

causes may have originated from accidental or criminal design. The last case only, involves the question of child murder. But when called before a Coroner's inquest, on the important responsibility of investigating this cause, we ought to endeavour to lay aside that feeling which often induces us to see a criminal in every one who happens to be accused, and to keep in mind the valuable principle of *Grotius*, "*prius est crimine quàm de reo inquirendum.*"

With a view of adding another case of unexpected seizure, (primiparous) with labour, and sudden expulsion of the child by the violent efforts of the uterus, I beg to relate the following :—

In the month of May last, I was hastily called to visit a young married woman, named Paquet, living in a back concession of this Parish, taken, as stated by her husband, suddenly ill, under very peculiar circumstances. On reaching the house, the patient informed me, that early in the morning, she was seized with violent colic pains, and a desire of evacuating her bowels, and for that purpose she had gone to a privy, (if it may be so called,) situated a short distance from the house, that while on the stool, a wide open place, the pains became so severe that she could not move, and nearly lost her senses; that all on a sudden she felt something pressing heavily downwards, she gave one scream, (heard by her mother in the house,) and at the same time she felt something leaving the passage, and falling into the privy-hole; the child's head, in falling, came in contact with a piece of wood projecting on the side of the privy, and produced great laceration of the scalp over the right parietal bone, but no fracture; the cord, which, on measuring, was found to be nineteen inches long, was ruptured near its placental end; the child, a full grown one, survived three or four hours.

This young woman was twenty-three years of age, of irreproachable character, and had been married only ten months, and on the morning in question, she was under the impression, as was also her mother, that she had upwards of two weeks to reach the time of her confinement.

This, then, is another case which suggests many important reflections in regard to the medical jurisprudence of infanticide, and, from the *possibility* of its occurrence in the unmarried state, it points out the great responsibility which is attached to the Coroner, if, in the vindication of justice, and the due protection of society, he fails to place before his jury such facts as are available through the agency of an experienced physician, and through whose proper information, respecting the phenomena which accompany birth, he may influence that jury in rendering an irreprehensible verdict. The following from Mr. Ollivier's *Annales d'Hygiène, &c.*, so intimately bears upon the above subject, and conveys so forcibly and impressively the integrity of position which the physician or surgeon