

when he reaches the locus in quo, on being satisfied that an inquest is not necessary, withdraw his warrant and receive remuneration for his travelling expenses and time.

If he lives near enough to the place of death and conscientiously makes an enquiry before commencing proceedings he probably applies to the very persons, who, if it was not a case of death from natural causes or accident, were responsible for the death. In which case the answers to be given have probably been carefully considered before the commission of the crime, or at any rate before the Coroner's arrival. Unless the Coroner is fortunate enough, while making his enquiries, to meet with someone who was a witness to the transaction or some person who knew the business relations of the deceased, and the character of the persons who committed the offence, and who is courageous enough to give him information, the probability is that the Coroner will decide without evidence under oath, the very question which it is the object of a Coroner's inquest to decide. The body is duly embalmed, by a registered embalmer, arsenic and other substances, which doubtless are the best preservatives of a dead body, and the most destructive to a living one, are injected into the stomach and intestines and down the throat of the deceased. The body is buried. A suitable return is furnished to the Division Registrar of deaths and the expenses of an inquest are saved. Weeks, perhaps months, afterwards, circumstances strongly tending to show a crime has been committed are brought to the notice of the authorities and an inquest is probably held when the body is so far decomposed that no valuable results can be obtained by a post-mortem examination. As a doctor once said to me, "about all we can do is to smell the body." The holding of which inquest in the time of Hale and Hawkins would have resulted in the imprisonment of the Coroner. By this time many important circumstances, which would have been fresh in the minds of witnesses at the time of death, have been forgotten altogether, or the witnesses have or claim to have just such a hazy recollection of the facts as is quite sufficient for counsel for the defence to build up a case of doubt for perplexing the jury at the trial, for example, *Reg. vs. Stearnaman*.

The people of this Dominion are an active, restless people, and not attached to the soil as were the people in the days when Coroners' inquests were first established, and it frequently happens that persons who could have given material evidence at the time