

to me and I put it on the table. In a few minutes afterwards he said, "My God, I have taken the drops instead of the wine," and he begged somebody to go down and ask the Doctor if any accident would happen. I have often heard the deceased say that he was suffering greatly. I have often done much to assist him: I have never heard him say, "I wish I was dead." I knew nothing about the bottles or the contents of them.

James Crawford, M.D.—I attended the Richardson Wing of the Hospital in my capacity as physician. In ward No. 12 there was a man named Campbell. On the 7th inst. I ordered him a composing draught at night, which was to consist principally of laudanum. The quantities are marked in the book of the apothecary. Wine was also ordered for the patient, quinine also. These medicines were necessary to obtain sleep for the deceased. I saw the deceased after he had taken the laudanum. An emetic had very properly been administered, which was acting satisfactorily. I did not anticipate, from the small quantity which I had been informed had been taken, and from the effects of the emetic, that any bad consequences would result. I saw him again at three o'clock. He was then labouring under the narcotic effects of opium. The stomach pump was used, both to inject and eject, and to administer the requisite medicines. I think, if the man had been in health, he would have recovered. But the preceding evening to his demise, I anticipated the effects would be fatal on account of his weakness. We could not make him walk about, as is usual in such cases, on account of his knees. I have seen much worse cases recover. Directions ought to be put on all bottles containing medicine. It was not my order that a certain quantity of laudanum should be put in a bottle. When I order twenty-five drops of laudanum, that quantity only should be taken up stairs each night. I mean that if the apothecary mixed six times twenty-five drops, with six spoons of water, he would have done right. I never anticipated that half an ounce of laudanum should be given to the nurse to dispense. I believe that there is no rule affecting this matter. I never knew a rule existing in any Hospital except in Military Hospitals. Had I ordered the quantity of laudanum which was put in the bottle, I would have directed that it should be mixed with water, and the particular dose marked. All bottles containing medicines should be so marked, that the dose, and the person for whom it is intended, should be known. It is the duty of the apothecary, in all cases to mix the draught himself, except in cases where he sends up the number of drops prescribed for one draught unmixed. I have never had occasion to find fault with the nurse, Susan Oliver. I consider her attentive and careful.

Jane Tweedie, sworn.—I am unmarried. I am a night nurse. I make rounds of the whole hospital. I was with deceased occasionally during the night, before he died. Towards morning he spoke to me. I heard him say twice, "I had my mind made up." He died within a quarter of an hour. He was in his senses. He looked me full in the face from the pillow; I stooped down, I was so glad to hear him speak. These were his last words.

Alexander Long, M.D., sworn—re-examined—The deceased told me, that he got up from his sleep and asked for some wine. A person might have taken the poison in place of wine, even taking two draughts. Thinking it was port wine, and his mouth being parched, the deceased might have done so. It is impossible to give a direct answer, but I should say that a man awakening from sleep has not a proper sense of taste.

Angus McDonnell sworn.—I am a student of medicine. I am in the habit of visiting the Hospital. I often saw Alexander Campbell. I come every day. I sometimes speak to the patients. The deceased spoke to me about two days before his death. I remarked to him that his leg was more swollen than it was before. He asked me if I thought his leg would get any better. I said that I could give no information. He said that if he had to get his leg amputated, that he would rather poison himself. I made no reply. I did not think it was any thing serious. I took no further notice of it. I said nothing to the nurse or doctor.

The Jury remained in deliberation for upwards of an hour and a half, at the expiration of which time they returned the following verdict:—

That the deceased died from the effects of laudanum, improperly and through ignorance of its nature, administered to him, by William Halloran in the belief that the bottle contained port wine. In rendering this verdict, the Jury feel it their duty to remark upon the great want of caution evinced, in leaving so large

a quantity as half an ounce of laudanum within reach of a patient. And as it appears from the evidence, that no regulation exists in the Hospital, on the method of dispensing medicines, they conceive themselves bound to recommend the adoption of such whole-some rules for the proper labelling of bottles containing poisonous fluid, and otherwise, as may prevent such fatal mistakes for the future.—From the Times Newspaper.

#### FEEs AT CORONERS' INQUESTS.

The subject matter of the following communication which we have received, is one of great moment to the profession of Canada West; and we think they ought to adopt some immediate steps to obtain such an amendment of the Act, 9 Vic. cap. 58, as will rectify the oversight, for we can hardly look upon it in any other light. While the fact cannot be disputed, and is everywhere recognised, that the most important evidence at Coroners' Inquests, is furnished by the medical witnesses, and that this testimony must be based, in the majority of cases, upon the evidences revealed by dissection, the value of which is to be decided by the utmost nicety of scientific discrimination, it can hardly be supposed that such services could, or ought to be obtained without ample remuneration. The case is otherwise, however, in Canada West, as any one may perceive who refers to the Act passed at the last session of the Legislature; but we apprehend it to be rather a fault of omission than one of commission on their part. A proper representation would, we doubt not, be attended with good effect.

A similar case of difficulty has occurred, in the Dalhousie District, in which a like charge, allowed however by the auditors, has been objected to by the Government, in consequence of not having been provided for in the Act. The whole matter, however, is "*en-delibere*," by the Executive Council. We are at a loss to conceive how these charges can in the meanwhile be paid out of the public funds of the Province, as no provision whatever is made for them in the Act referred to already. They have always hitherto been defrayed out of the local District funds, against which, we apprehend, they should still be charged, until an alteration of the Act, to include them as items against the public funds of the Province be made, to the defrayment of which these funds are more legitimately applicable.

To the Editor of the British American Journal.

SIR,—You will perhaps have the kindness to bring before the public a matter of no small importance to the community generally, as well as to the Faculty in Canada West.

At the last meeting of the Quarter Sessions for this District, two accounts of medical men, for attendance and holding *post-mortem* examinations at inquests, were presented, duly authenticated, for payment, when the auditors appointed by the Government for examination of the District accounts, although admitting the correctness of the claims, declared that they could not be paid.

It appears that in the Act passed at the last meeting of the Legislature, 9th Victoria, cap. 58, p. 917, of the Provincial Statutes, being for the payment of expenses incurred in the administration of Justice in Canada West, a schedule is given of items chargeable upon the revenues of the Province; among the number are enumerated the fees of the coroner who holds the inquest, and the bailiff who summons the Jury; while the surgeon, who really performs the most important part, is omitted.