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Die Martis, 10^o Julii 1838.

The Lord WHARNCLIFFE in the Chair.

Evidence on the Operation of the Poor Law Amendment Bill.

Mr. JOHN BOWEN is called in, and further examined as follows:

YOU stated Yesterday that when you visited the House on some Occasion you saw Two or Three Persons in such a State that their Fæces were running from them, and they were in a very filthy State; do you recollect the Date?

I think it was the Morning of the 21st of April; it must have been about that Time; but if your Lordships have the Matron and Governor here you will find that such an Occurrence was by no means uncommon; they were so much reduced it was hardly possible to go through the House without seeing Things of that Sort.

Did you see Things of that Sort more than once?

I do not remember remarking it particularly more than once. On correcting my Evidence I observed I was asked some Questions respecting the Cubic Contents of the old Bridgwater House which I was not then prepared to answer. I can now put in in answer a Paper which was drawn up to show that.

Do you know that to be accurate?

Yes; this is the Certificate of the Surveyor; and I afterwards surveyed it myself.

The same is read as follows:

Bridgwater, 19th May 1838. I have at your Request ascertained the Cubic Contents of the sleeping Apartments of the old Bridgwater Workhouse, which I find to be 23,028 Cubic Feet.

" I am, Sir ,

Your obedient Servant ,

Edwin Down, Architect. "

" To John Bowen, Esquire. "

Have you any Observations to make upon that Paper?

Yes; the Allowance of Space in the great London Hospitals materially exceeds 1, 000 Cubic Feet for each Person. Sir Gilbert Blane, in his Evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons on the State of the Children employed in the Factories, states 700 Cubic Feet to be a safe and proper Space, In the Report from the Select Committee of your Lordships House appointed in the present Session to inquire into the Cases of certain Prisoners confined in the Penitentiary at Milbank, it is stated that the Size of the Cells is Ten Feet by Seven and Ten Feet high, affording 700 Cubic

Feet of Air for each Convict. On the Scale of the great London Hospitals the Number the old Bridgwater Workhouse would accommodate would be Twenty-three; on the Estimate of Sir Gilbert Blane, and the Space allotted in the Penitentiary, it would accommodate Thirty-three; but the Average Number actually in the Bridgwater Workhouse during the Time that the Diarrhæa raged there was Ninety-four, giving an Average of only 244 Feet of respirable Air to each Individual.

When you speak of the Time when the Diarrhæa was raging, you speak of the Period between the 26th of September 1836 and the 26th of April 1837?

Beginning with September and ending in April.

950 *Do you wish to include the whole of September?*

From the 1st of September 1836 to the last of April 1837.

Can you state how many fresh Paupers were introduced into the House from the 1st Day of September 1836 to the last Day of April 1837?

I cannot; but that will appear from the Admission and Discharge Book.

To what other Point are you about to speak?

The other Point I would wish to bring before your Lordships Attention is connected with setting up the Poorhouse as a Test of Destitution. My Observations upon that Subject commence with Page 53, and are extended over Part of 54; I commence with observing, that " Fifty Persons have been returned at one Time as labouring under various Diseases, exclusive of a still greater Number of concealed Cases, being mostly those of Children confined in their Beds by a violent Eruption. The Nurse which the Board was at length induced to hire (only on the 26th of January last) lies at this Moment in Typhus Fever, caught in the Performance of her Duty. "

What was the Period referred to?

It was the 4th of March I wrote this. " In addition to inflammatory sore Throat and Congestion of the Brain terminating fatally, there are entered in the weekly Reports of Mr. John Rodney Ward a sufficient Variety of Fevers to furnish Employment for a new School of Nosologists; there is Fever, Fever Simple, Inflammatory Fever, Scarlet Fever, Fever with Eruption, Fever with Cough, Fever with Debility, Fevers with great Debility, Typhus Fever, Putrid Fever. " While these Fevers were raging in the House a greater Number than had ever been ordered into the House before were sent in. That Number is given in the Figures here as received from the Clerk of the Union:

19th January.-44 Persons ordered into the House; 9 were admitted; there were 21 on the

Sick List, and 200 Persons in the House. ·

26th January.-There were 25 ordered into the House; only 8 of them accepted it; there were then 50 on the Sick List, and 195 in the House.

2d February.-16 Persons ordered in; only 6 accepted the Test; there were 54 on the Sick List, and 191 in the House.

9th February. -- 73 Persons were ordered into the House, only 14 accepted it; 35 were on the Sick List, and 191 in the House.

16th February.-17 Persons were ordered into the House, and after that 18 were admitted that Week; 37 on the Sick List, and 206 in the House.

23d February.-13 Persons were ordered into the House; 14 accepted it; 59 were on the Sick List, and 223 in the House.

2d March.-15 Persons ordered into the House; 6 accepted it; 62 on the Sick List, and 225 in the House.

What is the total Number?

The Total is 203 ordered in, and Seventy-five accepted the Offer. What do you mean by "ordered" into the House?

There is the Return-"Names and Descriptions of Persons applying for Relief, and ordered into the Bridgwater Union Workhouse between 12th January and 2d March 1838; distinguishing those who entered the House." Your Lordships will find a Return in the Sixth Page of this paper.

From what you have seen yourself in visiting that House during the Time you were a Guardian, and what you have heard from the Medical Man, do you think it proper that any Person should have been at that Time sent into the Workhouse?

I think not; but I would beg to allude, in support of my Evidence, to the Medical Return from 26th January to the 1st of February; it will there appear what was the Number of Persons labouring under Fever in the House.

Have you heard from the Medical Officer, or do you know of your own Knowledge, whether any of those Paupers died of this Disorder?

Yes; they died of the Disease which was raging in the House. On the Statement I have just read Mr. Weale makes an Observation in a Letter to the Poor Law Commissioners: he says, "Mr. Bowen in the Letter before adverted to alludes to the Number of Deaths in the Workhouse and the Prevalence of Disease existing in it from the 1st of January to the 13th of March, and made a violent Attack upon the Guardians for offering the Workhouse to several Applicants for Relief." 951 The Gentleman goes on to say, "On this I have only to observe, that many Persons in a State more or less diseased, and frequently at a very advanced Age, are ordered into the Work house for the Purpose of receiving that Care and Superintendence which it would be

impossible for them to receive at their own Homes; but that any healthy or convalescent Persons were likely to suffer from Admission to the House I totally deny, for the Workhouse now used is a new and commodious Building, in which the sick are separated from the convalescent and the healthy in such a Manner as to prevent the Possibility of Infection."

Do you know whether any healthy Persons were sent in?

I applied to the Noble Lord in the Chair for a Return of the Names and Descriptions of Persons applying for Relief and ordered into the Bridgwater Workhouse, to see whether they were Persons of advanced Age, as Mr. Weale stated them to be. I have analyzed that Return, and I find that, instead of there being "many Persons in a State more or less diseased, and, frequently at a very advanced Age, ordered into the Workhouse for the Purpose of that Care and Superintendence which it would be impossible for them to receive at their own Homes," there were Twenty-two Men and their Wives.

It does not appear whether they were aged or not?

No; but it generally will be found that they were Men and their Wives with Children:- Children of Ditto, Forty-one; Widows and Women deserted by their Husbands, Twenty-nine; Children of such Women, Forty-eight; Orphans and deserted Children, Eight; unmarried Women, Sixteen; Children of Ditto, Seven; Single Men, Thirteen. The greater Part of those were Men with Disease.

Do you know that any of those died of Disease?

I threw my Eye over the List of Deaths to see how far it was likely that any Persons brought into that House suffered under those Circumstances; knowing, as I did, that Disease raged in the House.

What Disease? Not Diarrhæa?

No; Fever.

Was that the Fever brought in by the Vagrant to whom you referred Yesterday?

No; that was in the other House, I take only One of those Cases, for it is not my Object to bring before your Lordships or the Public One single Fact more than is necessary to procure an Investigation. Having once put this Matter on Record, I think I shall be relieved from any further Reference to it. I do not mean to pledge myself that it shall be so, but I wish it to be so. If your Lordships will be pleased to turn to Page 12 of the printed Return you will find Drusilla Winn, her Children, William Six Years of Age, Elizabeth Three, Jane One and Three Quarters, and an Infant of Two Months.

What became of her?

In about Two Months Three of her Children died; the other Child was attacked in the same Way, and she left the House with it. I never saw this Woman in my Life; but I requested a prudent and discreet Gentleman, a Gentleman not likely to agitate the Neighbourhood and the Town, to call upon her, and get her own Account of what occurred. This is the Account given me by this Gentleman.

What is his Name?

His Name is Colthurst; he was a Member of the previous Board of Guardians.

He is alive and well?

Yes; but the Woman is the best Evidence herself.

Where is she?

At North Petherton.

Are you aware whether she came into the House, or not?

She must have come into the House.

Did the Children die?

She is returned here as having rejected the House; but it appears that Four Days afterwards **952** she was forced into Submission. It appears from the Book that she came into the House on the 13th; she had been offered it on the 9th, but did not then come in. It appears on the Obituary that on the 27th of February William Winn died of Convulsions; but he was in the Fever Ward. It appears on the Admission Book that Drusilla Winn and Tour Children came into the Workhouse on the 13th of February 1838.

Upon what Days did the Children die?

On the 27th of February William died, Eight Years old; March 31st, Jane Winn died, Three Years of Age, of Inflammation of the Lungs; April 20th, Daniel Winn died of Inflammation on the Lungs.

You do not know of your own Knowledge that those Persons died of Fever?

I know nothing more than appears upon the Report. But the only Point I would wish to bring before your Lordships is, that this Woman entered the House on the 13th of February with Four healthy Children, and that early in May she went out, Three of the Children having died in the House.

Do you know of your own Knowledge in what State the Woman and Children were when they entered into the House?

No, not of my own Knowledge.

You say that the Fever was raging at the Time in the House?

Your Lordships will find that from the Medical Returns.

Your Opinion is, that the Children died of the Fever caught in the House?

My Opinion is that they died of a Disease caught in the House.

It appears that in the Week ending the 23d of February William Winn was suffering under a Complaint of the Head?

That is for the Mother and the Medical Man to speak of.

Their Testimony would be superior to your Judgment of the Nature of the Disease?

I beg to say that I can give no Evidence on the Subject; I have only referred to Documents.

What makes you suspect that they died of any other Disorder than that stated in the Book?

Because no such Disease prevailed out of the House. Presuming that the Book is correct, that they did die of that Disease, I still think it is a Subject for your Lordships to inquire into.

What induces you to suppose that they did not die of the Diseases they are stated to have died of?

I do not know whether their Diseases are correctly described; but I will call your Lordships Attention to a few Words written by Mr. Weale on the 2d of April, in the 57th Page:- "Gentlemen, I have the Honour to forward the Returns above referred to, and I have the Happiness of informing you that the Medical Officer last Evening reported to me that the Workhouse is even now more free from Disease than it was at my last Visit on the 16th Ultimo; there is now no Case of Fever of any kind, and the Measles, from which some of the Children have been suffering, have almost disappeared." The Noble Lord in the Chair moved for the Deaths in the Bridgwater Registrar's District between 1st of March and 30th of April, taking in the Period of Two Months, and it appears from this Document that, at the very Time that Mr. Weale was communicating with the Poor Law Commissioners on the State of the Health in the House, on the 30th of March George Coate died in the Workhouse.

What was his Disease?

His Disease is stated to be Apoplexy, but I merely state the Nature of the Disease at that Time. On the 31st of March Rhoda Vearing died in the House. On the 31st of March Jane Winn died in the House. On the 31st of March Rebecca Coles died in the House. On the 2d of April Johanna Price died in the Workhouse. I merely wish to show your Lordships that at the Time selected for showing that the Workhouse was in a very high State of Health there were Five Persons died in Four Days, and probably

953 they were lying dead in the Workhouse at the Period of that Letter being written.

From that you infer, either that Mr. Weale had not been in the Workhouse, or, knowing the Fact, that he misstated it?

The Conclusion I mean to draw is, that there was a Concealment practised; that the real State of the Workhouse was not put before the Poor Law Commissioners.

What induces you to suppose that those Persons did not die of the Disorders it is stated they died of?

Because I have carefully analyzed the Return which your Lordship moved for, headed "Copy of the Register of Deaths in the Bridgwater Registrar's District 1 March and 30th April 1838, distinguishing those who died in the Bridgwater Union Workhouse;" and I will state the Result, and that will, I think, assist in guiding your Lordships Judgment.

Do you take notice that this Letter, noted as being received by the Bridgwater Union on the 2d of April, written by Mr. Weale, refers to the Register of Deaths up to the 23d of March; those Cases you have stated appear to be subsequent to the 23d of March?

Those Cases I have referred to occurred between the 30th of March and the 2d of April, both inclusive.

What is the Inference you draw from the Analysis you have made of that Paper?

The Bridgwater Registrar's District comprises Five Parishes, the Population of which in 1831 was 8, 833; it may now be computed at 10, 000, exclusive of the Inmates of the Union Workhouse, which form a fluctuating Population of less than 250. I have put it materially above the real Population, to meet any Remarks on the Number of Persons going in and out. The Deaths registered in this District in March and April 1838 amounted, according to the Return on your Lordships Table, to Fifty-four in the whole District, of which Sixteen appear to have occurred within the Walls of the Workhouse and Thirty-eight without. The relative Proportions on the above Data would be as follows: Actual Number of Deaths registered in March and April last among 10 000 Persons out of the Workhouse, Thirty-eight; actual Number of Deaths among (say) 250 Persons in the Workhouse, Sixteen; being in the Ratio to 10, 000 of 640: actual Number of out Deaths in 10, 000 Persons, as registered from the 20th of March to the 20th of April inclusive, Twenty-one, in the whole Population of 10,000; actual Number of Deaths in the Workhouse between the above Dates, Thirteen; being in the Ratio to 10, 000 of 520. Thus the Deaths in the Workhouse during this Period were to the

Deaths out of the Workhouse in the Proportion of Twenty-five to One. Not any of the Thirteen Deaths returned as having taken place in the Workhouse were of old or decrepid Persons, but of Persons in the Prime of Life, and Children carried off by Diseases which either did not prevail in the District beyond the Walls of the Workhouse, or were only fatal to One Person in 10, 000, as may be seen by the following Extract from the Register:- "Deaths in the Workhouse ascribed to the under-mentioned Diseases on the Register: March 23d, Underhill, Robert, Ten Months, Inflammation of Lungs; March 25th, Day, Mary Ann, Ten Months, Inflammation of Lungs; March 26th, Macey, Anthony, Seven Months, Inflammation of Lungs; March 31st, Veering, Rhoda, One Year, Marasmus; March 31st, Winn, Jane, Three Years, Inflammation of Lungs; March 31st, Coles, Rebecca, One Year, Diarrhæa; April 2d, Price, Johanna, Fourteen Months, Inflammation of Lungs; April 6th, Darch, Mary Ann, Ten Months, Inflammation of Lungs; April 9th, Sage, Henry, Seven Months, Inflammation of Lungs; April 20th, Winn, Daniel, Six Months, Inflammation of Lungs." Now with respect to Deaths out of the Workhouse, which are ascribed on the Register to either of the above Diseases, there is only One Death:- "April 30th, Bell, Mary Jane, Nine Months, Inflammation of Lungs."

From that you infer that those Persons who were stated to have died of Inflammation of the Lungs died of something else?

No; they either died from an infectious Disease raging in the House, which was **954** was correctly described as Inflammation of the Lungs, or else they died from some other Disease not correctly described .

You say they must have either died of some other Disease or the Disease spoken of was an infectious Disease ?

The Disease which existed in the House, and not out of it .

Was it an infectious Disease ?

I think it clear there was an infectious Disease, which was described as Inflammation of the Lungs .

What was your Reason for supposing that Disease infectious?

The Number of Persons who died of it .

Do you suppose it was from the Atmosphere, or from the local Situation of the Workhouse, or that they caught it one from another ?

I cannot give an Opinion upon that ; I only know that a Number of Deaths is returned in that House, and that only One Death from a similar Cause is entered out of the House .

And that they are returned as dying of the same Disorder, and that that shows that one must have

communicated it to another ?

That one may have communicated it to another ; but I give that with a distinct Declaration that I will not give an Opinion on a Medical Subject .

Your Suspicion arises from the Number of Persons who are stated to have died of Inflammation of the Lungs ?

My Suspicion arises from this Return ; there having been a Number of Persons returned as having died in the House from a Disease which was there fatal, I presume that One of Two Things must be clear, either that there was a deadly Disease raging in the House which was not fatal out of it, or that the Deaths were not ascribable to that Disease .

Is there not another possible Alternative, that the Children may have been ill before they came into the House ?

I conceive not . I should not be justified in giving such an Answer, for it appears from the Register that no such Disease existed out of the House .

Is it not possible that all the Children of this Family may have come into the House labouring under Disease ?

It is possible .

Is it probable that Persons should have come from different Parts of the Union all labouring under the same Disease ?

Certainly not .

You state that this Family of the Winns were a healthy Family ?

Yes ; I had Reason to believe that was the Case from the Information had received . To proceed with the Statement : I observe, " Thus it appears that in the Workhouse Ten Children were carried off in Twenty-eight Days by Diseases which were only fatal out of the House in the Proportion of 1 to 10, 000 ; while within the Walls of the House they were fatal in the Proportion of 400 to 10, 000 . " So far from any Inquiry having been instituted on this Destruction of Human Life (by Inflammation of the Lungs) within the Workhouse, the Assistant Commissioner congratulates the Poor Law Commissioners on the House being " even now more free from Disease than it was " at his last Visit .

You say the Commissioners " even now. " The Commissioner's Letter is dated on the 2d of April, he having had the Report of that Week ; will you look from the 26th of March to the ad of April ?

I do not know on what Day he received his Report .

He says, " It was last Evening reported to me . " Will you look to the Six Days preceding the 1st of April,

and see whether any Persons died or were ill in the House ?

The 30th of March George Coate, the 31st of March Rhoda Vearing, the 31st of March Jane Winn, the 31st of March Rebecca Coles ; there were Five died in Four Days .

955 *When the Assistant Commissioner reported that they were more healthy than they had been before, Five died in Four Days?*

Yes; but I do not mean to charge the Commissioner alone, he might have been deceived by others.

Can you state from the Book how many were admitted within the Two Periods of September and April?

No. I could not make that out, for there were Two Workhouses, the Petherton and Bridgwater; the Clerk, who is on the Spot, can state that without Difficulty.

You have not referred to the Visitors Book of that Period?

No, I have not.

Have you seen that on the 9th of March 1838 there is this Entry in the Visitors Book, signed by William Pitman King:- " No infectious Fever; several Cases of Itch, and One of Measles; " that on the 16th of March there is this, signed by John Dalby:- " The only Case of Fever is the Nurse; One or Two Cases of Measles. " Upon the 19th of March, in answer to Question, " Are the Inmates generally healthy, or is there any Sickness prevalent among them? If so, state Particulars, and especially if any dangerous or highly infectious Case exists in the House? " the Answer is, " Yes, " which may be considered to mean that the Inmates are generally healthy-signed " H. Parsons. " Then, the 23d of March 1838, the Report is signed, " for R. K. M. King, George Browne " ?

I believe it is not an unusual Thing, when the Visitor for the Week is prevented, for another to visit for him, and to sign for him.

The Entry on that Date is, " The Inmates are improving in Health, and the Fever Patients and Itch Patients may be considered recovered; there are a few Children ill with the Measles, and others with Colds. " Then comes the 29th of March, signed " Richard King, " in answer to that Second Question, " The Inmates are much better, " and on the 5th of April, " No infectious Case in the House? "

If your Lordships go on to May you will see an Entry something to this Effect: a few Fever Cases, a few Itch Cases, a few Cases of Inflammation of the Eyes, but still the Health of the People is generally improving.

The Entry of April the 12th is, " The Inmates are generally healthy; the Children are better, " signed by " N.

Ruddock, Visitor: " April 19th, signed by " Robert Evered, " 6 Two Cases of Fever, and Three or Four in the Itch. " On the 26th of April 1838, signed-James Somers, " " There are Four Cases of Fever, and a few Cases of Itch. " On the 3d of May 1838, signed " John Knight, " *There are a few Fever Cases, Itch Cases, and Inflammation in the Eyes, but the general State of the sick is much improving. Is that the one you object to?*

I object to none; but only wish to show, that after the Entries had gone on saying that the Health of the Inmates had gone on improving, there were a few Cases of Fever, a few Cases of Itch, and a few Cases of Inflammation of the Eyes.

Suppose there were a few Cases of Fever, a few Cases of Itch, and a few Cases of Inflammation of the Eyes, might not the general State of the sick be notwithstanding much improving?

It might; but I must only beg to call your Lordships Attention to what their State must have been before that Improvement took place.

Why is the stating a few Fever Cases, a few Itch Cases, and a few Cases of Inflammation of the Eyes inconsistent with the general State of the Health improving?

I have not so stated that.

What Inference do you draw from that?

I draw no further Inference from it; I merely call your Lordships Attention to it.

You drew the Attention of the Committee to it as showing that you were right in your View, and as showing that there was Infection in the House?

I was asked whether I had examined the Visitors Book; I candidly stated I had not; I 956 therefore could not have the smallest Wish to draw your Lordships Attention to it; but as your Lordships asked the Question, it occurred to me that there was that particular Entry.

With what View did you call particular Attention to it?

To show that at the Time when there were a few Cases of Fever, a few Cases of the Itch, and a few Cases of Inflammation of the Eyes the Visitor was of opinion that the Health of the House was improving, and therefore it must have been much worse at a former Period.

Why should it have been much worse?

I will say worse.

Then you must go back to the other Entries to deduce that?

I had a very strong Reason for closing my Observations on the Bridgwater Workhouse on the ed of April, and I am ready to state what that Reason is.

Do you mean to state that you did not mean to make an Impression that the Bridgwater Workhouse had that Infection in it, and was in a much worse State than it had been represented to be?

I meant to call your Lordships Attention to the State of the House in the Months I brought before your Lordships, from January to March; I mean to go no further than that.

Then with what view did you bring that Entry to the Attention of the Committee?

Your Lordship brought it to my Attention; I merely mean to say that the Visitors Book does not in the slightest Degree invalidate the Facts I have stated.

Does the Fact of Ten Children having died in the Interval do any thing more than raise a Suspicion that there was an infectious Disease?

I have stated that as my Opinion; and I hope that I have stated it modestly and humbly; but such is my deliberate Opinion.

Is that Entry offered to confirm your Opinion?

No: I would rather have it to be considered as having no Reference to my previous Answer, which I put on Paper, and which I do not wish to evade in the smallest Degree.

There is nothing in the Visitors Book which induces you to suppose there is any thing confirmatory of your Observation?

Nothing beyond that which I have repeatedly stated.

Do you mean to insinuate that any thing is untruly stated in that Book?

May I beg to say I never insinuated any thing in my Life.

Do you consider that Persons with the Itch or with sore Eyes are therefore Persons out of Health?

That is a Medical Question which I cannot answer.

Is not the Itch a very common Complaint out of Doors among the Agricultural Population?

That is a Question I cannot answer; I only know from some Reading that Inflammation of the Eyes is considered infectious to such an Extent that there have been Objections made to the Establishment of Eye Infirmaries in particular Situations; there was an Objection very strongly made to the Establishment of one in the Regent's Park.

May there not be Inflammations of the Eyes not at all infectious?

There may be.

It does not therefore follow that because a Man is stated to have Inflammation of the Eyes it is infectious?

I have brought the Subject forward in consequence of your Lordship leading to it; I do not mean to say it is infectious.

Will it not follow from a great many Persons in the same House having it that it is infectious?

It would appear to be so.

957 *Do you know how many had it?*

I do not.

The Effect of the Answer would depend upon the Number, would it not?

Yes; the Visitors Book has been referred to by the Noble Lord who applied for a Return of the whole of the Medical Cases in that Time. Now that Return, if placed before each of your Lordships, would show the Surgeon's View of the Thing.

In the Copy of the Register in one Week you state there were Four Deaths; if those appear to be from different Complaints, should you think yourself justified in concluding there was Infection in those Cases?

Certainly not, from such Cases alone; if they had been from different Complaints.

If it be that one Complaint should be Apoplexy, another Marasmus, another Inflammation of the Lungs, and another Diarrhoea, should you from those Cases conclude Infection?

No, certainly not, from those Cases alone.

You are acquainted with the Registrar, Mr. Abraham King?

I am.

Did you ever have any Conversation with him upon the Subject?

Yes.

Did you gather from that Conversation that those Diseases in the House were infectious?

I never had any Conversation with him upon that Subject.

Have you any Reason to believe that the Entries made by him in the Register Book are incorrect?

Not the smallest; I conclude he is bound to register the Accounts given, that he is sworn to do so.

Do you conceive he is competent to describe the Diseases properly?

He inserts them as they are given to him by the Medical Man, or other Authority.

You have stated your Belief that the Family of Winn entered the Workhouse in a healthy Condition?

I have so stated; but I stated at the same Time that I never saw one of them.

William Winn was attacked with an Affection of the Head in the Week ending the 23d of February?

I know nothing about that. I have not the smallest Knowledge of any thing connected with them.

In Page 75 of the printed Papers there is a Note at the Bottom relating to a Letter from the Reverend Mr. Pitman of Eastbourn, in which he compares the Dietary of the Lewes House of Correction with the Dietary of the Workhouse of the Eastbourn Union. He states that "the Lewes House of Correction Dietary allows Five Ounces more of Bread, besides One Pint of Soup daily, than that of our Workhouse"?

He says "our Workhouse." I took his Statement as I found it.

Are you aware or not that that Quantity of Bread and Soup are the only Victuals allowed in the Lewes House of Correction?

I am not; and it would perhaps have been more prudent not to have copied the Note.

If there is nothing allowed in the House but Bread and Soup, is that a fair Comparison?

I think not; but the Comparison is not made by me. I take it as I find it.

Is not the Labour more severe in most Houses of Correction than that which the Inmates of the Workhouse are subjected to?

Much more so.

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

958 Mr. WILLIAM BAKER is called in, and examined as follows:

WHERE do you live?

At Bridgwater.

What Profession are you?

A Currier by Trade.

Have you been a Member of the Board of Guardians of the Bridgwater Union?

I have.

Are you still so?

I am not at present.

When were you?

From May 1836 to March 1837, the first Year.

Have you taken an active Part as a Guardian in that Union?

I did, whilst I was a Member of the Board.

Had you Occasion during that Year to act with Mr. Bowen upon the Subject of what he conceived to be improper Conduct on the Part of that Board?

Mr. Bowen was not a Member of the Board that Year.

You lived near the Workhouse at that Time, did you not?

I did.

You were in the habit of frequently visiting it?

Very frequently indeed.

Were you One of the Visiting Committee?

I was.

Were the Medical Officer and the Governor in the habit of applying to you in case of any Circumstances occurring which they thought required Consultation?

I believe constantly, when they required Advice and Assistance.

In August 1836 was there a good deal of Oatmeal Gruel used in the Workhouse?

The Oatmeal Gruel was then brought into the House, I believe, for the first Time.

Up to that Time they had Milk?

Yes.

Up to that Time were the Inmates of the Workhouse healthy?

They were; there was nothing unusual in the Sickness of the House.

In August 1836 the Diet was changed from Milk to Oatmeal Gruel?

Yes.

After that did there appear to be any Illness prevalent in the House?

About September the People became ill of Diarrhæa.

How soon?

I think about the last Week in September; I think it was little more than a Month after we began to use the Gruel.

Did you visit the Workhouse at that Time?

I did, constantly.

Did you sign the Visiting Book any Week about that Time?

There were several Weeks when I did sign the Book.

You say that Diarrhæa began about the End of September?

I think there was some Appearance of Sickness about the End of September.

It appears that on the 11th of October 1836 you signed the Book; the Answer to the Question whether they were healthy is, "Yes, except some Cases of Sickness among the Children"?

I believe there were Entries of Sickness before that Period signed by other Members of the Committee.

959 *The Week before that, the 4th of October, "generally healthy; but the Week before that Frederick Axford says, "The aged Poor are afflicted with Colic and Diarrhea, and the Children suffering from the same Complaint: One in the Measles."*

The 20th of September, -Frederick Axford, "Generally healthy."

The 13th of September, "Generally healthy-Frederick Axford."

Then, on the 11th of October, William Baker, "Yes, excepting some Sickness amongst the Children."

18th of October, William Baker, "Yes, excepting some Sickness amongst the Children."

25th of October, "No; there is much Sickness, amongst the Children and the old People; there are Thirty-three Cases under the Care of the Medical Gentleman"?

Yes; we were very much alarmed by the Appearance of the House at that Time.

When was it the Medical Officer informed you he believed the Oatmeal Gruel had occasioned this Diarrhæa?

I think that was the Time; not supposing I should be ever asked any Questions on the Subject I went on doing from Day to Day what I considered necessary.

You know that Mr. Evered Poole did apply for an Alteration of the Diet?

I believe Mr. King applied.

Was not Mr. Evered Poole attending then for Mr. King?

When Mr. King became ill Mr. Poole assisted him, and I believe Mr. Poole did apply as well, but Mr. King made a strong Application to the Board.

Is the Letter you refer to that of the 25th of October?

It is; Mr. King had been then ill for some Time, with the same Complaint of Diarrhæa frequently upon him.

You were one of the Visitors at that Time, and frequently visited the House?

Yes.

Do you recollect whether for some Weeks prior to the 25th of October Mr. Evered Poole had frequently remonstrated with you and the visiting Committee on the Use of the Gruel?

Mr. Poole recommended to have the Dietary altered if possible, and I made Application to the Board repeatedly for that Purpose.

When was that?

I think immediately after the Appearance of the Diarrhea in September, but more particularly after the 25th of October; I had made Application in the Interval.

Three Weeks before the 25th of October did Mr. Evered Poole frequently remonstrate with the visiting Committee on the Use of the Gruel?

Mr Poole, I believe, but either Mr. Poole or

Mr. King made Observations, that the Gruel produced bad Effects on the Health of the People, to the visiting Committee.

Did the visiting Committee enter that in their Book?

I must inform your Lordships that what is called the visiting Committee is sometimes only One Person; I was sometimes the only Person who attended the Poorhouse as visiting Committee.

Did you enter those Remarks of Mr. Poole in the Book?

I did not; I went to the Board, and made known the Observations of the Medical Officer to the Board on several Occasions.

Do you recollect the Occasions?

I made known the Observations before Mr. King's Letter appeared, but more particularly after that Letter, for I endeavoured to enforce the Necessity of altering the Diet by that Letter.

After that Letter was not the Diet altered?

Not for a long Time; not till April 1837. The Board gave Direction for the visiting Committee to use Milk and Arrow Root and Rice for the sick People, but not for the healthy People; that was strongly objected to.

960 *There is in your Handwriting, on October 25th, in answer to the Question "Is the established Dietary duly observed? It has been departed from this Week by the Direction of the Medical Officer in consequence of Sickness amongst the Children and weak People; Milk has been used instead of Gruel."*

Does that Answer of yours apply merely to the sick People?

Merely to the sick People and young Children; there had been some Complaints of our departing as far as we had done, but I importuned the Board to allow it.

Who made that Complaint?

I do not know that I can fix on any particular Person.

It was some Guardian at the Board?

Yes.

The Board generally?

Yes; and the Reason given was the Necessity of carrying the Law into effect; that we had chosen a Table of Dietary, and must abide by it.

Did they hold that Language after the Medical Man had told you there was the Diarrhea in the Workhouse, and that he ascribed it to the Dietary?

Certainly.

Did you make any Motion upon the Subject?

I do not believe I ever did; my Efforts were

intended to have the Effect of a Motion; I could not carry a Party sufficiently strong with me in Measures that appeared to go against the Law or the Rules of the Commissioners, - to overrule the Board.

Were you prevented making a Motion by the Chairman telling you you could not do it?

Yes; there was a very strong Reason for my not doing it; the Chairman has repeatedly told me that the Dietary could not be altered.

Without the Consent of the Poor Law Commissioners?

That was not referred to; that it was imperative upon us to continue it

Notwithstanding the Consequences of its Use?

Yes; notwithstanding the Consequences of its Use. There was another Circumstance which arose out of that, which I think of Importance: when I found that I could not have the Dietary altered, I begged the Board to refrain from sending any more People into the House; I thought that if we could keep the House from having too many Inmates we might by and by get the House more healthy. The Reply was given to me several Times upon that Occasion, that when we took the House it was reported to be capable to contain a certain Number of Persons, and that Number there had not yet been put there; there fore there was sufficient Room to take in more.

What was the Number reported?

I think 140.

By whom was that reported?

By no competent Persons, but I think by some of the Gentlemen of the Board who went to see how many Beds could be placed Side by Side.

Were the Overseers of Bridgwater any Parties to the Representation as to what Number the House would contain?

I am not aware that they were; they must have negotiated for the Use of the House, but I am not sure whether they had taken any Pains to know what the House would contain.

Do you not think they might have expressed an Opinion as to how many the House would contain?

No: I do not think that at all likely; I think it more likely that some of the Members of the Board would ascertain the Space.

Was not there a Committee appointed by the Board?

There was a building Committee appointed, and I believe it was made part of their Duty to see this House.

961 *Do you remember of whom that Committee was composed?*

I was one of the building Committee myself.

Were you one of the Persons who went to visit the Workhouse?

I was not.

Notwithstanding what you told them of the State of the House and the Disease prevailing, still other Inmates were taken in?

There were.

Did you endeavour to record your Opinion by making a Motion at the Board?

I did not; I proposed making Motions once or twice to the Board, and Mr. Warry begged me not to make Motions if I could avoid it that would be likely to interrupt the good Feeling of the Board, saying it was a Pity we should divide more than was absolutely necessary; and in order to satisfy me on those Points, I was allowed to be as indulgent as I could be, as one of the Visitors, to the sick; but I was always prevented making any Alteration as to the healthy.

Were you put off from making a Motion to prevent the Reception of fresh People into the House by the Declaration of the Chairman, that you could not do so consistently with the Law and the Rule of the Poor Law Commissioners?

I believe not; I was told that there must be fresh People put in as Occasion required to carry the Law into effect; but I do not believe it went further than that. I was repeatedly told that the Number was not so many as the House was reported capable of containing, and that they must go on as long as there was Room.

Notwithstanding you represented to them that it was in an unhealthy State?

Notwithstanding that I represented to them it was in an unhealthy State at that Time.

Those Representations were several Times made?

Yes; and there was one particular Circumstance occurred which I think I mentioned in my Letter in order to make the Board acquainted with the un. healthy State of the Inmates. I obtained Permission to remove as many Children as were convalescent and could be taken conveniently from the House; they gave me Permission to do so, and I sent Five or Six or Seven on one Day to North Petherton; and the same Day a Man and his Wife and Five Children came into the House by Order of the Board, and we had no Beds to put them on.

What was the Name of those People?

Kidner.

That was the Man that was afterwards committed for running away from his Family?

Yes, I have alluded to the Circumstance in my Letter to Mr. Bowen; but I did not mention the Name, because the sending the Man to Prison had created an unpleasant Feeling in the Neighbourhood, and I did not wish to add to the Excitement.

Do you know what became of those Children who were sent to Petherton?

I cannot trace them.

Do you know whether they died or not?

I believe not; there were very few Deaths at Petherton. There might be some Deaths, of course, but whether those particular Children or not I do not know.

Were the Applications for an Alteration of Diet to the Board received invariably in the same way?

Invariably.

That the Law would not permit it?

Yes, that was the Case; they would give every Indulgence to the Committee to take care of the sick and the Children that were labouring under Diarrhoea.

962 *It was on an Interpretation or a Mis-interpretation of the Law; they apprehended it prevented them from altering the Diet?*

That appeared to me at first to have been the Reason.

When the Union was formed did the Assistant Commissioner lay before you certain Forms of Dietary?

Yes, he did.

Did he inform you that you must adopt one of them, and that having adopted it you must adhere to it?

Yes.

Is that contained in any Letter written by him?.

I do not know; that was the Impression upon my Mind, and I believe the Impression on the Mind of the Board, that it was imperative to abide by the Dietary when once adopted.

Was your Proposition to change the Dietary in the Nature of an Application to the Poor Law Commissioners for Permission, or for the Board to change it on their own Authority?

I repeatedly said to the Board that if the existing Orders of the Commissioners or the Law would not allow us to depart from the Dietary we had chosen we should take some Steps to obtain the Means; and I went so far as to say that we ought to take the Responsibility upon ourselves, and then guard against the Consequences.

Did you inform the Board of Guardians what the Medical Officer had told you?

Yes.

That it was the Gruel which had produced the Diarrhoea?

Yes.

What Answer was given you by the Board of Guardians?

I recollect its being said that it was an unhealthy Season, and we had no Reason to attribute the Sickness in the House to the Gruel; that the Neighbourhood was unhealthy generally.

Did they call in the Medical Persons on any of those Occasions to examine into the Fact?

Not at all, I believe.

Did you ever press upon them to do so?

I am not aware that I did.

Did it not strike you that that was the best way to show them that the Gruel produced this Sickness, for the Medical Officer to come and state that to them?

When those Reports were laid before the Board they were constantly read at the Board.

What Reports?

The weekly Reports of the visiting Committee. The Medical Report Book was always on the Table and handed from one Member to another; the Facts were always before the Board; and this Letter of Mr. King 's was put in for the very Purpose of making a stronger Call upon the Board to attend to the Circumstance.

But still the Board never did call upon the Medical Officer and examine him with respect to the fact of this Illness arising from the Use of the Gruel?

Never to my Knowledge, and I believe not.

You say those Reports were regularly laid before the Board: do any of those Reports specify in any way that the Gruel was the Cause of the Complaint?

The Reports themselves do not; but Mr. King's Letter on the 5th of October stated distinctly that the Disease arose from the Use of the Gruel.

Did not a Change take place immediately upon that?

No: there was no Change took place in the Dietary until April.

963 *Did the Gruel continue to be used for those not sick up to the April following?*

I believe so

Did the Sickness continue to prevail uninterruptedly while the Gruel was used up to the April following?

Not uninterruptedly; but there were a good many old and infirm People swept away, and we removed the young Children, whenever we could do so, to the North Petherton House.

There is an Entry signed by you on the First of November, that the Inmates were not generally healthy; that there was still much Sickness in the House, but the Health of the Inmates generally was rather better?

That was the Case sometimes.

Then on the 8th of November there is an Entry signed by Mr. Coulthurst: " The Health of the Inmates of the House rapidly improving." The Gruel was still used?

It was.

On the 15th of November there is an Entry by Mr. Frederick Axford: " The Health of the Inmates generally good, with the Exception of Five Children?"

Yes, that was so.

There is an Entry on the 22d of November by Mr. Ruddock: " The Health of the Inmates still improving." The Gruel was still used?

Yes; all this Time the Health of the Inmates was not good; they were only getting better, as we supposed; but there was always Sickness, though we hoped from Time to Time they were getting better ,

Was not it a very unhealthy Period out of the House?

At one Period Influenza prevailed; I think that was after Christmas.

On the 29th of November you signed, " Still much Sickness in the House," On the 6th of December, " The Health of the Inmates is improving "?

Yes; we were always hoping they were improving, and constantly went on in the Hope we should get them better, and whenever we could make a favour able Report we did so.

Then on the 13th of December Mr. Axford says, " Much Sickness is still prevalent in the House." On the 20th of December, " William Baker, The Health of the Inmates is improving." Those Answers were put deliberately after Examination; not at random?

On my own Part they were not put down at random.

If it has been stated that they were put down at random that was not true as far as you were concerned?

Certainly not.

Was the Observation that the People were healthy or unhealthy founded on your own Observation, or the Report of the Medical Officer?

At the early Part of the Year 1836 I generally went round myself; but at last, when the People

became so ill, I was advised by the Medical Man not to go into the sick Wards, he having selected a Ward to put the worst Cases in.

What Medical Officer was that?

Mr. King. He told me that he had repeatedly caught the Diarrhæa by going himself.

He advised you not to go because he thought it infectious?

Yes.

On what Authority did you put down the State of Health if you did not visit them yourself?

From the Report of the Matron and Governor, and sometimes the Report of the Medical Man.

Did you abstain for some Weeks?

Yes, I should think Six Weeks.

964 *There was a Part of the House set apart for the sick People?*

I kept pretty much from the Bed-rooms altogether.

Was there a part of the House set apart for the sick People?

There was no regular sick Ward in the House, but we set apart a Side-room to put them in.

The Matron and the Governor 's Children were attacked with the Diarrhoea, were they not?

Yes; the only one who escaped, I think, was the Matron herself.

At what Time of the Year was that?

I think it must have been after October. I believe at the End of October or the Beginning of November we gave Permission to the Governor to go from Home for a Change of Air: he went to Guernsey.

Did he and his Children and the Matron live on the Gruel as well as the other People in the Workhouse?

I believe not.

Did you ever have any Conversation with the Medical Officer as to what it arose from in their Cases?

He believed the House to be infectious, and that was his Reason for advising me not to go through the House.

Was that Mr. King?

It was.

After he advised you not to go through the House because it was infectious were any more Paupers brought in?

Yes, a great many.

Do you know whether any of those died?

I do not know the particular Cases.

Did he advise you not to go into the House or the sick Wards?

Not to go into the sleeping Apartments; I went constantly into the Kitchen and the lower Parts of the House.

The Paupers brought in were not put into the sick Wards?

No, not at first. Was the State of the House offensive at the Time?

The Persons who went into the Bed-rooms informed me that they were very offensive.

Who were they?

Most of the able-bodied of the Paupers, whom we kept to perform the Offices of Nurses and Servants; in fact there were some very worthy poor old People · who, as far as their Strength enabled them, attended the sick until they were unable.

Were there Instances of their being unwell themselves?

Yes: the infirm weak People are almost all gone from the House.

Where are they gone?

They are dead.

You attempted to hire Work People and Nurses?

We did.

Did you succeed in hiring them?

I believe not; they got in a Nurse occasionally, but they could not get them to stay there.

Why could not they get them to stay there?

My Belief is that they would not stay; we hired Persons to do a Day 's Work; they would go away after doing a part of the Day 's Work, and we could not get them to come again.

Have you ever had any Conversation with them as to the Reason of their not coming again?

No; I was strongly impressed with the Opinion that the State of the House prevented it

965 *Can you give the Names of any Nurses who came for a Part of the Day and would not come again?*

I recollect Two Women whom I knew personally, but I cannot remember their Names; I could obtain their Names.

You say Mr. King recommended you not to go into certain Parts of the House because it was infectious; did that apply to the whole of the sleeping Wards, or only One?

It applied to the whole of the sleeping Wards; he wished me not to go into any Part of the sleeping Wards, but more particularly the sick

Wards.

In consequence of his Recommendation did you cease to visit the sleeping Apartments?

Yes; I was not in the sleeping Wards for some Time; I understood that at Meal Times the Air was offensive even in the Kitchen.

Except on this Occasion had you any Difficulty in hiring Nurses?

We never made an Application for Nurses; when I say we applied for Nurses, it was only a Wish of those Persons who attended the House mostly; there was no Order by the Board for Nurses.

But Nurses were wanted?

Yes; we only wanted to hire Persons to come and do Work at the House; one of them I recollect was of the Name of Philips, who lived near the House, who used to do Charwork.

Was any Application made to the Board for Nurses?

I think on the Report it is stated that there were Nurses required. There was another Woman of the Name of Bray, I believe.

You say that the offensive Smell extended to the Kitchen?

That I do not speak to from my own Knowledge.

What was that offensive Smell that extended to the Kitchen; was it arising from the Sickness of the People, or any Circumstance connected with the Use of Drains?

I have heard that the Matron reported it to arise from the State of the Children 's Bowels; that they could not retain their Fæces while they were eating their Meals; they generally stood at their Meals.

That was Mrs. Gover?

Yes.

Gover is not the present Master of the Workhouse?

No.

It is another Person of the same Name?

No; the present is Govier.

You say that Persons refused to come to the House to work; there was a good deal of Excitement about the Diarrhea in the Workhouse at that Time, was not there?

There was, certainly.

After you found this State of Things, and the Difficulty of getting Nurses and Work People, you applied to the Clerk of the Board about the Mortality the House under the old Law?

I did.

You found the Mortality very much increased in the House under the Union?

Yes. This was after I had made repeated Applications for an Alteration in the Diet; and for the House to be kept free from new Inmates. I carried this Report to the Board for the Purpose of more effectually carrying out my Object.

Did you urge the Board not to send any more Paupers into the House?

To send as few as possible; I believe I requested them not to send any.

966 *Did you make any regular Motion at that Time?*

I did not; I considered that sufficient Information to before the Board, and I was in hopes proper Steps would be taken.

But you were not successful?

I was not.

They were sent in the same as they had been?

I believe there was no Difference.

On what Ground did they continue to send them in after that Representation?

On the Ground of there being sufficient Room in the House according to the Report made, and that the Law must be abided by. As to the State of the Neighbourhood, it was generally healthy, therefore they had no Right to suppose it arose from any thing connected with the general State of the Health of the District.

Was the Diarrhæa prevailing in that Neighbourhood at that Time?

Certainly not.

The Workhouse was examined by the Committee previous to your entering it, and there appears to be a Report to the Board on the 7th of June 1836, stating that the House would accommodate 140 Inmates, and recommending the Guardians to take it for Two Years at a Rent of 50l; which is signed by several Members of the Committee, of whom you do not appear to have been One?

My Name, I find, does not appear there; I was not certain, but I thought I was not present.

Did you concur in that Report?

Yes. I believe generally there was no Doubt about it at the Time; and indeed the House would contain 140 by packing rather close, and if the Inmates were perfectly healthy; but when a Family became unhealthy,-- a large Family, they required very much more Room.

With respect to the Names; do you know that any of those Gentlemen were Guardians for the Parish of Bridgwater?

Mr. Frederick Axford was; I think he was the only one.

Was Mr. Parsons?

No; he was an ex-officio Guardian.

Mr. Inman?

Yes, he was.

Mr. John King?

No, he was not.

Mr Coles.

No, he was not.

Mr. Clark and Mr. North?

They were Country Guardians.

What is Somers?

He is a Farmer.

Where does he live?

At Middlezoy.

Did Mr. Axford ever serve any Parochial Offices?

Yes, certainly.

He was likely to have been well acquainted with the State of the Work house?

Yes; he knew the State of the House very well as Overseer.

He would not therefore have been likely to have concurred in any Report which was not consistent with the Fact?

No; I believe the House would accommodate 140 Persons if no Sickness had broken out among them ,

967 *Mr. Axford is the Brother of the Surgeon?.*

Yes.

Do you mean 140, allowing a separate Bed to each Person?

No; Two or Three in a Bed; I mean such Accommodation as they generally give at such Places.

Was there such Accommodation as existed in the Workhouse before?

No, for we never used to have more than Seventy or Eighty.

During that Period were the Male Paupers allowed separate Beds, or were there more than One in the same Bed?

More than One in the same Bed, I believe.

Do you mean with respect to adult Male Paupers?

Yes.

Was that the Case during the Prevalence of the Disease?

Yes; I have no Doubt of it.

Was it so in the Sick Ward?

I should think most probably not; I would

leave that Case thus, as I cannot speak to it from my own Knowledge; I have not the least Doubt that more than Two slept together out of the Sick Ward in some Instances.

You were on the Visiting Committee?

Yes.

Can you state how many Beds there were in the Workhouse?

I cannot.

Were there Seventy?

I should think not.

You think that though there were not Seventy Beds there were 140 Paupers in the House?

There were not 140 Paupers at any one Time; I think there were only about 106, or something more than that; that is, exclusive of the Family of the Governor.

What Steps were taken for providing that Workhouse with temporary Furniture; did you take any Furniture out of the other old House of the Union?

No; I ordered fresh Bedsteads myself where we could find Room for them; then we removed some of those Bedsteads to North Petherton.

What Bedsteads?

Iron Bedsteads.

Why did you remove the Bedsteads to North Petherton?

To take the Children, there being no Bedsteads for them there; we did not order a great many; I suppose not more than a Dozen Bedsteads; I am not quite certain.

You ordered some more Bedsteads probably?

We did, to fill the Places of those removed.

When you found that the Workhouse was in the State you have represented, did you take any pains to prevent Persons going into the Workhouse who were ordered into it?

I did; I perhaps departed from my Duty in some Instances. I prevailed upon some Persons not to go into the House, and gave them Money out of my own Pocket to keep them till I could get some Representations next Week to have them provided for.

Some of the Children were removed to Petherton Workhouse?

There were.

Do you know how many?

I do not know how many; but there must have been some considerable Number; first and last we sent away Six or Seven together on One Day.

968 *Can you state the Date?*

It must have been about October or November.

Were any fresh Persons sent to the Workhouse at that Time?

Yes; it was the very Day that Kidner 's Family were brought into the House.

Where were they placed when they were brought into the House?

I was obliged to direct that a Bed should be made for them by removing a Corpse, a Woman who had recently expired, the only unoccupied Bed there was in the House; there was only One Bed for the whole Family; how they contrived I do not know.

There were some Bedsteads removed from Bridgwater to Petherton, and there were none then remaining for this Family?

No.

Did the Board direct that the Beds and Bedsteads should be removed to Petherton, those which were removed?

Yes; the Board directed that.

Were the Board aware at that Time that there was no such Thing as a Bed and Bedstead in the House at the Time they sent in those Persons?

I suppose the Board did not know that we were so short of Beds.

Were you apprised that Kidner and his family were ordered into the Workhouse?

I believe not; I was surprised at finding the Family had come into the House.

At the next Board did you represent to them the Impropriety of sending this Family into the House, there being no Accommodation for them?

I did depart from the usual Course in making an Entry on the Visitors Book.

Can you refer to the Date?

I think it must have been in December; I wished the Board to know of it. The following Entry is read from the Visitors Book:

" 20th of December 1836. " One able-bodied adult Male only in the House; viz., Kidner, who came in from North Petherton with his wife and Five Children on the 14th Instant. "

Did you follow that up by stating to the Board that there were no Means of providing them with a Bed when they came in?

I am not certain of that.

Can you state that the Board were cognizant then or immediately after of the Family not being provided with a Bed otherwise than by the Means you have stated?

No, I am not aware that they were; I only know that I have made frequent Applications that fresh Persons should not be sent in under

those Circumstances; and I have repeated that Report to call the Attention of the Board to the Hardship of fresh Persons being sent in when we had cleared the House of the convalescent Children.

This Family came in at Eight o ' Clock at Night, did they not?

Yes.

Did the Matron come to you?

Yes, she did, or sent for me.

For what Purpose?

To ask me what was to be done with them, and to ask me to prevail upon the Family to go back to North Petherton for the Night. I spoke to the Man; but he said he had no Place to go to; that his Goods had been taken for Rent, and they had been out of their House for some Days, and had no Place to go to unless to a common Cowshed.

969 *Did you know the Person at all before?*

Never; I had no previous Knowledge of him.

When you went to the House you did provide One Bed for them by removing the dead Body of a Female Pauper?

Yes.

Of what had she died?

I do not know.

Was she one of those who had died of Diarrhoea?

Her Name was Ann Needs; she appears by the Book to have died of Paralysis.

After all, the whole Accommodation you could get for this Man and his Wife and Five Children was One Bed, and that only by the Removal of a Corpse?

Yes.

How long did they remain with One Bed only for their Accommodation?

I believe it could not be above a Day or Two, for I ordered fresh Beds to be sent into the House as soon as possible afterwards ,

How many of your Paupers were sleeping in the same Room at the same Time?

I cannot say that; I did not go into the Bedrooms myself.

Perhaps the Governor and Matron will give the best Evidence on that Subject?

Certainly they will.

The Entry you have made is, " One able-bodied adult Male only in the House, namely Kidner, who came in from North Petherton with his Wife and Five Children on the 14th Instant. " Might not that lead a Person to suppose that it was your Object to direct Attention to there being only One able-bodied Man in the House, rather than to the Hardship of sending in an able-

bodied Man under such Circumstances?

The Subject of the State of the House and the Impropriety of sending Persons in had been so much spoken of at the Board that they could not misunderstand me.

At all events you followed it up the next Board Day by stating something; upon the Subject?

It was the Subject of some Conversation the next Board Day.

They were made aware of it the next Board Day?

Yes.

Was it then you produced the Death Book to the Board?

I think I produced that Book before that Day.

When you took the Females who happened to be in the House to attend the Patients, were they in the early Part of the Year allowed Tea and Sugar?

They were.

When was that stopped?

I do not recollect the exact Period; it was in fact never entirely stopped. We were ordered not to give it, but I believe we did persist in giving it to those Persons who attended the sick; indeed I know we did to those, and to those who washed the Clothes of the sick and dead People.

Were any Applications made by the Governor to your Committee upon that Subject?

The Governor made repeated Applications that Tea and Sugar should be given to those Persons who did the Work of the House.

You are sure that they had it?

They had; we ordered it them, and there were some Members of the Board disapproved of it and made a Complaint, and there was a Committee called together. The Visiting Committee all together attended, and went into some Discussion upon the Subject; I believe the whole Committee, or nearly so, attended; and **970** there was a very considerable Struggle made by some Persons belonging to the Committee, who wished to carry the Law most rigidly into effect, to do away with the Supply of Tea and Sugar; others persisted that it should not be given up as long as it was necessary to have the Assistance of those People, as no Nurses or Servants were regularly hired by the House, they doing the Work of Servants and Nurses.

Was the Difficulty of getting Nurses stated?

I am not thoroughly sure that it was stated at that Time; but must have been known.

Can you state who were present on that Occasion?

One Person present, who took a very active Part, is now deceased; very great Friend of mine, Mr. Thomas Poole.

Did he press the Allowance?

He was against the Allowance; it was almost the only Instance in which after a very long Friendship together we ever differed.

Who else was present?

Mr. Parsons was present.

Did he oppose it?

He did not.

Who opposed it?

Mr. Poole was the principal Person, and Mr. Starkie, who, I think, now acts as Vice-Chairman; he is a very well-informed Gentleman upon the Law, and I believe a very clever active Man.

Was Mr. Poole a Lawyer?

He was not; he was a Magistrate of the County.

What was his Character?

One of the most benevolent Men in the World.

That was notorious in the County?

To me it was most extraordinary, and to everybody, that he took the Part he did at the Board.

The Board did not accede to your Request?

No; but I persisted in that Course and took the Consequences upon myself, that if they chose to take any Steps against me they might do it.

In point of fact when you had a Difficulty in getting Nurses was the Tea and Sugar discontinued?

It was not discontinued.

It was not owing to that you could not get Nurses?

No, certainly not.

It was discontinued by the Board, but not by you?

Yes. After the Committee had refused to give way, and it was found that the Visiting Committee persisted in giving Tea and Sugar to those Persons who acted as Servants and Nurses, some of the Members of the Board found that the Governor and the Matron and their family were not strictly entitled to Tea and Sugar by their Contract, and therefore they struck off all the Allowance of Tea and Sugar from them.

You know that of your own Knowledge?

Yes.

Mr. Weale was sent down to make some Inquiries

into these Matters, was not he?

Yes, he was.

When was that?

I do not know the Date; it was on account of Mr. Weale coming down I prepared my Memoranda.

971 *Why did you prepare those Memoranda on account of Mr. Weale coming down?*

I had Notice from the Board that my Evidence would be required upon the Examination of the Pamphlet.

What Board?

The Board of Guardians; in consequence of that I brought to my Mind the Circumstances.

Was that before you wrote the Letter to Mr. Bowen which has been published?

That was long before I wrote the Letter.

Did you say you were willing to attend?

I did. Mr. Ruddock, a Clergyman, one of the Visiting Committee, came to me and told me my Evidence would be required for the following Day. I believe there was the Period of a Week elapsed between the Two Examinations; during that Time I endeavoured to make my Evidence as clear and correct as possible, and I wrote this Letter to Mr. Bowen giving all the Facts.

The Letter was dated long subsequent to that?

Yes; I had prepared my Evidence to give in to the Board of Guardians as a Letter at the ' Time, requesting them to examine me upon that Letter.

Were you examined?

I was not; I was not called; I staid at home for the Purpose.

Have you ever been informed why you were not examined?

No, I have not.

You say in your Letter that you went to the Board with the Death Book in your Hand; that is the Obituary?

Yes.

For what Purpose did you take the Obituary in your Hand?

I found that during the Period since the Formation of the Union up to the Period when I brought that to the Board, – I am not quite sure of the Period, but I think I can state from the Number of Deaths, – there were then, I think, Twenty-eight Deaths when I carried the Information to the Board; and that was Two or Three Times the Amount of Deaths which occurred in a whole Year, and I think it was only Six Months.

Did you advert to the Causes of the Deaths?

No; I adverted only to the Deaths; the Causes had been repeatedly talked of.

At what Period was this?

I cannot speak to the Date of the Month, but I think it will appear from the Number being Twenty-eight.

The Number Twenty-eight is up at the 26th of January 1837?

It was before that; then there could not be so many.

Was it before Ann Needs died?

I think it must have been somewhere thereabouts.

On the 15th of July a Person of the Name of Giles Cridland died of old Age?

I knew him very well.

George Taylor is entered as having died of Dropsy?

I think it was on the 22d of December I carried the Book to the Board; I have made a Memorandum from the End of July to December 22d.

It appears that the Number of Deaths to that Time was Twenty-two. The first is stated to have died of old Age, the Age being only Sixty-five; the next a Person who is stated to have died of Dropsy. The next is a Person of the Name of John Chapple, who is said to have died of Dropsy. The next George Burge, an Infant of Two Months old, and no Complaint stated. The next is Rebecca Farthing, aged Sixty-five; died of Palsy. The next is Eliza beth Davey, aged Seventy-five; no Complaint stated. The next William

972 *Arthur, One Year old, who died of Diarrhea. The next is Charlotte Perratt. Two Months old; died of Syphilis. The next is---- Clatworthy, Six Hours old; no Complaint mentioned. The next Mary Stacy, aged Seventy eight; died of natural Desay. The next Elizabeth Brown, aged Two Year ' s and a Half; of Measles. The next Elizabeth Palmer, aged Two Years; of Measles. James Symes, Half a Year old; of Measles. James Brown, One Year old; of Measles. Mary Ann Vokins, Four Years old; of Measles. William Pyke, Sixty-seven Years old; of Diarrhæa. Emma Hoyle, One Year old; Measles. Sarah Mullins, Twenty-three Years old; Consumption. Thomas Storey, aged Seventy-nine; of Mortification of his Foot. Henry Dinnent, Two Years and Four Months; of Diarrhæa. George Farthing, Sixty Years old; Diarrhæa; and Ann Needs, Seventy-one Years old; of Paralysis. Those were the Parties you referred to to show the Deaths when you went to the Board?*

Yes.

What was the Object of your taking that Book containing an Enumeration of the Deaths; was it

merely to show the Number of Deaths which had happened, or to show that there was any prevalent Complaint in the House?

I took it to show that there was that Number of Deaths had occurred in the House, not at all with reference to their Disorders.

When the Name of Elizabeth Brown, who had died of Measles, was read, you were going to add something with reference to the Complaint of Measles; will you now be kind enough to give that?

The Medical Officer, Mr. King, had an Opinion, and expressed that Opinion to me repeatedly, that the Measles were produced by an Irritation on the Alimentary Canal by taking the Gruel; he stated that to me in Conversation, that it arose from the other Complaint that the Gruel had produced; that was his Opinion.

You are not a Medical Man yourself?

I am not.

You have never attended to Medicine, have you?

I have not.

Mr. Weale was there twice to examine into those Cases, was he not?

I think he was; a Week apart.

The first Time was in August 1837, was it not?

Yes; it was on the Occasion of the Inquiry into Mr. Bowen's Pamphlet; one was the Inquiry into the Doctors Pamphlet, I think.

There was an Inquiry in the Month of August 1837, a Report of which is before the Committee?

That must be the same I allude to.

There was a subsequent Inquiry into Mr. Bowen's Pamphlet, and several Letters addressed to the Editor of the Times?

It was not upon that Occasion.

Your Letter of the 1st of January 1838 was written to Mr. Bowen previous to the last Inquiry?

Yes; therefore the Thing speaks for itself.

Were you ever called on either of those Inquiries?

Never.

Did the Guardians know you were in attendance?

They knew where they could find me.

You live in Bridgwater?

I do.

You had been an active Visitor?

They all knew that I had been an active Visitor.

And that you saw a great deal of the working of this System?

Yes.

973 *But you were never called?*

No.

Did not you see Mr. Weale, or speak to him?

Not upon that Occasion.

You say that the Guardians allowed you to make use of every Indulgence to those who were sick, but that they expressly restricted you from extending that Indulgence to those who were not actually sick?

Certainly.

That you must keep to the Rule with respect to them?

Yes, and not to depart from it.

Though the People in the Workhouse were then ill of this Diarrhea, and the Medical Man had given his Opinion that that Diarrhea was occasioned by that very Gruel?

Yes.

How many of the Guardians during this Time ventured into the Work house?

I am not aware that any Guardians went into the Sick Ward of the Workhouse for several Weeks; I believe that no Guardian went about the Bedrooms or the Wards for Five or Six Weeks, and perhaps more than that.

Did you ever see Mr. Weale go into the Workhouse on any Occasion in your Time?

No.

He never inquired into the State of the sick?

I do not know that he did not, but I am not aware that he did.

You brought the Dietary to the Notice of the Guardians for the purpose of impressing upon them the Necessity of its Alteration?

Both of altering the Diet and refraining from sending new Persons into the House.

Was either of your Applications complied with?

Neither; and my Object of carrying the Book was strongly expressed at the Time. I did not merely show the Number of Deaths, but made that a Reason for calling on the Board to order a new Dietary or avoid sending new Persons in, or both.

No Reasons were given why the Dietary was still continued except as to those on the Doctor's List?

No other than I have stated.

Did you ever hear the Board of Guardians say, "We must order what the Doctor has directed with respect to the sick, but the Surgeon shall not interfere with those who are well"?

I have heard that often said.

By whom?

By Mr. Warry: "The Doctor has no Right to interfere with the State of the House except as to those who are ill."

Do you mean that he had no Right to report on the general State of the House?

I thought it very hard that the Doctor was not permitted to report on the State of the House, and the Necessity of altering the Dietary to avoid Sickness.

Was Mr. Weale ever present when those Conversations occurred?

I do not recollect that he was.

Had you ever any Conversation with Mr. Weale at all on the State of the Workhouse during the Time it was in this unhealthy State?

I had not.

Did you never meet him at the Board at this Time?

I must have seen him.

974 *Why did not you ask him how far Mr. Warry was right in laying down this Rule as to Persons in Health?*

I cannot give a very satisfactory Answer upon that; I cannot say why I did not do it. I should have taken very different Steps if I had foreseen the Consequences, but I looked forward from Day to Day for a different State of Things; I hoped that the People would get better, and that the Board would relax in working out the Law.

When did Mr. Bowen first apply to you to obtain Information upon this Subject with respect to your Proceedings at the Board?

I do not know any particular Time.

Was it before his first Publication, which was the Subject of Inquiry in August 1837?

The Letter to the King was published considerably before that, and this was a Sort of Introduction or a Preface to the Second Edition of that.

That is the Book Mr. Weale alludes to when he says he has inserted his Preface for a particular Object?

Yes.

Were you in the habit of communicating with Mr. Bowen upon the Subject:?

Yes, I was in the habit of communicating with him; and I believe that Mr. Warry considered that I had made Communications to Mr. Bowen, and he made a strong Observation, that he should wish that Persons should not report Things out of the Board; I believe that Observation was made one Day with reference to Mr. Bowen.

Did you make an Answer to that?

I considered I was not bound to Secrecy, and that I always reported what occurred when I

saw it necessary.

Were you supported by a considerable Body in the Board?

I was on many Occasions; I had a Majority on One or Two Divisions; but on those Questions I did not choose to divide the Board very often; I thought the Object would be obtained without dividing the Board.

On what did you divide the Board?

As to the Appointment of the Master of the Workhouse, Mr. Fynte, I believe, had proposed another Person, and I proposed, as Master of the Workhouse, Mr. Gover.

Did you concur in the Opinion expressed by the Board, that you could not find Means for altering the Dietary consistently with the Law?

I always expressed a different Opinion, and that we ought to secure the proper Comfort of the Inmates of the House, whatever might be the Consequences.

Did you bring that before the Board?

I did repeatedly.

Did you divide the Board upon it?

No, I never did.

Did you, under the Impression that some Measure ought to be adopted to relieve you from the Difficulty under which you were, have any and what communication with Mr. Warry upon that Subject?

I had no Communication with him on the Subject; I believed at that Time that we had no legal Power.

Did you imagine, under the Impressions you were, that the Commissioners above had no dispensing Power upon the Subject?

I believed that the Power did not rest with the Board to alter the Dietary when I heard that stated so strongly by the Chairman of the Board.

You have stated that you did not agree with those who had expressed View?

I did not.

975 *You adopting that which appears to be the right Interpretation, perhaps, did you take any Measure to give Effect to your own Views?*

I did not; because I was afraid of distracting the Board too much; I was afraid that I might not be able to go on with my own Plan.

Though you had stated the miserable Sufferings of the Poor, and you saw an infectious Disorder proceeding in the Workhouse, and were under the Impression that your Interpretation of the Law would enable you to put an End to that, you did not take the Steps necessary to communicate with Mr. Weale or the Commissioners above?

I believe I have been misunderstood; I did not conceive that we had the Power.

Did you agree with the Guardians in their Interpretation of the Law?

I believed, generally speaking, we ought to have complied with the Rules of the Commissioners or with the Law. I cannot pretend to say whether I was right; but the Chairman of the Board assured me that it was contrary to the Law to alter the Dietary, and I yielded.

The Chairman of the Board is a Barrister?

He is, I yielded to him. I felt that I did in some Instances more than I had a Right to do; but I certainly should have taken a different Course if I had foreseen all which has occurred; I should have been proud to show that I stood up more firmly, and divided the Board.

Did it not present itself to your Imagination that the more likely Mode to obtain Redress of the Grievances you have mentioned would be by applying to the Assistant Commissioner or the Commissioners above?

I am afraid I shall be led to say a few Words I did not wish to say. I had perhaps better say at once that I had not any Confidence in Mr. Weale's Opinion. He had taken some Part there that I did not choose to join in; I did not choose to put myself more into the Hands of Mr. Weale than I could help; he had taken a Part in the Board that I was not thoroughly pleased with.

You were aware there were the Commissioners above?

Yes; but I did not know the Way to approach them.

You can write, as the Committee are aware?

I am not very much accustomed to writing.

Are you aware of a Circular Letter sent to your Board from the Poor Law Commissioners, signed by the Secretary, of which the concluding Paragraph is in these Words: "The Board of Guardians, after they have made a Selection of the Dietary most suitable to the Circumstances of their Union, will notify the Fact to the Poor Law Commissioners, specifying the Number of the Dietary so selected, and the Commissioners will then issue the same under Seal, and thus render its Observance imperative."

That was the Feeling I had.

Did you understand that Approval of the Poor Law Commissioners to make the Dietary imperative?

I did not know that, but I considered that we were bound by it; I wished to alter it, but it was felt we could not.

You considered it was of no Use to refer to the Poor Law Commissioners against their own Order?

Yes; or to apply to their own Officer.

Did you consider that the Determination of the Poor Law Commissioners was like that of the Medes and Persians, that they could not themselves alter it?

The new Poor Law was so little understood in its Effect the very first Year your Lordships may suppose I did not take the most correct View of it.

Did you take a strong Part against the Law?

I did not; I am not opposed to the Law.

976 *Have you read the Act?*

I have read only those Parts I have been called upon to exercise; I have never attempted to load my Mind with the Act, but when Circumstances occurred I have referred to it.

If you had read the Act you would have found it was provided, "That in case the Overseers or Guardians of any Parish or Union in which such Orders or Regulation shall be in force shall depart from them or any of them in any particular Instance or Instances of Emergency, and shall within Fifteen Days after every such Departure report the same and the Grounds thereof to the said Commissioners, and the said Commissioners shall approve of such Departure, or if the Relief so given shall have been given in Food, temporary Lodging, or Medicine, and shall have been so reported as aforesaid, then and in either of such Cases the Relief granted by such Overseers or Guardians, if otherwise lawful, shall not be unlawful or subject to be disallowed."

I did not know that, certainly.

Did Mr. Weale, the Assistant Commissioner, ever refer you to that Clause?

No, certainly not.

He was your legal Adviser?

Yes.

Upon the whole Effect of the Law, you do not profess yourself an Enemy to it?

Certainly not; in many Parts of the Kingdom some such Law is exceedingly desirable, but I do not believe that we require such a Law in the Agricultural Districts at all. I have had long experience of Parochial Business in Bridgwater. I was engaged in 1816 on Committees appointed by the Vestry; I was the Secretary of a Committee on which all the influential Persons of the Parish attended for some Years to get rid of some Evils which arose out of the great Expenses incurred during the War.

How much in the Pound was the Rate at Bridgwater before the Introduction of the new Poor Law?

I recollect that we have had upon some Occasions Ten Rates a Year; I cannot speak as to the Year, but about the Period I allude to.

How much each Book?

I cannot speak to that; Mr. Underdown can state it. But in 1822 Select Vestries were legally formed; I was one of the Select Vestry, and we went on and reduced the Rates until before the Operation of the new Poor Law we brought down the Ten or Eleven Rates to Six, so that we had reduced the Expenditure nearly Half.

You cannot tell how much in the Pound each of those Rates was?

I cannot.

Can you tell what it is now?

I cannot.

You stated that the Representations you made to the Board of Guardians with respect to the Dietary were made with the Sanction of the Medical Gentlemen; and you stated also that you made Representations on the Subject of not sending fresh Paupers into the House; were those Representations also made under the Sanction of the Medical Gentlemen?

Yes, they were.

Did it ever occur to yourself or any Member of the Board, that Gruel being the Article ordered, it might have been as well Milk Gruel as Water Gruel?

I never took any part in the Preparation of the Gruel but upon One or Two Occasions. I have seen that the Effect was not what one expected. When the Effect was bad, I did go to the Table to see that it was properly boiled, and that it was not given in a crude State to the People, and I found that it was properly prepared.

With Groats and Water?

Yes; and properly boiled, and not given to them in a raw State.

977 *What has become of Gover the Master of the Workhouse?*

He is still at Bridgwater.

What is he?

He makes Sails.

Was the present Master of the Workhouse a Bridgwater Man?

Yes, for a long Period.

You were Guardian during the first Year only?

Only in the first Year.

Have you ever been up to the new Workhouse?

I have. I am Agent to the West of England Insurance Company, and I insured the Buildings whilst they were in the Progress of building for the Builder, and since they have been finished I have transferred the Policy to Mr Underdown the Clerk of the Board. The

Insurance is still continued with me, and the Furniture has since been insured under my Care by the Board.

Have you ever been over the House since it has been inhabited?

I have.

What Sort of State is it in?

I do not like the House.

That is a Matter of Taste?

Perhaps a Matter of Taste in some respects; but I believe the Rooms are not sufficiently large for the Inhabitants; and there is one Circumstance which struck me, in comparison with other Houses: Williton House, for instance.

Is that a House under the new System?

Yes. I was passing there on Wednesday last, and I went to see the House, knowing that it was likely I should be called here, and I saw it; that is a large and commodious House, in my Opinion. The Chapel, for instance, is not in the eating Room; the Tables in the eating Room remain during the Time of public Service, I believe, in the Bridgwater Union. There is a separate Chapel in the Williton House, which is very much more comfortable.

Are the Rooms larger?

I should think they are; I did not measure them. They appeared to me, as I passed through them, to be much more comfortable.

Does the Bridgwater Workhouse appear to be well ventilated?

It did not. I have gone into the House when it appeared to be very warm; the Kitchen being in the Centre, and the Governor 's House in the Centre, there was an unpleasant Feeling in the Rooms; and they are low too.

In the Governor 's?

And in the Rooms adjoining.

Is it heated by hot Water?

Yes.

Might not that unpleasant Feeling of which you spoke be owing to the Windows not being properly opened?

I think the Windows are not large enough, and I made a Complaint of the Height of the Windows to the Board, and endeavoured to have the Windows altered while the Building was going on. I went and made a Complaint of the Windows of the new House, when it was in progress of building, being so high that the Paupers could not look over the Sills of the Windows, and I then applied to the Board to have the Windows altered before they proceeded any further with the Building. The

then Vice President, Mr. King, supported me in my Application. He declared that he would support me in any Motion that I would make upon the Subject. I then pledged myself to the Board that I would make Arrangements with the Builder that the building on some Parts of the House should be suspended until the next Week, that I might be able to report to them whether the Alteration could be made without Prejudice to the Contract or Injury to the Building as far as it was gone. I did do so, and I had very satisfactory Information from Wainwright, the Builder, that the Windows could be cut down and no Injury done to the **978** Building, and that he would not take any Advantage of the Breach of Contract; that the Departure from the Plan should not be any Violation or any Detriment to the Contract at all. But when I went on the following Week to carry this Motion, which I thought I should have done, and entertained no Doubt about it, the Vice Chairman objected to second my Proposition, which he had pledged himself to do; and he stated, that his Reason for not doing so was that he had seen from the public Papers that there was Pressure from without, not Mr. Bowen's Letter, but some Article appeared in the Times, which gave him the Impression that there was great Excitement upon the Subject, and he refused to support the Motion.

Were you a Member of the Board when the Plan was determined upon?

Yes, I was.

And a Member of the Building Committee, were you not?

Yes.

Did you object to the Plan at that Time?

Not at all; I did not know the Effect of the Plan; and when I mentioned that the People could not look over the Sills of the Windows many Members of the Board were astonished; it was overlooked by all of us; there was not One Person present, I believe, that knew the Effect of the Plan; we saw the Plans, and took that which was most recommended.

The Circumstance of the Windows being high up is more favourable to Ventilation; are you aware of that?

It would be so if you had but One Space, and must have it up or down; but if you let them be as high as at present, and lengthen them below, you would have a larger Space, and the Ventilation would be improved, undoubtedly.

Is there any Want of Light in those Rooms?

Not at all.

Have you ever heard any Complaints of the

Inmates that they could not look out of Window?

No, I have not.

Have you heard that they have made Complaints?

No.

How many Beds are there in the Rooms, and what is the Distance between the Beds?

I cannot give Information upon that Subject. I thought I should be merely questioned upon the Letter that appears in Print, and I have not prepared myself for any thing beyond that, but all that Information can be obtained officially, undoubtedly.

You do not know yourself how many People are sleeping in any One Room in the House?

No.

Do not you think that a much greater Point in order to make good your View of the Case, that there is not sufficient Accommodation, than the Circumstance of the Divine Service being performed in the eating Room?

Certainly; I should think the first Object would be to give Accommodation for sleeping and living in the House. It is perhaps a very immaterial Thing whether the Chapel be in the eating Room or in a separate Room; but it always gives one an Idea of more Reverence to have a separate Place for the Prayers of a large Family of that Kind, 200 or 300 People, which should be considered a sacred Place.

It gives you a Notion that there is more Space altogether devoted to the Inhabitants?

Yes; if you are obliged to use a dining Room for a Chapel, it gives you an Idea that they are put into that Room because they have no other.

You know that the dining Room is sometimes made use of for the Prayers of a Family?

Yes; only that you do not often see so large a Family.

979 *With respect to the Beds; can you state whether, in the new House, the grown up Male Inmates have a Bed each to themselves?*

I believe not; but I cannot state.

With respect to Kidner's Family, who you said had no Bed to but that which you gave them, from which a Corpse had been removed; you said it was Two Days before they were provided with any other Accommodation?

I said Two or Three Days.

When they were provided, to what Extent were they provided with Accommodation?

I do not know. I ordered fresh Bedding and fresh Bedsteads, and left it to the Governor and Matron to make the best Arrangement they could.

If they had not been received that Night into the Workhouse, do you know whether there was any place where they could have been accommodated?

No; unless the Parish Officer had given them Money enough to procure Lodging at the Inn, but that was not to be accomplished; the Man had received his Orders to take his Family there, and there was no other Place open for him, and there he stayed. I did endeavour to prevail upon him to go back to North Petherton.

Was there any Place at North Petherton for him?

The Statement which is in Evidence is that there was no Place.

Was the Man's Character such as would have prevented him from readily obtaining any other Accommodation?

I believe it was; I believe his Character was bad. I found subsequently that he deserted the House, and was not a good Character.

He deserted the House because he disliked the Control?

I do not know the Motive, but it is likely.

You do not think it was because he was afraid of the Pestilence?

I cannot state; I am not aware; I think his Wife caught the Diarrhæa.

Do you know that an Order was sent to him for Relief, but that he remained in the House for some Weeks after that, and would not accept it?

I do not know whether an Order was made or not.

Was this Family laid upon the same Bedding from which the Corpse was taken, or was fresh Bedding supplied?

I cannot answer positively to that, but I should believe that it was the same Bedding. I know that it was on the same Bed and Bedstead, because there was no other. Whether the Matron had any fresh Bedding that she put on I am not certain.

You stated that Mr. Warry has frequently observed upon the Inexpediency of allowing Reports of what passed at the Board to spread out of doors; do you remember his particularly adverting to that at the Time when the Quarrel between the Medical Men and the Board was rife?

I was not on the Board at that Time.

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

CHARLES LOCOCK, M. D., is called in, and examined as follows:

YOU practise as a Physician and Accoucheur in this Town?

Yes.

Have you been good enough to examine the Person of Charlotte Allen?

Yes.

Will you have the goodness to state to the Committee how you found her; will you state all the Circumstances?

She told me that she was Thirty-two Years of Age; that she had been for Eight or Nine Years previously to her Pregnancy in delicate Health, which had obliged her to leave her Service; that she suffered more than is common Pregnancy 980 from Sickness and Pain, a Pain especially in her Right Side: that she was confined on the 29th of June 1837; that she was taken ill the Evening before, suffering slightly from Pains, but sufficiently to keep her awake; and that, at Eleven o' Clock on the following Morning, finding her self worse, she sent to the Relieving Officer; that the Relieving Officer sent her a Midwife of the Name of Walker, who came to her within an Hour from the Time she applied for her; that this Midwife stayed with her, and did not leave her at all till about Ten or Eleven at Night, when the Child was born; that she suffered severely; that the Pains were very frequent and very strong. In answer to Questions which I put to her she further said, that the Child was born in the natural Posture; but that towards the latter Part of her Labour she felt that the Midwife was giving her a good deal of Pain; that she hurt her considerably with her Hand, and that upon complaining of this the Midwife ceased to give her any Pain, and that the Child was born in Two very violent Pains afterwards, and that the After-birth came away at the same Time, and with the same Pain that expelled the Child, without the Interference of the Midwife. I particularly asked her whether the Midwife was at the Time of the Birth of the Child actually assisting her. She said that as far as her own Sensations were a Guide she was not, and had not assisted her for Two Pains before the Birth of the Child. My Reason for asking that Question was, because the Accident that occurred is very liable to occur, provided there is no proper Assistance at the very last Pain or Two, and especially with the First Child. She said that the Midwife desisted from assisting her in this Way on account of her Representations of the great Pain to which she was put. She then told me that about Half an Hour after the Child was born she felt confident that some thing was wrong; that something had been displaced; that there was a Protrusion; but she did not mention it; she did not mention it for several Hours, and then she mentioned it to her Nurse, who was the Sister of this Midwife. I understood that the Nurse told her it was

nothing but a Clot of Blood, and that it would soon disappear. The next Day, within Twenty four Hours after the Birth of the Child this poor Woman appears to have got out of Bed and to have sat upright, and to have used some little Exertion in passing Urine in the erect Posture; that those Symptoms of something externally protruding became after that still more troublesome, and that the Midwife was then applied to and told of the Circumstance; that the Midwife made an ocular Examination and told her positively that there was nothing wrong, that there was nothing unusual; that it was nothing but a Clot of Blood which some Fomentations would soon disperse. Those Fomentations were applied, and no Relief being gained on the Third Day after the Day of her Delivery, on the Monday, she being confined on the Friday, she applied to the Relieving Officer for a Surgeon; the Relieving Officer sent for the Midwife, and questioned her, and hearing from her positively that there was nothing unusual, did not send a Surgeon. A Second Application was made to him on the following Wednesday, and then a Surgeon was sent to her. This Surgeon 's Name I forget.

Ruddock?

Yes. On the Wednesday she was visited by this Surgeon, who at once declared that she was irreparably injured; that it was a Displacement of the Womb; that she would not recover; and after some little Trouble he replaced the Womb, and enjoined perfect Quiet, and left her. She was afterwards seen by him and by some other Surgeon on Two or Three Occasions, and the Womb was replaced, because it again protruded by some little Exertion on her Part; it was replaced altogether Three Times. After the Third Replacement it did not again protrude. She then stated that for many Months she was nearly constantly in pain, suffering from very distressing and painful Sensations; that her Health was much injured by this Confinement, and that there was a constant very fætid and acrid Discharge. That about Eight or Nine Weeks ago she was put under the Care of a new Medical Man of the Name of Ward; that this Medical Man had employed Treatment which had not been previously employed, – local Treatment and Injections; that he also gave her a generous Diet; that she had Wine and other nourishing Things, and that she took Medicine; and that under that Treatment the Discharge
981 no longer continued fætid, and then it entirely ceased; that she became much more comfortable, both in her local Feelings, and in her general Health was very much better. I ought to have stated that the first Medical Man

who saw her said, that not only was the Womb displaced, but also that there had been a Laceration of the protecting Medium between the Passage to the Womb and the Passage to the Bowels.

Which you call the Perinæum?

Yes. I then without asking her any further Question examined her present State, and I found the Womb perfectly in its natural Situation and perfectly healthy. I found Traces of the Laceration of the Perinæum; it appears to have been very extensive, and to have extended close upon the contracting Muscle, which we call the Sphincter Muscle, of the Bowels, but not to have passed through that Muscle; that it had healed up very irregularly, with an uneven Scar (Cicatrix), and that the Edge of this uneven Scar was still tender, painful to the Touch, and evidently the Cause of her remaining Uneasiness, which, though very much less than it was, is very troublesome to her, preventing her from standing or walking without Support. She told me she wore a Belt, which gave her great Support and great Comfort, and that by the Assistance of this Belt she was able to walk about and to take moderate Exercise.

Then you have no Doubt of the Fact of the Perinæum having been lacerated?

I have not the slightest Doubt of that Fact.

And with respect to the Womb, when once it was restored to its original Place it would probably get right again?

Yes. There was no Disease in the Womb; it had been displaced, I suppose, by the violent Efforts of Labour, and from having lost the Support of the Perinæum, which keeps it in its proper Situation, and from the Woman sitting up too soon after Confinement.

Would these Circumstances be produced by Meddling or Officiousness on the Part of the Midwife, or in the natural Course of the Labour?

The Inefficiency of the Midwife appears to be shown only in her Inability of detecting the Mischief after it had occurred. The Want of Assistance during the Labour was more the Cause of the Laceration of the Perinæum than any officious Meddling, if her Statement was correct that the Midwife did not assist her. If no Assistance is given to a Woman in her last Pains, in which the Child 's Head is pressing upon the Perinæum, the Perinæum is liable to give way and tear through instead of gradually and gently dilating.

Supposing this Woman had been attended by a Person of Medical Skill, is it less likely that this should have occurred than with an ignorant

Midwife?

Less, unquestionably; but not at all impossible with a first Child.

Therefore it is not certain by any Means that those Circumstances are to be attributed to her having been attended by an ignorant Midwife instead of by a skilful Medical Person?

I have met with the same Accident with Medical Men who have had great Repute; and I have met with it myself; and it is not at all uncommon with the first Child, though rarely to this Extent.

If any body has said that there was no Laceration of the Perinæum and that there was no Prolapsus of the Uterus, he cannot be a Person who has given a proper Medical Opinion?

I am quite certain that there has been a Laceration of the Perinæum; as to a Prolapsus of the Uterus I can only be guided by her History; there is none now.

And there is nothing to enable you to judge upon that by Inspection?

No; because the Perinæum having united again holds it in its proper Place, and therefore I cannot say how far it may have been displaced.

Is this Laceration of the Perinæum a Matter which the Woman will probably feel during the rest of her Life?

Under her present Management it has been so much improved that I see no Reason why it **982** may not be entirely recovered from. She is a delicate Woman and that is against her.

Is there any Discharge from it now?

I believe none; she told me there was none.

You did not perceive any yourself?

No.

Supposing you met with a Patient in that State, would your Opinion have been, upon seeing her immediately after the Thing occurred, that she was very likely to remain incurable from that State, and to be a Sufferer during the rest of her Life?

It is an Accident which, when it does take place, does not always re-unite without an Operation. I have seen several Instances of Patients who have been brought up to me where the Laceration has not united, and in which great Distress and great Discomfort have remained to them for many Years. The Instances of Recovery after the Operation have been but few; it is a difficult Operation to perform, and it is in a Situation where Union does not readily take place; the Consequence is, that Cases of Recovery by an Operation are not common.

Was the State of her Health, according to her

Account, previous to her lying-in, such as made it more likely that an Accident of that Sort would occur?

No; but it would make it more likely that if it occurred it would not heal, as this has done.

Under these Circumstances does it appear to you that it would have been right to have had a Medical Person instead of an ignorant Midwife?

If one had anticipated a Circumstance of that Sort one might have said that the more educated and more experienced the Attendant had been the less likely would it have been to occur to her.

Was there any thing in her previous State of Health that, if under common Circumstances, it would have been sufficient for her to have been attended by a Midwife, would have induced you to say that she ought not to have the Attendance of the Midwife but a Person of Medical Skill?

No, I cannot see that.

You say that this Accident is much more likely to have occurred from Want of the Assistance of the Midwife than from any officious Meddling?

That is my Opinion.

Do you think it could have occurred from the Midwife improperly putting her Finger upon the part in the Way that this Woman says she did when she complained of the Pain?

No; it is not uncommon for Women to complain of the Pain which the necessary manual Examination during Delivery gives them; but in this Instance the Time when the Accident occurred must have been the last Pain, and at that Time, according to the Account of the Patient, the Midwife had ceased to assist her.

Therefore it was rather owing to her ceasing to assist her that this occurred than to any other Cause?

Yes.

Can you judge at all, from the Statement the Woman has made to you, of the Propriety of the Treatment which she is now experiencing?

I should say that the History that she has given me of the Treatment she has had since she has been under the Care of the last Medical Man, Mr. Ward, appears to be most judicious; that it has succeeded is a Proof that it has been well conducted, because I should say the Case has done remarkably well in the last Two Months, judging from her History.

At the Time when this Woman first went out of the House after her Confinement, she got into a Cart, and went over the Quantock Hills, a Distance of Five or Six Miles; was that likely to retard her Cure?

I did not know that Fact, and I do not know what her State was at the Time. Any uneasy

Motion, any Exertion, would have been mischievous.

983 *She stated to you that these Medical Persons had replaced the Womb in the right Place; is it possible that Laceration of the Perinæum could have taken place in consequence of the Medical Men doing that at any Time, or in the Examination of the Person?*

Certainly not; such a Laceration as that could only have arisen from the stretching of the Perinæum by the Child 's Head in passing into the World.

The Prolapsus might have been caused by the Woman getting up too soon after her Delivery?

Yes; without any Laceration at all.

And when there was a Laceration, it was much more likely?

Yes.

Do you apprehend that it was occasioned by her getting up, or that the Prolapsus had taken place before?

Her Impression was that it had taken place before. I should say, that it would have been more likely to have taken place when she got up. After Delivery she got out of Bed and sat upright. It is often very difficult to pass Water after the first Delivery, and she used, according to her Account, a great deal of Effort, which if this had not taken place before was very likely to have occasioned it.

What the Midwife stated as to the Clot of Blood shows the Ignorance of the Midwife, does it not?

She certainly was ignorant as to that.

If there had been a Medical Man there to have given the proper Assistance to this Woman is it likely that this would have happened?

It is less likely; but I have known it happen to a great Number of Medical Men.

This unfortunate Accident having happened, if a Medical Man had been called in on the Saturday, instead of not being called in till the Wednesday, would the Patient 's Sufferings have been less?

Certainly; the sooner the Womb was replaced the better Chance would there have been of the Patient 's ultimate Recovery, and a great deal of Distress and Suffering would have been saved her.

Then if she had been attended by a Medical Man would she not have been more likely to have been cured than by waiting Four Days?

I can have no Doubt upon that Point.

You would apply that Observation to the displacing of the Womb, and not to the Laceration of the Perinæum?

Yes, it would have saved her very great Inconvenience; and also, as regards a Laceration, the great Chance of Recovery consists in the Treatment of the first few Days.

Did she say that Mr. Ruddock did not examine her the first Time, but merely felt her Pulse, and prescribed for her as a Person having sustained no Accident?

She did not state that.

If that was the Case does not that show Negligence or Ignorance on the Part of the Medical Man?

Patients very often conceal Things, and even against their Interest: if she told him that there was something wrong, and he took no Steps to discover that, he did not act as I would have done.

Have you any Doubt of this Woman 's ultimate Recovery; do you think she will, with her present Treatment, ultimately recover?

Yes, with her present Treatment.

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

Ova

Ordered, That this Committee be adjourned to Monday next, Twelve o ' Clock.