

the jury to return a verdict of *wilful murder* against her.*

But it is possible that she might have been taken in labour by surprise, or (as happened in the case of *Curshod* †) did not know or believe herself to be pregnant. If she had *expected* parturition, or had any evil intention to execute, why should she have admitted a witness to the scene of such a transaction? Although this witness was censured for not having called in assistance, it is also possible that she committed a mere error in judgment, but, from the report of the evidence, it is manifest that she was in the secret, and probably did not know how to act.

It is a most dangerous idea that tying the umbilicus is not necessary. In many instances it may be so, and the law of nature may countenance the *doctrine*, but it records too many exceptions to warrant the practice.

DISSECTIONS.

COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following is a copy of a letter which I sent to the College a few days ago, you can insert it if you please in your LANCET:—

"To the Honourable Board of Examiners of the Royal College of Surgeons in London.

"Gentlemen,—You are fully aware, I doubt not, of the difficulty of obtaining subjects for dissection in the ordinary mode, in consequence of the discovery of the horrible system of Burking now evidently practised by some of the resurrectionists, and of the consequent disreputable reflections which will be cast upon the lecturers, if they persist in having connexion with such men. I beg, therefore, to ask you officially, as the proper authority, what plan you would advise me, as well as the other anatomical lecturers, to adopt. Also whether it is the intention of the Council to

make an early representation to Parliament during the coming session for the profession and public in this particular.

"Should your Honourable Board not be able to suggest any means besides the ordinary for procuring a supply, I wish to know whether, provided it happens to be the unanimous wish of my pupils, their attendance on my dissections, demonstrations, and lectures in Paris, will be acknowledged by you till the present evils in England are removed.

"As things are at present, one of the three following alternatives seems inevitable—to continue in league with murderers—close the dissecting-rooms and suspend the lectures—or repair to France. I await your advice, and remain, your very obedient servant,

G. D. DERMOTT.

"9, Gerrard Street, Soho,
Nov. 22, 1831."

I subsequently received the following answer:—

"Royal College of Surgeons, London,
November 25, 1831.

"Sir,—I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd inst., and to inform you that the subject is already under the consideration of the court. I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"EDM. BELFOUR, Secretary."

By this the public will have the consolation of knowing that the College is not inactive (and neither I trust is the government) in this matter.

G. D. D.

WESTMINSTER MEDICAL SOCIETY.

Saturday, November 26.

Dr. SIGMOND, President.

THE CHOLERA.

ITS NATURE AND TREATMENT.

THE PRESIDENT.—The subject, Gentlemen, which has engaged your attention so many evenings, is again to be brought before you, but in a new shape. It having been understood, on the last evening, that the question of contagion or non-contagion had received its full share of attention, we now proceed to the general character and treatment of the epidemic. The gentleman in possession of the chair is Dr. J. Johnson.

Dr. JOHNSON.—In order, Mr. President, the more effectually to economise the time of the Society, I have arranged my opinions in the form of propositions, which I have numbered for the sake of reference, and will now read without any further delay:—

* This may sound strange, but it is far from being an absurdity. No punishment could, of course, be indicted upon the deceased culprit; but her own death did not arise from the same cause as that of the child; and the evil intent, as proved by the evidence, was the same as it would have been had she lived to form any other, and perpetrate any other evil action.

+ A young Swiss lady, who was delivered of an illegitimate child in solitude about 1819, for which she was tried at Chelmsford Assizes, but acquitted on the ground of ignorance of her situation. Such facts do occur, and perhaps more frequently than unfortunate young females obtain credit for. At the same time the proof must be very strong, indeed which establishes it.