

much, and sometimes more, the aspect of a natural death rather than of a violent death, if the State failed to make investigation at a useful time, so few people would be interested, that homicide, if it existed, would remain unpunished.

58. Mittermaier, a German jurist, charged by his Government, about fifty years ago, to study criminal procedure in the various countries of Europe, speaking of Coroners' inquests in English countries, at page 124 of the French translation of the book on English Criminal Procedure, writes the following lines:—

"The advantages of the institution of the Coroner consist in the fact that, in a series of cases where, in another country, the death does not come to the knowledge of the authorities, a crime which otherwise would have remained unpunished is discovered, thanks to the information by which the Coroner proceeds. We confine ourselves here to recalling the numerous instances when a person succumbs without a physician having been called, after an ostensible attack of indigestion, or a chill.

"No relative thinks of giving notice of this death to the authorities; whereas it would, perhaps, have been easy to establish, by means of sufficient information, that he who was believed to have succumbed to a natural illness, had died by poison. In England the agents of the police and parochial officials are bound to notify the Coroner of all questionable deaths. The latter immediately hastens to summon a jury, and to open an enquiry. Thanks to this measure it often happens that a crime is discovered which would otherwise remain unpunished."

Baker, in his treatise "Office of Coroner", page 2, says:—

"It has been found from long experience that paramount to all other inquisitions, those on sudden death are of the utmost importance to the safety of the subject, and ought in no case to be dispensed with, as there is more suspicion attached to such deaths than to those by accident or any casualties whatever."