

reasonably required for the protection of the parties. As Birmingham was not a place where the plaintiffs carried on business, an injunction should not be granted in respect of that town. The agreement was, moreover, unreasonable so far as it prevented employment 'in any business hereafter to be carried on by the plaintiffs;' but the remainder of the agreement being reasonable, and there being in his lordship's opinion no difficulty in severing the bad part from the good, an injunction should be granted to restrain the defendant from being engaged in the places mentioned in the agreement, except Birmingham, in any business similar to that carried on by the plaintiffs at the time the defendant's employment by them ceased.

#### ENGLISH CAUSES CÉLÈBRES.

REGINA v. LAMSON.\*

The name of Lamson is associated with *aconitia* as closely as that of Palmer is associated with strychnine. Two scoundrels before the bankrupt Bournemouth doctor had made use of this deadly poison for criminal purposes. Dr. Pritchard in 1865 had administered it to his mother-in-law, Mrs. Taylor, in the form of tincture of aconite, and, as far back as 1841, an Irishman, M'Conkey, had used it as powdered aconite root. But the agent on which Dr. Pritchard principally relied, and which has gained him an infamous notoriety, was tartar emetic, and M'Conkey was, fortunately, hanged without having become notorious at all. It was left for Dr. Lamson to introduce this new alkaloid to the medico-legal world.

In the month of December, 1881, Mr. Bedbrook, the head-master of Blenheim House, Wimbledon, had among his pupils a boy called Percy Malcolm John, who suffered from paralysis of the lower limbs produced by curvature of the spine, but enjoyed fair general health. One of this lad's sisters was married to Dr. George Henry Lamson, a surgeon at Bournemouth, who took a great interest in him and was in the habit of sending him medicines. On December 1, 1881, Lamson wrote to Percy John that he was coming to see him on the following evening.

\*Browne and Stewart's 'Trials for murder by poisoning,' pp. 514-567.

He failed, however, to keep this appointment, but arrived at Blenheim House on the 3rd, with some sweets, a cake, and a box containing gelatine capsules which he told Mr. Bedbrook he had brought from America for the convenience of persons that had to take nauseous medicines. He induced Mr. Bedbrook to take one of these capsules in order that he might see how easily they were swallowed. While this experiment was being made, Lamson filled another with some powdered sugar, for which he had sent on the pretext of destroying the alcohol in his wine, and turning to Percy John, who was present at the interview, said, 'You are good at taking medicines, take this.' The boy did so, and in a few minutes Lamson left, saying that he had to catch the tidal train to Paris. In about twenty minutes afterwards, the cripple lad was seized with a sudden pain which he attributed to heartburn. He was carried upstairs to bed, became gradually worse, and died in a few hours. The medical men who attended him, Dr. Berry and Dr. Little, were convinced that the symptoms were attributable to the action of some irritant poison. The *post-mortem* appearances confirmed this view, and the chemical analysis indirectly revealed the presence of aconitia.

On December 8, Lamson unexpectedly returned from Paris, presented himself at Scotland Yard to inquire, as he said, into what was being done about the alleged murder of his brother-in-law, and was promptly taken into custody. He was duly tried at the Central Criminal Court in March, 1882, before Mr. Justice Hawkins and a jury. Sir Farrer Herschell (then Solicitor-General), Mr. Poland and Mr. (now Mr. Justice) A. L. Smith conducted the prosecution. Mr. Montagu Williams was leading counsel for the defence. After a careful trial, Dr. Lamson was found guilty, was sentenced to death, and, after two reprieves, granted by the Home Secretary (Sir William Harcourt) in order to enable his friends in America to produce evidence of his insanity, was very properly hanged.

The evidence against Lamson was overwhelming. 1. Motive was clearly proved. He was and had been for two years, in grave