

A man who for some months had been in a despondent frame of mind came one day to his wife and displayed to her a piece of paper labelled 'arsenic' and said that he had swallowed what it had contained and that it was 'all over with him.' The man was taken to a hospital, where the resident officers applied all the most approved remedies for arsenical poisoning with great vigour, but the man died in spite of them. The druggist from whom the parcel had been procured said that the man had asked for arsenic, and that in consequence of his manner and appearance cream of tartar had been supplied under an arsenical label. A quantity of arsenic was, nevertheless, found in his stomach. Not satisfied with this, Dr. Quain pursued his enquiries, and found that no arsenic had passed out of the stomach into the intestinal canal. He inferred, therefore, that what was found had been introduced by a stomach pump or some similar means after death had occurred, and it was ultimately shown that this had been done by the resident medical officers of the hospital, who seemed at last to have some notion that the case was not one of arsenic poisoning at all, and who had endeavored to conceal the error into which they had fallen. The acuteness with which Dr. Quain suspected the truth, and the skill with which he brought it to the test of experiment, were much appreciated and exercised an important influence in confirming the reputation which he had gained as a student."

Unfortunately, perhaps, for Dr. Quain's reputation as a teacher, he was never attached to any large teaching hospital, but he readily came to the fore in appointments connected with the business of the profession. In 1860 he was selected by the Queen and Council to be a member of the Senate of the University of London, and in this connection he was mainly instrumental in procuring the existence of the "Brown Trust," and he became a chairman of the Brown Institution for the study of the diseases of animals. In 1865 he was appointed a member of the Royal Commission for the investigation of the cattle plague, which had then been recently introduced into the country and had caused a terrible mortality among English herds. He it was who, by his strong grasp of the facts of the position and by his able letters to the press, convinced the country that the only course to be pursued was the absolute prohibition of moving of cattle from infected districts, slaughter of all beasts which had been attacked or exposed to infection, and of all animals imported for food from infected countries. He contributed thus more largely than any other individual to the arrest of the cattle plague. Of the Commission of which thus he had been so active a member, Lord Sherbrooke said that "it was the only Royal Commission which had ever done any good." In 1865 he was