

with my own experience the truth of your remarks, and to exculpate myself from having neglected that which I think was the duty of those connected with the inquest to suggest. I remain, Sir, one of your oldest and constant readers,

Dr. J. DE PRATI.

8, London-street, Fitzroy-square,  
August 4, 1838.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR:—My attention has been directed in the last published number of your weekly Journal, to certain strictures upon my evidence, at an inquest held upon the late Mr. Pow.

I am aware it would occupy too large a space in your publication to enter fully into a refutation of all the charges you have thought proper to bring forward; at the same time, I cannot but express my surprise that the Editor of THE LANCET should rely for information upon the garbled extracts of a daily paper. That I did say that I would not give ardent spirits in delirium tremens I admit, and that opinion I still retain, as in those cases where I have witnessed its administration, its effects have invariably been injurious, if not fatal. At the same time, I am willing to admit, that there are medical men who sanction such practice. Had you perused my evidence with attention you must have perceived that my remarks applied more particularly to the case in question, where there was every reason to surmise the existence of inflammation of the stomach.

That I did not object to the exhibition of stimulants is evident from several of my replies, where I have recommended the administration of ammonia, ether, opium, camphor, &c., from which you must be sensible that my objection to the use of the spirit bore more particular reference to the incautious administration of it in the present case.

With regard to the examination of the viscera by chemical tests, as we had no reason to suspect the presence of any acrid poisons, the symptoms and course of the disease not leading to such a conclusion, they were not examined further than is stated in the evidence. And this, allow me to say, met the concurrence of three other medical men who were present.

In conclusion, I must take leave to remark, that comments upon a case not finally adjudicated, by creating a particular bias in the minds of the jury, would tend rather to defeat or baffle the ends of justice, than arriving at the much-desired object,—truth. I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

C. J. PREEDY.

89, Chapel-street, Pentonville,  
August 8, 1838.

Had Mr. Brooke and Mr. Preedy ad-

ressed notes to the Editors of the newspapers and complained of the inaccurate manner in which their evidence was reported, those gentlemen would have been spared the comments which appeared in this Journal.—ED. L.

## INQUEST ON THE BODY OF MR. POW. LETTER FROM MR. BROOKE.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR:—My estimation of the manner in which the proceedings of coroners' inquests are usually conducted coincides so entirely with your own, and the course pursued in reference to the deceased Mr. Pow, appeared to me so very unsatisfactory, that I did not give myself the trouble of correcting the misrepresentations of my evidence as reported in some of the daily papers. As, however, the attention of the medical profession has by your notice of the proceedings been directed to the subject, I consider an explanation to be indispensable on my part, feeling as I do that the fault rests not with myself, but with the medico-legal incapacity by which my observations were directed. On entering the room in which the jury were assembled, not accidentally, but having been sent for at the instance of some one present, I was requested to examine the body, and when I endeavoured to ascertain the precise object of the examination, all I could learn was, the existence of a suspicion that large doses of the tincture of hyoscyamus had been administered medicinally, but no one ever suspected that the deceased had been otherwise poisoned. I was also requested to ascertain, if I could, whether inflammation of the brain had existed; and a hope was expressed that the inquiry would be expeditiously conducted, as the jury would wait my return. I therefore satisfied myself as far as I could on these points, and returned, leaving the body open for analysis, or further investigation if required by the coroner or jury. I stated that the stomach bore evident marks of inflammation. The minute patchy injection of the mucous membrane, (which was not all decomposed), unaccompanied by any congestion of the large vessels, and which differed alike from the cadaveric congestion described by Dr. Carswell, and from that state of congestion of the stomach which I believe frequently results from the repeated action of vomiting, I considered, and I believe justly, to be a distinctive characteristic of inflammation; and in reply to a question, I added that there was nothing in the appearance of the stomach that would lead me to suppose that any acrid mineral poison had been taken.

In reference to the question whether or not the tincture of hyoscyamus had been

administered, I said that the smell arising from the decay of the body rendered it impossible to judge by the smell of any vegetable medicine that might have been administered; and I am not aware of any other means of detecting the presence of hyoscyamus; and in reference to the same point, I subsequently said, in reply to an ill directed question, that some vegetable poisons would have been so changed by decomposition, that no analysis could detect them.

The soft parts of the head were so completely disorganised by the combined influence of putrefaction and maggots, that I do not hesitate to repeat my assertion that any examination of the brain in reference to the appearances of inflammation would have been *useless*, not impossible.

Had a negative analysis been required, or had the examination been directed, and its results recorded by a competent tribunal, I trust I should have superseded the strictures which you have justly made on the published report you have quoted. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHAS. BROOKE.

35, Keppel-street, Aug. 6, 1838.

## LETTER FROM A DRUGGIST.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR:—The letter signed “M. L.,” in your Journal of last week, is an attack against druggists generally, and is unjust to go forth to the public without some defensive reply. That uneducated persons selling drugs frequently practise, and thus bring discredit on their fellow members, must be admitted, but cannot be allowed as a proof of the inadequacy of druggists in general, nor is it fair to select two isolated cases as a condemnation of the whole body, for, if such were admitted, there is not a week that passes but cases might be proved against qualified medical men mistaking one disease for another, and thereby subjecting their patients to a decided wrong treatment. That reformation is requisite there can be no doubt, but let that reformation begin at home. Why should surgeons dispense medicine, and take the bread out of the druggists’ mouth? “Live, and let live,” ought to be the motto; but does the dispensing surgeon act upon that principle? Does he not take from the druggist all in his power, and thereby compel him to act in the manner complained of? Let the surgeon adhere to his own profession, without infringing on the druggist’s livelihood, and let every druggist be subject to a strict examination by the Apothecaries’ Company, and I think, in a very short time, the profession would take a nobler stand in society; all parties be more respected and empiri-

cism arrive at its final struggle. I remain, Sir, your admirer and constant reader,  
A DRUGGIST,

July, 30th, 1238.

## OBJECTIONS TO THE CÆSAREAN OPERATION.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR:—Is it not a stigma in the nineteenth century upon the French and German surgeons, to see them publishing cases not only in this but other independent medical journals, in which they boast that they have performed the Cæsarean section with more or less perfect success? Is it not an operation through which under the most dexterous and skilful hands, the patient after *acute suffering* generally falls a victim to the knife—peritoneal inflammation? From the published reports in nine cases out of ten, is not *decidedly unsuccessful*? How thankful then, ought we to be that scientific men have now invented instruments with the humane intention, if possible, of *utterly eradicating* this cruel operation; and I sincerely trust that we may never again hear of its performance in this favoured isle. Amongst the instruments in use for this purpose, let me particularly call the attention of medical men to one invented by Dr. David D. Davis and which I fear is too little known among the great body of our profession. It is called the Osteotomist, or Bone-Pliers, combining the principles of a punch and pair of scissors; and is, indeed, a power by which a portion of the foetal skeleton presenting at the brim of a contracted pelvis may be broken down into small fragments of about half an inch in diameter, with the most perfect impunity to the tissues of the mother. The extreme breadth of its broadest oval rim is precisely three-quarters of an inch, so that where there is sufficient space to admit of the introduction of this instrument, together with the point of an index-finger to feel it with successive purchases of bone, it will be practicable to effect the delivery by the *natural passages*.

Its cutting ends are marked into two low and penetrated oval rims of unequal size but nearly equal strength; the smaller is of a size to enter into, and to fit closely within the parietes of the larger; the mutually adapted parts of each being formed into continuous oval edge, they become competent when brought together and firmly applied to their object, to exert a prodigious power upon any portion of bone placed within their grasp. The cutting edges of the osteotomist are protected by being enclosed within the level of the thicker parts of the respective rims which are everywhere rounded and polished into smooth surface without projections of any kind. The entire