

Evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee enquiry on the Operation of the
Poor Law Amendment Act.

Day 13, 17 July 1838

Evidence of Abraham King, p 985; James Gover p 1006; Rachel Philips, p 1016; Elizabeth Bray, p 1017;
Amy Ellis, p 1020; Harriet Bindon, 1024; James Gover, 1027; Robert Underdown, p 1029

Edited by Tony Woolrich, 25/04/2021

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Die Martis, 17th Julii 1838.

The Lord WHARNCLIFFE in the Chair.

Evidence on the Operation of the Poor Law
Amendment Act.

Mr. ABRAHAM KING is called in, and
further examined as follows :

*YOU were the Medical Officer attending the
Bridgwater Workhouse in the latter End of the Year
1836 and the Beginning of 1837?*

I was.

*You were Part of that Time in a State in which
you could not attend yourself?*

I was.

Mr. Poole attended for you?

He did.

*During that Time there was Diarrhea in the
House?*

There was.

*When you resumed your Duty as Medical Officer
you wrote a Letter to the Board, which was dated the
25th of October?*

I did.

*In what State was the Workhouse at that Time;
was there infectious Disorder in it of any Kind; was
the Diarrhæa supposed by you to be infectious?*

It certainly put on that Appearance; many
Individuals were affected with Diarrhæa who
did not make use of the Diet of the House.

*Did it begin with the Persons who used the Diet
of the House?*

It did.

*Was it at that Time that the Governor and
Matron took the Diarrhoea?*

It was some little Time after, I believe, that
they were ill.

*Did you yourself suffer from it in
consequence of your Attendance?*

*I suffered from Diarrhæa ; whether it was in
consequence of that I do not pretend to say.*

*Was there any Complaint with respect to Nurses
who attended the Sick that they suffered from
Diarrhæa?*

Some few suffered.

*When you went away on account of Illness was
that Illness Diarrhæa?*

Not entirely; I was in a weak State of Health,
and had been for some Months; and during my
Attendance there I had occasionally Diarrhæa.

*You were absent the first Week of October 1836,
were you not?*

No.

*Were not you absent for Three Weeks prior to the
25th of October?*

I was not entirely absent during that Time.

*October the 25th you wrote " On resuming my
Duties at the Workhouse; " how long had you been
absent?*

As I said before, I had not been entirely
absent; when I wrote that Letter I attended the
Union Workhouse entirely by myself; previous
to that Mr. Poole and myself used to be in
attendance.

You were not absent during the Three Weeks?

No; occasionally I visited the House in
consequence of being the responsible Medical
Officer to the Board.

986 *Was that at the Time you suffered from
Diarrhæa?*

Yes.

*Did you ever warn the Visiting Committee not to
go into the Workhouse on account of the Disorder
which prevailed?*

I believe I did, in One or Two Cases.

*That was from the Conviction that it was
infectious?*

It was.

At what Time was that?

It is so long since I can scarcely say.

*You never made a regular Report of your having
that Opinion to the Board?*

I stated to the Visiting Committee repeatedly
that the Dietary was producing Diarrhæa.

*Did you state to them that the Diarrhoea was in
your Opinion infectious, and that that was the
Reason for your desiring them not to go through the
Wards?*

Yes.

*You never brought that regularly before the Board
by any Letter of yours?*

I considered that my stating it to the
Committee was quite sufficient.

*Did you ever remonstrate against fresh Persons
being brought in while the House was in that State?*

I believe I did once write a Letter to the
Board requ hat they would not send old Persons
with diseased Legs so as to give rise to
disagreeable Effluvia.

*Was there disagreeable Effluvia in the House at
the Time?*

Yes.

During the Time the Diarrhæa was raging?

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Yes.

From the Diarrhoea?

I presume it was.

*When was it you stated to the Visiting Committee
that they had better not go through the Wards on
account of the Infection?*

I cannot answer that Question not knowing
the Date.

Can you not tell whereabouts as to the Time?

No, I cannot.

*Was it before or after you wrote this Letter of the
25th of October?*

I think it more than probable it was before,
for a few Days after that Letter I know I was
taken very ill again, and was obliged to give up
to Mr. Poole.

When did you resume again?

Not entirely for some Months.

*You think it was before the Letter of the 25th of
October you warned the Visiting Committee not to
go to the Workhouse because it was infectious?*

I believe it was.

*Did any of them go in to your Knowledge
afterwards?*

I think, in the Spring, some few of the
Members went in.

Was there any Time when they did not go in?

I cannot answer that.

*Did you ever speak to Mr. Baker upon the
Subject?*

Very frequently; he being the only Guardian
near I frequently had Communication with him.

*Did you speak to him as a Member of the
Committee?*

Yes.

Not as a mere personal Acquaintance?

No

987 *But as positive Information to him as a
Member of the Visiting Committee?*

I took Two or Three Times the Master of the
Workhouse to Mr. Baker, to corroborate what I
stated to him, he being a very active humane
Guardian.

*The Governor corroborated you as to the Facts at
the Time of your communicating to him your
Medical Opinion upon the Subject?*

Yes.

*Did you tell Mr. Baker, about August 1836, that
the Oatmeal Gruel occasioned this Complaint in
the Paupers?*

I will not pretend to say it was August, but I
certainly stated it to him.

*Do you know at what Time you wrote that Letter
about not admitting Persons with diseased Legs?*

I do not.

*Was any Application made by you for a general
Alteration of the Diet, not merely as respected the
Sick but for all the Paupers in the House, in
consequence of the Effect you saw produced by the
Oatmeal Gruel?*

I believe, in consequence of my
Representation, it was stated to the Board; and
the Answer I received from the Board was, that
it was no Concern of mine; that I was to attend
to the Sick, and that only.

*When did you receive that Answer from the
Board?*

It was communicated by One of the Visiting
Committee.

*Who was the Member of the Visiting Committee
who communicated that?*

I cannot recollect. I think it was Mr. Baker;
but I will not say for certain.

You did not go to the Board?

No. I considered that the Visiting Committee
were the responsible Persons.

*That you were to communicate to them, and they
were to forward your Communication to the Board?*

Yes.

*When this Member of the Visiting Committee told
you that you had no Business with any but the Sick,
did he state that as Matter of his own Opinion, or as
an Answer from the Board of Guardians?*

I received it as an Answer from the Board.

That was your Impression?

Yes.

*He did not state that as an Answer from the
Board?*

No.

*Had you any other Means of ascertaining whether
it was brought before the Board?*

No.

*But you did state to the Visiting Committee that
the Gruel was producing this Disorder, and desired
that the Diet might be changed?*

Yes.

*And the Answer you got was, that you had
nothing to do with the general Diet, but just to
attend to the Sick?*

Yes.

*Can you state when you made that
Representation to the Visiting Committee?*

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I believe there was One Representation of that Sort before I wrote the Letter; then there was a similar Representation the following Spring; and when I received the Answer many Children were suffering severely. When I wrote the Letter I considered that the Board had a discretionary Power to diet the Children under Nine Years of Age, but that they had no Power of altering the general Dietary without applying to the Poor Law Commissioners.

Did you make those Representations previous to writing the Letter and the other in the Spring?

Yes.

988 *Can you recollect to whom they were made?*

No, I cannot.

Was it to more than One Member of the Visiting Committee?

Yes. I believe there were Two or Three present.

Were they visiting the House at the Time?

No; in Committee.

Where did the Committee sit?

In a Room adjoining the Workhouse.

Did the Committee meet every Week to visit the Workhouse?

They met every Week.

Did not One Member visit the Workhouse for the Committee each Week?

I cannot answer that Question.

You do not know either one way or the other?

I know that the Committee met every Week.

The Three Members of the Committee, or the whole Committee?

I used to see Three; sometimes Four; sometimes more.

Did they meet in a particular Room?

Yes.

What Room was that?

A Room adjoining the Workhouse.

A Room within the Precincts of the Workhouse?

It was under the same Roof.

It was part of the Workhouse, then?

Yes, you may say so; under the same Roof.

Was it the same Building?

It was not the same Building; it was a Building erected a few Years ago for a Committee Room.

Did you attend them every Week there?

I attended when they required my Attendance.

Never but then?

No; unless I had something to represent to them.

On this Occasion did they require your Attendance, or had you represented it to them?

I represented it to them.

You cannot recollect who were present at the Time?

No.

You cannot recollect the Dates more precisely than that one was previous to the Letter of the 25th of October and the other in the Spring?

I believe that was the Fact.

Was there any Communication between that Room and the Workhouse?

A Doorway adjoining the Kitchen.

The Kitchen belonging to the Workhouse?

Not the general Kitchen, but the Kitchen belonging to the Governor.

Persons who went to that Room would be tolerably safe from any Infection?

There was no immediate Connexion.

You recommended to the Gentlemen not to go into the Wards on account of the Infection?

I did at the Time.

Did you state to Mr. Baker that you had got the Diarrhæa in you Attendance on that House?

I stated that I had got the Diarrhæa; but whether it was in consequence the Performance of the Duty I cannot say.

989 *Did you give the same Advice to the Governor or Matron not to go into the Bed - rooms?*

I did.

They had the Diarrhoea?

They had.

Very badly?

Yes; the Governor so badly that I recommended that he should be removed from the House entirely; a strong hale Man was reduced to a Skeleton in a short Time.

Do you attribute that to the Infection that was in the House from the Diarrhæa?

I think it is more than probable.

Did you ever so represent it, either to the Visiting Committee of the Board of Guardians?

Never to the Board of Guardians; I did to the Visiting Committee.

Do you remember whether he was a Man of drunken Habits?

I believe I have seen him tipsy, but I should say his Habits were not those of a Drunkard.

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*Did you never remonstrate with him upon the
Subject of being tipsy?*

I do not recollect that I did.

*Did you ever give him to understand that his
Indulgence in those Habits was unfavourable to his
getting rid of this Complaint?*

I do not recollect it.

*Can you take upon yourself to say, that you never
remonstrated with this Man on his intemperate and
drunken Habits?*

I cannot recollect any thing about it.

*Can you recollect whether you ever told him that
if he did not leave off those intemperate and drunken
Habits he would kill himself?*

I do not recollect any thing of the Sort.

*Are you sure you never did say any thing of the
Sort?*

I do not recollect it.

You know the Man well?

Yes.

*If you had had an Occasion to tell him that, you
could hardly fail to have recollected it, could you?*

I think I should have recollected it, but I do
not.

*Can you take upon yourself to say you never did
tell him that?*

I do not recollect any thing of the Sort.

*Can you take upon yourself to say you have not
said something of the Sort to him?*

I do not recollect any thing of the Sort.

*You are not asked whether you recollect any thing
of the Sort, but whether you can take upon yourself
to say you had not told him so?*

I have no Recollection of any thing of the
Sort.

*Is it not notorious that he is a Man of very
drunken Habits?*

No.

You know him well?

Yes, I know him.

*You cannot take upon yourself to say you have
not told him that if he would not leave off those
drunken Habits he would kill himself?*

I do not think I ever had any Conversation
with him upon the Subject.

*You never had any Conversation with him on his
drunken Habits?*

Not that I can recollect.

990 *If you cannot recollect any Conversation with
him about his Habits of Intemperance, cannot you*

*take upon yourself to say that you never told him
that if he did not leave off his intemperate Habits he
would destroy himself?*

I do not recollect any thing of the Sort.

*The Question is whether you will undertake to
say you have not told him so?*

I do not remember any thing of the Sort.

Will you undertake to say you have not said so?

If I have no Recollection I cannot say any
thing about it.

*Were the Man 's Habits so bad that it was likely
you should tell him so?*

No; I never saw him tipsy more than once.

Was his Diarrhæa produced by Intemperance?

No; had it been so stated it would have been
my Duty to have laid it before the Board. I never
saw him tipsy but once.

Was he very drunk then?

He was able to understand very well what
was passing.

*Would long Habits of Intemperance tend to
produce Diarrhæa?*

Not generally. Drinking Port Wine would
not, but the contrary; but Cider would.

*When you were affected with the Diarrhæa did
you as a Medical Man consider that you took it by
Contagion, or that it was epidemic and originated in
yourself?*

I consider that my visiting the Workhouse
produced it to a certain Extent; at other Times I
am of a costive Habit.

*Had you had it before you went to the
Workhouse?*

No.

*How soon after the Paupers had it in the
Workhouse did you have it?*

I suppose it was about a Month after it began
in the Workhouse.

Had the Matron the Diarrhæa also?

I believe she had, but not to such an Extent as
her Husband.

And the Children?

Yes; One was very bad indeed.

Were they on the same Food as the Paupers?

No.

Had they had any of this Oatmeal at all?

I believe not.

*Those were Cases in which you attribute the
Diarrhæa to the Infection?*

I think it is more than probable.

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Supposing it was not caught by Infection, by what do you suppose it would be brought on; or was there any thing particular in their Diet which would bring it on?

No, I could discover nothing.

Did you discover any Reason from any thing they ate or drank?

No. I made Inquiry whether there was Diarrhea in the old Workhouse before the Formation of the Union, and I was told there was none; I made many other Inquiries whether or not the Water was of a purgative Quality, and it ran through my Mind whether the low Situation would produce it, but I set that aside in consequence of the Inmates of the old Workhouse never suffering from it.

You were satisfied that it had been originally produced by the Gruel.

Yes.

Were you equally satisfied that it became infectious?

991 *Was the Workhouse in such a State that it was safe to send fresh Paupers into it who might require Relief?*

Certainly not; they ought not to have been sent in.

When was it first in that State that they ought not to have been sent in?

I felt it more forcibly when I wrote the Letter about the bad Legs; I forget the Date of the Letter.

Were they sent in notwithstanding?

No Cases of bad Legs were sent in.

Were there fresh Inmates sent in?

Yes.

You did not mention any thing about Infection in writing that Letter?

No; I named it to the Visiting Committee.

The Date of the Letter appears to be " December the 13th, 1836. To the Gentlemen of the Visiting Committee. Gentlemen, - It will be very desirable for the future not to admit Persons above the Age of Sixty having sore ulcerated Legs. Abraham King, Surgeon. " Was that with a view to the ulcerated Legs, or to Infection?

It was with the view of not increasing that noxious Effluvia which was occasional in the Wards.

It was not with a view lest those Persons having the ulcerated Legs should catch the Infection, but lest the bad Smell of the ulcerated Legs should increase the bad Smell of the Workhouse?

Yes, and increase the general unhealthy State

of the House.

You were afraid of increasing the infectious State of the Atmosphere?

Yes.

Are there Houses immediately contiguous to the Workhouse?

No.

How far are they?

I suppose Twenty Yards.

Were there many Persons living in those Houses near the Workhouse?

There were several Families up the Street.

Were they in as low a Situation as the Workhouse?

No, they were rather higher.

Had any of their Families the Diarrhæa?

I cannot answer that.

You have said that you were absent from the Workhouse, and that prior to the Writing of the Letter you were affected with the Diarrhæa; you had not been taking Gruel?

No.

Was it from Infection at that Time that you had caught the Diarrhæa?

Really I cannot say.

What do you think?

I am sure I do not know; I did not think about it.

You just now said that the Oatmeal had produced it?

Not in myself.

That the Oatmeal had produced it and you had caught the Infection?

I do not think I stated that.

You stated that it was from Infection you caught the Diarrhoea?

I believe I was asked whether the Diarrhæa was produced by Infection; and my Answer was, it was more than probable; I could not say for certain.

It appeared it was in your Case produced by Infection?

My Answer was, that it was more than probable.

992 *It had not been caught by Infection in the early Part of October.*

The Infection had begun in the early Part of October?

It had, I suppose.

How soon did it show itself in the House?

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I think about August.

Did Diarrhæa show itself in the House as early as August?

I believe it did.

It became infectious at that Time?

I did not consider it infectious at first, though I did afterwards.

How soon did you consider it infectious?

About the Date of that Letter; the 25th of October.

You did not consider it infectious before?

I was making up my Mind upon the Subject. I do not think I stated to the Committee that it was till that Time, or a little before.

Did you at that Time state to the Committee that it was infectious?

Yes.

Did you state to the Board that it was infectious?

I do not think I did.

If you had not made up your Mind that it was infectious, to what did you attribute your having the Diarrhea in the early Part of October?

I thought it was more probable to be caused by that, though my Mind was not exactly made up.

When did you first become Surgeon to the Workhouse?

At the Commencement of June, I think, or about Midsummer.

Had the Oatmeal Diet been then introduced?

No; I think it was introduced sometime afterwards.

Was there any Diarrhoea there then?

No; I attended the old Workhouse a Month before the Commencement of the Union, and there was no Diarrhæa there then.

Was there any Diarrhæa till the Gruel was introduced?

No, I think not.

How long after the Gruel was introduced did the Diarrhæa begin?

I think about a Fortnight.

How long after the Diarrhoea began did you communicate to the Visiting Committee that it had begun?

Probably a Fortnight.

Did you in your Communication to them attribute the breaking out of the Diarrhæa to the Gruel?

Yes.

Was there any Alteration made in the Diet of the Workhouse?

Yes. I suggested Milk; and I was allowed to give Milk to the Sick.

That was the 25th of October, was not it?

I think I had given Milk to the Sick before that.

Did you not think it was right to abstain from giving Gruel to those who were well, lest they should get the Disorder?

Yes.

Did you communicate that to the Visiting Committee?

Yes I stated to them I was obliged to keep a common astringent Mixture in the House, to enable them to keep their Food in their Bowels for a short Time.

Notwithstanding that was the Dietary altered?

No, not for some Months.

993 *Did the Diarrhoea become better or worse?*

Sometimes it would become better by active Treatment, and then again it - became worse.

How many had you at the Time under your Care?

I should think from Ten to Twenty.

Did they die?

Many of them did.

Was all that communicated to the Visiting Committee?

Yes; the Death Book was always open to them.

Notwithstanding the Death Book was open to them was the Gruel still administered?

Yes.

To what did you attribute your Diarrhea in the early Part of October?

I thought it more than probable I caught it from Infection.

Did you communicate to the Visiting Committee at that Time that it was infectious?

I believe I did.

Was any Alteration made in consequence of that, either in the Dietary or any thing else?

No; I do not recollect that there was.

You never communicated to the Board of Guardians that it was infectious?

The only Communication I had with the Board was that Letter which is published.

Were you disappointed and surprised that no Alteration was made in consequence of your Communications to the Visiting Committee?

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I was surprised very much, and alarmed very much on the Subject. I used to state the Case, not only to the Guardians but to many Inhabitants of the Town, when I met with them.

But you never stated that to the Board of Guardians?

I stated it upon that Letter.

Immediately on the Receipt of that Letter was not an Alteration made?

No.

Was not the Alteration made immediately on the Suggestion of that Letter?

May I be allowed to look at the Letter (The Witness reads over the Letter). I believe the Children returned to Milk Diet, those that were sick.

Was not the Suggestion you made immediately complied with?

Part of it; the Milk Diet.

To the sick?

Yes; but proper Nurses were not in attendance.

As far as you made any Suggestion as to the Diet was not it complied with?

With regard to the sick and the Milk.

Was there any Suggestion with regard to others besides the sick in that Letter?

That Suggestion was conveyed through the Committee.

Did you ask in the Letter for Nurses?

Yes, I did.

Was not every Suggestion in the Letter with respect to Diet immediately complied with?

The Milk Diet was certainly complied with, with regard to those who were sick; but the proper Nurses were not provided.

Was not every Suggestion made in that Letter with respect to Diet immediately complied with?

It was.

994 *What was your Reason, when you wished at future Times to make a Suggestion, for not making it to the Board of Guardians, they having attended to the Suggestions you had made?·*

Because I considered that the Committee were the proper Persons.

On that Occasion what induced you to make it to the Board of Guardians?

Because the Board of Guardians had a discretionary Power as to the Diet of Children under Nine Years of Age, if they thought fit.

Was not that Suggestion made by you through the Visiting Committee before that?

I suppose it was.

In consequence of its not being complied with you made a Suggestion to the Board of Guardians which was immediately complied with?

Yes.

How came you not to make other Suggestions to the Board of Guardians directly when you found your Suggestions to the Committee were not attended to?

The Answer respecting the general Diet stopped me.

Who gave that Answer?

One of the Visiting Committee.

When was that?

I believe it was before I wrote the Letter.

What was that Answer?

That it was my Duty to attend to the Diet of the Sick, and I had no Concern with the others.

You have said that Answer was given to you by One of the Visiting Committee?

Yes.

Cannot you recollect from which of the Visiting Committee you heard that?

No, I cannot.

Was it Mr. Baker?

I cannot say.

Was it Mr. Axford?

I cannot say.

Mr. Ruddock?

I do not know.

Was that given to you as the Opinion of all the Members of the Visiting Committee, or as the Answer of the Board of Guardians?

It was given to me as a Communication from the Board of Guardians; at least I received it as such, and acted upon it.

Did the Person say, " I have been desired by the Board of Guardians to say that it is your Duty to attend to the Sick? "

He did not say he was desired by the Board, but he communicated it as the Feeling of the Board.

How came you to write the Letter respecting ulcerated Legs?

I was anxious not to increase the disagreeable Effluvia in the House.

How came you to put it into Writing?

I was requested by One of the Committee to do so.

Who was it that requested that?

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I really cannot say who was the Person.

*Had you made some Representations respecting
ulcerated Legs before?*

I might have done so, but I do not recollect.

*How soon had this offensive Smell shown itself;
did it show itself before the Diarrhæa?*

No.

995 *What was the Period at which it showed itself?*

I cannot say.

Some Time before this Letter about the bad Legs?

Some Time before.

*Had you remonstrated before about sending in
Persons with ulcerated Legs?*

I might have done so.

Are you sure whether you had or not?

I think I had.

You are not certain whether you had or not?

I cannot speak positively.

*As soon as that Request was made in Writing was
it not complied with?*

Yes; no Men with bad Legs were sent in.

*Subsequently to the Letter of December 1836 the
Diarrhæa became much worse, did it not?*

I think some little Time after that it became
better, and then was worse again.

*You still continued to attribute Infection to the
Complaint, and the Origin of the Complaint to the
Gruel?*

I did.

*Did you upon that Occasion make any
Remonstrance to the Board of Guardians in Writing?*

No.

*You had twice before that made Remonstrances to
the Board of Guardians, once in October and once in
December, and having found your Remonstrance
immediately complied with, how came you not to
remonstrate again if you found the Lives of Her
Majesty 's Subjects in danger?*

I did to the Visiting Committee, which I
considered the responsible Body.

*You had made a Remonstrance to the Visiting
Committee in October about the Gruel, and in
December about the ulcerated Legs, and you found it
had no Effect; but you found on putting it into
Writing it was carried to the Board and had an
Effect; still on the following Occasion you did not
think it necessary to put that into Writing,
notwithstanding the good Effect you had found to
result from the former Letter?*

I have stated before, with regard to the

Letter, that the Board had a discretionary Power
with respect to Children; but I considered that
the Committee would communicate what I had
said on other Subjects.

*On each Occasion on which you had represented
to the Board you found your Wishes complied with?*

No; proper Nurses were not provided.

*But as far as the Diet was concerned you found
your Wishes complied with?*

As to the sick Children.

*Every Suggestion except the Nurses was
immediately complied with, was not it?*

No.

What was not?

The sick were not separated from the healthy.

Is that suggested?

Yes, and that the Sick Wards should not be
scrubbed.

996 *With respect to the Separation of the sick, was
not that done?*

It could not be done because the House was
so small.

*Every thing that could be done, except the
providing of Nurses, was done upon that Occasion,
was not it?*

That the sick should be separated from the
healthy was not complied with.

You say it was not possible?

Not without taking another House; there
were Plenty of Houses in the Town they could
have rented.

*If they continued in the House it was impossible,
you say?*

I think it was.

*In December you made another Suggestion that
was complied with?*

Yes.

*Then why did you not think it necessary to make
another Suggestion when you found that your
Remonstrances with the Visiting Committee were
not complied with?*

I stated that I considered them the Persons to
represent Circumstances of that Kind to the
Board.

*If that was the Case, if you thought the Visiting
Committee were the proper Persons to suggest those
Things to the Board, how came you to write a Letter
to the Board on the 25th of October?*

What I have stated was, that the Board of
Guardians had a special Power to alter the Diet
of Children under Nine Years of Age, and not of

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the others.

If you had represented that to the Visiting Committee they would have represented it on their Part to the Board; what was your Inducement upon that Occasion only to write that Letter rather than leave it to the Visiting Committee; were you recommended by the Visiting Committee to write a Letter to the Board?

I believe I was.

What is your Authority for stating that the Board of Guardians had the Power of altering the Dietary for Children under Nine Years of Age?

If your Lordships will refer to the Diet Table, that is One of the Observations at the Bottom of the Table.

When was it that the Diarrhæa first showed itself in the House?

Some Time in August or September; the latter Part of August or the Beginning of September, I think.

When was the Gruel first adopted?

I think some Time in June.

The Diarrhoea showed itself in the End of August, you say?

Yes.

Was the Dietary strictly adhered to immediately after it was established?

I believe not.

Did the Paupers get Milk at the Recommendation of the Medical Officer instead of a Pint and a Half of Gruel?

I believe they did.

That was stopped in August?

I believe it was.

You frequently communicated with the Visiting Committee?

Once a Week.

Who were the Gentlemen most in the habit of attending at that Period?

Mr. Baker was very constant.

Mr. Henry Parsons, was he one?

No.

997 Mr. Starkie?

I used to see him occasionally.

Mr. Ruddock the Clergyman?

I used to see him occasionally.

Mr. M. King?

I do not remember Mr. M. King.

Mr. R. K. M. King, that is Mr. Meade King?

Yes.

Mr. Poole?

I do not recollect seeing him there.

Mr. Coulthurst?

I have seen him repeatedly.

Mr. T. C. Coulthurst?

When I speak of Mr. Coulthurst it is the one residing in Bridgwater.

Are they Brothers?

I believe they are.

Mr. Axford was pretty constant?

He was.

Those pretty constant were Mr. Ruddock, Mr. Coulthurst which appears to be Mr. Robert Coulthurst, Mr. Baker, and Mr. Axford?

Yes.

Those were the Gentlemen to whom you were in the habit of communicating the State of the House?

Yes.

You say you recommended a Separation of the sick from the healthy?

Yes.

By taking another House?

I did not particularize that.

That was the only Separation that could take place?

Yes; I considered the Board would have settled that Matter.

Do you think if your Advice had been followed some of those Persons who died would have been saved?

I think that more than probable.

Do you recollect sending any of the Children to Petherton?

Yes.

Was that by your Advice?

Yes.

Had they had the Diarrhæa?

Some of them.

They were sent to Petherton for the Recovery of their Health by Change of Air?

Yes.

Do you know whether any of those Children caught the Measles?

I think I heard that some of the Children died afterwards.

Is it likely that if a Person had been weakened by Diarrhoea and was then attacked by Measles, the Measles would then be fatal?

Yes, I think it is.

Were they sent to Petherton Workhouse after your

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Recommendation that they should be separated?

I think they were.

How soon after?

I cannot remember; it is now Two Years ago.

998 *Subsequently to your Recommendation that they should be kept separate they were sent to the Petherton Workhouse?*

I know they were sent, but whether before or after I cannot say.

Was there sufficient Room in the Petherton Workhouse to allow a di Separation?

I do not recollect that Workhouse at all.

After that Separation made by sending them to the Petherton Workhouse was there any subsequent Recommendation for further Separation or Removal?

I do not recollect.

Those that were sent to the Petherton Workhouse were convalescent?

They were.

Did you recommend the Removal of those that were actually diseased?

No, I recommended those that were well to be removed; that I thought a Change of Air would do them good.

Those that went to Petherton Workhouse were of that Description?

Yes.

Your Recommendation was effected by their Removal to the Petherton Workhouse?

Yes.

Were all removed that you thought ought to be removed?

They could not take all.

They could have taken them at some House at Bridgewater?

Yes.

Should there have been more removed?

I think there should.

Was the Separation of the sick from the healthy effected as far as the State of the Premises would admit of it?

I did it as far as I possibly could.

You recommended it, and that Recommendation was acted upon by the Officers of the House?

I did it myself; I was there many Hours assisting them.

Did you recommend to the Committee to hire another House in the Neighbourhood of the Workhouse?

No, I did not.

Can you state in what Terms you gave the

Intimation that more Accommodation should be provided for the Sick?

I really cannot.

Did it ever go to the Extent that you proposed, that another House or another Apartment should be taken?

I do not recollect naming any thing of that Sort; I do not recollect any thing beyond what I have stated.

The Visiting Committee may be to this Hour in ignorance of what you considered necessary upon that Subject?

They can be scarcely called in ignorance when I suggested the Thing to them.

In what Terms?

That the sick should be kept separate from the healthy.

Without saying that you considered it requisite they should be sent out of House?

I considered that if they wished for farther Information they would app ! to me; but they never did.

Did you offer them any other?

No.

999 *It was not for you to offer but for them to ask Information?*

My Suggestions were met so unpleasantly that I refrained from sending to the Board; they thought it no Business of mine to interfere with the general Health.

That Offer was not made to the Board but to the Committee?

Yes.

Because it was met unpleasantly you refrained from making a Communication to the Board?

Yes.

And you state that in consequence of that those Lives were lost?

There were certainly some Lives lost.

Can you reconcile that with your Duty as Medical Officer of the Establishment?

Yes. I considered that I did perform my Duty by the Letter I wrote, for it would not do for me to tease the Board with those Matters when they said I had no Right to interfere with the general State of the House.

Was the Term " teased " used[?]

I do not know that it was, but it was met in a very unpleasant Way.

You state, that in consequence of that Communication being met so unpleasantly, you

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*desisted from communicating any further
Information to the Board upon that Subject?*

Yes; I considered the Answer they gave me
as final; that I could not venture to go further.

*The Course was this: you represented this to the
Visiting Committee, whose Business, as you
conceived, it was to state those Representations to the
Board?*

Yes.

*You say you were told you had no Business to
interfere with the Diet so far as respected healthy
Persons?*

Just so.

*But that you might recommend a Change as to the
sick?*

Yes.

*You say that in your Letter you stated the
Necessity of the Separation of the sick from the
healthy, and that there was a Necessity for a greater
Attendance of Nurses, and so forth; and that,
notwithstanding, those Things were not done, and
therefore it was you did not think your Inter ference
with the Board could be of any Use?*

Just so.

*Will you look at Page 33 of Mr. Bowen's
Pamphlet; you will there see a List of Persons whom
he states to have died, either of Diarrhea or the Con
sequences of Diarrhæa, between the Months of
September 1836 and May 1837. The first Six of those
are stated to have died of Measles; is it true that those
Persons were afflicted with Diarrhæa, and that that
Diarrhæa made the Measles so dangerous to their
Lives that it was fatal in consequence?*

I cannot say that as to all of them, it may be
as to some few of them.

Which would those be?

I cannot remember the Names, it is so long
since.

*The Report of the Disease was made by you in the
Book?*

Yes. Some of the Number I know.

That was a true Report?

Yes.

That was the final Cause of their Death?

Yes; some of them that had had the
Diarrhæa.

That aggravated the Disorder of the Measles?

Yes.

1000 *There were some attacked with Marasmus and
Inflammation of the Lungs ,and Tubercles on the
Lungs, were there not?*

Yes; I recollect George Cox, he had the
Diarrhea, and Flora Wilkins and Woolcott.

What is Marasmus?

General wasting.

*Would Diarrhæa aggravate the Symptoms of
inflamed Lungs?*

It would so reduce the System that any
Exposure to Cold would bring on Inflammation.

*Are not pains taken to reduce Patients suffering
from Inflammation on the Lungs?*

That depends upon whether it is a chronic
Case or an acute Case: in many low Fevers, as
Typhus, Inflammation on the Lungs is present,
and oftentimes a Cause of Fever.

*Is it not one of the most difficult Things in
Medicine, in Cases of Inflammation of the Lungs, so
to manage the Reduction of the Patient as not to
impair his Strength and render him unable to resist
the Effects of the Disorder?*

That is a difficult Point.

*You apprehend that the Inflammation of the
Lungs and Tubercles of the Lungs were produced or
aggravated by Diarrhæa?*

The Constitutions were so reduced that they
did not rally as they ought to have done.

Do you observe the Ages of those Persons?

Yes.

*Do you think, on observing those Ages, that they
were so weakened by the Diarrhea, that the Measles
in the one Case and the Inflammation of the Lungs in
the other was the Cause of their Death?*

The immediate Cause of Death I considered
at the Time to be that I have stated here.

*But the remote Cause might have been the
Diarrhea?*

Yes.

*The Diarrhæa might so weaken the whole System
that the other Disorder would have greater Power
and produce Death?*

Yes. This Name Woolcott recurred to my
Mind since I was before your Lordships
Committee. I met one of the Sisters, and spoke
to her Mistress on the Subject; and her
Statement is, that the poor Creature could not sit
at her Meals without her Fæces running away
from her. She is living now at Bradley's Green,
in Cannington Parish.

Which is the one who is suffering now?

I do not know her Name.

Was she in the Workhouse?

Yes.

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Had she the Diarrhæa?

Yes.

*Flora Wilkins you represented as dying of
ulcerated Bowels; is that likely to be produced by
Diarrhæa?*

She had the Diarrhea.

*Does Diarrhæa frequently produce Ulcers in the
Bowels?*

Yes, Ulcers are formed.

Did you open her after Death?

I did not. I was in so bad a State of Health I
was afraid, although I was anxious to do it.
There was one Ulcer at the extreme Point of the
Rectum, which I saw with my own Eyes.

Was that produced by Diarrhoea?

There is great Probability that it was. There is
no Doubt that Irritation ascended from the
Rectum.

1001 *It descended, did it not?*

The Irritation ascended from the external
Point of the Rectum.

That Ulcer was produced by the Diarrhoea?

I think it most probable.

*Looking back to the State of that Workhouse at
that Time, are you of opinion that the taking of this
Gruel, which began strictly in the Month of August,
was the Cause of that Disorder appearing in the
Workhouse?*

I believe that was the Cause.

*Do you believe that afterwards the House actually
became infectious?*

That was my Impression.

*Do you know whether after the House had become
infectious other Persons were sent into it?*

I believe there were.

*Do you remember a Man of the Name of Kidner
and his family being sent in?*

I do not recollect the Man, but I recollect his
Children.

In what State did they come into the House?

In a State of great Poverty.

Were they in health?

Yes, I believe they were; I do not recollect
that they were sick.

*Did they become sick soon after they entered the
Workhouse?*

They were under my Care - I cannot say how
soon after; I know I attended them.

Was it Diarrhæa they suffered from?

Yes; I believe they suffered from Diarrhoea.

Did they die of it?

I cannot say.

*Was the House at the Time Kidner was brought
into it in a fit State to receive fresh Paupers?*

I cannot recollect when Kidner was brought
in.

*He went into the Workhouse in December 1836;
do you recollect when they were taken sick?*

No, I cannot tell without referring to the
Book.

*There was a great deal of Diarrhea in the House at
that Time?*

There was a great deal of Diarrhea in the
House in December, I believe.

*Was there any Diarrhæa out of the Workhouse at
that Time?*

Very little in comparison to what there was
in the House.

*Will you ascertain from Examination of the Book
at what Time Kidner's Children were taken ill?*

I see John Kidner, 25th of December,
Constipation of the Bowels; Kidner, Elizabeth,
on the 28th of December, Diarrhæa.

*Suppose the Diarrhæa to have been infectious,
would it have taken a Fort night to have shown
itself?*

I cannot tell. Elizabeth Kidner lived on the
Oatmeal.

*Then the Diarrhæa in her Case would be in
consequence of living on the Oatmeal?*

I should think it more than probable that was
the Cause.

*If the House was infectious at that Time why did
not she take it by Infection?*

Strong Persons resist Infection much more
than weak; after they are reduced they take it.

*Do you consider that Oatmeal produces
Diarrhoea?*

I did in that Case.

1002 *Generally speaking, do you think so?*

If we look to the Scotch they make use of
Oatmeal, but they drink Whisker as a
Corrective, I believe.

*How do you account for the Diarrhæa not having
shown itself in other Workhouses where Gruel has
been used?*

I cannot say any thing about that.

*Do you consider that the Gruel taken in the Way
that it was in this Workhouse produced Diarrhæa?*

Yes. I tried the cooking of it in different
Ways; it was first boiled Twenty Minutes, and I

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then ordered it to be boiled an Hour to make it
of more Substance and less watery.

*When you represented this to the Visiting
Committee you say you were told that the Dietary so
far as healthy Persons were concerned could not be
meddled with?*

Yes.

*Was there any Diarrhæa out of the House at that
Time?*

There were a few Cases, but nothing in
comparison to the Cases in the House.

When did it manifest itself out of the House?

I think during the Autumn of 1836 we had
some Diarrhæa out of the House, but no fatal
Cases that I recollect.

*Were there no Cases out of the House before it
appeared in the Workhouse at all?*

I cannot recollect.

You are not sure that there were not?

No.

*You do not remember how many Cases of
Diarrhæa you attended yourself out of the House at
that Period?*

Taking my Parish Patients out of the House, I
should say not more than One in Thirty.

How many had you in the House?

One in every Four or Five.

You say those out of the House were not fatal?

No.

*Do you know whether it was a prevalent Disease
in the Town and the Country round?*

Not more than it is every Autumn.

It does prevail every Autumn?

Generally speaking, in Time of ripe Fruit it
prevails out of Doors.

*You stated that it originated in the Workhouse
from the Gruel Diet; do the People out of the House
use the Gruel Diet likewise?*

Not that I am aware of.

*It began in the Workhouse before the Autumn, did
it not?*

*I think so. It continued long after the Autumn,
into the Winter and during the Winter?*

Yes; and it returned in the Spring with
greater Violence.

*Was it prevalent out of the Workhouse before the
Autumn, and after the Autumn had terminated?*

There were some few Cases. If I were to say I
had Sixty Patients or more out of the House I
might find among them Two or Three Cases of

Diarrhoea.

*What Proportion of your Patients in the House
were there with the Diarrhæa?*

One in Four or Five.

*Will you take upon you to say how many
Diarrhæa Cases you attended between the Autumn
of 1836 and the End of the Spring of 1837 out of the
House?*

I could not state without a Reference.

1003 *Are you aware that your Book makes it appear
that you attended Ten Diarrhæa Cases out of the
Workhouse before you attended One in the House?*

There might have been Ten Cases; but on the
Average there were not more than the
Proportion I have stated.

*Do you not find by your Book that it prevailed in
the Country a Month before it prevailed in the
Workhouse?*

It is impossible to say; they are all jumbled
together. I know that the Cases in the House
were common, and I kept a common astringent
Mixture there, which I directed the Governor to
give in all Cases.

That is your own Book before you?

Yes.

*Do you mean to say that you did not distinguish
between the Out - door and In - door Patients?*

I have since kept them in Two separate
Books. Here is one Case, of Sarah Mullins,
which I recollect I attended in the House,
though that is not stated.

What enables you to state that?

Because it was a very severe Case of
Diarrhæa; I recollect there was Sickness
attending it, and I directed an astringent
Injection to be thrown up, and it had the desired
Effect.

*Was she taken ill in the Workhouse, or removed
into the Workhouse in consequence of her being
attacked?*

I really cannot say.

*Which Book will show whether she was in the
Workhouse at that Period?*

The Admission Book will show it. The Books
were not sufficient to put down all the
Complaints they suffered from.

*Did you abide by the Directions of the Guardians
in keeping that Book?*

We put down such Diseases as would be
understood by them; but frequently the Patients
were suffering under Two Complaints.

Was not there a Column for distinguishing the In

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- door from the Out - door Paupers?

Yes, but there was an Order directing me to state in the In - door Column the Parish to which the Pauper belonged, either Chedzoy or Bridgwater, or any other Parish.

The Entries which appear on this Occasion were made by Direction of the Guardians?

Yes.

You have no Doubt that there were a great Number of Diarrhæa Cases in the Work house?

Not the slightest.

There may have been some out?

I know there were.

You were enabled to give the Children Milk Diet, and the old People Tea, and so forth, and that checked the Diarrhoea?

Yes.

Then when they returned to the other Diet it returned again?

Yes.

On what Occasion did they return; Milk was only given to the sick People, was it?

The Children had Milk generally, I believe.

When was it altered back again; was there any Order given by the Board for altering it back again?

Yes; and I know that one of the Visiting Committee complained that my ordering so much Tea and Sugar, and Butter, and so on, was attended with considerable Expense. In 1004 consequence I reluctantly ordered them back to the general Diet, knowing they would soon come on the Sick List again, which some of them did.

While the People were sick of Diarrhea you were enabled to change the Diet, then they got well, and then they were to return again to the Gruel?

Yes; one of the Visiting Committee complained that so much Tea and Butter and Sugar were made use of.

Who was that?

I cannot say.

Was it Mr. Ruddock?

I cannot say.

Was it Mr. Coulthurst?

Mrs. Gover will be more likely to tell that.

Sarah Mullins appears to have been admitted into the House the 19th of July 1836; a single Woman, she then being ill?

I recollect it was a Case of much Interest.

Why?

The Case was an extreme one. I repeatedly checked the Diarrhoea by an Injection; and I happened to be absent, and Mr. Poole saw her, and when I came down the next Morning I found her dead; she was taken in the Night and died as rapidly as possible.

Coming in in a bad State of Health she would be more affected by the Disease?

Yes ,

You say that when they returned to the old Diet they got worst again?

Yes; there were Two Cases, of the Names of Mary Harding and Diana Brown, who were Instances of that.

At what Time did you receive the Order to distinguish the Parishes from which the In - door Paupers came?

I received that about the 16th of August.

Was there a post mortem Examination of Mullins?

No; I was in such an ill State of Health I thought I should be running a Risk in doing it.

After you received that Order from the Guardians you did manage to distinguish the In - door Patients from the Out - door in a great Portion of the Book?

Yes; I did it more particularly than Mr. Poole, I see.

Was not there an express Request from the Board of Guardians that you would make the Distinction?

No, there was no Order that I recollect particularly on that Subject; there was an Order that the Surnames should be mentioned before the Christian Names.

You were understood to say that these are the Gentlemen who attended the Visiting Committee most commonly; Mr. Ruddock, Mr. Coulthurst, Mr. Baker, and Mr. Axford?

Yes.

Mr. Parsons, Mr. Starkie, Mr. King, Mr. Poole, and Mr. C. Coulthurst, you never saw three, or very rarely?

Very rarely.

The House was never in so bad a State that you were afraid of visiting yourself?

I never fear any thing of that Sort.

Did you ever see such a Case as any Patients being unable to retain their Fæces, and lying on their Beds in a Puddle of their own Fæces and Urine?

I have been informed that such was the Case.

1005 *You never saw it?*

No; I never recollect seeing such a Thing.

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*Do you recollect that they were ever in that State
that their Fæces left them as they walked across the
Room?*

I can easily imagine that.

You never saw it?

No.

Do you believe it?

I do.

*Was it ever reported to you by the Governor or the
Matron?*

I heard it, but I cannot say from whom I
heard it.

*You cannot state that the Governor ever reported
that to you or the Matron?*

No, I cannot.

Gover was the Governor?

He was.

The Matron is his Wife?

Yes.

Was there a Deputy Governor?

There was for a Time.

What was his Name?

John Trood.

How came there to be Two Governors?

This Man was appointed while I sent the first
Governor to take Change of Air.

When was that?

I cannot tell.

You knew Gover before that?

I knew little of him before he was Master of
the Workhouse.

*Do you know whether he was enabled to keep the
Accounts in the Book himself?*

I do not know that.

*You are not sure whether you heard from him this
Account respecting the People?*

No; I am not sure from whom I heard it.

You may have heard it from Mr. Bowen?

No; I never heard it from him.

*You never witnessed any of those Things
yourself?*

No.

You were there pretty constantly?

Yes; Twice a Day.

How long did you stay?

Sometimes Half an Hour, sometimes an
Hour.

Was there a Smell in the House, as if arising from

such Circumstances?

Yes; very disagreeable sometimes.

*As if arising from a Want of Power of retaining
the Fæces?*

Yes.

*There was no other way of accounting for the
Smell; from the Sewer or a Smell from the River?*

No; there was a Fresh - water Stream running
at the Bottom of the Garden, and carried every
thing away.

1006 *If it was likely that the Fæces might run from
them while walking, is [it] not equally likely it might
run from them when they were in their Bed ?*

Yes; I know some of the Patients that had
from Thirteen to Fourteen Evacuations in the
Night; I think Mary Harding 's was such a Case;
she sufered extremely in that Way.

JAMES GOVER is called in, and examined as
follows:

YOU live at Bridgwater?

Yes.

You are a Sailmaker?

I am.

*Were you Governor of the Workhouse at
Bridgwater?*

I was.

At what Period?

From the 21st of June 1836 to the 25th of last
January.

*Soon after you came into the Workhouse was a
new Dietary established?*

It was.

*Previous to that Period was any Gruel used in the
Dietary?*

There was not.

*What State was the House in in respect of Health
at the Time the new Dietary was established?*

They were all in very good Health.

*It was the 14th of June the Dietary was
established?*

I believe that was the Time.

At what Time were you elected?

I came into the Workhouse the 21st of June.

Was the Dietary strictly adhered to at first?

It was.

It was a Diet partly of Milk at first?

Before we altered the System, when I went
there at first, we were giving them the same as
had been given in the old Time.

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When did you alter it?

We altered it some Time in July; I am not certain as to the Day.

Was it in July or August?

I think July.

Soon after that Dietary was altered was there any Alteration in the Health of the Inmates?

There was.

What was that Alteration?

Bowel Complaint and Diarrhoea.

Did that continue?

It did.

At what Time were you affected with the Diarrhoea?

I was not affected till after Christmas.

How long had the Diarrhæa been going on in the Workhouse before you were affected?

Several Months.

Was your Wife also affected with it?

She was.

And your Children?

Yes.

1007 Had they lived on Gruel?

No.

Had you Milk for them?

Yes; they generally lived on Milk or Tea.

They had none of the Gruel?

No.

Which of you began first to have the Diarrhæa?

I believe I was affected first.

That was about Christmas?

Yes.

Did you speak to the Medical Man about yourself?

I did.

What did he state to you as to the Cause of it?

He stated that it was the Diarrhæa, and gave me certain Powders, which soon put me to rights at that Time.

Did he state that it was in consequence of Infection, or any thing of that Kind?

No. I am perfectly satisfied how I caught the Diarrhæa; by lifting up a Man that had it very bad; a Man who died, of the Name of Farthing.

Do you recollect when that was?

No, I do not; but it was the very Day he died. I was taken within Five Minutes afterwards very violently. I see by the Death Book Farthing

died on the 27th of November; it was about Eight o' clock in the Morning. I put a small Drop of Brandy in his Mouth; the Person who had attended him was taken very ill, and I was obliged to go and attend him myself.

Do you mean the Nurse?

Rowsell was the Man who was attending. I carried out the Brandy, and I lifted him up.

At the Time Rowsell went to attend upon him had he the Diarrhoea?

No. I suppose I caught the Diarrhæa of him in lifting him up; he was dirty, of course, and the Smell got into my Stomach immediately.

You felt a Sickness?

I did.

Did you ever state to the Medical Man this Fact, that you believed you had caught it from this Person?

I do not know that I did.

With respect to your Wife; did she get it in the same way?

I believe she caught it from attending to the Children in the Nursery.

That was not till after you had it?

No; she did not get affected till afterwards.

How do you imagine your Children were affected?

They were affected by me; by visiting me as soon as they came home. They thought I should die at the Time. The Children were brought home to see me, and caught it; they were living in the Town; they were brought home on purpose to see me while I was so very ill.

Was there at the same Period in the House a bad Smell?

Shocking; in the Morning when they first were brought down Stairs it was dreadful; I have seen the Women come in the Morning with the dirty Things, and I have seen them go outside; they were sick directly; in fact it was enough to make any one sick.

Did you ever represent this to any Member of the Visiting Committee?

Yes, to Mr. Baker; he lived close to me.

Did you represent it to any other of them?

It was represented to Mr. Axford and Mr. Coulthurst; I stated what a State the Clothes were in.

1008 *Did you say any thing to them about sending in any fresh Persons while the House was in this State?*

Yes; I begged them to represent it to the

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Board, and to entreat them not to send any more into the House.

Did you suppose it was infectious?

I was met by one of the Visiting Committee one Day; he said "Have you seen the Committee?" I said "No, Mr. Parsons;" he said You look very bad. I have been to see the House; they say the Diarrhæa is infectious." I said "Yes, Sir, I am sure it is; I have been affected with it Two or Three Times, and if you had been in such a Room you would have been sure to have caught it."

Did Mr. King caution you at any Time on the habit of drinking, and say you would be bad yourself if you continued it?

I do not recollect that he did, he may have done so.

Did you ever give him Occasion to make such a Remark to you?

Never that I know of.

Why do you think he may have done so?

He may have done it, but I do not recollect it at all.

Have your Children got well again?

They have.

And your Wife too?

Yes.

You were away for some Time in Guernsey?

I was away for Three Weeks.

Did you give up the Government of the Workhouse?

Yes, to a Person of the Name of Trood, during the Time I was away.

Did you come back to the Workhouse?

Yes.

When did you come back to the Workhouse?

I think the 25th or 26th of March.

How long did you remain then?

Till the 5th of last January.

Then you gave it up?

I did.

Why did you give it up?

I gave Notice to give it up; the Salary was not sufficient; and in fact when I went there to take it first I expected to have had every thing allowed me, but I found everything different; in consequence of my trying to get some Tea and Sugar allowed to the Women that washed the Clothes, Mr. Somers made a Motion to take away the Tea, Sugar, and Butter from me, and I had to pay for Two of my Children that were not in the Place for Six Months.

You were not discharged by the Board, but gave them Notice?

I did.

When you came back in March was there still Diarrhoea in the House?

There was.

Did you catch it again?

I did not; I was sick about a Week afterwards, but I did not get the Diarrhæa.

Did any of your Family get it?

I had one of my family ill at that Time, a little Girl; she was ill for Six Months.

Did she live?

Yes, she recovered, but has never been healthy since.

Was

1009 *Was there the same Smell in the House then?*

Yes, but not so bad as when I left it; there were not so many bad with Diarrhæa when I came back.

Do you remember some of the Children being sent out to Petherton Workhouse?

I do.

By whom was that done?

In consequence of the Recommendation of the Doctor; they were ill, and he thought it might do them good.

They were ill of Diarrhoea?

Yes; they died, some of them, after they went over.

Do you recollect a Man of the Name of Kidner coming in?

Yes; he came in with his Wife and Family.

Was that after you had represented to the Visiting Committee that they should not send in any more in its then State?

Yes, it was; it was quite dreadful at the Time to think of their sending in a Family in that Way, while we were in such a Mess in the House.

Were there any Beds for him and his wife and Five Children?

They were obliged to be separated, one one Way and another another.

Were there Beds provided for them the First Night?

I believe there was One.

In what Way was that provided; was there any Removal of a dead Body for that Purpose?

I believe there was a Removal of a dead

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Body, and they were obliged to take that Bed.

Was there more than One Bed found for them that Night?

I believe there was not.

Did that go on till you got some more Beds?

Yes, it went on till we got Room for them.

Did some of that Family catch the Diarrhæa?

Yes.

How soon?

Very soon after they came into the House.

Some of the Children and the Mother?

Yes.

Some of them died?

Yes.

Had you great Difficulty in obtaining Nurses?

We had at the Time the Diarrhæa was so very bad.

Did you try to get Nurses out of the House, or confine your Applications to the House?

We tried out of the House.

Did you get any?

Yes, I got one for washing; no Nurse at all.

Did the Nurses fall sick of this Diarrhæa too?

The Woman I employed was Bray; I begged her to get some more, but she could not.

How long did she stay?

She was there several Hours. Three or Four Hours after she came to the House to go to washing she was taken ill; I saw my Wife have her in and give her some Brandy.

Did Sickness come on?

Yes; she got sick and ill directly.

1010 *After those Circumstances occurred did they still bring in more Paupers?*

Yes; they continued sending them in every Week.

Do you know whether any of those died?

Yes, there were several fresh ones that came in that died; Children.

Can you state the Names of any of them?

No, I do not know that I can without examining the Names in the Death Book; if I had a little Time allowed me for doing it.

Did Mr. Poole ever give you Directions which you did not comply with?

I do not recollect that he ever did.

Did he complain to the Visiting Committee that you had not complied with his Directions?

I never heard that he did.

You sent in your Resignation, you say?

I did.

Was it in Writing?

Yes.

When was it you sent it in?

I am not aware of the Day of the Month.

Can you tell in what Month it was; how long before you left the Situation

I should say Five or Six Weeks before I left it.

Was it on account of the Salary you resigned?

Yes; I was determined not to bide in the House unless I got an Advance of Salary.

Was that the Reason you resigned?

Mr. Somers brought something against me respecting the Accounts.

When was that?

About a Month or Five Weeks before I resigned.

That was Six Weeks before you were out of the Situation?

Yes; I should think it was.

What was it that he brought against you?

My being incompetent for Account - keeping.

Ultimately you were discharged, were you not?

As soon as the other Governor was ready to fill the Situation I was ready to leave it.

Did you resign, or were you discharged?

I resigned; I sent in my Resignation.

You were not discharged for Intoxication, nor, as far as you know, for an other Matter?

No.

When was this Charge brought against you by Mr. Somers?

I think some Time in December.

You do not recollect the Day?

I do not.

What was the Nature of your Incompetency?

Respecting the keeping of the Accounts. I paid for my Son 's Maintenance in the House, and paid him for writing in the Books for me, and Mr. Somer objected to it.

Could not you take charge of those Accounts yourself?

Not exactly. I am not very much of a Scholar.

Are you not a good Arithmetician, or a good Writer?

Not a good Writer.

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Was the Letter you wrote to the Board written by yourself?

No; by my Son.

1011 *Who filled up the Book?*

My Son Part of the Time, and a Person of the Name of Trood Part of the Time.

Were the Board aware of that when you were first elected?

I am not certain of that.

Were the Visiting Committee aware of it?

They were aware of it.

How soon did they become aware of it after you were elected?

Directly

Were you examined at Bridgwater by Mr. Weale, the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, in August 1837?

Yes, I was.

You have stated that the House was in a very sickly State. You know the Members of the Visiting Committee?

Yes.

Did any Member of the Board come to see the House except those who were Members of the Committee?

No; in fact they did not visit the House for some Time.

Do you mean that the Members of the Visiting Committee ceased to visit the House?

Yes.

For how long?

For some Time.

There was a Room attached to the Workhouse where they used to meet once a Week?

Yes; but they did not attend there likewise. I was obliged to go to Mr. Baker when I had any thing to say ,

Can you state the Month in which that was?

No, I cannot exactly.

Was it before you went away ill or afterwards?

It was before Mr. Baker was ill himself from coming down.

Were you ever during this Sickness sent for by the Board of Guardians and questioned by them?

I was called before the Board, I think, on the 4th of August, and examined respecting it.

This Time, when you state the Diarrhæa raged so much in the House, was considerably after that?

Yes; I do not remember that I was called and asked as to that.

While this Sickness was going on you were not sent for by the Board and examined respecting it?

Mr. Baker and Mr. Axford and Mr. Coulthurst were continually speaking to me about it.

Did Mr. Weale ever venture into the Workhouse?

I do not think he did during the Time the Diarrhoea prevailed.

Do you recollect his passing through Bridgwater?

Yes; I have known of his passing through Bridgwater.

Do you remember his sending to the Workhouse from some Inn at Bridgwater?

He generally stopped at the Hotel.

Do you remember his sending to you from the Inn?

No; he has been there, but not during the Time the Diarrhæa was so bad.

Have you any Means of knowing whether he was informed of the Diarrhea prevailing there?

I have not.

1012 *How often did he use to come there before?*

Sometimes once in Five or Six Weeks, sometimes oftener.

How long was his Absence during the Prevalence of the Diarrhoea?

I do not recollect seeing him there for several Months; I do not know whether he was there during the Time I was away.

Except for the Three Weeks you were absent was he ever there while the Diarrhæa prevailed?

I do not recollect it.

You would recollect a Person of his Consequence coming to the House?

Yes; I have brought Persons before him when he was there; Persons that were disorderly, and so on.

Can you take upon yourself to say, that during the whole Time the House was in this Condition he never came near the House?

I do not think he came once.

Do you think you should have recollected it if he had?

I think I should, unless he came in my Absence, and my Mistress might not state it to me.

Was he in the habit of coming there often at other Times?

Yes, he did at the Beginning, every Five or Six Weeks perhaps.

You say you brought before him People who were

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disorderly; on what Occasion was that?

People that objected to work, and such Cases.

On what Occasion was that; at what Period?

Very soon after I was in the House I brought
a Case before him; I brought a Man of the Name
of Cole, who afterwards died of Diarrhæa.

There were Guardians there?

No; not at that Time.

For what Purpose did you bring him?

I wished him to reprimand him, because he
would not work.

Was that the First Time of his coming?

No, the Second.

He was in the habit of coming frequently?

He was there Twice or Three Times before
the Diarrhæa commenced so very bad.

*Afterwards, you say, he abstained from coming in
consequence of the Diarrhæa?*

I do not know whether it was in consequence
of the Diarrhea, but he did not come there.

Has he ever renewed his Visits?

I do not recollect that he did during the Time
I was there.

Up to January last?

Yes; or not above once.

When was that?

I do not recollect the Time exactly.

You are sure he came once?

Yes; I believe he came there once.

You do not recollect when?

No.

*It might have been while the Diarrhæa was
prevailing?*

No, it was after the Diarrhea was past; the
Diarrhea had been gone from the House for
some Time, or at least there were only trifling
Cases; those Persons who suffered by it never
wholly recovered from it.

2013 *Was it the new House or the old House he
came to?*

The old House.

*Do the Visiting Committee meet on the same Day
as the Board of Guardians?*

The same Mornings.

*They report to the Board of Guardians on the
same Day?*

Yes, they do.

*Have you ever known the Board of Guardians
interfere with the Visiting Committee?*

I had not an Opportunity of knowing that.

*None of the Board of Guardians visited the House
except the Committee?*

There may be One come now and then; they
did at first, but they did not afterwards.

*Neither the Guardians nor the Visiting
Committee came after the Diarrhæa got bad?*

No.

*When Mr. Weale was in the habit of attending did
he inquire into the State of the House?*

He would ask how we got on, and Things of
that Kind.

*All those Visits ceased after the Diarrhoea became
bad?*

Yes.

*Who were the Visiting Committee that chiefly
attended?*

Mr. Baker, Mr. Axford, Mr. Coulthurst, and
Mr. Ruddock; those were the Four that chiefly
attended.

*You were examined before Mr. Weale, on the 17th
of August 1837?*

I was.

*Do you recollect stating that you were attacked
with Diarrhæa Five several Times, during the
Months of February and March, although you did
not confine yourself to the Gruel Diet?*

I did.

Did you add any thing to that?

I do not know that I did.

*Did you state to Mr. Weale that you believed that
you had caught the Diarrhæa from some of the
Patients in the House?*

I believe I did.

You signed that Examination?

Mr. Weale, after he had taken my
Examination, asked me a Question or Two.

*Did you tell him, upon the Subject of your having
the Diarrhæa Five several Times, how you came, in
your Opinion, to catch the Diarrhæa?*

From the People in the House of course.

Did you tell him that?

I may have done; I do not recollect that I did.

*Would you not naturally have told him if you had
been satisfied that you caught it from Persons in the
House?*

I may have told him; I am perfectly satisfied I
have stated to several others that it was my
Opinion from the first Commencement, after the
Children had got into such a State, that it was
from the Gruel.

In your Affidavit you only state that you did not

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confine yourself to the Gruel Diet, you do not state that you caught it from the Inmates in the House?

Perhaps I was not asked. I was asked more Questions before the Board of Guardians on the 4th of August; I was then examined a great deal. Mr. Weale was present.

1014 *Did you state then that you believed you caught it in the way you have mentioned?*

I believe I did.

Do you know whether you stated that or not?

I have stated that it was from Farthing. I have seen the Doctor come down and be obliged to lie across the Table for Five or Ten Minutes before he could get away; it produced a Sort of Cramp in the Stomach; and I have been in the same State myself.

You was examined before the Board of Guardians in August; was that August 1836 or 1837?

At the Time there was an Inquiry respecting Mr. Bowen's Pamphlet.

That was after the Diarrhæa?

Yes.

Not the August when it first began?

No.

When you were examined before the Board of Guardians on the 4th of August, on what Subject were you examined?

Respecting some Tea and Sugar, and such Things.

You were not examined about the Diarrhæa, were you?

I think there was something of that Kind mentioned.

Was not the Examination you then underwent about sending the Tea and Sugar to Petherton Workhouse?

Yes, it was.

Did you tell them you considered the House infectious?

I do not remember.

You said that you had more Questions put to you on the 4th of August when you were examined before the Board; that was respecting sending the Tea and Sugar to Petherton Workhouse, was not it?

Part of it.

Can you say that you stated at that Time that you had caught the Complaint from People in the House?

I think I must have stated that.

You do not remember having stated it?

No.

That had nothing to do with the Tea and Sugar?
No.

Did you state to Mr. Weale that you were ill of Diarrhæa Five several Times during the Months of February and March?

Yes.

How often had you the Diarrhæa in the whole?

I should think Six or Seven different Times.

And Five Times during those Two Months?

Yes; the first Time I caught it I was not ill any Time at all, the Second Time it remained a little longer, but not very long.

When was the first Time?

The first Time was the moving of Farthing.

You say in your Affidavit before Mr. Weale that whenever you required the Assistance of any Servants or Nurses you have always hired them, and no Objection was ever raised to the Payment of them for their Services?

I never knew the Gentlemen object to any Payment.

Did you state to Mr. Weale that you found great Difficulty in getting Nurses on account of the State of the House?

I do not recollect.

1015 *Were you asked that Question?*

I cannot say that I was.

There was great Difficulty?

Yes, there was often Difficulty.

Mr. Weale asked you Questions, and took down the Answers you gave to those Questions, as you suppose?

Yes.

If he did not ask Questions you did not go on to state other Facts?

No, I did not; for he did not ask me Questions relating to those Subjects.

He asked you Questions about supplying Tea and Sugar to North Petherton Workhouse in October?

Yes.

When were you applied to for that Tea and Sugar?

At the Time the Tea and Sugar was applied for I was not in the habit of seeing the Visiting Book at North Petherton; it was entered in the Visiting Book; it was brought to the Board, and taken back again, so that I knew nothing of the Tea and Sugar being ordered, or I should have sent it directly. I was obliged to be very particular about Tea and Sugar, and every other Thing, or I should have been brought up before

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the Board every Day.

When did you see the Medical Book ordering it?

Not for a Week, or a Fortnight.

During that Time was there any Communication asking for Tea and Sugar?

No; not that I recollect. I was at Petherton House, and saw Two or Three old People lying, and I told Mrs. Ellis she must apply to the Medical Officer, and she would have the Things. She was very close, and did not say that she wanted any thing. I said, that if she did she should have it, but I do not believe she did apply for them.

You did not see the Order in the Medical Officer 's Book at the Time?

I did not see it till Mr. Meade King, the Chairman, showed it to me; he called me in, and told me of it in the Board Room, and I sent the Things the very same Day.

To whom do you attribute the Neglect on that Occasion in not letting you know it?

I think it was Mrs. Ellis's Place to tell me there was this Order in the Book, for the Book was kept at her House. I never knew of its being entered in the Book; as soon as I knew it I sent the Things directly.

You say in your Affidavit that the Guardians always desired you to furnish what the Medical Officer should direct?

Any thing that the Medical Officer directed, of course.

And you did so?

I did so.

Was there any Complaint made of your Conduct in giving them too much, or being too ready to give them?

I do not think there was; I gave them their Allowances, what was due to them, and every one saw the Weight of what they had got. I weighed them before them in the Hall, and instructed any one of them to come if they thought there was not Weight, and let me see.

Have you lately heard your Examination read?

I have not.

The Affidavit states, that " James Gover, Governor of the Workhouse of the Bridgwater Union, deposes that he knows Robert Kidner, who was formerly a Pauper in the Workhouse, and that on the 15th of January last he ran away therefrom, leaving a Wife and Four Children, who are now in the Workhouse? " Was any Question put, except just to lead to that Answer?

1016 Deponent further states, that he has heard, and

likewise believes that the same Robert Kidner was in March last committed by the Justices for neglecting to support his Family, and that no other able - bodied Pauper who was in the House was ever committed for deserting his Family. " *Was any thing asked except to lead to that Answer?*

Nothing at all.

" Deponent further states, that whenever he has required the Assistance of any Servants or Nurses he has always hired them, and no Objection was ever raised to the Payment of them for their Services. " *What do you say to that?*

That is perfectly right; if we could get them they were paid for.

You could not sometimes get them?

No, they did not like to come to the House.

Did you state that?

I did not, because I was not asked; but they had a particular Objection to come to the House.

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

RACHAEL PHILLIPS is called in, and examined as follows :

WHERE do you live?

At Bridgwater?

You are in the habit of nursing People in Sickness, are you not?

Yes, I am.

Were you so employed in the Bridgwater Workhouse?

I was requested to go there, and refused.

When was that?

When the Union took place first.

Why did you refuse?

I thought I had more Opportunities for doing myself good by going out in the same way as I did in Time past. I always endeavoured to keep my little Family as well as I could with what little Support I had from the Parish.

Were you ever afterwards applied to to come in and nurse the People while they were in the Workhouse?

No; I washed for them at different Times.

When did you wash for them?

At the Time the new Poor Law had taken place first.

Did you wash at the Time Illness was going on in the House?

No; I do not know that I did.

How long did you continue washing there?

Three or Four Times; I cannot say

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particularly as to how long.

You used to go up there and wash for a Day?

Yes.

You went Three or Four Days?

Three or Four Times.

You were there only in the Day?

Yes.

Was it the Summer, or the Winter?

I cannot recollect; it was just as the new Poor Law had taken place.

Was Gover the Master there then?

Yes.

1017 *Was it before you heard that the People were dying there?*

I cannot say; I never heard of that.

You never heard that the People were dying there?

I heard of such Instances, but not much about it.

You never heard that it was a Place that People were put into to die, and be murdered, and so on?

No.

You never heard that people were dying off in great Numbers in the Workhouse?

No.

Were you ever driven away from the House by any bad Smell in the House?

No.

You always stayed and did all you were required to do?

Yes, I stayed and did my Day's Work.

Were you ever sent for when you refused to go?

I was sent for as Nurse, and refused to go.

When was that?

Just when the new Poor Law came in.

Were you sent for afterwards to nurse sick People?

No.

Were you ever living in the House?

I was living in the House under the old Poor Law; when Mr. Underdown was in the House.

Do you know Mr. Baker?

Yes; he is a Currier.

Did you come from Petherton?

I did.

You were never sent for to take care of People in the Diarrhoea?

No; I never was sent for then.

Did you know Gover?

Yes.

Did he ever send for you to come up?

He came to fetch me up, but I would not go.

What did he want you to come for?

To wash.

Why did you refuse to go?

Because I had plenty of Work. out.

Was it in consequence of the Fear of any Infection in the House?

Oh no.

Do you remember at what Time it was; whether it was in the Winter - time?

I cannot say. It was just after the Union took place, I know.

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

ELIZABETH BRAY is called in, and examined as follows :

WHERE do you live?

At Bridgwater.

Were you ever applied to to go and work in the Workhouse?

Yes; I was applied to to go and wash there.

When was that?

When there was such a dreadful Disease in the House.

1018 *Did you go?*

Yes; Mr. Gover applied for other People and they would not go, they were afraid of the Disease, and he sent for me, and to oblige Mrs. Gover and Mr. Gover I went, and during the Time I was there I was taken very ill myself; the Smell of the Linen I was washing made me quite ill.

How soon after you began washing were you taken ill?

About Two Days.

Did you continue to do it?

I continued ill, but I did not give up my Work; I did it as well as I could: because there was such a dreadful Sickness in the House, I did not like to leave the People.

What was the Nature of your Complaint?

A Bowel Complaint.

You had that actually yourself?

Yes.

Were you quite well when you went into the House?

Quite well, I never was better in my Life.

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It came upon you soon afterwards?

Yes; from the Smell of the Linen.

How long did you remain there?

I was there I think about Twenty - five Days.

Did you go home to sleep?

Yes.

Did you eat any of this Gruel they talk of?

No; I had so much a Day and found myself.

You had Tea, and all those Things?

Yes.

After you left off your Work at the Workhouse did you recover?

No, I did not; I was very ill; I did go to Bed as soon as I got home, but I did not have any Sleep owing to the Pain I was in.

After you had worked there Twenty - five Days and went away did you become healthy again?

Not directly, not for Days afterwards.

In the course of a Fortnight perhaps?

Yes, thereabouts.

When was it you did this Work in the Workhouse?

I do not know; it was a good while ago.

Was it the Summer or the Winter?

I think it was the Summer.

At what Time in the Morning did you go?

At Six.

Was it light or dark?

It was light.

Was the Sun up?

No, the Sun was not up.

Just Break of Day?

Yes; it was Daylight, and that is all you can say

At what Time in the Evening did you return?

About Eight.

Then it was dark?

Yes.

It was about October, perhaps, then?

As near as may be, I should think.

1019 *When you got away from the Workhouse you got well?*

Yes; in a Fortnight afterwards.

You were quite well when you went?

Yes.

In Two or Three Days you became ill?

Yes; I could not bear my ownself.

Did you wash in the Workhouse?

Yes.

Was there a bad Smell in the House?

A dreadful Smell through the whole House.

Had you any Communication with the People in the House?

I used to go to and fro to them; those that Mr. and Mrs. Gover sent me to.

Were Mr. and Mrs. Gover ill?

Mr. Gover was dreadful ill; they did not expect him to live; he was obliged to go away.

Did the Paupers in the House complain of the State of the House?

Yes; they said there was such a dreadful Smell in the House they did not think they should ever recover; and there were a great many died.

You say other People refused to go there?

Yes.

Do you know how many?

No. I heard Mr. Gover say he had been to others to apply to them to come; but they would not come, for they were afraid of the Disease in the House.

Did you ever go again?

Yes; I worked there again the last Winter, when they were moving out the House.

Gover told you that he had applied to others?

Yes; and I heard Mr. Baker say he had applied to People.

When did you hear that?

I heard Mr. Baker say so at the Time.

When did Gover tell you so?

At the Time he came to me.

Was it to induce you to go that Gover told you that?

I said I would go to oblige Mrs. Gover.

Was there any other Person washing that was not resident in the House?

No.

Was there any Nurse there?

No; no more than the Paupers in the House.

Do you know the Person who has just been in; Mrs. Phillips?

Yes; but she did not wash at that Time.

Are you a married Woman?

Yes.

Have you any Family?

No.

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Do any other Persons live with you?

Yes; but I was living in a House by myself at that Time.

None of your Neighbours caught the Complaint?

No.

Do you know any Woman that refused to go?

I heard them say that Mrs. Phillips refused to go.

1020 *Did she refuse Mr. Gover?*

I cannot say whether she refused him. I know nothing of it. I heard that she had refused

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

AMY ELLIS is called in, and examined as follows:

YOU were Matron of the Workhouse at North Petherton, were you not?

Yes.

Do you live at North Petherton now?

Yes.

When the Union was formed there was a new Diet Table provided?

Yes.

Was that used at first?

Yes.

Was not Milk used for some Time instead of Gruel?

I believe a Quarter of a Year.

You were Mistress of the Workhouse before the new Law?

For Five Years.

Before that Time was there any Gruel used in the House?

No.

When was it the Gruel was begun to be used in the House?

When the Union was first formed; Milk was used for the first Quarter.

You began with Gruel, and then you went to Milk?

Yes.

How came you to go to that?

It took place in Bridgwater. I cannot exactly say what passed there. When the Diet was altered at Bridgwater, which was the head House, I had Order to do the same.

Had you any Sickness in the House?

No; nothing worth speaking of.

You heard something about Sickness in the other House?

Oh dear yes; but there was none in our

House but what was incident to the Children.

Had you ever any Difficulty in getting Washerwomen?

No.

Do you remember a Woman of the Name of Jane Morley in the House.

Yes; she was there all the Time I was in the House before the one formed.

Do you recollect the Medical Officer ordering her Tea and Sugar ?

On one Occasion.

Did she get it?

No; not from the Board.

Did she get it at all?

I provided her with it.

How came you to provide it?

Because I knew her a long Time, and I did not like she should go without.

Did the Board refuse it?

No; I believe the Board knew nothing of it.

They did order her some afterwards?

Yes; she had it for a long Time afterwards.

1021 *That was on the Recommendation of the Medical Officer?*

Did she have it immediately after the Order of the Medical Officer?

No; there was One Week elapsed that she did not have it after the Order.

In the meantime you supplied her out of your own Stock?

Yes.

It was returned to you out of the Store afterwards probably?

No; I did not request it.

How came it not to be supplied during that Week?

I cannot tell.

Whose Neglect do you think it was?

To speak the Truth, I think it was the Neglect of the Master of the Workhouse.

The Medical Officer wrote it in the Book?

Yes; in the Medical Officer 's Book.

The Medical Officer 's Book remained in your Hands?

I never had that Book.

The Medical Officer's Book was taken in to the Board?

Yes.

Was the Order given to the Governor that he was to send it?

From the Gentlemen of the Board I suppose it

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was.

If the Gentlemen of the Board did tell him of it it was his Fault?

Yes; all I can say is it did not come.

Do you remember a Woman of the Name of Harriet Bindon?

Yes.

Do you remember her being ordered Tea and Sugar and Butter?

Yes.

Did she get it?

No; not till the Week elapsed.

Did you give it her?

No; Mr. Tilsley gave it her.

How came she not to get it?

I do not know.

After Two or Three Days Mr. Tilsley gave her some out of his own Stores?

He did.

How long was it before the Order was obeyed and it was sent from the Bridgwater Workhouse?

One Week.

Do you know why it was not sent sooner?

No; I do not.

Do you know what Time of the Week it was that the Medical Officer ordered those Things?

On the Day before the Board Day the Books were sent.

That was the Day he generally visited, was it?

He visited every Day.

He made the Entry the Day before the Board Day?

Yes; I believe so.

What is done with that Book when the Entry is made?

It is sent into the Board the next Day.

1022 *You mean the Board of Guardians?*

Yes.

Though it was sent in the next Day the Tea and Sugar did not come till the next Week?

No.

There were some Children sent to the Petherton Workhouse from the Bridgwater Workhouse?

There were.

At what Time was that?

At the Time there was so much Sickness in the House.

Were they very ill when they came?

They were reduced to nothing, as you might say.

How long might they have been before they recovered?

They recovered in the Summer, but they died afterwards, some of them.

How were they dieted when they came to you; did they eat Gruel, or Milk?

We were using Milk at the Time for the Children.

After they came was there any Increase of Sickness in the House?

No, none at all.

Had you any Diarrhæa in the House?

No.

It was confined to those Children?

Yes.

Were there other Children in the House?

Yes, principally Children in our House.

Were those Children in a separate Ward from the other Children?

I used to keep them as much I could to themselves, but I could not effectually separate them.

Did any Children in the Workhouse with them catch the Complaint?

No, not One.

They had the Measles?

Yes.

Had they Diarrhæa upon them besides the Measles?

No; they did very well with the Measles; I had Twenty - two in the House had it.

Those who came from Bridgwater Workhouse you say died?

Yes; I do not recollect that they had the Measles.

Do you recollect their Names?

James Symes was one of them.

He died of Measles?

Yes.

Had he any Diarrhæa upon him?

No.

Had he the White Mouth?

No, not that I know of; he was a delicate Baby.

He was one that came from Bridgwater?

Yes; when the Union was first formed he and his Mother came.

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*Are you sure that none of those had the Measles
when they were with you at Petherton?*

I am quite sure of that.

Do you recollect how long James Symes was
with you before he died?

I cannot say.

1023 *He came to you after the Diarrhæa. was in the
Bridgwater House, did not he?*

No, he was one of the first Children that
came; there was a young Woman with Two
Children.

*The others that died of Measles came from
Bridgwater, did not they?*

I do not think they did.

*Did Elizabeth Brown, Two Years and a Half old,
die of the Measles?*

I think not.

Did Elizabeth Palmer, Two Years old?

No.

*Did John Brown, One Year old, die of the
Measles?*

No.

Mary Ann Vokins, Four Years old?

No.

Emma Hoyle, One Year old?

Yes.

When did she die?

She was very delicate when she came; she
was a North Petherton Child; she died of the
Measles.

There was no Diarrhæa upon her?

No.

*Do you recollect how long she had been there
before she died?*

Not long.

John Davey; do you recollect him?

No.

John Wride?

No.

George Cox?

No.

Flora Wilkins?

No.

George Woolcott?

Yes.

Of what did he die?

Of Diarrhea. He was one that was sent from
Bridgwater Workhouse to our House in a dying

State.

How long was he before he died?

Several Weeks.

Theresa Woolcott; what was her Complaint?

The same Complaint.

James Furber?

He was a Baby.

What was his Complaint?

A Decline. Mr. Tilsley said a natural Decline.

William Arthur?

No.

William Pyke?

No.

Loman Biss?

No.

John Bindon?

Yes.

1024 *Was that a Son of Harriet Bindon?*

Yes.

What was his Complaint?

The Diarrhea. He came with his Mother; she
was ill when she came.

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

HARRIET BINDON is called in, and
examined as follows:

YOU were in North Petherton Workhouse?

Yes.

When?

I do not know really the Time.

Was it in February 1837?

I believe it was.

You were ill when you were there, were not you?

Yes, very ill.

Mr. Tilsley attended you?

Yes, he did.

He ordered you some Tea and Sugar and Butter?

Yes.

Did you get them?

Yes.

How soon did you get them?

I got the Tea and Sugar when I went to
Petherton. I was very ill when I went from
Bridgwater to Petherton.

What were you ill of?

The Bowel Complaint.

The Complaint which was so rife at Bridgwater?

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Yes.

He ordered you some Tea, Sugar, and Butter?

Yes.

You got the Tea and Sugar immediately?

Yes; I got them at first when I went.

Who gave you them?

Mr. King furnished me Tea and Sugar from Bridgwater.

Was there any Delay about your getting any of those Things?

Yes; when I got up and got about, young Mr. Gover came to Petherton House, and said, "Harriet Bindon, your Tea and Sugar are stopped."

I was not able to work.

How soon after you got into Petherton Workhouse did he tell you they were stopped?

About Three Weeks or a Month.

Did you complain to Mr. Tilsley of their being stopped?

Yes, then I was taken ill again, and I spoke to him and said my Tea and Sugar were stopped, and he said to me that he had ordered them for the Week following.

Was it not till the Week following you got them?

No, it was not till the next Week; he told me he had ordered them that Week, but they did not come.

Did not Mr. Tilsley give you some of his own?

Yes; I spoke to him about it, and he said he would give me some out of his own Pocket.

1025 When was it stopped?

It was stopped about Three Weeks or a Month after I went.

You had had them before you went from Bridgwater?

Yes.

You went to Petherton?

Yes.

Who stopped them?

Young Mr. Gover came to me, and said, "Harriet Bindon, your Tea and Sugar are stopped."

Do you recollect when that was?

No.

You were examined by Mr. Weale, were not you?

Yes.

Did you tell him that?

Yes.

Before you went to Petherton you were very ill?

Yes.

Were there a great many ill in the House?

Yes, many of the Children; before I was taken ill I looked after them in the Nursery.

There were a great Number ill?

Yes; with the Bowel Complaint.

Was there a great Smell in the House?

Yes, which made us all very ill in doing for the Children.

Were there any fresh People came into the House at Bridgwater while this Malady was going on?

Yes; they were continually coming in.

Did you catch it more than once?

Yes; I got better, and had it again. I was very ill; Mr. Tilsley gave me up for Dead.

Are you a Bridgwater Woman?

No; Stowey.

Were you well when you went into the Bridgwater Workhouse?

Yes.

When was it you went in?

I went in between Haymaking and Harvest; the latter Part of Haymaking.

The early Part of the Summer?

Yes.

Were you removed into North Petherton Workhouse?

I was in Petherton House more than a Quarter of a Year.

When did you first go to Petherton?

I do not know the Day of the Month.

Was it the Summer or the Winter?

In the latter Part of the Summer.

That was about October then?

Yes, I should think it was.

Do you know more precisely?

No, I do not.

Are you in the Workhouse now?

No, I am out of it now.

How long did you continue at Petherton?

More than a Quarter of a Year.

1026 *Where did you go to then?*

I went out of the House then, I had lost Two of my Children in the Bowel Complaint. I took Three in with me, and lost Two; and I went to the Board to ask Leave to go out, for that if I did not I should lose my other Child, and I should lose my own Life too. I was very ill.

You were very comfortable in Petherton

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Workhouse?

Yes, I was very comfortable. We were very kindly treated. There were not Victuals enough in either House when we were able to Work.

Where did you go after you left the Petherton Workhouse?

I went home with my Father and Mother till I was able to work.

Have you continued out of the House ever since?

Yes.

Had you any Complaint to make of your Treatment in the Workhouse from anybody?

No; we were not ill - used by the Governor.

All you complain of is your having been ill there?

Yes.

Had you sufficient Food?

No; we had not Victuals enough when we were able to work.

How many People were there with you in the Bridgwater Workhouse?

I cannot say; there were a great many kept in one Room, and a great many in one Bed, for we had not Room for them; Four or Five or Six sometimes in a Bed ,

Do you mean grown - up People?

Children.

How many grown - up People had you in the same Bed?

Three or Four.

Do you mean Three or Four grown - up People?

Yes; they were obliged sometimes when the People came in, till they got more Beds.

Do you remember a Man of the Name of Kidner coming in with his Family?

No, I do not recollect them.

Are you a Widow?

Yes.

When you went in you were well?

Yes.

Then you got ill of this Bowel Complaint?

Yes; and the Children too.

When you were under the Doctor's Hands he ordered you Tea and Sugar?

Yes.

When you got the Tea and Sugar you got better?

Yes.

Did they not put you back again upon the Gruel?

No.

You were not quite well when you left?

No; I was very ill when I came out. Mr. Tilsley said I should never get well while I

remained there, nor my Children.

Two of your Children had died?

Yes.

Were they healthy Children before that?

Yes; they had not had a single Day 's Sickness before they went in; there was afterwards Broth ordered for them.

1027 Did they get better upon the Broth?

No; I did not see that they got any better.

What Food do the poor People and Children generally get in that part of the Country?

Broth.

A Kind of Soup made with Potatoes?

Yes.

They never use Oatmeal at all in that Part of the Country?

No.

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

JAMES GOVER is again called in, and further examined as follows :

WHAT is the greatest Number of Beds in any One Room in the old Bridgwater House?

We had about Fourteen Beds in One Room.

How many in the new Workhouse?

I cannot say.

There was One Room that contained Fourteen Beds in the old House?

Yes.

Did Men or Women sleep in that Room?

The Men and Boys slept in that Room.

How many Women slept in any One Room?

There were about Fifteen or Sixteen Women; all those Women had Children with them also, whom they were obliged to do for.

How many People ever slept in any One Bed?

I believe there were Five or Six Children in One Bed.

How many grown - up Persons?

Grown - up Persons, as many as Three I have seen in the same Bed; in fact, we were obliged to put them so; we had so many in the House. We had 100 or 102 People in the House.

How many Beds had you?

I am not aware how many we had.

Had you Thirty - five or Fifty?

We had more than Thirty - five; about Forty I should suppose.

Had not you more than Forty?

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I am not aware exactly how many Beds we had in the House.

Are you quite sure that Two or Three grown - up People slept in the same Bed?

Yes; I have seen Three in One Bed.

Did you state that to the Visiting Committee?

Yes; and Beds were ordered in consequence.

Was there Room to lie in the Bed?

We made Room as far as we could.

The Rooms were crowded?

They were.

Did you know the Workhouse under the old Law?

Yes.

How many people were ever in the House then?

I have heard there was One Winter nearly 100 People there, but sometimes very few.

How many Beds were there then?

I cannot tell.

1028 *What became of your Beds when the new Guardians took possession of the House?*

All the old Beds left were kept.

And new Beds ordered?

Yes.

Do you know how many new Beds came in?

I should think Seven or Eight or Nine came; and new Beds were sent to Petherton too.

You do not know how many new Beds came in?

No.

Then the old ones in the old House remained and some new ones were ordered in?

Yes.

That was after your Representation?

Yes.

When the Illness became so bad in the Workhouse did the Board of Guardians hire a House or a Room in the Town?

No, they did not. The Sickness was very bad among the Children, they were in a deplorable State.

How many were in one Bed at that Time?

There were, I should think, Six Children in One Bed. They were obliged to have one Room for the Children who were ill. Harriet Bindon was one of the Women employed to look after the Children.

When they were ill of Diarrhæa you mean?

Yes.

In what State were the Beds?

They were in a shocking State. I had them all got into the Court, and opened them, Three or Four at a Time, and got the Tick washed. I have known a Person put into one of those Beds after the Diarrhæa was got away catch the Diarrhæa.

How long was Trood in the House?

He stayed there Three Weeks for me while I was away; then he was in the habit of coming at other Times.

Did he come to assist you?

In the Winter, the Day before the Board met, he came and helped me in what I wanted.

Was he about the House?

No; not until I went away.

How long were you away?

Three Weeks.

When you came back he went away again?

Yes.

What was the Date of the Time you were away?

I went away the latter End of February.

Was the Complaint increasing at that Time?

No; the Diarrhea had been worse before then; it was ceasing a little when I left. I had been affected so many Times that the Medicine had no Effect at all. Mr. King and Mr. Poole both told me if I did not leave it would be a bad Job, and they recommended me to the Board of Guardians for Leave of Absence.

Did he remain there after you came back?

No; he left for Bridgwater.

How soon did he leave Bridgwater after you came back?

I should think within Three Weeks or a Month; he went to the Union House at Sherborne?

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

1029 Mr. ROBERT UNDERDOWN is called in, and further examined as follows :

DO you remember Harriet Bindon?

I do.

It appears that some Tea and Sugar were ordered for her when she was in Petherton Workhouse, by Mr. Tilsley, but she did not get it for a Week; what was the Occasion of that; is the Book brought to the Board?

Yes; it rests with the Governor to get those Things.

To whom is the Book delivered?

To the Governor of the Bridgwater Workhouse; it is brought to the Board; it is his

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Place to come and take it from the Board.

Does Mr. Tilsley send it to the Board?

The Governor sends the Visiting Book, and
the Medical Officer's is sent to the Clerk.

That is to you?

Yes.

What do you do with it?

I place it on the Table for the Inspection of
the Board.

When the Board breaks up what is done?

The Medical Officer arranges for its Return;
the Medical Man generally makes an Arrange-
ment with some one to take his Books to and
from the Board.

Does it come through you?

No.

Did you use to take Mr. Tilsley's Book?

No.

*Was that Book examined to see what Orders the
Medical Man gave?*

It was sometimes examined; I do not think it
was always.

*Whose Fault was it that the Tea and Sugar was
not sent for Harriet Bindon and the other Women?*

If it was known to the Governor it was his
Place to have sent it.

Whose Business was it to let him know?

I should think it was the Matron's Duty; if
she knew of its being ordered she should have
taken care it was procured from the Governor.

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

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