nor medical men; and yet they presume, with amusing and unprecedented simplicity, to decide upon the relative capability of the members of both professions.

Every man of common sense knows that the case in which they were engaged depended, principally, on medical testimony; that none but a medical man was able to put the questions which could produce the entire evidence; that none but a medical man could estimate the pertinency and efficiency of the answers given; and that the mere formal technicalities of a lawyer were quite inadequate in such, and many similar cases, to attain the ends of justice, and prevent the sacrifice of public interest and private character.

Let it be remembered that a coroner's court has simply to investigate the fact; and that the matter, whatever it may be, is afterwards referred to another tribunal for a legal decision. The fact may, certainly, be best determined by those who know something respecting it; and the law can, on the same principle, be most efficiently brought to bear on the subject, by those who are skilled in that profession. It would be as absurd to ask the Lord Chancellor to give his opinion upon an intricate medical case, as it would have been to put the same question, in a complicated legal difficulty, to John Hunter.

The flippant and obtrusive document of the Stockport jury, which has all the appearance of being the production of an interested party, is a most flagrant and wanton imputation upon a most important and respectable profession; and its publication will, it is presumed, be, at some future time, lamented by every individual who has so strangely and inadvisedly attached his signature to the article.

The advertisement is reported to have been drawn up by an attorney. The jury were mere simpletons, who *did as they were directed*. I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,

AN ADVOCATE FOR A MEDICAL CORONER.

STRANGULATED INGUINAL HERNIA TREATED BY A DRUGGIST.

INQUEST ON THE BODY.

(Forwarded for publication in THE LANCET.)

GEORGE RICHARDS, of Ashcombe, labourer, aged 33, said to have been at times afflicted with hernia, was seized, during his work, on Saturday morning, at about nine A.M., October 10th, with such sudden and excruciating pain in his bowels that he could not stand up, and was taken home in a cart. A messenger was sent for Mr. W. M. Cann, surgeon, at Dawlish; but he being from home, Mr. Liddon, a druggist, at Dawlish,

was subsequently sent for, and saw him in the evening; bled him, gave him medicines, ordered him poppy fomentations, &c.; and, during the two following days, continued his efforts to relieve him by enemata, warm baths, and a large blister all over the abdomen.

The man continuing to get worse, having had incessant vomiting from the first, and now of a stercoraceous character, on Monday, October 12, at four A.M., his brother went to Mr. Collyns, of Kenton, surgeon, to request his assistance. Mr. C. being engaged, and unable to attend, sent to request the man to go for some other surgeon, and he accordingly went to Dr. Tunstall, at Dawlish, who was from home; but his servant went and requested Mr. Cann to go for him, and Mr. Cann saw him on Monday evening, and ascertained that there was a hernial tumour of some size in the right groin; the man was, however, very obstinate and violent, and would not permit Mr. Cann to do anything to endeavour to reduce it. Mr. Cann, therefore, took his leave, and did not interfere.

On the following morning, being Tuesday, the 13th October, Mr. Cann was again requested to attend him, which he accordingly did, and finding him moribund, he requested to have another opinion, and Mr. Collyns being sent to, he met Mr. Cann at eight on that evening, and found the man in *articulo mortis*. Mr. Collyns, however, to satisfy himself, passed his finger into the external ring, and plainly felt the protruding intestine above, which then felt as if receding from his finger. The poor man died whilst Mr. Collyns was in the house.

Mr. Cann, with a laudable anxiety to prevent *unprofessional* and *unqualified persons* from undertaking cases of such importance, suggested the propriety of having an inquest held on the body, in which Mr. Collyns cordially concurred, and Mr. Gribble, one of the coroners for Devon, was sent to on the following Friday, Oct. 16th, the man having died on the 13th. Mr. Gribble came to Ashcombe, and summoned Mr. Cann, Mr. Liddon, and Mr. Collyns, to attend; but Mr. Liddon having learnt that an inquiry would take place, went on Thursday, the 15th, to Mr. Radley, who practises at Lenton, and got him to come over and look at the body on that day, being forty-eight hours after death.

On attending the inquest, on Friday, Mr. Cann and Mr. Collyns informed the coroner, that they could not give *satisfactory evidence* touching the death of Richards, unless they opened and examined the body; and this being ordered to be done, they accordingly prepared to do it. Here, however, an extraordinary scene was presented; the mother and wife of the deceased, assisted by some female neighbours, made a furious attack on the surgeons, attempted to throw the

instruments out at the window, and, with very menacing gestures and horrid imprecations, threatened to throw the surgeons after them. Finding it impossible to proceed, Mr. Collins went to the coroner, in the adjoining house, and informed him what had taken place; and he having been told by the foreman of the jury, that Mr. Liddon was coming with his friend, Mr. Radley, the coroner said it would be better to wait their arrival, and proceeded to take the evidence of the wife, whom he reprimanded for her violent conduct. On the arrival of Mr. Liddon and his friend, the foreman of the jury, at the suggestion of Mr. Radley, requested the coroner to order Mr. Cann and Mr. Collins to leave the court, which they did; and the latter was not again called as a witness, although he was prepared to swear what had occasioned the death. Mr. Liddon and his friend Mr. Radley were suffered to remain; Mr. Liddon's testimony being taken, Mr. Radley was allowed to give evidence, although he was not summoned to attend, and had not seen the case until forty-eight hours after death. Mr. Cann was then called in, and submitted to a very long examination by Mr. Radley; after which the coroner summed up, without enforcing his order for the post-mortem examination, and without calling for Mr. Collins's evidence, who had seen the man whilst living; and the jury came to a decision, on the volunteer evidence of Mr. Radley, that the man—"Died by the visitation of God."

Surely it is high time to have laws which permit all this amended.

On Thursday, October the 16th, Mr. Collins being applied to as registrar of the district for his certificate of registry, he entered the death in the register-book as having been caused by *strangulated hernia*, on his own knowledge of the case, not knowing that the inquest would be held; and now he is required, by the information of the coroner, to enter the cause of death as "*the visitation of God*." How can this be reconciled? Of course, neither Mr. Cann nor Mr. Collins can know anything of the testimony given by Mr. Liddon or Mr. Radley, he not having been permitted to be present; but the latter is said, by one of the jury, to have stated that the treatment adopted by the former was most correct and judicious, and it was insinuated that the inquest was held purposely to injure Mr. Liddon; but Mr. Cann and Mr. Collins positively deny any such intention, their object being to expose the system, not the man, whom they believe to have done as much as his limited knowledge of the case enabled him to do.

W. MOORE CANN, M.R.C.S.L.

W. COLLINS, M.R.C.S.L.

October 25, 1840.

PATRONAGE OF QUACKS BY MEDICAL MEN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—I am a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, a licentiate of the Apothecaries' Company, and, in addition to the peculiar practice which these mighty, but perfectly valueless, titles introduce me to, I am also bold enough to trade in the low and humble business of a chemist and druggist; I feel, therefore, that I am one of those very unfortunate persons who come under the ban of Mr. Dendy's severe and victimising letter in your last Number. From the peculiar and quaint style in which this gentleman's letter is written, I am very much afraid that he sets himself up as the exterminator of all who, like myself, sell pink saucers and hang out blue lights. In addition to my professional employments, I occupy myself every week with reading your pages; and I am no stranger to the persevering efforts of which you have been and still are the author, in endeavouring to exterminate from the surface of society those numerous creatures yclept "quacks." Why, Sir, can you be in ignorance that quacks are more numerous than ever; that they flourish, and thrive, and coin cash to a greater amount than at any former time? Why, the stars in heaven, and the sands beneath the sea, are small in number compared to the quacks in the streets of London. It is all very well for you, and those who think like you, to attempt to exterminate them from the face of the earth. Why, Sir, do you not know that every quack in England reads your pages, and takes especial good care to profit by them? Every chemist and druggist is to all intents and purposes a quack. They have all of them nostrums of their own. "Bilious Pills," "Family Pills," "Dinner Pills," "Friends to Females," "Corn Comforters," &c. Now, who is to withstand all this? It is very well for Mr. Dendy, who, bachelor as he is, has only himself and his housekeeper to provide for, to cry out against those who keep shops; but my wife, children, and servants, would soon become more intimate with hunger and starvation than they have ever yet been, were I to "shut up shop." No, Sir, much as I admire your logic, I cannot forsake my "order." I respect Mr. Dendy, but I respect myself still more; and I cannot consent to starve, to please either of you. You are pursuing the wrong cause, and are taking the wrong route. You will never exterminate either Holloway or Franks; they will be too much for you; they will beat you hollow; and crow and flap with delight over your unsuccessful, though well-meant, efforts to crush them. Quackery—oh, how ignorant are you, Sir, of the va-