

The death of James Renforth can be referred only to one or to a combination of three causes—over-training, violent exertion, or mental shock, for we need scarcely allude to the absurd suspicion of poisoning which made so much noise at the time. It was natural that over-training should be suspected by those who had not seen the men, for a six mile race is a very arduous performance implying some forty minutes of severe and steady work, and demanding that the man who undertakes it shall draw himself to the utmost pitch of fineness, and carry no ounce of superfluous tissue that he can get rid of. But the fact is that the English crew were not properly trained for their work at all. Accustomed to short races and preparing for this one without skilled superintendence, they came to the starting buoy in a condition exactly fitted to realize an ignorant spectator's idea of what he would call fine training for every purpose: big bulky and powerful looking, good perhaps for a dash of four or five minutes, but unhardened, and carrying a weight of "rubbish," which, had they rowed the whole six miles would assuredly have punished them severely upon the last three. Renforth, a man of less than medium height, called his weight eleven stone, and if appearances are to be trusted he might have said twelve. Clearly he was not injured by over-training. Nor (with what deference may be due to the Coroner's jury,) could violent exertion *alone* have killed him in the time and manner noticed. No vessel or vital organ was ruptured. The formidable term "congestion of the lungs" expresses a state which is the perfectly natural result of all violent exercise. Circulation is more accelerated in proportion than respiration, and blood accumulates in the lungs, rendering the breathing shallower all the time that it ought to be growing deeper. After a length of time in proportion to the fineness of his condition the man finds that he cannot breathe efficiently without slackening his exertions, and is then said to be "out of breath." This congestion of the lungs acquired by exercise is cured very speedily and simply by a few seconds of rest. It cannot endanger life unless aided by some other condition.

Mental shock is an agent that has been known to destroy life of itself very rapidly, and without leaving any appreciable trace of injury behind. It seriously depresses the activity of all the organic functions. It more or less completely suspends consciousness and muscular power. It causes a sudden and very marked reduction in the force and frequency of respiration and circulation, and if applied to a man whose lungs are congested in the way just mentioned it will make that otherwise harmless condition a source of great and immediate danger to life. What should we expect to be the result of reducing the respiratory muscular power to a minimum just at a time when the strongest respiratory efforts cannot force sufficient air into the lungs? These, already loaded with unærated blood will now be choked with it, air almost totally excluded, and the man asphyxiated by the force of his own circulation.

We shall not extend a digression already long enough, by explaining (as we could easily do) how the mental shock which we believe to have been the prime cause of Renforth's death was produced. We