinuated to the jury, that debility and dropsy (from the ankles and legs being swollen) might account for the sudden death; he refused also to pay me the usual fee, as he stated that he could not, on his own responsibility, give one; but that he would recommend the magistrates to allow him to send me one.

DR. RYAN'S REPLY

TO THE

NOTICE OF MR. HOUSTON'S MANUAL OF DISEASES OF THE EYE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—I was a good deal surprised on observing in a late number of THE LANCET, December 22nd ult., a most unfair and scurrilous notice of my friend Mr. Houston's “Manual of Diseases of the Eye,” published in June last, which was not written by Mr. Wakley, as it is not his style, and is totally unworthy of his character. I write advisedly when I make this statement; for it cannot be expected that medical editors are ubiquitous, and that every

article can be written by them. Though this is generally the case in *THE LANCET*, yet, at Christmas time, the editor might naturally be expected to have the usual privilege of enjoying the festivities of the season with his family at his country residence.

The article of which I complain was surreptitiously introduced, after it had been first concocted, by persons who are most ungrateful to me for many acts of kindness, and now, without just cause, my personal enemies; and whose conduct, if exposed, would do them little credit in the estimation of the profession.

I should consider the article totally unworthy of my notice, so far as I am personally concerned, had it not been that my friend has been most unjustly assailed, simply, as it is alleged, because he dedicated his work to me; and quoted several prescriptions which he repeatedly saw me use, and used himself, at the Metropolitan Free Hospital,—truly a most cogent reason.

I am well aware of the motives which led to this attack, but shall refrain, at present, from stating them publicly; but I trust to your candour and liberality to allow me a word in reply.

Dr. Littell's Manual, edited by Mr. Houston, was reviewed as follows, in one of the medical journals:—"It is no small triumph to Dr. Littell to be able to say, that he has introduced almost all that is valuable, and everything absolutely necessary to the student, within the compass of 250 small pages; and we would deliberately recommend our young friends to read this work before encountering the voluminous treatises of Lawrence, Travers, Mackenzie, Middlemore, &c."—*British and Foreign Medical Review*, No. IX.

Mr. Houston not only reprinted every word of Dr. Littell's work,—not Dr. Little's, *vide LANCET*,—but added much valuable matter, as will appear by reference to his edition, more especially from Professor Stœber's recent and best foreign Manual; he supplied several deficiencies, added many efficacious prescriptions, considerably enlarged the vocabulary, wrote an index to the formulary, and an alphabetical ophthalmic index, or rather dictionary, unequalled by those of the authors enumerated by the anonymous and dastardly critics, viz., "of Guthrie, Lawrence, Mackenzie, Middlemore, Scarpa, Beer, Ware, and Alexander, (who, by the way, have not published any volumes at all on the subject), Velpeau, Wenzel," &c., and even Stœber; while he has introduced accounts of diseases, and scientific names of diseases, not in any one of the preceding voluminous works. In fact, there is *not*, in my opinion, in the English, or in any other European language, so far as I know, so perfect and comprehensive a manual of diseases of the eye, as Mr. Houston's. It

contains the conclusions of all systematic treatises of worth, and is one of the best manuals of the age. It will find a place in the library of every medical student and practitioner. If it has prevented others from attempting abortive speculations on the same class of diseases, it surely ought not to be attacked on that account. If it will supersede other works that have long lain on the respectable publisher's shelves, this is no ground for condemnation. If Mr. Houston has quoted the "*Medico-Chirurgical Pharmacopœia*," published by me, the last of the kind, and extracted numerous prescriptions, which he saw me use, and repeatedly tried himself, with success, I should feign hope that it is not injurious to the interests of science, and no just ground for low, vulgar attack. Then it is alleged that other writers are not quoted so often as myself, which is not true, as every author of merit is quoted just so often as he deserves, but not oftener.

Lastly, it is falsely insinuated that the revisions and enlargements were, probably, "furnished by himself," meaning myself; another most unjust attack upon the ability of my young friend. I certainly suggested to him to reperuse all the standard works on diseases of the eye, and to extract any thing important, if omitted by Dr. Littell, which was seldom the case. He followed this *advice*, and added some few cases he saw treated by myself, and the histories of others I had treated for years past. In adopting this plan, he has left no room for other manuals of diseases of the eye,—*hinc illæ lachrymæ*,—hence the cause of lachrymation. I certainly revised the work, as more conversant with the press than my friend, and of this he has made no secret, as will be seen by his preface. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

M. RYAN, M.D.

4, Charlotte-street, Bloomsbury,
Jan. 29, 1839.

* * Dr. Ryan, we are well aware, may have a sufficient ground for believing that persons who were at one time connected with him in the publication of a medical journal are now his bitter and malignant enemies; but he may be assured, with reference to the notice of Mr. Houston's work, which appeared in *THE LANCET*, that it was not the production of his secret foes, but of the sub-editor of this Journal.

PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE.

DR. ROE AND MR. WADSWORTH.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR:—In *THE LANCET* of the 26th instant I am charged by Mr. Wadsworth with having spoken to the mother of a little patient in disparagement of his mode of