

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

Day 17, 24, July 1838

Evidence of Robert Jolliffe Colthurst,p 1163; Frederick Axford.p 1181; Rev Samuel Starkey, p 1199;
Robert Beadon Buller,p 1216; Rev Noblett Ruddock, p 1221

Edited by Tony Woolrich 25/04/2021

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Die Martis, 24th Julii 1838.

The Lord WHARNCLIFFE in the Chair.

Evidence on the Operation of the Pour Law
Amendment Act.

Mr. ROBERT JOLLIFFE COLTHURST is
called in, and examined as. follows:

WHERE do you reside?

At Bridgwater.

In what Profession are you?

I am not in any Profession; I am living upon
my Means.

Have you not been employed by Mr. Bowen?

I was with him for a short Time, merely for
an Hour in the Day.

In what Capacity?

I posted his Ledger for him in his Business.

As a Friend?

I have known Mr. Bowen for many Years.

You posted his Ledger as a Friend?

Yes.

Receiving no Salary for it?

I did receive a Remuneration for it in Money.

*Were you a Member of the Bridgwater Board of
Guardians?*

I was.

From March 1836 to March 1837?

Yes.

Have you been since?

No, I have not.

Were you a Member of the Visiting Committee?

I was during the first Year.

*When were the first Complaints made of Illness in
the House in consequence of the Gruel?*

I made no Memorandum; I really cannot
charge my Memory unless I could be refreshed;
I had no Idea of ever coming here.

*Was it in the Summer, or the Autumn, or the
Spring?*

It must have been in the Autumn.

In what Year?

In 1836.

*Do you remember when the new Dietary was
established in the Work house?*

I do.

What Time of the Year was that?

I cannot recollect the Month.

Was it in the Month of August?

I cannot recollect.

*Until that Time you had continued the old
Dietary of the Milk?*

Yes.

1164 *And then it was changed to Gruel?*

It was.

*Was it soon after the Change in the Dietary that
the Illness began in the House?*

I should think it was within a Month or Six
Weeks; but perhaps I ought to say that during
the Holidays my Children were from School,
and I was from home the whole of the Time.I
was then ill till, I think, the latter End of August,
or the Beginning of September.

*When you recovered and returned to your Duties
as Guardian and Visitor did you find Illness in the
House?*

I did.

*Was any thing upon that Subject stated at the
Board of Guardians?*

There was.

At what Time was it first stated?

I cannot recollect.

*Do you remember Mr. King, the Medical
Officer, writing a Letter to the Board upon that
Subject?*

I do.

*When that Letter was produced at the Board was
there any Discussion upon the Subject of the
Sickness in the House?*

There was.

*Of what Nature; upon the Subject of the Matters
pointed out by Mr. King, or upon the general State of
the Health of the Inmates of the House?*

Upon that Letter.

*You stated just now that when Illness was in the
House it was mentioned at the Board?*

Yes; previous to that Letter it was mentioned.

By whom?

I think it was Mr. Baker or Mr. Axford; I
really do not know which; it was one of the
Visiting Committee.

*Were there not Five Guardians from the Parish of
Bridgwater?*

Myself and Mr. Evans, and Mr. Baker and
Mr. Axford, and Mr. Inman.

Is not Mr. Inman an ex officio Guardian?

He was elected in the first Year.

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You say the State of the House had been mentioned before the Letter of Mr. King?

Yes.

By whom?

Mr. King came into our Room, and gave his Opinion of the Diet, and then it was mentioned at the Board by Mr. Axford, or Mr. Baker.

What did Mr. King say when he came in?

He was sent for by the Visiting Committee; we wanted to ask his Opinion'

On what Account was he sent for?

From there being so much ill Health in the House; and believing that the Diet was injurious the Medical Man was sent for, and he gave his Opinion that it was injurious.

When was this?

I do not know the Date.

Was it in August, or October, or November?

I really do not recollect.

How long previous to the Letter from Mr. King?

I think the Letter must have followed in a Week or a Fortnight i the Letter was not on the same Day as this Communication.

1165 *Can you recollect who were present at that Visiting Committee which sent for Mr. King?*

I was there; Mr. Baker and Mr. Axford were also present.

Was any body else there?

I do not recollect.

You are quite sure they were there?

I am.

That was at least a Week before the Letter?

The Letter must have followed the Week following, I think.

What did Mr. King say upon that Occasion, when he was sent for by the Visiting Committee?

That he thought the Diet unwholesome.

What did you do as the Visiting Committee in consequence of that?

We stated to the Chairman of the Board the Opinion of the Medical Man.

Had the Visiting Committee been visiting the House that Day?

We met that Morning at the Board; the Board sat at Eleven or Twelve o'Clock; we met at Nine in the Poorhouse, in the Visiting Committee Room.

Had you visited the House that Morning?

Yes.

In what State did you find the House that Morning?

In a State of Sickness.

Was it full?

Yes; it had been full for a long Time.

And the Circumstance of it being in a State of Sickness induced you to send for the Medical Man?

Yes.

Had it been in a State of Sickness for some Weeks previously?

I think it had, if I can charge my Memory.

And the State of the Workhouse was brought to your Notice by your own personal Inspection, and by the Reports in the Book?

Yes.

Which of the Reports was it that brought to your Mind the State of Sickness in the House?

On the 4th of October you yourself visit the House, and to the Question, "Are the Inmates generally healthy, or is there any Sickness prevalent among them; if so, state Particulars, and especially if any dangerous or highly infectious Disease is in the House?" your Answer is- "Yes." On the 11th of October Mr. Baker visits, and he answers the same Question, "Yes, excepting some Sickness among the Children." On the 18th of October Mr. Baker visits, and answers the same Question, "Yes, "that is, generally healthy, "except some Sickness among the Children." Which of Those Entries was it that brought to your Mind such a Knowledge of such a Degree of Sickness in the House as induced you to send for Mr. King; you say that you sent for Mr. King in consequence of a Knowledge of a Degree of Niness in the House that required you to consult Mr. King, and that was brought to your Mind by the Entries in the Book, and by personal Inspection?

I am quite sure there was Sickness in the House, but how we had observed it it is impossible for me to recollect. There was great Sickness; we sent for the Medical Man; that was a Proof that there was Sickness.

You sent for the Medical Man at least a Week before the 25th of October?

I cannot answer the Question as to the Date.

Have you a distinct Recollection of that Meeting of the Committee, and sending for the Medical Man?

I perfectly recollect it.

Are you perfectly sure that it was previous to the 25th of October, which was the Day on which the Letter from Mr. King was read at the Board?

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It was previous to that.

1166 *You are sure it was not the same Day?*

I am quite sure of that.

Then after this Meeting in which you had had Mr. King's Presence, at the next Board Day or on that same Day, did you report to the Board the State of the House?

The Report was regularly laid before the Board.

Did you state to the Chairman or any part of the Board that the House was in a very sickly State, and required some Alteration?

There was a personal Communication by Mr. Baker or Mr. Axford.

Were you present?

Perhaps I might have been, but I do not recollect now; I went from the Committee Room with them to the Board, and one of the Committee carried the Book.

Who carried it?

I do not recollect; but we went immediately to the Board, and a Communication was made.

The Entry in the Book was communicated to the Board?

Yes; and there was also a verbal Communication.

You do not recollect who made it?

No.

Did you hear the Answer?

My Impression is that there was no Answer, that no Notice was taken of it.

Do you recollect whether that Communication was made in a formal Way by the Person who made it, as the Spokesman of the Committee, on his Legs?

I should say on his Legs; I mean that he made that Communication as the Organ of the Committee.

But you are not aware that any Answer was given?

I am not.

Are you sure you heard this Communication made?

I am quite sure of it.

Can you recollect in what Words it was made?

No.

No Discussion took place upon it?

I have no Recollection of any.

Were you very much impressed with the Degree of Sickness in the House?

Yes.

No Answer being given to this Communication, did you yourself, or did either of the other Gentlemen, get up and address the Chairman, and call the Attention of the Board to this Subject?

I have no Recollection of any thing following this whatever.

Was any Motion made?

I have no Recollection of any thing following it.

Do you mean that you are sure that nothing took place afterwards, or that you do not recollect any thing further taking place?

I am almost sure that nothing more took place.

Do you mean to say that you do not recollect any thing taking place further, or that you yourself believe that nothing further took place?

I think I may say that nothing further took place, from a Letter following it bringing up the Subject again.

Was the Communication made in this sort of Way: "I am sorry to say, Sir, there is a deal of Sickness in the House"?

I do not recollect the Form of Words, but it was given as the Opinion of the Medical Man that there was Sickness in the House, and that and that it was the Opinion of the Medical Man that it was caused by the Gruel.

1167 *It was not till the next Board Day that a Letter from Mr. King was received?*

Certainly not.

Do you recollect whether it was stated on that Occasion that Diarrhæa was existing in the House?

Yes, Diarrhæa.

And that it was infectious, was that stated?

That was stated.

You are sure of that?

It was so far stated that I was recommended not to go into the House.

On this Occasion, previous to the 25th of October, was it communicated to the Board that there was Illness in the House which was Diarrhea?

It was stated that it was Diarrhoea; but whether it was stated to be infectious I cannot recollect.

But the Statement was made by the Visiting Committee that Diarrhoea was existing?

Yes.

Are you sure of that?

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Yes, quite sure.

Was it stated that it was infectious?

I am not sure of that.

When that Letter from Mr. King was read at the Board was there any Discussion upon it, or what was done upon it?

I do not think I was present at that Time; I do not remember it.

After that Letter from Mr. King there was some Alteration in the Diet with respect to the sick and the Children?

There was.

Did the sick and the Children get better upon that Change of Diet?

I do not know.

Did the Diarrhæa continue and increase in the House?

I cannot answer that Question; I do not know.

It appears from the Book that you were present at the Board on the 25th of October, but you do not recollect what passed?

I do not.

Do you not recollect that the Proposal was assented to?

I do not.

You do not know what was done about it?

I do not.

You do not remember any Discussion or Remarks being made at the Time upon the State of the House?

No, I do not.

When was it that the increasing State of this Illness in the House was again brought to your Notice; how soon after that?

I could not say, unless I could be at all assisted by any Memorandum.

Do you remember at any other Time after this 25th of October any thing being said at the Board, or amongst the Members of the Visiting Committee, with respect to the State of Health of the Inmates of the House?

I do not.

Did you visit the House after the 25th of October?

Yes, I think I must have visited; but I was very little in the House.

Did you ever attend the Visiting Committee after the 25th of October?

Yes; undoubtedly I did.

1168 *Then, when you attended the Visiting Committee after the 25th of October did you ever hear any thing of the State of the House?*

I do not know at what Date it was; but the Sickness continued for some Time.

Did you visit again upon the 8th of November?

I do not remember.

Your Name appears on the Book on that Day; your Entry in the Book is, "The Health of the Inmates of the House is rapidly improving"?

That must be correct.

From the Month of October to Christmas was there at any Time any thing said, or any Discussion at the Board of Guardians, upon the Subject of the State of the Inmates of the House?

I cannot call to my Recollection any particular Time.

Did you frequently hear at the Board of Guardians Representations made to the Board, either by the Visiting Committee or by somebody else, that there was a great deal of Sickness in the House, and of this Diarrhæa?

Undoubtedly; the Report every Week would give the State of the House.

The Report does not state that. Was there no other Statement made to the Board of Guardians than what appears from the Report of the Visiting Committee?

I do not think that there was after that Time.

You say that you repeatedly heard something of this Disorder at the Board; was there any thing, done beyond the reading of the Report?

I have no Recollection of any thing but the Report being presented regularly every Week.

Did any of the Visiting Committee represent to the Board that something more ought to be done than the mere Alteration of the Diet of the Children and the sick People?

I have no Recollection of that.

Was it the Opinion of the Visiting Committee that there should be a general Alteration of the Diet, and that the Gruel should be got rid of?

Yes; the Opinion of the Visiting Committee was that the Gruel should be got rid of, and the Diet changed.

Then if that was so why did not the Visiting Committee represent to the Board the Necessity of changing the Dietary?

I do not know.

Can you not give a Reason why you did not

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represent to the Board the Necessity of changing the Diet when you saw the Sickness going on in the House in consequence, as you supposed, of the Diet?

It having been represented, and no Notice taken of it, we could do no more.

When was it represented?

Previous to that Letter.

The Letter was written in consequence of no Notice being taken of the Communication?

It was followed up by that Letter.

Was no Notice taken of that Letter?

I do not recollect.

Was not the Alteration of Diet which was suggested in that Letter immediately adopted?

The Alteration of the Diet generally did not take place till the Year following.

Was not all the Alteration in the Diet that was suggested in the Letter adopted?

I do not recollect the Contents of the Letter.

1169 *It appears from the Entry in the Book that you were at the following Meeting of the Board; do you recollect that at that Meeting a Letter was received from Mr. Poole, stating that great Benefit had been derived from the Change which had taken place?*

No, I do not.

Mr. King states in his Letter that Oatmeal had been used for the Children instead of Milk; that he had watched the Result, and that it produced Diarrhæa; and his Recommendation is, that the Children should return to Milk Diet, that proper Nurses should be in attendance Day and Night, that the sick should be separated from the healthy, and that the Sick Ward should not be scrubbed; he does not recommend a general Change of the Diet, but that the Children only should return to the Milk Diet; were those Things done?

The Children did return to the Milk Diet.

Were proper Nurses in attendance Day and Night?

I believe there were.

You do not know of your own Knowledge?

No.

That the sick should be separated from the healthy?

I believe that was done.

And that the Sick Wards should not be scrubbed?

I believe that was done.

But previous to this Letter you and the other Members of the Visiting Committee were satisfied

that the Gruel produced Diarrhea, not only in the Children but in the House generally?

My Impression was, that it predisposed the healthful to receive Disease which was infectious.

Did you disapprove of the Diet?

Yes.

Then why did none of the Members of the Visiting Committee urge upon the Board of Guardians, between October and the Beginning of the following Year, a general Alteration of the Diet, and the doing away with this Gruel?

I do not know why it was not done.

But, in point of fact, it was not done?

It was not.

Then the Board of Guardians, generally speaking, must have supposed that you were satisfied with the Alteration which had been recommended in this Letter of the 25th of October, from your not urging a general Alteration in the Diet?

I do not know what their Impression might be; the Sickness was not removed.

But you and the Visiting Committee did not again bring that Matter before the Board with a view to a general Alteration of the Diet?

I have no Recollection of it.

Do you remember at any Time afterwards, during the Period that you were Guardian and a Member of the Visiting Committee, whether the Members of the Visiting Committee brought the Subject before the Board of Guardians with this view?

I do not.

Not up to the End of March 1837?

No, I do not.

After the Beginning of 1837 the Sickness became worse?

I am aware of that.

At what Period did it become worse?

I do not remember the Time.

1170 *Do you remember the Governor falling sick, and also his Wife and his Children?*

I do.

Then at that Time the Sickness was worse?

It was very much worse.

Did you believe it then to be infectious?

I did.

How comes it that seeing all this, and believing the Fact of this Disorder being infectious, you did

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not, as the Visiting Committee, bring those Circumstances regularly before the Board? Was it not brought forward in the Report? Never that it was infectious.

I can give no Reason why it was not.

Do you think, as a Member of the Visiting Committee, your Business being to watch the House, and to see that the Inmates were properly dealt with, that it was doing your Duty to allow that Sickness to go on increasing, to allow it to become infectious, without your making any Report to the Board upon that Subject?

Perhaps it was our Duty to report it; I was not aware of the Nature of the Report; I have not looked at it, and I do not know any thing about it.

Did you attend the Visiting Committee after Christmas?

I do not know without having my Memory refreshed.

You visited on the 10th of January, and on the 14th of February, and on the 24th of March; on the 10th of January the Answer to the Question is, "The Children still continue unhealthy, especially about Four or Five; "does that mean Four or Five Children?

Four or Five Children.

The Answer of the 14th of February is, "Generally unhealthy; "the Answer of the 24th of March is, "Still continuing to improve:" when you stated that they were generally unhealthy on the 14th of February, which was at the Time that the Governor and his Family were ill, and at the Time when you believed this Disease to be infectious, why were you satisfied with merely putting down in your Report, "Generally unhealthy;" why did you not state all the Circumstances, and your Persuasion of the infectious Nature of the Disease, to the Board itself?

I can give no Reason why there was not a Report made to that Effect.

Why, being a Member of the Board of Guardians, did you not state to the Board of Guardians your Impression upon the Subject, and call upon them to do something to mend the State of Things in the House?

I do not know.

Had you been warned previously by any body not to go into the Work.house?

I had been warned, but I forget when.

By whom?

By the Medical Man.

By Mr. King?

By Mr. King

In consequence of that Warning did you abstain from visiting?

I attended the Committee Room; I did not go into the Workhouse.

Do you recollect for how many Weeks you did not go into the Workhouse?

No.

For more than One Week?

Oh, certainly.

For as many as Three or Four Weeks?

I should think it was; it appeared to be a long Time; I should say more than Four Weeks.

1171 *Did all the other Members of the Visiting Committee abstain from going into the House for the same Time?*

I do not know; I had been in ill Health myself, and therefore I abstained.

Did the Visiting Committee meet as usual at that Room where they were in the habit of meeting?

I believe they regularly met.

Did you attend during that Time?

It appears that I did at some Time, but whether I did always I do not know, but if I did I met in that Room.

You signed the Report when you met in that Room in the same way as if you had visited the House?

From Inquiry of the Governor; he came in always to give his Report of the State of the House.

You signed the Book from the Report of the Governor, and without visiting the House personally?

Without going through the Wards myself.

Did you state in the Book that you did so on the Report of the Governor, and without personal Inspection yourself?

I am not aware that I did.

Did not the Governor report from Time to Time the dreadful State the House was in?

Yes.

How came you not to take notice of that in your Report?

I do not know why it was not done.

Do you remember Mr. Baker bringing the Matter before the Board, with the Death Book in his Hand?

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I do not recollect that.

Do you remember Mr. Baker making any Representation to the Board in the Month of March?

I do not recollect it.

Do you think that it was fair Treatment of the Board of Guardians that you, the Visiting Committee, should have all the Circumstances so much within your Knowledge, and yet that you should leave them in Ignorance upon the Subject?

The making our weekly Report was considered sufficient.

But there does not appear to be any thing in your weekly Report stating the Circumstances and the Infection.Do you remember Mr. Baker begging the Board not to send so many People into the House on account of its State?

Yes, I do recollect it.

When was that?

I do not recollect; but I remember Mr. Baker begging them not to send more in, because the House was so full, and in that State of Illness.

Was this in the Spring or the Winter, before or after Gover went away?

I do not recollect.

Was it before you had been warned not to visit the House?

It was after.

Before the 14th of March?.

I do not recollect the Date.

Was it before the Change of Dietary?

Yes.

Do you recollect the Change of the Diet Table?

No; I had ceased to be Guardian.

You remember Mr. Baker objecting to the Number of Persons brought into the House; was there much Discussion upon that Occasion?

I do not recollect the Discussion.

1172 *Did he at that Time state that the Disease in the House appeared to him and to the Visiting Committee to be infectious?*

Yes; he stated that to the Board, and entreated that others might not be sent: that I have a perfect Recollection of.

Do you remember a Man of the Name of Kidner being before the Board?

No, I do not.

Do you remember the Answer given to Mr. Baker?

No; I cannot recollect it.

Do you remember at any Time whatever an Answer of this Description being given to the Representation that the Diet should be generally altered, namely, that the Medical Person had nothing to do with the Diet of those who were healthy, but that he might order what he pleased for the sick?

No, I do not.

You mix, of course, with other People in the Town of Bridgwater; was there at the Time that this Sickness prevailed in the House a general Impression that there was Sickness in the House, and that that Sickness was infectious?

Yes; I believe that that was the Impression.

You believe only?

I speak as to the Fact that I believe that was the Impression.

Did you hear many Persons say so?

Yes; I heard it spoken of a good deal.

Was it known in Bridgwater that there was Diarrhea in the House, and that it was supposed to be infectious?

Yes, it was.May I be permitted to make one Observation? I was asked just now if I had not been employed by Mr. Bowen, and there may be an Impression on the Minds of your Lordships that I have been in communication with him; I assure you, since Mr. Bowen has been home from London I have scarcely had any Communication with him; I have not even read his Pamphlet, on which this Inquiry is grounded, for I do wish to come with truthful Intentions to answer that which is correct; but I am not mixed up in the Town with Business of any Description.Perhaps if my Calling is more amongst one Class than any other it is among the Poor and the Children; I visit them a good deal.

Have you had in the Interval that has elapsed since Lady Day 1837 frequent Conversations with Mr. Bowen upon the Subject of the Operation of the Poor Law?

Yes, I have seen him.

At what Time was it that you acted for him in posting his Books?

Two Years since.

Up to what Time?

Lady Day Two Years since.

You ceased to have that Communication with him at Lady Day 1836?

Yes.

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You say you had considerable Communication among the Poor at Bridgwater at the Time the Diarrhæa was in the House; was the Diarrhæa among the poor People?

No; I did not observe it.

You can take upon yourself to say there was no violent Disorder of that Kind?

I can.

Had the Poor, in consequence of the Diarrhoea being in the Workhouse, a Dread of going into the Workhouse?

They had a great Dread, expecting they should be taken ill if they went in.

Had they Dread from any other Circumstance?

I am not aware that they had.

Will you endeavour to recollect as to Mr. Baker's Entreaty that they would not send any People into the House; can you at all recollect when that was?

I cannot, indeed.

1173 *Was it a short Time only before you ceased to be a Member of the Board of Guardians, or how long before?*

I cannot charge my Memory with any Time.

When was the House the fullest?

I should think towards the End of the Union Year; that is to say, towards March.

Then you suppose it was about that Time that he made his Application?

I believe the House was fuller at that Time than at any previous Time.

Then the Period when he entreated the Board not to send in People because the House was full was probably when it was the fullest?

I think it was.

Mr. Baker was a Member of the Visiting Committee?

He was.

Did he make this Application as from himself alone, or as a Member of the Committee, and if so, did he make that Application as Spokesman of the Committee?

I should believe as the Spokesman to the Committee.

Did he make any Motion upon the Subject?

I do not recollect.

Were you present?

The Question was put to me, whether I recollect his taking the Death Book in his

Hand; I do not recollect that.

Were you present when he made this Applicatio?

I do not recollect it.

You speak of that only from Rumour?

I do not recollect being present.

Do you recollect deputing him as the Spokesman of the Committee to make that Application?

No, I do not.

You do not recollect any thing at all about it?

The last Statement of Illness in the House was made by Mr. Baker or Mr. Axford; but I do not recollect his going with the Death Book in his Hand and making the Application.

You were understood to say you recollected perfectly Mr. Baker making the Application to the Board of Guardians not to send in any more Paupers because the House was too full?

Yes; I recollect his stating that.

Were you present?

Yes; I was present when he entreated that no more should be sent into the House because it was so full.

Do you recollect when that was?

No, I do not.

At what Time of the Day was that?

Before the Business of the Day commenced.

Are you sure of that?

That was the Time when it would come forward.

Do you recollect at what Time of the Day it was made?

I cannot say.

You can recollect whether it was on presenting the Visitors Book that that occurred, or at a subsequent Part of the Day?

I cannot say.

Did you go in a Body from the Visiting Committee to the Board of Guardians?

It was our regular Habit, and I have no Doubt that we did that Day

1174 *Mr. Baker was deputed, according to your Idea, to make that Application?*

Yes.

Did he make a Motion upon the Subject?

I cannot recollect.

It is one of your Bye Laws that the Gentleman who makes a Motion shall stand up and present a

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written Motion?

Yes.

Was that done upon this Occasion?

I cannot say.

You confine your Impression upon this Subject to the Circumstance of your deputed Mr. Baker to make this Application?

Undoubtedly.

You can neither recollect the Time when it was said, or what was said by Mr. Baker or any other Person?

I cannot recollect.

Was Mr. Baker's Application rejected?

I do not recollect the Effect of it.

Do you recollect either of the other Members of the Visiting Committee attempting to enforce the Application?

I do not.

Mr. Axford, or any other Member of the Visiting Committee?

Not to my Recollection.

You recollect no more of what passed?

No.

You say that previous to the 25th of October, you think the Week previous, the Visiting Committee sent for Mr. King, the Medical Officer, to consult him about the State of the House; at whose Instigation was he sent for?

The Committee who were present, who were wishing to know his Opinion Do you recollect at whose particular Instigation it was?

No, I do not.

He was sent for by the Committee?

Yes.

On that Occasion when you went over to the Town Hall you took the Book as usual?

Yes.

The Book was handed to the Chairman, and it is the Practice for the Chairman to read aloud the Entries?

Yes, they are read.

At that Time either you or one of the other Members of the Visiting Committee stated that over and above the Entry in the Book you had some Observations to make as to the State of the House?

Yes.

Who was it that said that?

I am not sure whether Mr. Axford or Mr.

Baker, but one of them, I think.

Did you make a Motion upon that Occasion?

No, I think not.

Did he address the Chairman on his Legs in a formal Way, so as to be heard?

Yes; and I am quite sure he must have been heard.

What Answer was made?

I do not recollect any Answer.

Was no Notice taken by any of the Board of Guardians?

No.

1175 *Do you recollect in what Words Mr. Baker pressed this upon the Attention of the Board of Guardians?*

No.

Did you attempt to enforce it by any Speech or Observation?

No.

You are quite sure of that?

Yes.

You were quite impressed with the Necessity of this Alteration?

Yes; we felt it.

And yet you contented yourself with his Statement, without making a single Observation; no Notice being taken of it, you did not press it upon the Observation of any other Members of the Committee?

I think nothing else took place on that Day.

Did any thing fall from the Board, such as that there ought to be a regular Report from the Medical Officer?

I do not recollect.

In short, you do not recollect what was done by the Board upon that Day?

No, I do not.

So that though you were very much impressed with the Necessity of some thing being done, no Result having arisen from the Application you made to the Board, you do not at all recollect what did take place upon that Occasion?

My Impression is that nothing took place.

And that you and all the other Visitors acquiesced in that Indifference shown by the Board?

My Impression is, that there was no Notice taken of it at that Meeting, and that it was followed up on the subsequent Meeting by the Letter.

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Are you to be understood that in consequence of the Indifference with which it was received on that Occasion you followed it up with a Letter?

Yes'

That Letter was written by Mr. King?

Yes.

Was that Letter written by Desire of the Visiting Committee?

Yes.

Did you communicate with Mr. King immediately after the Board having passed over your former Application with Indifference and Silence?

I do not remember when it took place.

Can you state that this Application of Mr. Baker's was made immediately on delivering the Visiting Book, or might it be at any subsequent Part of the Day?

I do not know.

You are not sure it was not at some subsequent Part of the Day?

I cannot say.

Are you to be understood that this Letter was written by Mr. King at the Suggestion of the Visiting Committee, in consequence of your ill Success in attempting to bring it before the Notice of the Board?

Indeed, I do forget the Thing, it is so long since. My Impression is, that the Letter was presented a Week after following it up, but whether by the Desire of the Committee, or whether they saw the Disease still continuing, I cannot say.

When you answered the Queries did you put the Answers at Haphazard, without Consideration, or without making due Inquiry into the Particulars as to which you put those Answers?

I have never signed the Book without duly considering, and wishing to sign the Truth.

1176 *Every Answer you put down was after deliberate Inquiry, and believing it was the Truth?*

Quite so.

Although you put down this on full Consideration, did you satisfy yourself of the Truth of it from personal Inspection, or take the Facts from the Reports of the Master of the Workhouse?.

We were in the habit of walking through the House and examining the House.

You stated that you did not do that for a considerable Time?

During the Sickness I did not; I was in ill Health Part of the Time myself.

Did you state to the Board that you had received a Warning from Mr. King not to go through the House?

No; I do not recollect that I stated that.

All the other Visiting Guardians abstained from visiting as well as yourself, did they not?

I think Mr. Baker must have been the most regular in his Attendance.

He braved the Disease?

I believe he did.

Do you know that of your own Knowledge?

I know he was a great deal at the House; he lived close to the House; I lived in the Country.

Do you recollect the Governor asking leave to go away?

I do.

That was asked of the Board?

Yes; he first of all made an Application to the Visiting Committee, and it was referred to the Board.

Did he state what was his Reason for wanting to go away?

He did; in consequence of the Diarrhea.

Are you quite sure that it was stated what the Nature of his Illness was?

Yes; I am sure of that.

Did he state upon that Occasion what was the Situation of the Health of his Family?

I do not recollect that.

You have said that before the Letter of Mr. King was written it was known to the Visiting Committee that the Disease of Diarrhoea prevailed in the Workhouse?

Yes.

Do you now recollect whether before that Letter you had ever, and if so how often, communicated that to the Board?

I have only a Recollection of once.

How long before?

I do not know whether it was long before; I think it must have been communicated to the Board a Week before.

That was taken no notice of?

It was taken no notice of.

Had they Discussions at the Board from Time to Time, from that 25th of October to the Time you ceased to be a Visiting Guardian, as to the Diarrhea that was prevailing in the Workhouse?

I believe they had; I believe it was often mentioned.

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Was it ever mentioned at the Board, to your Recollection, except when Mr. Baker begged them not to send any more Persons in, and stated that the Disease was infectious?

I have no Recollection of that being mentioned.

1177 *Do you know that that was mentioned?*

I do not know that it was brought forward in the regular Way before the Board, but I am quite sure it was a Matter of Conversation among the Gentlemen.

Are you sure that it was a Matter of Conversation at the Board at several different Times?

I am quite sure of that.

Are you sure that in any of those Conversations it was mentioned that the Disease was infectious?

I am quite sure of that.

Did they after that send other Paupers into the Workhouse?

Many.

You stated that the Workhouse was fuller at the End of the Parochial Year than at any other Period?

Yes.

The End of the Parochial Year is in March?

Yes.

Were they sending in Paupers during the previous Month of February, and up to the Termination in March, when it ended?

They were constantly sending Persons into the House when the Disease was at its greatest Height; that I am sure of.

Are you sure that before they sent in those Persons it was mentioned that it was infectious?

I am quite sure of that.

You say you do not remember Mr. Baker producing the Death Book?

No.

Do you remember Mr. Bowen producing it?

I was not a Guardian with him.

Do you recollect the Reverend Mr. Ruddock saying any thing upon the Subject, and proposing to make a Motion upon the Subject, or his wishing to bring it before the Board?

I do not recollect that.

Do you recollect what was said to be the Way in which Gover caught the Disease, whether it was his lifting up a Man out of his Bed?

No; I do not recollect that being stated.

You say you are quite sure that the Diarrhæa was a Matter of Conversation among the Gentlemen at the Board?

I am.

What do you mean by Matter of Conversation; was it a Discussion among the Gentlemen of the Board?

No.

There are a great many Members of this Board of Guardians?

A very large Number.

The Board was very largely attended?

From Thirty to Forty.

The Chairman sat at the Head of the Table, and conducted the Business?

Yes.

Did it not often happen that Knots of Guardians, some Three or Four, got up from the Table, and at the Fireplace, or in other parts of the Room, entered into Conversation one with another?

I have seen Three or Four round engaging in Conversation.

Was it in Conversations of that Sort you have heard it spoken of?

I have heard it spoken of in that Way'

1178 *Not brought before the Board as Matter of Business for Discussion of the Board?*

No; I only made the Remark of its being brought forward by the Committee, and then the following Week by the Letter; those are the only Two special Times.

Those were the only Times you heard the Subject brought forward before the Board as Matter of Business and Discussion by the Board?

The only Times.

Are you not quite sure that if it had been brought before the Board for the Determination of the Board you must have recollected it?

I have no Recollection of it.

Are you not quite sure that if it had been so brought forward you must have recollected it?

No; I cannot say that, for we were sometimes late, and sometimes left early; we were the first Year from Nine in the Morning to Six and Seven and even Eight o'Clock at Night; the Business occupied so much Time.

Your Mind was much impressed, you say, with the dreadful State of Diarrhæa in the House, and the Necessity of something being done to stop it?

Yes.

If that was the Question, and it had been brought before the Board as Matter of Business and Discussion before the Board, and you were present, must you not have recollected it?

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If I had been present; I may not have been there the whole Day.

You visited occasionally only, except during this Time when you were a Visitor?

Yes.

You did not reside in Bridgwater?

No.

Did you ever remark that the People were too much crowded in their Beds?

I did see the Beds very full; I do think there were too many in such Rooms.

It was a very old House; a very inconvenient and bad House, and merely taken by the Guardians till the new one was ready?

It was our regular Poorhouse for some Years.

Was it not an inconvenient and bad House, and taken by the Board of Guardians as a mere Shift, till their new House was built?

They continued it till they had finished their new House.

That was because they could get no better?

They had no other; they continued that at North Petherton also.

That was used for the Children?

Yes.

From the very beginning of the Union it was the Practice to send the Children there?

Yes; or very soon after.

The Bridgwater House was not devoted to the Children?

No.

There were a few old Persons remained in the Petherton House, who could not be removed?

Yes, there were.

Was it not taken as a Receptacle for the Children?

Yes.

Were those Persons very much crowded when you visited the House?

I have known the Beds so thick one could scarcely get between them.

1179 *Were there Two Inmates in each Bed, or did you hear of Two and Three. sleeping in a Bed, and Five or Six Children?*

I have often heard the Governor say, "I have more than I can put away in the House. "

As a Visiting Committee did you order fresh Bedsteads?

There were Iron Bedsteads ordered.

They were ordered when the Visiting Committee thought them necessary?

I recollect seeing new Iron Bedsteads, but I do not recollect the Order for them.

What was the latest Time you ever went into the Workhouse?

I do not recollect.

Were there any ill in the Workhouse when you were last there?

I do not think I visited the House after the Disease myself.

You were never there when the Inmates were in Bed by any Accident?

No, never.

Was it ever proposed by the Board to hire additional Rooms or House when the House was too full?

Yes; I recollect a Proposal to hire additional Lodgings.

Do you recollect who proposed that?

No, I do not.

Was that regularly put to the Vote?

That I cannot recollect; a House had been suggested; it was thought desirable to send some of the Poor there, but I do not recollect by whom.

Do you recollect whether that was put to the Vote by the Chairman?

I do not recollect any Vote.

Was there any Motion made to that Effect?

I do not recollect.

Was it mentioned in some of those bye Conversations?

That was stated to the Chairman.

By whom?

I do not recollect, nor did I call it to Mind till this Moment; but I recollect it was suggested as desirable.

Was it by yourself?

No.

Was it by Mr. Baker?

I cannot tell indeed.

Nor the Time, nor any thing at all about it?

No; I cannot recollect any thing at all about it.

Do you recollect whether it was any particular House that was suggested?

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That I do not know; I think it was that a House should be looked out for, that it would be desirable a Lodging should be taken out, because the House was full.

And that was discussed by the Board?

I do not recollect a Discussion.

It was brought before the Board?

Yes; but I do not mean in regular Form, a Motion being made upon it.

It was discussed as a Matter of Business?

Yes, it was.

Was the Suggestion agreed to?

Certainly not, for there was no House ever taken.

Was the Question put from the Chair?

I do not know that it was.

1180 *Could you have hired Houses in Bridgwater?*

Oh yes; plenty of Houses might have been hired.

If a Motion was not made it will not of course appear upon the Minutes?

Of course not.

Can you point out any such?

I cannot indeed; I do not remember a Motion being formally made upon the Subject.

It is the Practice of the Visiting Committee not only to fill up the Book but to present a Report?

Yes.

Was that generally understood to be the Course of the Visiting Committee each Week?

They reported what was the Quantity of Food to be ordered, and the Apparel required.

And the Beds required?

Every thing required was entered and presented by the Committee in the Report.

In that Report was there entered every Observation that particularly struck you as deserving the Attention of the Board?

Yes.

Nothing appears in the Report at all relating to the Diarrhæa?

No; I should consider that the Book was quite sufficient.

You think the Visiting Book quite sufficient?

I should consider that was an Indication as to the State of the Health and the Articles required during the Week.

On the 6th of December there is a Report from the

Visiting Committee that there are 100 Paupers in the Workhouse at Bridgwater, that certain Necessaries are immediately required?

That is the Master of the Workhouse's Report.

It is headed, "The Visiting Committee report to the Board that there are 100 Paupers; then at the foot of the Report the Master of the Workhouse reports to the Committee, and they take that Report to the Board?"

Yes.

That is to be considered as a Register of important Circumstances which it is desirable to present to the Notice of the Board?

The Governor would not say any thing about the Health of the Inmates.

The Visiting Committee would, would they not?

They would present their Report.

This is headed, "The Report of the Visiting Committee"?

It was a Report by the Governor, and laid before us, stating the Number of Inmates in the House, and the Things that were wanted, and so on.

You state that the Children were always sent to the North Petherton Workhouse?

Under a certain Age.

Can you state of your own Knowledge that the Children belonging to the Town of Bridgwater and the neighbouring District were not kept in the Bridgwater Workhouse?

I recollect the Children being sent the first Time; a very large Number, all the Children we had in the Workhouse, were sent.

On the Formation of the Union?

Yes; and afterwards the young Children were sent. The Woman who had the Care of the North Petherton House was a very kind motherly Woman, and she had the Care of the Children.

It has been stated by the Person who assisted the Governor in the Workhouse that the Children of the Bridgwater District were retained in the Bridgwater House, and other Children sent to North Petherton; do you know whether that was correct or not?

No; I should say that the Children were all sent to North Petherton; that House was used for the Children.

And that they had a good Schoolmistress there?

Yes; a very nice Woman.

You were present at the End of the Parochial

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Year, when it was agreed to report to the Poor Law Commissioners on the general Operation of the Law, were you not? It appears by the Minute Book that you were there: "It was moved by Thomas Poole, Esquire, and seconded by Mr. T.C.Colthurst, that the grateful Thanks of this Board be given to our Chairman, George Warry, Esquire, for his efficient and valuable Services as Chairman, and for the urbane and gentlemanly Conduct which he has manifested during the Time he has presided at this Board. Carried unanimously. "

I recollect that.

Do you remember this at a Meeting of the Board held by Adjournment the 25th of March: "A Report of the Proceedings of the past Year, prepared by the Chairman, was read by him, which received the unanimous Approbation of the Board. It was therefore moved by Thomas Poole, Esquire, and seconded by R.K.M.King, Esquire, that the best Thanks of this Board be given to George Warry, Esquire, for drawing up the said Report; and that he be requested to transmit a Copy of the same to the Poor Law Commissioners; "and that was carried unanimously; that Report going very much at length into the Proceedings of the Union, but not stating any thing respecting the Diarrhoea, or the Mismanagement which is now endeavoured to be established as having prevailed at the Workhouse?"

I have not read the Report lately.

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

Mr. FREDERICK AXFORD is called in, and examined as follows:

WHERE do you live?

At Bridgwater.

In the Town?

Yes.

Do you carry on any Profession or Trade there?

I am a Merchant.

You are the Brother of the Doctor?

I am.

Were you a Member of the Board of Guardians of the Bridgwater Union from March 1836 to March 1837?

I was.

Were you also a Member of the Visiting Committee?

I was.

Do you remember when the Milk was left off in the Workhouse, and the new Dietary of Gruel introduced?

I cannot speak as to the Date, unless I were allowed to look at the Book of the Visiting

Committee.

It appears by that Book that it was in the Month of August; that was Two or Three Months after the Establishment of the Union?

It was.

Was there any Disease in the House soon after it was established?

There was Sickness in the House; I should say soon after, as far as I can charge my Memory.

A few weeks after?

Yes.

What Sort of Sickness was it?

It was of that Nature that, as a Member of the Visiting Committee, I felt exceedingly anxious **1182** about it, and desired the Medical Officer to attend the Visiting Committee; I made a personal Application to him, in order that he might state to the Visiting Committee what he considered the Disease, and that the Board might be informed by him by written Communication; and I apprehend that was done.

That was Mr. King?

Yes.

Was it Diarrhea?

He so stated it to us.

Did he state to you from what Cause he supposed the Diarrhæa to prevail?

He did.

What did he state?

He stated that those who were not in strong Health, and the Children, the Diet had a bad Tendency, a bad Effect upon.

Did he state only as to the Children or others that it was a Diet which Persons not in strong Health would not do with?

Decidedly.

Upon his stating that what Motion did you make?

I desired him to make a Communication to that Effect to the Board.

Did you on the Day when you desired this attend the Board of Guardians afterwards?

I believe I did.

Can you recollect the Date?

I cannot charge my Memory with it.

The Letter was written the 25th of October?

It was that Day, or the Day previous to that.

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Was it the same Day, or the Week previous?

The Impression upon my Mind is, that I desired him at the Committee Room to make this written Communication to the Board, but I rather think he did not do it at that Time, but went to his House, and sent it to the Board; and I think I have a Recollection of being at the Board when it was received.

The same Day?

The Impression on my Mind is that it was upon the same Day.

When the Letter was received was there any Discussion about it in the Board?

There was, undoubtedly.

What was proposed to be done?

There was an Alteration made in consequence of that.

Referring you to the Letter itself, it merely recommends an Alteration in respect of the Diet of the Children; was that the whole Thing that was recommended?

I believe it was; and the sick; of course those that were sick.

There was a Recommendation also as to Nurses, and the sick being separated from the healthy, and the Sick Wards not being scrubbed?

Just so.

All those Things were ordered by the Board of Guardians?

Yes.

If there was an Impression among the Visiting Committee that the Diet produced Diarrhæa where the Persons entered in a very good State of Health, was there any thing said as to a general Alteration of the Diet, not applying merely to the sick but the healthy, by leaving off the Gruel?

I do not recollect that there was. The Visiting Committee thought it was so important a Subject that they preferred a written Communication to go direct from the Medical Officer to the Board, and for the Board to direct the Course to be pursued..

1183 *You say you were satisfied by the private Report to the Visiting Committee that the Diet affected every one not in a good State of Health?*

Yes.

And that, generally speaking, it was an unhealthy Diet?

That was the Inference I drew from the Medical Officer's Statement.

You understood from what he stated that that was

the Case?

That that was what he considered.

When this Matter came into Discussion before the Board did any of you represent that it was an unhealthy Diet, according to the Representation of the Medical Officer?

I do not know that we did, for there was a written Communication laid before the Board, that they might have it in the Medical Man's own Words; fearing lest we should make any Mistake we requested him to state himself what was his Opinion to the Board.

You heard the Letter read?

Yes.

You see that Letter does not go the whole Length of what you have stated as to the Diet, for it recommends a Change of Diet only as far as the Children are concerned?

The Children and the sick, I thought it said.

It proposed an Alteration only with respect to the Children?

I understood the sick to be included.

Do you remember the Board being urged to alter the Diet generally?

No, I do not; certainly not generally.

Did you or the Visiting Committee continue to think this Diet was inducing Sickness in the House?

As far as regarded the sick; with regard to others we considered that the Diet should be observed.

Was not the Sickness increasing in the House afterwards?

May I be allowed to refer to the Visiting Committee's Book? not having seen it till Yesterday I cannot speak to the Facts without that.

Was there at any Time subsequently during the Time you were on the Visiting Committee an Impression upon your Mind that the Sickness was increasing?

I should think after that Period the Sickness was increasing; then after that it decreased again.

Then did it increase again?

Then I believe it increased again.

Was it worse after Christmas than it was before?

It was; that was the worst Period after Christmas, when it increased again.

Do you remember the Period when the Governor was taken ill himself?

No, I do not, further than that he was taken ill about the same Time as myself

You were not taken ill of Diarrhæa?

No; I was ill of Influenza; but I was absent from the Board for nearly Six Weeks, in the Months of January and February.

Had you any Communication previously to your being taken ill with the Medical Attendant on the Workhouse, with respect to the visiting the Work house?

No.

You had not been warned against visiting it?

No; I remember one Thing: the Medical Officer said to me that he had him self been ill in consequence of being in the Course of his Duty so frequently at the House, and he said certainly, that it would be well if the Visiting Committee were not to put themselves into the Way of it more than they could help; but at what Period that was I cannot say.

1184 *You do not remember the Time when the Governor, Gover, was taken ill?*

I cannot remember that.

You appear to have visited on the 3d of January, and again upon the 10th of March; when you visited the 10th of March in what State did you find the House?

I think the House was then getting better

The Entry is, "The Health of the Inmates still improving "?

I remember that was the Case.

Do you remember any Member of the Visiting Committee objecting to fresh Paupers being sent in on account of the State of Disease in the House?

I think once or twice it was represented that it would be undesirable to have more; the House was so full.

Do you recollect whether the Desire to restrict the Number arose from the Prevalence of Disease?

No, I do not.

Do you remember that Mr. Baker made any Representation upon the Subject?

Mr. Baker and myself generally acted together in our view of what was essential to the Interests of the Poor, and I think it was represented to the Board that it would be desirable not to have a greater Number in the House.

When was that?

There was something about Persons having bad Legs.

That was a Representation from Mr. King?

It was.

Do you remember any thing being said about its being undesirable on account of Diarrhæa?

No, I do not recollect that; but I recollect, on account of the Number, that the House was not large enough to admit so many..

Had that Reference to the State of Sickness in the House, or the Largeness of the Number?

I think the mere Number, as far as I can remember; of course the Feeling of the Committee was altogether that we would not wish to have a greater Number in the House during the Sickness, not knowing the Extent to which that might go.

The Sickness was partly the Reason for your making that Representation?

I have no Doubt it operated to a certain Extent.

Was the Persuasion upon your Mind that the Diarrhoea was infectious during that Time?

Really I hardly know how to answer that Question, it was so much a Matter for the Medical Officer; it was on that Account we particularly desired him to state his Opinion to the Board; I did not like to be the Channel of Communication to the Board, fearing I should do wrong, and I did not like to give an Opinion upon that myself.

Are you speaking to the Period previous to the 25th of October?

I apply it to the Period when the Diarrhæa was in the House.

When Mr. King spoke to you, and said it would be desirable the Visiting Committee should not go into the Wards, did you from that and other Circumstances conceive that the House was infectious?

Of course I could only suppose that was the Reason.

Did you represent to the Board that Mr. King had warned you not to go into the House, and you supposed that must be on account of Infection?

I do not remember that I did.

Why did you not?

Because Mr. King had made a written Communication himself to the Board, which I considered to be sufficient.

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1185 *That was on the 25th of October; do you suppose that this Communication had taken place before the 15th of October, and not at a Period since?*

I should think not.

Then this Circumstance must have arisen afterwards; did you let that pass, and not state it to the Board?

I think it was about the Time when he made the written Communication; I cannot charge my Memory with it at any other Period; it was when we were so anxious about the State of the House.

Being anxious about the State of the House, and you supposing there was Infection in the House, why did you not state to the Board of Guardians that that was your Opinion?

I did not do it for the very Reason that the Medical Officer's Report was before the Board at my Request.

Did the Medical Officer ever report that he feared Infection prevailed in the House?

He only reported that which your Lordship has read.

Do you recollect whether Mr. King ever made any other Report beside that on the 25th of October, and on some Date in December, about the ulcerated Legs?

I have no Recollection of any other; I have a strong Recollection of the first, in consequence of my feeling the Necessity of it.

You state that you yourself had an Impression upon your Mind that there was Infection in the House; having that Impression, why did you not state that to the Board, that they might know the real State of Things?

I think your Lordships assume that I proceeded upon the Case of its being infectious, when certainly I did not go to the Extent which might be presumed; he certainly said to me that it was undesirable to go into the Wards any more than could be helped, and he had himself been poorly from it.

What did you imagine then to be the Case with respect to Infection?

That the greatest Caution should be taken.
For fear of Infection?

Yes.

You having that Impression upon your Mind, why did you not report it to the Board, that they might take the necessary Measures?

I considered that the Board were apprised of the whole Circumstance, that they were aware of it as well as myself.

How were they aware of it; was there any thing in the Report of the Visiting Committee which stated that?

I really cannot say without referring to the Book.

Was there ever any Conversation with any Persons at the Board in which it was stated that there was an infectious Disorder in the House?

I cannot say that there was ever any Conversation; but the Board certainly knew the unhealthy State of the House.

The House was particularly under your Charge as the Visiting Committee?

I really cannot say further than I have said upon the Subject, and that I do not remember having made any Report to the Extent which appears to be inferred.

Do you not conceive the House was more particularly under your Charge as the Visiting Committee?

Certainly.

That being the Case, and you having a Suspicion upon your Mind that there was an infectious Disease existing in the House, was it not your Duty to report that to the Board of Guardians?

I considered that it was the Medical Officer's Duty to report every thing of that Character to the Board.

How was the Medical Officer to report that?

Through his Medical Report.

1186 *Was it not your Duty to report it, in order that the Board of Guardians should not be left in Ignorance on a Subject of that Kind?*

I do not think they were in Ignorance at all of the State of the House.

What makes you suppose they were not ignorant of the Circumstance?

Because we were in the habit of talking of the general State of the House.

You were in the habit of talking to the Board of the general State of the House?

Yes.

Have you ever talked on that Subject in the Presence of Mr. Warry, the Chairman?

I cannot charge my Memory as to our stating that the State of the House was infectious; we spoke of the Diarrhoea and Cholic as being there.

Did you ever state to Mr. Warry, or any Member of the Board likely to take an influential Part, that this Caution had been given you by Mr. King, that the Fact had been stated to you by him, and he

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himself had been affected?

No; I cannot charge my Memory with that.

Do you think it was doing your Duty as a Member of the Visiting Committee not to report such Circumstances as that to the Board of Guardians?

I may have been remiss, but I felt most anxious and desirous to do my Duty, and I thought I was doing it to the utmost.

Do you think, looking back upon it, that it was proper on the Part of the Members of the Visiting Committee, if they had any Suspicion that there was an infectious Disorder in the House, not to report that to the Board?

Undoubtedly I should say that if the Board had been strongly impressed at the Time with the Infection a Report ought to have been made to that Effect, but I must state again that I considered that the Medical Officer had reported what he considered the real State of the House; and feeling the great Responsibility we were under I requested he might make the Communication. I cannot recollect the Dates and Periods.

As a Member of the Visiting Committee it was your Duty to inspect the House?

It was.

If you were cautioned by the Medical Man not to visit the House on account of the State of it, was not it your Duty to represent that to the Board, that you might get rid of the Responsibility of not having visited the House?

The Impression upon my Mind is, that it was at that Period the Letter was written to the Board, and it was so stated; I may be wrong, but I do not know why, unless that was so; I applied to the Medical Officer to report to the Board the State of the House.

Did you not hear the Letter read to the Board, or look at the Letter?

I heard the Letter read.

There is nothing in that Letter stating any thing like Infection?

I cannot go beyond the Letter, except the private Communication I had with the Medical Officer.

Having had that private Communication, was it doing your Duty to allow the Board to remain in Ignorance of those Circumstances?

I must allow that it was not proper to allow the Board to be in Ignorance of any one Thing, but I still considered the Medical Officer to be

the proper Person to report those Circumstances.

You had a responsible Duty as a Visiting Committee?

Yes; and I felt that very forcibly.

One of those Duties was to visit the House?

Yes; and I visited the House.

But you were warned by the Medical Officer not to visit the House?

I visited the House, I think, afterwards; but I am afraid I am wrong as to the Period of the **1187** Conversation; the Time passed is so long since that I cannot fix myself as to the Date.

Was it well known in Bridgwater that such a Disease existed in the Workhouse?

It was talked of.

Was it the general Opinion that it was a Disease which was supposed to be infectious to a greater or less Degree?

On the Point of its being infectious I will not say, but the House being in an unhealthy State was talked of; as to Infection I cannot say'

Do you remember Mr. Baker making any Representation upon the Subject of the House being too full, and begging the Board not to send other Persons in?

Yes; and I think that was at the Period when there was the Letter respecting sore Legs.

Was there any Conversation at that Time as to the State of the House?

Its generally unhealthy State, and the Desirableness of having no more brought in.

Do you recollect an Application being made for a general Change of Diet?

I do not.

Do you recollect Mr. Warry saying, "You have nothing to do with the Diet of the healthy; you may order what you please for the sick"?

I think not; what I recollect is, that the Visiting Committee were very anxious for Milk, but they confined it to the Children. There was rather a Difference in the Visiting Committee upon that Point, some thinking that they ought to adhere closely to the Dietary returned by the Commissioners, and some not.

Are you speaking of the Visiting Committee or the Board?

I am speaking of the Visiting Committee, that we went before the Board and stated that, and

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the Board requested us to withdraw into an Anteroom, and see whether we could not agree in our Opinion; the Majority of the Committee thought we must adhere to the Dietary, upon which the Minority, of which I was one, who were desirous of Milk, gave up our Opinion.

At that Time you had the Opinion of the Medical Man?

Yes; it had been said that Milk would be much better for the Children and the sick and aged.

After Mr. Baker had brought forward the Impropriety of sending any more Paupers in, were any more sent into the House?

I cannot say; I think that that was attended to by the Board, as far as I can charge my Memory.

Do you remember a Man of the Name of Kidner being sent into the House?

No, I do not.

Did you continue a Guardian after the first Year?

No; only the first Year.

Will you endeavour to carry back your Recollection to this Period; is it not a matter of fact that so much has been said and written about this Diarrhæa and Infection since that Period, that People's Minds have come to think much more of the Infection, and much more of the Diarrhoea which existed, than they thought at the Time?

In answer to that I can only say I have not read any Matters which have been published; I have not entered into it; I have kept away from the Discussions about it.

You do not think more of it now than you thought at that Time?

I do not.

You were very anxious about the State of Health of the House?

Yes.

1188 *You knew Mr. Poole?*

Yes, I did.

Do you not recollect having a Conversation with him about the Health of the House about the Month of September 1836?

No, I do not.

Do you recollect having any Conversation with Mr. King previous to his writing the Letter of the 25th October?

On the same Day; I believe it was on the same Day, or the Week previous: but I think it was the same Day.

Was that Letter written at your Suggestion?

It was.

Do you mean to say that it would not have been written but for your Suggestion?

I think not; that is to say, at my own Suggestion and that of other Members of the Committee.

Was it not the fact that the Committee went in general as a Body from the Place where they met to the Board Room?

Yes.

They took the Book, and delivered it to the Chairman, who read the Entries from the Chair in a loud Voice?

Yes.

Do you recollect that, either the Week before that Letter was written, or the Fortnight before, the Committee had determined that One Gentleman of the Committee should address the Board, and state to the Board that the House was very unhealthy, and it was desirable something should be done?

I do not; I merely recollect the Necessity of a Letter being sent by the Medical Officer being stated.

Mr. Colthurst was the other Member beside you?

Yes.

He was an active Member?

Yes.

Do you not recollect a Determination come to by the Committee on the 10th or 11th of October, that the Committee should address the Board of Guardians, and request that some Alteration should be made respecting the Diet, in consequence of the State of the Sickness in the House?

I do not.

If you had been the Spokesman do you think you should have recollected it?

I think I must have recollected it.

You do not recollect the Committee coming to that Resolution?

I do not indeed.

You recollect that on the 25th of October you did come to a Resolution to request Mr. King to make to the Board a Statement of the Alterations he wished to have made respecting the Diet?

Yes.

That was done?

It was done.

The Board complied with that Recommendation?

Yes.

What he applied for was agreed to?

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I apprehend it was; I think that Milk was substituted for Gruel.

Were not you at the Board the next Week, when a Letter was brought from Mr. Poole, stating that great Advantage had arisen from the Alterations which had taken place?

Yes.

1189 *There was no other Communication that you know of ever made by Mr. King to the Board except that with respect to the sore Legs?*

That is the only one that I remember.

That also was immediately complied with?

Yes.

There was an Application made in consequence of the Fullness of the House, and the Inconvenience which arose from the Smell arising from the sore Legs?

Yes.

Not at all from Infection arising from the sore Legs?

No; I do not think that formed a Part of the Consideration.

Did you understand Mr. King to say that the Gruel was a healthy Diet for any except those in bad Health and Children?

The Difference, I apprehend, was that the Gruel, having been given to the Children and those in a weak State of Health, had produced Diarrhæa, which was communicated the more readily to those in Health from those in Health also having used Gruel; that their Bowels were excited by it, and more ready to take the Disease; that was Matter of Conversation which passed between us.

Is it in your Recollection that Mr. King said it was a Diet likely to produce Disorder in People who before that were healthy?

In the Way I have described; that they were more ready to take it from others; that it was more readily imparted, from those who were in a healthy State having been dieted on Gruel.

Was that signified to the Board in any other way than by the Letter of the 25th of October?

No, I believe not.

Do you recollect, during your Continuance at the Board, which was up to Lady Day 1837, the Propriety or Necessity of changing the Diet Table being pressed upon the Board?

No; the Subject of the Diet was very much debated at first. The whole Board chose that as

the Diet most likely to be approved; after that the Visiting Committee were very anxious to continue the Use of Milk to the younger Children; and the Matter having been regularly discussed over and over again by the several Members of the Board, considering it of consequence, all their Minds were made up to act up to the Dietary. I do not recollect that any thing else was said about it.

The Diet Table was fixed after Consideration by the Committee?

Yes.

After this Complaint appearing do you recollect any regular Business-like Discussions at the Board, or any Motion made for a Change of Diet?

No, I do not.

For the healthy?

No; I do not recollect any Proposal of a Change for them.

You attended very regularly?

Yes, except during the Time, which was Three or Four Weeks, when I was from home.

Should you have heard that if it had occurred?

I think I should.

If such a Proposal had been made, and it had been put down by Mr. Warry's Interference, should you have recollected that?

Yes; I think I should have recollected it, if there had been a Proposal for a general Alteration of Diet; but I do not recollect any thing of the Kind.

Should you say, from what you have seen of the Board, that Mr. Warry was a Person likely by any violent Means to repress any Motion which might be made?

Decidedly not; Mr. Warry, as a Chairman, acted courteously towards all.

1190 *It was not at all likely that if such a Motion was about to be made by any Member he should have prevented it by putting him down, and saying he would not put such a Motion?*

I should conceive not; I always found him ready to submit any Motion that I made.

Did you frequently make Motions?

Yes.

And Motions he disapproved?

Yes.

Did he object to put them?

Never.

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You know Mr. Evered Poole, the Surgeon?

Yes.

Did he not frequently make Applications to the Board for Things which he wanted?

I do not remember.

He acted for Mr. King, did he not?

Yes, he did.

Do you recollect any Applications he made direct to the Board, without going through the Visiting Committee?

I do not.

Was it generally understood that the Medium of Communication between the Medical Man and the Board of Guardians was the Visiting Committee?

That was the proper Channel, but I do not know that it was always adhered to.

Are you not aware of Instances where it was not adhered to?

The Medical Report was always laid upon the Table for the Board of Guardians, and if any thing particular was introduced therein the Chairman or some Member of the Board took notice of it; I think that was the general Way in which the Medical Report was adopted.

Did it not frequently happen that the Medical Gentlemen did communicate direct to the Board of Guardians?

They might have occasionally done so, but I do not recollect it.

It will appear upon the Minutes if it is so?

Yes.

Do you not recollect Mr. Evered Poole frequently communicating to you at your different Meetings that there was Diarrhæa in the House before that Letter was written?

I was allowed Permission Yesterday to see the Minutes of the Visiting Committee; I think I saw one Entry, in consequence of what had passed between Mr. Poole and myself, where it speaks of the Cholic and Diarrhea being in the House.

How long was that before the Letter of Mr. King?

I really cannot say without referring to the Book.

Was it some Weeks before?

The Impression upon my Mind is, that this Entry with respect to the Cholic and Diarrhoea was in consequence of a Communication with Mr. Poole.

Mr. Poole attended for Mr. King while he was absent?

Yes.

Do you recollect how many Times Mr. Poole had told the Visiting Committee that there was Diarrhæa in the Workhouse?

I cannot recollect that.

Do you not think he had told you that Three or Four Times?

I cannot recollect; it is very possible he might have done so twice.

1191 *Three Times?*

I cannot say indeed.

Had he not told you that the People were dying?

That there were Deaths we knew.

And Deaths from Diarrhea?

Yes; we understood so.

Had he not told you that there were Nine or Ten died of it before that Time?

There were some Persons died; some old Persons died, I believe.

Was not that before that Letter was written?

Yes, I think it was; and it was that which impressed my Mind so strongly with the Necessity of Mr. King's Report.

Mr. King states that it is proper to alter the Diet with respect to the Children and Persons who were sick; do you not recollect now that after the Diarrhæa got worse in the House that other Persons fell sick?

I recollect Mr. Poole's Observation after Mr. King's Letter; I cannot take upon myself to say how it was; I rather think Mr. Poole's Conversation with me was some Time in October, and that what is referred to by your Lordships must have been at a later Period; but your Lordships will make Allowance for my not recollecting Dates after such a Period has elapsed.

Do you communicate much with the Poor in Bridgwater?

I have had a good deal to do with the Poor'

Do you know that at that Time the Poor had a very great Horror of going into the Work house, from the Fear of an infectious Disorder prevailing there, between the 25th of October and the following Year?

I am not aware of that arising from the infectious State of the House; that goes beyond my Impression; my Idea was that they had a Horror generally of the House being unhealthy.

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Can you not say whether they considered it infectious?

I cannot say.

That is perhaps the most likely Thing to occasion their having a Horror of-the House, if they supposed they were going into the Midst of Infection?

It is a Prejudice which I think they will overcome when they see it is well calculated for their Good, and they find that the House is in the State it ought to be; but this was not the regular House.

Did not their Dislike to the Workhouse increase during the latter End of 1836 and the Beginning of 1837; was not it much greater than at any former Period?

I cannot say that it was; but knowing that the House was unhealthy, of course their Reluctance would be increased.

Was not it generally considered by the Town that there was an infectious Disease in the House?

I cannot say that; I do not remember; I should say that the House was generally spoken of as being in a very unhealthy State; my Answer always was, that the Medical Officers were exceedingly attentive, and that every Care was taken, which certainly was the Case, with those who were sick; whatever the Medical Officer thought necessary he prescribed for them, the very best of Things if necessary; and I believe the Governor and the Visiting Committee, or the Board, never interfered in case of Sickness.

Were not the Medical Officers skilful and attentive?

I believe so.

Notwithstanding that a great Number of Persons died in the Workhouse of this Disorder?

There were a great many died.

You were just now asked whether Nine or Ten Persons had not died of Diarrhea before the Letter of Mr. King to the Board was written?

I think it very likely it was before that Letter.

1192 *Do you know the Number who had died in the Workhouse from the Beginning to that Time?*

I have seen the Statement made, but did not investigate the Fact; it was stated by Mr. Baker that there were a great Number of Deaths.

Previous to the 25th of October?

I believe the Question was whether there were Eight or Nine died previous to the 25th of October; I suppose that must have been the Number.

If it should turn out that from the 15th of July to the 25th of October inclusive, or up to the 26th of October exclusive, only Eleven had died, of whom Two had died of Dropsy, One of Palsy, One of old Age, One of Syphilis, One aged Seventy-eight of natural Decay, One of Two Years and a Half old of Measles, and One Two Months old of no Complaint mentioned, is it not quite clear that Nine or Ten had not died of Diarrhæa previous to the 15th of October?

Then of course I must be wrong.

According to the Medical Man's Return One only appeared to have died of Diarrhæa?

Then I must be mistaken as to the Date; I ought to be very guarded, as having no Memory as to Dates.

Was it ever suggested to the Visiting Committee, or by the Visiting Committee to the Board of Guardians, or by any body else to the Board of Guar.dians, that, instead of sending other Persons into a House in that State, they should hire other Rooms or Houses to put the People into?

Your Lordships are aware that they have another House at Petherton; I do not remember its being proposed that there should be other Rooms or Houses hired.

Was there any Conversation on that Point?

I do not remember any, except that it was considered that the House was too full, and that it was only under pressing Circumstances allowable to send in any more; and we came to the Conclusion that no more should be admitted into the House than could be helped.

Did it never occur to you or the Guardians that you might relieve the House by hiring another House?

I do not recollect that that ever occurred to myself, If we had taken another House it would have been increasing the Expense; we should hardly have known the End of it.

That House was so crowded as to increase the Sickness; surely the Board ought not to have made the Pounds, Shillings, and Pence a Consideration while the Health of the Paupers was suffering?

Your Lordship is right in saying that; the Board ought not to make the Pounds, Shillings, and Pence a Consideration; but I really do not think that was considered at all.

Had not the Consideration of the Pounds, Shillings, and Pence more Influ ence on the Minds of the Guardians, when it prevented their listening to the Proposal to take another House?

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I never heard it proposed to take another House.

It never did occur to your Mind, or to the Minds of the Visiting Committee, that that would be a ready Way of preventing the filling of the House in so improper a Way as you have described?

I do not remember that that was suggested by any one.

After it had been suggested to the Board of Guardians not to fill the House more than they could help it has been stated that there were People still sent into the House?

There was still every Inclination not to send in any more than it was necessary to send.

Do you believe that the Number was not increased?

I do not think it was much increased; the Board were desirous of paying Attention to the Reports, so as not to unnecessarily increase the Number.

1193 *In your Opinion, did not the Board pay every possible Attention to the Recommendation of the Visiting Committee?*

I can only say that I had been fully satisfied at the Termination of the Year with the Conduct of the Board; I thought they had worked well together; there was a fair Difference of Opinion, some carrying out the Letter of the Law, others acting in the Spirit of it; but I am satisfied that there was the Feeling on the Part of all the Guardians that we were bound to do the best we could for the Poor, as well as the Inhabitants of the District.

There was no Object, in putting in any of the People, of slaying them?

No.

They were not put there for the Purpose of murdering them?

No; if they had been I am sure I should have stood up and resisted it; and I am sure every one would have done so.

You would not have aided the Board of Guardians to murder those People by putting them in there?

I should have been ashamed of myself if I had.

Are you aware that the House was at one Time so full that it was necessary when they introduced another Family to remove a Corpse to give them a Bed to lie on?

I do not recollect having heard that Circumstance.

Was not the House fuller at the Close of the Year

than it had been at any Time previously?

The Books will answer that; I cannot charge my Memory with it.

You mention that you were absent for Six Weeks from Sickness during the Months of January and February?

I was.

You were absent also another Month on a Journey?

Yes; that was the Month of October I was absent.

Are you sufficiently acquainted with the House to know whether, if any Person should have said that a Corpse was removed to make Room for a Family that came in, that was correct?

I do not recollect the Circumstance.

You cannot state whether such a Circumstance occurred?

I cannot say indeed.

The House may have been so full that it was necessary to remove a Corpse to make Room for a Family without your knowing it?

Certainly; the Governor may have done it.

Do you remember Mr. Baker going to the Board, and taking the Death Book in his Hand?

Yes; I remember the Circumstance.

Can you state the Date?

I cannot.

When he did that what else did he state?

He stated the simple Fact, to draw the Attention of the Board to the Circumstance of the Number of Deaths which had occurred, and to the Account, with all the Force he possibly could.

With regard to what?

With regard to the Health, not to the Number in the House.

How was that met by the Board?

It was met by a very good Feeling, as far as I recollect.

Was any thing said about the House not being full, and that until it was quite full they would continue sending Paupers?

No; I do not recollect any thing of the Kind; I remember Mr. Baker making the Report, and that it was pressed upon the Mind of the Board, and that they acted upon that.

1194 *There was nothing said about the House not being full, and that they should continue to send in*

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Paupers until it was?

I do not recollect any thing of the Kind.

Do you not recollect Paupers being sent in after that?

There were Paupers sent in during Part of the Time, but I believe not when the House was full.

You stated that you and Mr. Baker very much co-operated upon this Point?

Yes.

Were you aware before Mr. Baker made this Proposition with the Death Book in his Hand that he was going to do it?

I was not.

But you were inclined to support his Views?

We had all been very desirous to promote the Bill as well as we could, for the Interests of the Poor and the Interests of all Parties.

When he made this Appeal to the Board did you concur with him in point of Feeling?

So far, if his Figures were correct, which I did not doubt; but I had not gone into the Detail with him; I had considered him as generally correct; I presumed that that which he submitted was correct.

With that Feeling, your Inclination would have been to support his View?

Yes; as to not increasing the Number in the House.

If it had occurred that some Person had said, "Crowded or not crowded, the House has not so many Inmates as it is reported able to contain, and therefore we shall not attend to that Recommendation, but send in Persons till it is full, "would not that have struck you?

If it had caught my Ear I should have noticed it certainly; but the Room is very long, and a Person at the other End of the Table might have made that Observation and I not have heard it; if that had been made as a general Proposition before the Board I must have heard it.

You did not hear such a Proposition?

No.

What did Mr. Baker's Figures prove?

The Number of Deaths was large; I have not the Number in my Recollection.

Paupers still were sent in?

I am not aware of the Number sent in, but there was every Wish to confine it as much as possible.

Do you remember Mr. Baker coming forward

with the Death Book?

I do.

It was not Mr. Bowen?

No; he was not in the Board at the Time.

Mr. Baker is a Person who has long lived in Bridgwater?

He has.

He has taken a great deal of pains on this Subject?

Yes; he is a Person whose Opinion is to be valued at any Time.

Is he a Man of very eager Temper, and liable to take up a Thing hastily?

He is a Person who calculates coolly about Things.

He is a respectable Man?

Highly respectable.

To your Knowledge did he take a great deal of pains about the Work house?

He did.

1195 *Was that under the old Law or the new?*

Under the old Law; I do not recollect at what Period, but he was Overseer, and took a very active Part.

You know Mr. Bowen?

Yes.

Mr. Bowen is a Man of rather a warm Temper?

Excuse me for saying much about that; he is warmer than Mr. Baker.

Is he a respectable Man?

No one more so; they are both Men of the highest Honour.

Mr. Baker is a zealous Adherent of Mr. Bowen's?

They are particular Friends; I fancy there has been the greatest Intimacy and Friendship subsisting between them for many Years.

Mr. Baker is a great Friend to the Poor Law?

I think he approves of the Principle.

So does Mr. Bowen, does not he?

I cannot say indeed; I have not read his Pamphlet. I think the Act will do much Good, but as an Individual I wish it were not strained quite so far; the Spirit of the Act will do Good I am sure throughout the Country.

Was not it a prevailing Opinion at the Board that the Medical Men had nothing to do with the general Diet of the House, notwithstanding that such Diet might be injurious to the Health of its Inmates; that

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their Authority was limited to the sick?

That was the Understanding, I believe, that their Authority extended to the sick only.

Under that Impression, were the Visiting Committee deterred from making the Observations relative to the Diet which you otherwise would have done?

No; I do not think we were deterred from making any Observation, but we had tried so long about Milk, and it had been such a Matter of Discussion constantly, and we at last found ourselves in such a Minority, that we gave up; we had determined on a certain Dietary as recommended by the Commissioners, and it was considered that we must adhere to that.

Although that Dietary was so injurious to the Health of the Inmates?

I do not think that was a Part of the Feeling.

You were informed that such a Dietary was likely to be injurious to the Health of the Inmates?

Yes.

You did not make a Representation for an Alteration of the Diet in consequence?

No; because I considered it to be the Duty of the Medical Officer to make a Representation upon the Subject of what he thought necessary for the Health of the Inmates.

Did you not think there should be some other Interference to remedy this Evil?

That was why I wished the Statement to come from the Medical Officer to the Board.

With your Knowledge, you did state that Matter to the Board, but you did not think it your Duty to press that Subject on the Board?

No, I did not, because we had pressed the Point in consequence of the State of the House, and found we were so much in a Minority.

From the Constitution of the Board you thought it would be useless?

I should be sorry to give the Idea that there was an unkind Feeling on the Part of the Board, but they considered that they must adhere strictly to the Dietary

Do you mean to say that the Majority was for adhering strictly to the Dietary, whatever the Consequence might be?

I did not put in "whatever was the Consequence." **1196** *Do you mean that the Majority were for adhering strictly to the Dietary, whatever the Consequence?*

I would not venture to say that.

Do you think the Majority of the Board would have thought it necessary to adhere to the Diet Table if the Medical Officer had reported that the Diet Table was such as would produce Illness?

May I be allowed to give one Answer to that? which is, that I do not think there was One Person at the Board who would injure a poor Person.

Do you think that a Majority of the Board would have thought it necessary to adhere to that Diet Table if they had had any Reason to believe from the Report of the Medical Officer that that Diet Table was itself productive of Disease?

If they had been impressed strongly with a Conviction of that Kind I do not think they would.

If they had had similar Statements from all the Medical Officers, that the Diet Table adopted led to Disease and produced Disease, do you think the Majority would have thought it necessary to adhere to the Diet Table?

I do not think the Majority in the Board itself would have agreed to any Course that they were sure in their own Minds would have led to that Effect.

Do you think they would have adhered to the Diet Table if they had had a Report from the Medical Officer that the Dietary was such as produced Disease?

I do not think that they would.

You had left the Board before the Diet Table was altered?

I had.

Were not such Statements made to the Board, that the Dietary was injurious to Health, that it produced Disease?

No; I do not think it was put in that Way; it was put that the Dietary was not the most desirable one.

That being the Case, did they not adhere to it though the Disease continued in the Workhouse?

It was continued.

Though the Disease increased?

Yes; and then decreased. I think the Medical Officer should weekly send in a Statement of the State of the Health, and the Effect of the Dietary.

Was it previous to the Letter of Mr. King on the 25th of October you had Communications with the Board respecting the Expediency of changing the Diet?

I had rather decline answering that Question;

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I cannot speak as to Dates, not having expected to be called upon in any Way whatever. I think, with regard to Milk, there is no Doubt that took place previous to the 25th of October; I see Milk was given as a Substitute for Gruel previous to that.

There were frequent Discussions at the Board, previous to the 25th of October, as to giving Milk instead of Gruel?

Yes; I should rather say in the Visiting Committee.

Was there any Proposition made?

Yes; the Visiting Committee met the Board of Guardians, and one Pro portion of the Committee was in favour of adhering to the Dietary, and the other Proportion was not.

So that the Visiting Committee were not even agreed among themselves as to the Expediency of Change?

No; we were desired to withdraw, to see whether we could bring our Opinions to tally, and on that Occasion, finding we were so much in the Minority, we gave it up.

Was the Question, whether Milk was preferable to Gruel as a Diet, or whether you were entitled to alter the Diet for Persons in Health?

It was whether Milk was not preferable for the Children, and which must have arisen, I apprehend, from seeing the Effect of Gruel upon the Children.

1197 *Did the Division of Opinion arise from the Feeling that you ought not to alter the Diet, but adhere to it strictly, though you might be of opinion that the Diet was unwholesome, and might lead to the Diarrhea?*

The Discussion was generally whether it was in accordance with the Dietary.

And whether you should adhere strictly to the Dietary or not?

Yes; those Gentlemen who took up the Ground that we ought not to make the Change rested it on the Dietary.

Did not they argue that the Disease did not arise from the Gruel?

I do not recollect that they did.

You were in favour of Milk?

Yes.

In consequence of that you applied to Mr. King to write that Letter?

I think this Discussion was at a much earlier

Period, that it began very early. In July 1836, in answer to the Question whether the Dietary was observed, I observe that the Answer was, "Yes; except in the Use of Milk for Oatmeal; "and there are several other Notes that the Use of Milk for Oatmeal is recommended by the Medical Officer.

Then on the 23d of August is there not this Minute, "Gruel is now used instead of Milk "?

Yes; I suppose it was then that the Discussion began. We wished also that the able-bodied Females in the House who did extra Work should be entitled to some little Allowance.

That was negatived, was it not?

It was allowed for a short Time; I was desirous there should be proper Per. sons employed, and it was thought that could not be done; it was not so much from the Reluctance to do it as from the Fear of departing from the Rule.

Then on the 25th of October they returned again to Milk?

Yes.

It appears from the Book that there were frequent Discussions before the 25th of October about the Milk Diet?

Yes; there must have been.

Was not that in consequence of the Diarrhæa appearing?

I do not know. At the early Part we began with Milk; we were very anxious that the Children should have Milk, knowing it was nutritious and good for them; Gruel was afterwards substituted, and then we got back to Milk again.

You wished to have Milk for the Children to obviate the Complaint; was that because you thought it was better for them?

Yes.

Can you state who were the Members of the Visiting Committee who were in favour of Milk Diet, and who were those who entertained a contrary Opinion?

I know that Mr. Colthurst and Mr. William Baker and myself, and I believe the Reverend Henry Parsons, thought together, but I do not know who the other Gentlemen were.

Who were on the Committee?

The Visiting Committee were, the Reverend Henry Parsons, the Reverend Samuel Starkey, the Reverend N. Ruddock, Mr. Richard Meade

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King, Mr. Thomas Poole, Mr. R. J. Colthurst, Mr. Thomas C. Colthurst, Mr. William Baker, and myself; but then a Portion of those Gentlemen were the Visiting Committee over the North Petherton House.

Who were the Visiting Committee over the North Petherton House?

Mr. Parsons, Mr. Starkey, Mr. Richard Meade King, and Mr. Thomas Colthurst.

1198 *Did those Gentlemen, who you say were particularly interested in the North Petherton Workhouse, attend at the Visiting Committee at the Bridgwater Workhouse?*

They did not, except when Clothing or any thing of that Sort was to be selected.

They did not take any Charge of the Bridgwater House?

No.

Mr. Parsons, Mr. Robert Colthurst, Mr. Baker, and Mr. Ruddock were in favour of the Change?

I am not certain with respect to Mr. Ruddock, but I think Mr. Ruddock was.

Did not the Guardians who had more particularly Charge of the Bridgwater Workhouse wish for the Change?

Yes.

The Committee used to meet on the Mornings of the meeting of the Board?

Yes; those were our regular Days.

You reported to the Board what had passed at this Meeting?

Yes.

Did the Medical Officer always attend your Meetings?

No, he did not.

Only when he was sent for?

I would not say only when he was sent for, for he might occasionally come in; but I recollect that on the Day in question I requested his Attendance.

He did not attend regularly?

No.

His Communications were not always made in Writing?

No.

They were made in Conversation?

Yes; sometimes in Conversation.

Though the Medical Officer was not present in Person, was not there his Sick Report of Persons in the House always laid before the Visiting Committee?

Generally the Committee inquired how Things were in the House, and if there was any general Sickness I believe we had the Book before us; but the Medical Officer's Report was generally considered more for the Information of the Board; that the Committee did not take cognizance of that so much as the Board itself.

Did not you think it your Duty, as a Visiting Committee, to inquire into the general State of the House?

Yes; but the Medical Book gave a View of the whole throughout the District. Was the whole of the Information received the Book containing Report of the sick in the House?

Yes, it was, generally.

Did you ever visit the North Petherton House?

Never.

Did you know how the Children that were there were?

I think they were very well there.

With the Gruel?

I do not know whether they had Gruel there.

Do not you know that a great many Children at North Petherton died?

I do not know that.

1199 *When you first became aware that the Diet of the Workhouse was considered unwholesome you were deterred from pressing any Change on the Consideration of the Board from your Knowledge of the Opinions of the Majority?*

That the Majority were in favour of strictly adhering to the Dietary; considering that we were a Minority, we must submit of course.

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

The Reverend SAMUEL STARKEY is called in, and examined as follows:

YOU are one of the Guardians of the Bridgwater Union?

I am.

Have you been so from the Formation of the Union?

Yes.

Have you been a pretty constant Attendant at the Board?

Yes.

At the Beginning of the Union a Committee was appointed to prepare a Diet Table?

Yes.

A Dietary was adopted at the Recommendation of that Committee?

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Yes.
Four Dietaries were submitted to them?
Yes; we were to choose one of them.
Were you at the first Meeting of the Board?
I was.
Some Resolutions were proposed?
Yes.
Who proposed those Resolutions?
I forget the Guardian's Name; I think Mr. Poole was one.
The different Bye Laws were moved and seconded by different Guardians?
Yes.
They were laid openly before all the Board of Guardians?
Yes.
There was nothing adopted surreptitiously or secretly?
No; the Guardians proposed them themselves.
Then a Committee was chosen to consider the Dietary?
Yes.
You proposed to hire the Bridgwater Workhouse?
Yes.
You hired that ready furnished for Two Years, with all the Furniture in it?
Yes.
A Committee was appointed to inquire how many it was capable of holding?
The Inquiry was made by the whole Board.
Were you a Member of that Committee?
Yes; there was no Committee; but I was present at the Board.
Was the North Petherton Workhouse taken at the same Time?
No.
When was the North Petherton Workhouse taken?
I think Three or Four Meetings afterwards.
What was the Object for which the North Petherton Workhouse was engaged?
For the Children.
Was that the principal Object?
Yes.
1200 *It was thought a better place for the Children; the Matron was reckoned a clever Woman*

in the Management of Children?
Yes; she had been the Matron of the House before.
And there was a good Schoolmistress there?
Yes.
After this do you recollect the first Discussions which arose about Illness in the House?
I do not recollect the Date.
You were a pretty constant Attendant?
Yes.
Do you recollect when it was first brought to the Cognizance of the Board of Guardians that there was any Illness in the House, or that any part of the Dietary disagreed with any of the Inmates of the House?
I think it was in October, but I am not certain.
Do you remember a Letter from Mr. King being received on the 25th of October on the Subject of the Children and sick having Gruel?
I have seen that Letter since; but I am not certain that I recollect its being brought to the Board.
Will you charge your Memory with this, whether previous to the Receipt of the Letter any thing had been suggested respecting the Diet of the Children, or any other Persons in the House?
I cannot recollect that there was any thing previous, though there was Sickness in the House previous to that; but whether that came before the Board I cannot say.
What Knowledge had the Board of the Sickness in the House?
From the Visitors Report.
Was it the habit of the Visiting Committee to deliver their Report to the Chairman, who read it?
Yes.
It was from that you derived your Information?
Yes.
Do you remember any Communication from the Visiting Committee on the Subject of Sickness, and the Expediency of altering some part of the Diet Table, over and above that of the Children?
Am I to understand whether there was a Motion submitted, or whether there was a cursory Conversation?
Was there any Discussion that did not actually come in the Shape of a Motion?
I think there were Conversations which did not come in the Shape of a Motion.

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Do you recollect when those Conversations were?

No, I do not.

*Do you remember who introduced those
Conversations?*

I think no Guardian in particular.

Was it one of the Visiting Committee?

No, I think not.

*Do you remember either on the 18th of October,
or the Meeting preceding, that of the 11th of October,
the Visiting Committee making a Report represent-
ing that the Children were sick, and that it was
desirable to alter the Diet Table, or any thing of that
Kind?*

I am not quite sure about the Date.The
Visiting Committee retired to consider at one
Time, — I cannot recollect the Date, but I should
imagine it arose out of some Conversation on
the Subject, — the Committee retired to consider
the Diet Table.

Were you one of the Visiting Committee?

I was one of the Visiting Committee of North
Petherton Workhouse.

1201 *Were you one of the Visiting Committee of
the Bridgwater Workhouse?*

No, I was not.

*Did you have any Discussion among yourselves
with respect to the Diet of the Children?*

I do not think that the Discussion was
confined to the Diet of the Children.

*Had you any Discussion respecting the Diet in
general?*

We occasionally had; we had to retire at one
Time to discuss about the Diet, whether it was
to be altered or not.

*Was that Diet, the Alteration of which you had to
discuss, the Diet of the Children, or the Diet
generally of the House?*

I think the Diet generally.

*Are you aware that the Children on the Formation
of the Union had Milk?*

Yes, I am.

Then it was altered to Gruel?

I think that there was a Difference between
the Two Houses; I think that the Milk Diet in the
North Petherton House was continued for some
Time after the Gruel was introduced in the
Bridgwater House.

*Will you take the Visitors Book of the North
Petherton Workhouse, and see at what Time the
Gruel was first adopted in that House?*

I see on the 10th of September an Entry of my
own, in answer to the Ques tion, "Is the established
Dietary duly observed?" "Yes, with the Exception of Milk
being used instead of Gruel. "The next Entry is the
17th of September, by Mr. King: "The Gruel will be
used instead of Milk next Saturday. "

Will you read the next Entry?

September the 24th, signed by Mr. King:
"Gruel is now used strictly according to the Dietary. "

That Alteration was made in consequence of the Diet
which had been established being conformed to strictly?

Yes.

How long did that continue in the North Petherton
Workhouse; was it ever altered back again to Milk?

On the 2d of March 1837 there is, in answer
to the Question, "Is the Dietary duly observed?"the
Entry, "Yes; except that Milk is used, as has been done
for some Time. "

Do you find any Entry previous to that Time of the
Period when they returned to Milk?

No, I do not.

Do you recollect the Time when they returned to Milk in
the North Petherton House?

No, I do not.

Do you know the Occasion on which they returned to
Milk, and the Cause of the Return?

I recollect the Matron of the House asking to
return to Milk, merely from her own Idea at the
Time, but I cannot recollect the Date.

Did she give any Reason?

That she preferred the Milk to the Gruel;
there was no particular Reason that she gave
me.

*Was there any particular Complaint in the North
Petherton Workhouse at that Time?*

The Hooping Cough, I think, prevailed, and
the Measles.

Many had the Measles there?

Yes.

*Some came with the Measles from Bridgwater, did
they not?*

I do not recollect any coming from
Bridgwater with the Measles.

1202 *Did they take the Measles after they came
from Bridgwater?*

All those, I apprehend, that came had the
Measles while they were there.the only Children
I recollect coming from the Bridgwater House
came in a convalescent State.

Convalescent from what?

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From the Measles, I think; there were as many as Six or Seven came.

Was it from Diarrhoea they came convalescent?

No, I think not.

Were you present at the Board when Mr. King's Letter was brought, on the 25th of October?

I cannot recollect its being produced at the Board; but I must have seen the Letter on that Day.

You do not recollect what passed upon that Occasion?

No, I do not.

Do you recollect being there on the following Week, the 1st of November, when a Letter came from Mr. Poole, expressing his Satisfaction at the Change which had taken place in consequence of the Change of Diet?

I do not recollect the Letter being produced at that Time; I recollect my Attention being called to it afterwards, when Mr. Bowen's Pamphlet was brought forward.

Do you recollect at a subsequent Time a Letter from Mr. King desiring that old Persons with sore Legs might not be sent into the House?

No, I do not.

In the Month of December?

I cannot charge my Memory with that.

Do you remember any Application being made subsequently to that from the Medical Officer that the Dietary should be changed?

There was some Application, I think, with reference to the Subject of the Bread and Cheese.

That was in April 1837, was not it?

I rather think it was.

The Question respects the Month of October 1836; do you recollect any Application being made for a Change in the Diet at that Time?

I really cannot say that I recollect any written Application.

Do you remember any Complaint being made of the Fulness of the Workhouse?

I have heard at different Times at the Board the Visiting Committee say "Do not send any more Paupers into the House on account of its being full. "

Did the Board comply with those Wishes?

Yes; as far as they could.

As far as possible they abstained from sending in?

Yes; and I think the Information was for that

Purpose, merely to lead to our not sending those in who could otherwise be provided for.

Did you, in point of fact, comply with that?

Certainly.

Did Mr. Baker come forward with the Death Book in his Hand, stating how many had died, and requesting that no more should be sent into the House?

I do not recollect Mr. Baker desiring us not to send in more; I recollect his desiring we would send no more than we could help.

Do you recollect his coming forward with the Death Book in his Hand, stating the Number of Deaths which had taken place?

I do not recollect that particular Circumstance; I have heard of it since.

1203 *Do you recollect his being told, either by the Chairman or by any body else, when he made the Representation on the Subject of the Death Book, that the House had not so many as it was reported capable of holding, and therefore they should continue sending them in?*

No; I never recollect its being put in that Shape at all.

Do you recollect his making any Representation?

Whenever we had a Representation from the Visiting Committee we considered how many the House had been reported to hold, and we sent in a few others; the House was not full in our Idea when we did so.

When you were applied to not to send in more on account of the House being too full, did you refer rather to the Report made by the Committee, who reported on the Number the House was capable of containing, than to this Application on the Part of the Committee?

I do not think we were ever applied to not to send in any more, only no more than we could help.

Did you on those Occasions conform to that Suggestion, or did you betake yourselves to the Report of the Committee, that it would hold a certain Number, and send in the Number which the House was represented to be capable of holding?

We always attended to the Wish of the Visiting Committee, and abstained from sending in any except those we could not possibly otherwise provide for.

Do you recollect a Proposition made by any Member of the Board to change to the Dietary at any Time previous to the Termination of the first Year?

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I do not remember any Motion to that Effect.

Had the Board of Guardians any Means of knowing the State of the House except from the Book of the Visiting Committee, which was laid before the Board, and read by the Chairman?

No.

Has the Report been regularly read from the North Petherton Workhouse as well as the Bridgwater?

Yes.

Have you frequently visited the North Petherton House?

Yes.

Did you put down the Answers you find there at Haphazard, or after examining the House, and ascertaining the Truth of the Answers you put down?

Of course I went round the House.

You satisfied yourself as to the Facts before you stated those Answers?

Certainly.

They were not put down at Haphazard?

Certainly not.

You were elected a Member of the Board of Guardians for 1837?

Yes.

Do you recollect an Application being made shortly after the Beginning of the Second Year, for a Change in the Diet, by Mr. Ruddock?

Mr. Ruddock applied for a Change of the Diet Table.

On the 14th of April, was not it?

I think it was.

What passed upon that Occasion; was Mr. Ruddock at that Time one of the Visiting Committee?

He was.

Did he make an Application to the Board by Motion?

There might have been Conversation, but there was no Motion.

Will you state to the Committee what took place upon that Subject on the 14th of April, so far as you recollect it; you were Vice Chairman that Year, were not you?

Yes, I was.

1204 *It appears that you were present on that Day?*

Yes; on the Day that the Conversation took place with the Visiting Committee.

There appears to be a Report from the Visiting Committee?

That was not the Day that Mr. Ruddock made any Motion to the Board

The Answer of the Visiting Committee on the 14th of April to the Fire Question, "Is the House clean and well ventilated in every Part?" is "Yes": to the Second, "Are the Inmates generally healthy, or is there any Sickas prevalent among them? If so, state Particulars, and especially if any dance ous or highly infectious Case of Illness exists in the House, "the Answers "There is still Diarrhea, and a Disposition to increase, and the Media Officer recommends Rice and Milk as a Substitute for Bread and Cheese Dinners on Two of the Days. " "Signed N.Ruddock. " Do you recollect hearing that Report on the 14th of April?

Yes, I recollect it.

Do you recollect Mr. Ruddock doing any thing in consequence of that?

No; that is what I heard.

Was there any Discussion upon that?

No.

You are sure there was no Discussion upon that?

As certain as I can be; I have no Recollection of any Discussion.

Do you recollect Mr. Ruddock making a Speech upon that Occasion, an proposing a Change of Diet?

I do not recollect his Speech at all.

Do you recollect Mr. Warry interfering, and saying, "We cannot entertai any thing of that Sort; we have a Diet Table, and must adhere to it," and by that Means preventing any Motion being made?

Certainly not.

If such a Thing had occurred should you have recollected it?

I have no Doubt I should.

You were Vice Chairman?

Yes.

Where did you sit as Vice Chairman?

Next to Mr. Warry.

If such a Thing had occurred you must have heard it?

I could not fail to have heard it.

You are quite certain you never heard it?

I am quite certain no Motion was ever made.

Was there any private Conversation between Mr. Ruddock and Mr. Warry upon that Occasion?

I think not.

Do you recollect Mr. Bowen coming forward at

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that Time with the Dec Book in his Hand, and making any Speech or using any Arguments to change the Diet?

No.

Should you have recollected that if it had taken place?

I think, certainly, I could not fail to recollect it.

The Week after that you were in the Chair, were you not?

Yes.

Do you remember any thing passing about the Diet Table upon the Occasion?

Yes; there was some Conversation.

Do you remember this Minute being brought before the Board by the Visiting Committee: "Is the House clean and well ventilated in every part If not, State Particulars of every Defect or Omission. — The House is as clean as cover all the Circumstances it can be; but from the bad State of the House cannot be made clean or well
1205 *Are the Inmates generally healthy, or is there any Sickness prevalent among them? If so, state Particulars, and especially if any dangerous or highly infectious Case of Illness exists in the House. The Inmates are not generally healthy; Diarrhæa prevails. "Signed by Thomas W. Inman, James Somers, and H. Barker, Auditor?*

I read that.

You recollect reading that?

Yes.

Was any Proposition made in consequence of that on the Subject of the Diet Table?

I think that was the Day that the Doctors were asked to attend.

Were the Doctors desired to attend upon that Occasion?

Yes.

Was that the Meeting at which they attended?

"It was thereupon moved by Mr. William Pitman King, and seconded by the Reverend Noblett Ruddock, that the Medical Officer be requested to attend the Board, for the Purpose of giving Information as to the State of the Health of the Paupers relative to the Minute above stated. Carried unanimously. Mr. Abraham King, Medical Officer, was thereupon sent for, who soon after attended at the Board, and confirmed the Report of the Visiting Committee, and stated that the Paupers above Sixty who were allowed Tea and Sugar did not suffer from Diarrhæa so much as those that were dieted on Gruel, and recommended for the present that Rice be substituted for Gruel. "

You perfectly recollect that having passed?

Yes.

Do you recollect what was done in consequence of that; did the Board agree to the Proposition?

Yes; "which the Board agreed to. "

Was any thing done after that with respect to a complete Change of the Diet Table; was an Application made to the Poor Law Commissioners to be allowed to change the Diet Table?

Yes.

Do you remember when that Proposition was made; was it the same Day, or at a subsequent Meeting?

I forget whether it was made on that Day or not.

But it was made on that Day, or about that Period?

Yes.

To that Proposition did the Poor Law Commissioners assent?

Yes.

Did the Board of Guardians wait for the Consent of the Poor Law Commissioners, or did they act upon the new Diet Table in the Interim as soon as they had heard Mr. King's Report?

I forget whether they acted or not; I recollect there was a long Conversation whether they should wait, or whether they should act immediately.

Do not you recollect how the Conversation terminated?

I think that we did act upon it immediately.

Afterwards you applied to the Poor Law Commissioners, and they agreed to a new Dietary?

Yes.

That new Diet Table was immediately adopted?

Yes.

What was the Result of that Diet Table?

I think it was beneficial.

Have you continued a Guardian up to this Time?

Yes, I have.

1206 *Was not there a general Approbation of Mr. Warry's Conduct in the Chair at the Termination of the first Year?*

Yes.

Was there any thing of the same Sort occurred at the End of the second Year, the other Day?

Yes.

Was that unanimously carried?

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I was not present till late that Day.

Were you present at the first Meeting of the new Board?

Yes.

Who was elected Chairman at the first Meeting of the new Board in 1838?

Mr. Bouverie.

Did any body propose that Mr. Warry should be elected?

No; I believe not.

There was no Proposition made?

No.

Were you present the other Day at the Election of the Medical Officers?

No, I was not.

Are you Vice Chairman this Year?

No.

You have stated that you recollect a Discussion in the Visiting Committee with respect to the Change of the settled Dietary once?

Yes, I believe there was a Discussion more than once.

A certain Number of the Committee pressed for this Alteration?

Yes.

But the Majority were against it?

They were.

Upon what Ground were the Majority against the Alteration?

They were not satisfied that the Gruel was the Cause of the Diarrhoea.

Did it arise from the Notion that they had not the Power to alter the Dietary?

Not the least.

Or that it would be expedient not to alter it hastily, in consequence of its having been sanctioned by the Poor Law Commissioners?

No; the Reason we did not alter it was that we were not agreed, for it was that which occasioned the Doubt; when we asked our Medical Officer he stated that Bread and Cheese would do the same, if it was continued.

Which of the Medical Officers stated that?

I think it was Mr. Poole, but I am not certain.

Did he state that it would produce Diarrhæa?

Whether it was his own Opinion I cannot say; but he stated that any Diet continued without Alteration would have the Effect of disarranging the Stomach; the Bread and Cheese was the Substance mentioned. Mr. Poole, the ex

officio Guardian, asked the Question, whether it was not entertained as an Opinion that any Food would have the same Effect if continued without a Change.

Do you mean as producing Diarrhoea, or producing some Derangement of the Bowels?

I suppose some Derangement of the Bowels.

The Notion on the Part of those who were anxious to have the Diet changed was that the Gruel produced Diarrhea?

Yes.

1207 *Was there any Notion on the Part of any body that Bread and Cheese would produce Diarrhea?*

No; I do not think it was put in that Way; I think they only said that any Diet continued would produce a Complaint, – a Disease.

A Disease of the same Kind?

Yes; and we were not satisfied that it would.

Was any thing said about its being necessary to adhere to the Dietary which you had chosen?

No; they knew we could alter the Dietary by applying to the Commissioners.

Was it never stated by the Majority that the Dietary having been fixed it could not be altered?

No.

Did you ever hear that stated by Mr. Warry at the Board?

No.

Were you there when the Governor came to ask Leave to absent himself in consequence of being ill?

Yes.

Did you ask what was the Matter with him?

I think he sent a written Application before he appeared.

What did he then state?

He stated that he was ill with the Complaint of Diarrhæa.

He appeared before the Board?

Yes.

Were any Questions asked him as to his own State?

Yes.

What did he state?

He stated that he had been suffering very much from Diarrhæa, and that he wished to absent himself for a Time, to go to Clifton.

What Appearance did he make?

He looked very ill at the Time.

Did he state that his Wife was ill?

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I do not recollect any Statement respecting his Wife.

Did he state that his Children were ill?

I do not remember that, but I think I saw his Children and his Wife the same Day, or the Day after.

Do you take upon yourself to say that they were not ill?

I cannot take upon myself to say that they were not ill.

Did they appear ill?

I did not make any Observation upon them; they were about the House; he may have Children I did not know; our Attention was not called to his Wife or his Children.

When he stated that he was ill of Diarrhæa, did you ask him how far he had eaten of the Gruel?

No.

Did you ask him how he conceived he had become ill?

No; I do not think there were any Questions put to him; he stated that he was ill, and when we saw that he was we gave him Leave to go.

You did not question him how far he had contracted this Disease from any one in the House?

No; I think not.

The Board were at that Time aware that the Diarrhoea was in the House?

Yes.

1208 *That was the general Subject of Conversation?*

Yes.

You do not live in Bridgwater?

No.

Did you ever hear at that Time that this Disease was infectious?

No.

Did you ever hear that stated in Conversation?

No. I never thought it was infectious; I used to go to the House repeatedly.

Were you ever cautioned by any Medical Man?

No. I used to go there often; I visited every Day before the Meeting; I used to go over the House; I did that as being a Guardian.

In what State did you find the House?

There were several sick in the House.

Was it crowded?

I do not recollect having seen the House what I should call too full.

Did you ever inquire about the Number of Persons sleeping in One Bed, either Adults or Children?

No.

Did you ever find any disagreeable Smell in the House?

No.

Did you ever see any of the Parties who were ill of this Diarrhoea in a State of Filth in their Beds?

No; I heard of that once or twice.

During that Time?

Yes; I heard of it from Mr. Bowen.

That would be after March?

No; it was during that Year.

Was that before he was elected Guardian?

No; it was after he was elected Guardian..

Did you perceive any musty Smell, or Smell of Closeness?

The House has always that Smell, because it is damp, I should think.

Did you know the House before the Formation of the Union?

No, I did not; I went over it once before the Formation of the Union.

Was there that Sort of Smell in it then?

Yes; I think more so.

You visited every Week after the Meeting of the Board?

Yes; I did before the Meeting.

Did you up go to the Bedrooms?

Always.

Did you go into the Sick Wards?

I did, always.

You did that regularly?

Yes; every Day, except one.

Was it from the Fear of Infection you did not go then?

No; I was not in Bridgwater.

Were you ever cautioned by any body that there was an infectious Disorder, and that you ought not to go?

No.

Did the Medical Man never tell you that?

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I do not recollect that he did.

1209 *If he had told you that should you have gone?*

I certainly should not, if he had told me that it was not prudent; I merely wanted to satisfy my own Mind.

Did Mr. King know you were in the habit of making those Visits?

I have met him in the House.

During the Time the Diarrhoea was raging?

Yes; I think it was; I think on more than One Occasion he went into the House with me.

He did not tell you you were running any Risk?

No.

He did not tell you to put a little Brandy in your Mouth, or to take care to come with a full Stomach?

No.

You are quite sure of that?

Certainly.

You could not have forgotten that?

No; for I should most certainly have adopted his Precautions.

And reported it to the Board?

Most probably I should.

Did you never hear in Bridgwater that there was Infection in the House?

No; I do not recollect hearing of any Infection, except from the Measles

Never from the Diarrhæa?

Never.

Did you never take the Trouble to inquire how it was that so many of those Parties, notwithstanding the Change of Diet which might be ordered by the Medical Men for sick Persons, remained sick of Diarrhæa?

I did not; but there were in the neighbouring Parish to my own, Cannington, many Persons lying ill of Diarrhæa.

How far is Cannington from Bridgwater?

Four Miles.

You are the Rector of Cannington?

I am of Charlinch, the adjoining Parish.

Were there any fatal Cases of Diarrhea in your own Parish?

I do not know whether they were fatal or not in Cannington.

You never heard in Bridgwater that there was a Notion that this Disease in the House was infectious?

Not the least. There was at the Time also Influenza prevalent; I heard of that being infectious, but I never heard of Diarrhea being infectious; many Parties in the House, I apprehend, had Influenza.

Does that appear upon the Medical Report?

I am sure in the North Petherton House they had, but I am not certain as to the Bridgwater House.

You say that you went over those Wards and over the Rooms, and never smelt any disagreeable Smell, such as would be occasioned by the Prevalence of Diarrhea?

No; I am certain of that.

Supposing other Persons have said there was such a Smell in the House, do you apprehend that they have stated that which was not true?

They must have gone at other Times.

Did you go every Week?

I think most Weeks; during the first Year I attended the Board nearly every Week, and I used to go to the Workhouse most Weeks before the Meeting of the Board.

And you never smelt a Smell arising from Diarrhoea on any Occasion?

Never.

1210 *Did you ever inquire how many Persons were sleeping in a Bed?.*

No; but when I used to go to the House the House was always cleaned up for us to go through; when we went to the House it was some Time after Breakfast, when they had cleared away the Breakfast Things, and washed the Place; the Beds were generally made when we went to the House.

You would see sick Persons lying in their Beds?

Yes.

Did you never smell any thing unpleasant under those Circumstances?

I never smelt any thing unpleasant from Diarrhæa; there was a Smell from the Closeness of the Rooms, from Persons being confined in them. I was never in the least inconvenienced by any Smell.

Were your Visits to the House always on the Days of the Board meeting?

Yes; previous to the Meeting.

Did the Visiting Committee of the Bridgwater House always make their Report in Writing?

Yes.

Do you mean to say they ever added any Report

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beyond their written Reports?

I never knew any other.

It never occurred that the Gentlemen forming that Committee, or any Member as representing the Committee, made a Statement viva voce beside the Medical Reports?

Yes, I think I have heard them speak as to their Reports.

Was Gruel cheaper than Milk?

I do not know.

There was Sickness in the House in the Month of October 1836?

Yes.

You know that that Sickness continued with more or less Violence up to April 1837?

Yes.

Had not the Guardians previous to that Time been repeatedly told that that Sickness was occasioned by the Gruel?

I do not recollect that we were repeatedly told that.

Were you ever told it?

I think that Mr. King stated it in his Letter.

Was there any general Alteration made in the Diet till April 1837?

No general Alteration till we had an Order from the Comissioners.

You continued using the Gruel, when you had heard from these Persons that it was injurious to the Health of the People, from October in one Year till April in the next?

The Gruel was not commenced at the Commencement of the Union.

Were you not informed by the Medical Men that that was the Cause of the Disorder?

By Mr. King's Letter.

Was not it continued from October to the following April, notwithstanding Persons were ill at the Time, and notwithstanding you were informed by some of the Medical Men that that was the Occasion of the Disorder?

I believe it was.

When the Dietary was altered in April 1837 did the People get well of the Diarrhæa?

Mr. King states so in his Letter.

Do you know, either of your own Knowledge or from the Information of Persons who attended the Workhouse, that they got well after April 1837?

All my Information is derived from that Letter.

1211 *That Letter is in the October previous; Mr. Ruddock's Application was in April; did they not get better after the Change of Diet?*

I do not recollect Mr. Ruddock's Application.

You have stated that Mr. Ruddock applied for a Change of Diet on the 14th of April?

I do not recollect Mr. Ruddock making the Application.

Are you frequently in Bridgwater?

h About once a week; I was at that Time.

Did you never hear Persons in the Town speak of the State of the Work.house at that Time?

I had personal Knowledge of the Workhouse.

Did you not hear a great Number of Persons in Bridgwater express them.selves as to the State of the Workhouse?

I have never Communication but with the Board; I used to go home from E the Board immediately.

You say that the Majority of the Visiting Committee were not satisfied that the Gruel was the Cause of the Diarrhea, though the Diarrhæa began after the Use of the Gruel, and continued to the Month of April?

They were not satisfied that that was the Cause.

You have stated that there was no other Information of the Gruel being pro ductive of Diarrhea but what you heard from Mr. Abraham King's Letter of the 25th of October?

No.

Does that Letter say that it is generally productive of Illness, or only that it affects the Children?

Only the Children. I think there was a Letter of Mr. Poole's, which rather did away our Impression from this Letter of Mr. King's, on the 1st of November.

Do you collect from Mr. King's Letter that Gruel is productive of Diarrhea, or is unhealthy, or has any Effect on any Persons but the Children?

Merely the Children.

You have no Information that the Gruel was considered unwholesome during this Period but that Letter?

No; I recollect the Impression on the Minds of the Committee was, that this Letter was not at all conclusive, or did not give us any Idea

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whether it was the Children or grown up
People, or whether the Gruel would affect the
grown up People in the same way it affected the
Children'

*Is this the Letter you refer to from Mr. Poole on
the 1st of November 1836: "Gentlemen, The Alteration
recommended to the Board of Guardians last Week
respecting the Dietary of the sick at the Workhouse has
proved very advantageous, and they are now daily
improving, and surrounded with every necessary Comfort,
and the Governor has strictly attended to the Orders of the
Medical Officer " ?*

Yes, it is.

*That clearly shows that sickness had prevailed
before?*

Yes; but Mr. King did not attend at the
House.

*Were you Vice Chairman of the Board at the Time
of the Dispute between the Board and the Medical
Officers?*

Yes.

*Were you there when Mr. Ward produced his
Testimonials?*

Yes.

*Did you see at the Time a Card of his which was
produced, published in Newcastle-on-Tyne, or dated
Newcastle-on-Tyne, with respect to his being a
Licentiate of Leyden, and so on?*

We had a great many Testimonials.

Did you see that particular Card?

I cannot recollect it; I looked over all his
Testimonials'

*Did Mr. Ward appear in Person before the Board
when he was elected?*

Yes; certainly he did.

1212 *Did he not state where he had been employed,
and what he had been?*

He stated that he had been living at
Newcastle-on-Tyne; it was from there he wrote
to the Board.

Did he state any thing about himself?

That he had been in Practice in London, and
so on.

*Did you take any pains to inquire into the Truth
of those Statements?*

No; not further than his Testimonials.

*You took his Testimonials, and from those elected
him?*

Yes.

You made no Reference to any Person with regard

to the Truth of these Statements?

No; I conceived them to be true.

*You considered his Testimonials to be of a very
high Order?*

Yes.

And very numerous?

Yes.

*Quite as numerous as the Medical Men in
Bridgwater produced?*

Yes; much of the same Character.

*Do not you think it would have been as well to
have inquired into the Trei of his Statements?*

I certainly conceived the Testimonials that
the Board received to be corrcet without Inquiry;
they only did the same as was done towards
me.The Testimonials of Clergymen in the
Diocese in which I had been a Curate were
taken to the Bishop, and received without
Question.

*At the Time the Visiting Committee reported the
Poorhouse in Bridgwater to be so full that they
advised that no Paupers should be sent in where it
could be possibly avoided did any Person suggest
that another House should be hired in the Town?*

No; I never heard that.

Nor at any other Time?

I do not recollect that they did at any Time.

*Do you recollect a Man of the Name of Kidner
being sent into the House himself, his Wife, and Five
Children?*

Very well.

*Do you know how that Man could be
accommodated in the House?*

From the Number that were in the House we
thought he could be accom modated.

*Was it ever reported to you that there were no
Beds to put them into?*

No.

*Do you know how many Children were at the
Time sleeping together in a Bed?*

No.Do you know how many Adults were
sleeping together in a Bed? No; I never had my
Attention drawn to that.

*Did the Board inquire as to the Number of
Persons sleeping together in the several Rooms?*

No; they only had the round Numbers of
Persons in the House.

*Was it ever stated that the Governor, when that
Man came into the House had not the Power of
giving him Accommodation?*

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I never heard that'

Did you ever hear it stated that they had no Bed vacant in the House, and that they were obliged to remove a dead Body to place him on one?

No.

1213 *Or that there was but One Bed for the whole Family?*

No.

If there was a Want of Accommodation, a Want of Beds, whose Business was it to inform the Board of Guardians of that?

The Governor's.

Did the Governor inform the Board of Guardians that he wanted Beds?

No.

Did the Board of Guardians ever refuse to allow him any thing which was reported to be necessary?

No.

How long did Mr. Ward tell you he had lived at Newcastle?

I think, as far as I recollect, it was Nine Months.

And that he had practised during that Time?

My Impression is that he did not practise during that Time.

What did you think he was doing?

From the Account I remember he said he had burst a Blood Vessel in London, and had gone to Newcastle-on-Tyne; that he had retired, and that he was living there upon his Means; that, I think, was the Substance of his Letter to us when he first answered the Advertisement.

Do you remember when that was?

I cannot say.

When he told you he went to Newcastle on account of having burst a Blood Vessel did it not strike you as something remarkable that he should go to the North to recover from the bursting of a Blood Vessel?

That did not strike me.

It does strike you now?

When it is put to me it appears strange, certainly.

Do not you think that the Guardians should have inquired?

Certainly I should not, if it was to be done over again, have inquired.

Whatever his Appearance might be?

I do not consider it necessary.

Do you know whether any Friends or Relations of his live at Newcastle?

No, I do not.

You wanted a Doctor to undertake the Business of the District and the Workhouse on particular Terms?

Yes.

You advertized for any Person willing to come upon those Terms?

Yes; we had Two or Three offered.

Amongst those was Mr. Ward?

Yes.

He appeared before you, and produced his Testimonials; they were very ample, very numerous, and very complete, and on the Faith of those Testimonials he was elected?

Yes.

Have you ever heard that any of the Testimonials he had given in were falsified in any way by him, or denied by the Persons who were stated to have subscribed those Testimonials?

Not till I came to London.

Have you heard that since you came to London?

I heard it here Yesterday merely, that some of them were not true, but I did not hear what they were.

Did you hear that some of the Statements on his Card were not true, or some of the Testimonials he had given in?

I did not hear any thing about the Card till To-day

1214 *Did you hear that any Testimonials were not true?*

That was what was hinted Yesterday.

From whom did you hear that?

Mr. Meade King.

Which of the Testimonials did you understand from Mr. Meade King were false?

I did not make any further Inquiry.

You are not certain whether it was that the Testimonials were false and forged, or that his Statement on his Card was false?

I cannot say.

Have you been in the habit of visiting the Work house since it has been under the Management of Mr. Ward?

I have not visited it at all this Year.

Have you heard from any Person any Complaint of Mr. Ward's Treatment of any Patients?

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We had an Examination as to one.
His Treatment of a Woman in Labour?
Yes.
What was the Result of that Examination?
We were satisfied there were no Grounds for
the Charge.
*That was examined into very minutely, was not
it?*
Yes.
What was the Name of the Woman?
Macey, I think.
*Have you ever heard any other Complaint of his
Treatment of Patients committed to his Care?*
No.
*As far as you observed has his Attendance been
satisfactory?*
I have never heard Complaints.
*Have you heard any Complaints put forward by
other Medical Men of Bridgwater of the State of the
Patients in the House or out of the House?*
I have never heard any myself; I have heard
that there were some, but I have never heard
what they were; I think I heard that there was
an Action to be brought against him.
*That was not in respect of a Patient under the
Union? I was not aware of that.You never heard of
any Objection to his Treatment of the Paupers?*
No.
*You were not present when he was re-elected the
other Day?*
No.
*Who was it that told you that some of the
Testimonials of Mr. Ward were suspected of being
false?*
Mr. Meade King.
Did he tell you where he had learned that?
No; it was only an Observation; he
mentioned that since Mr. Ward had been on his
Examination here the Report was that he was
not the Gentle man that we thought he was.
*There was another Gentleman elected besides
him?*
There was another Candidate not elected.
Was not Mr. Moseley elected?
Yes.
Did not he immediately resign?
He did.

1215 *Why did he resign?*
We could not make out.
Did he assign any Reason for his Resignation?
No; he gave us a Reason; he came to me in
the Morning; he had made a general
Application to us to support him, then in the
Morning he told me he would only stand for the
District of Bridgwater.Then Mr. Ward was
elected for the House and District of
Bridgwater, and we appointed him to
Cannington.The Reason which he gave was,
that it would not suit him, because of the
Distance; that he would be obliged to have
Horses.
*He had told you before that he would offer only for
the District of Bridgwater?*
Yes.
*He was not elected for Bridgwater, but for another
District?*
Yes.
*His Resignation of that other Situation was
perfectly conformable then to the Intimation he had
given?*
Yes.
That Gentleman came from London?
Yes.
Were his Testimonials as good as Mr. Ward's?
They were very good, but not so good as Mr.
Ward's.
Have you been much acquainted with Mr. Ward?
Not at all.
The following Letter is read from the Letter
Book of the Union:
Sir
Pilgrim Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 31 July 1837.
I observed in the Lancet of Saturday an Advertisement
to Medical Practitioners from the Board of Guardians,
soliciting the Attendance on the Poor of several Districts.I
should feel proud in accepting the Two former, namely,
Bridgwater (Population 7, 807, together with Workhouse),
at a Salary of 130/.per Annum, also North Petherton
District (with a Population of 4, 670), at a Salary of 75/.per
Annum, or any Two not too distant from each other; would
also reside within the Districts.I have an Independency,
consequently do not rely upon Practice entirely, but still
prefer an active Life.I have been in extensive Practice in
the Old Kent Road, London, for Twelve Years, but in
consequence of rupturing a Blood Vessel was obliged to
retire into the Country.During my Residence in London I
was elected to the Royal Maternity Charity, Doctors
Commons, as Consulting Surgeon, also to the Royal

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Infirmary for Children, and to the Southwark Lying-in Charity of Guy's Hospital. I possess Letters of high Recommendation from Drs. Blundell of Great George Street, Westminster; Ramadge, Ramsbotham, Walshman, and Addison; also from Mr. J. Abernethy, Mr. B.B. Cooper of Guy's Hospital, Mr. C. Callaway also of Guy's, and also Member of the Apothecaries Company, & c. & c.; and in the Year 1826 was Dresser to Mr. Abernethy, and was Pupil at Guy's and St. Thomas's Hospital for Three Years. Should there be any Probability of my being elected to the Office I will immediately, on the Receipt of your Letter, proceed to Bridgwater, and bring all Testimonials with me. Waiting your early Reply'

I have the Honour to remain, Sir'
Your obedient humble Servant'

To R. Underdown, Esq.

J.R. WARD, Surgeon, & c.

You never thought it worth your while to inquire into the Facts stated of his having been connected with certain Institutions?

I thought we had nothing to do with that Letter; we only waited for the Testimonials.

You thought the Testimonials were much more conclusive than the Fact of his having been in Practice?

Yes.

Supposing you had discovered that he had stated that which was not true, would that have altered your Opinion?

Certainly; I should not have voted for him.

Do you know the Handwriting of any one of the Gentlemen who signed the Testimonials?

No.

1216 *There were some Testimonials from public Bodies, which it would have been difficult for him to have forged, were there not?*

Yes, there were.

Testimonials of his having gone through a regular Course of Study?

Yes.

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

ROBERT BEEDON BULLER Esquire is called in, and examined as follows:

WHERE do you live?

At Nether Stowey.

What are you; are you a Gentleman living on your Fortune?

I farm a little.

Are you a Member of the Board of Guardians of

the Bridgwater Union?

I am not now; I was at first.

Were you the first Year?

Yes.

You were so from 1836 to 1837 and from 1837 to 1838? Yes.

Did you attend pretty constantly at the Board?

Tolerably regularly; probably I have attended somewhat less, because we had an ex officio Guardian who attended more frequently, the late Thomas Poole, Esquire.

Did you attend pretty regularly?

Yes, I generally attended once a Fortnight, sometimes more frequently.

You were not on the Visiting Committee?

No, I was not.

Were you made acquainted at that Time with there being a violent infectious Complaint in the House?

No, never.

Have you ever heard of it up to this Time?

No; I never heard that there was an infectious Disease in the House at that Time; I have heard it spoken of since.

When did you first hear of it?

I heard a Medical Man in my own Village say one Day that the Disease was infectious; I never heard of it till within the last Month or Six Weeks.

Who was that Medical Man?

Mr. John Evered Poole. It was at his Brother's House, at Dinner.

Did you hear of the Diarrhoea?

I did.

When did you first hear of the Diarrhea?

I heard of it some Time in the Autumn of 1836, I think.

Do you remember a Letter coming from Mr. King with respect to the Use of Milk for the Children?

I was not at the Board on that Day.

Were you at the Board the Board Day preceding, the 18th of October?

I cannot charge my Memory with that Fact.

It was the Practice of the Visiting Committee to bring the Book, and produce it to the Chairman, who read the Entries, and thus Information was given to the Board with respect to the State of the House?

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Yes.

1217 *Were you ever there at any Time when Mr. Baker or Mr. Axford came, with the Book, and having heard the Minutes read, as Members of the Com mitte, proposed that an Alteration should be made in the Dietary in conse quence of Diarrhæa prevailing in the House?*

I have no Recollection of it.

When did you first hear of Diarrhea?

I heard of it One Week before I attended the Board; Mr. Poole mentioned the Circumstance to me. I will state to your Lordships that which he did say; he had been at the Board, and he said the Diarrhæa was raging in the House.

Did he say "raging"?

That it was existing in the House, and that Rice was recommended by the Medical Man instead of Gruel. On the following Week I was there myself.

Had the Rice been adopted?

Yes, they had it; any thing that was recommended by the Medical Man was adopted; they had adopted the Rice, and on the Fortnight after they had the Sanction of the Poor Law Commissioners.

You are referring to the Period of the Spring of 1837?

Yes.

Did you hear of Sickness in the Autumn or in the Winter of 1837?

Yes; I remember hearing of it in the Autumn of 1836.

How was it brought to your Notice?

I cannot say.

Were you frequently in Bridgwater?

Yes.

Do you attend Bridgwater Market?

Yes.

Are you in the habit of riding to Bridgwater on other Days besides the Board Days?

Yes, I do, sometimes.

Have you much Intercourse with the Inhabitants of Bridgwater?

Yes.

Did you hear among the People at Bridgwater during the Winter any Rumour of an infectious Complaint raging in the House, or any such Complaint that you were afraid of going into it?

No; never in my Life.

Did you ever hear a Remonstrance made by any

Person to the Board against being sent there on account of the Diarrhæa or any infectious Com plaint prevailing there?

No; I have no Recollection of ever having heard any thing, except at the Board, in my Life.

Were there any People of Nether Stowey in the House?

Yes; we had Two Paupers in the House.

Have you ever visited the House?

Yes.

Did you see those Paupers in the House?

Yes.

Did they complain to you that they were exposed to Infection?

No, not at all.

When was it you first visited?

In the Autumn of 1836. What drew me to the House was, there was a Pauper of ours who went into the House just at the Formation of the Union, a Woman by the Name of Sarah Mullins; she went in in a very delicate State, with her Bastard Child; I used to go down occasionally to see her. She died of Consumption some Time in the Autumn. She was a very expensive Pauper **1218** to us, and I never met the Governor of the Workhouse on Board Days, or at any Time, without inquiring how the Woman was going on, and his Answer on one Occasion was, that she was a very expensive Pauper to us; that Port, Beef Steaks, and Mutton Chops were ordered for her, and she would cost our Parish from 6s.6d. to 7s. a Week. I went down occasionally to see her.

How long did she live?

I think she lived only Five or Six Months.

She died in the House?

She did.

What did she die of; Diarrhoea or Consumption?

She was in a galloping Consumption when I saw her.

Was she in a galloping Consumption when she went into the House?

I thought she had then the Appearance of Consumption about her.

You went to see her occasionally?

I did.

You do not recollect the exact Period of her Death?

No.

But she was in the House Six or Seven Months?

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Yes; she was the first Pauper we sent from our Parish; she must have gone some short Time after June.

When you have gone into the House have you ever found any disagreeable Smell in the House?

None whatever.

Was she in the Sick Ward?

Yes.

Were there others there?

Yes.

At what Time in the Day have you visited her?

About One in the Day, I suppose; in the Forenoon.

Was that on Days on which you attended the Board?

Yes, I used to walk down and go there.

She never complained to you of there being a dreadful Smell in the House, or any thing of that Kind?

Not at all; she always told me she was very comfortable there, that she was very well used.

She appears to have died on the 11th of November 1836. You never perceived any Smell?

No.

You were never cautioned against going into the House?

No, never.

You were never told you were likely to get the Infection?

No.

What other Paupers had you?

Harriet Bindon.

How long did she stay in the House?

She came in some Time last Summer; I think she stayed a long Time.

She was removed to North Petherton?

Yes.

Has she ever told you the Way in which she was treated at North Petherton?

When I saw her in the House at Bridgwater she reported very favourably of it. She was rather averse to going in at first, and when I say her I said 'Well, Harriet, how do you go on here?' "Very well, Sir." "You are more comfortable than you expected?" "Yes." "You have nothing to complain of?" "No; I have nothing to complain of." "Have you plenty of every thing?" "Yes; I have plenty of every thing, Meat and Drink, and every thing."

Have you attended the Board more constantly since Mr. Poole's Death?

Yes; I have attended more constantly since Mr. Poole's Death.

When did Mr. Poole die?

He died in last September; I did not attend for Four or Five Weeks; after that I attended regularly.

In the Beginning of the last Parochial Year, in March or April last, did you attend pretty constantly?

Yes.

Did you attend when the Diet Table was altered?

Yes, I did.

How came the Diet Table to be altered?

They said the Diarrhoea was existing in the House.

That was reported to the Board by the Visiting Committee?

It was reported to the Board; I was not there when the first Report came, but on the following Week I was there; they said that Rice had been recommended. Mr. Poole told me Rice had been recommended instead of Gruel. I was there on the Friday following; I recollect the Chairman saying that any thing that was recommended by the Medical Man should be adopted.

Who was in the Chair?

I believe it was Mr. Starkey, but that Week I was absent; I heard so.

Have the Recommendations of the Medical Officers been in all Cases in your Knowledge adopted?

I have never seen an Instance to the contrary.

With respect to infectious Complaint, you never heard until lately of its having prevailed?

No; I never heard of it at the Time, nor except in the Manner I have stated; and I was surprised when I heard that it was considered infectious. At the Time it existed there it was prevailing in Stowey; there were Two or Three died in my Brother's Parish, that is Over Stowey.

How far is that from Bridgwater?

Seven Miles.

Were there any People who died in your Parish?

I do not recollect that there were; I recollect that the Bowel Complaint existed to a great Extent at that Time'

Was not that a very unhealthy Season?

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It was a particularly unhealthy Season.
Were many of your Labourers laid up at the Time?

I do not recollect that there were; but there were a great many Persons laid up.

Have you any Idea that if there had been a Motion made by any Gentleman for a Change of Dietary Mr. Warry would have set him down, and preverted his making the Motion?

I should say not.

Have you ever seen any thing on the Part of Mr. Warry that would lead you to suppose such would be the Case?

I have always seen him behave with the utmost Courtesy to every one; I never saw him refuse to put a Motion.

You say that you did hear that the Diarrhoea existed in the House?

Yes.

You made use of the Word "raging"?

When I say "raging" I heard that it existed in the House.

1220 *To a considerable Extent?*

Yes.

You say at the same Time that you never heard that the Diarrhoea was infectious?

I never did.

Did you ever ask the Question of any body?

No.

You never asked the Medical Man whether he considered it infectious?

No; I had no Conversation with him upon the Subject.

Did you happen to be at the Board when the Governor came to ask for Leave of Absence?

No.

Did you know the Fact?

I heard that he had Leave of Absence.

For what Cause?

From ill Health.

Did you ever make any Inquiry as to the State of the Workhouse; as to its being so full that Persons were put Two in One Bed?

No.

Nor the Number of Children in a Bed?

No; I was not a Visitor; I never visited officially.

You never took particular pains to inquire into the State of the Workhouse?

No.

What you say as to the State of the House was from general Conversation?

Yes.

You had no Idea until lately that the Diarrhæa was infectious?

No.

Had you any Conversation with your Brother as to the Cases of Diarrhea which terminated fatally in his Parish?

I think he had Two who died there, and there was a married Woman that they said it was impossible should recover, but she did recover.

You never heard from him that it was infectious?

No; on the contrary, when he heard lately that it was considered infectious, he said he never considered it infectious.

Did you hear Mr. Evered Poole state that?

Yes; when we were talking about it I heard him say so; I think it was at his Brother's House.

Was Mr. Evered Poole the Brother of Mr. Thomas Poole?

No; he was no Relation.

Mr. Thomas Poole was a much older Man?

Yes; Forty Years older.

Did you happen to visit the Bridgwater Workhouse between the Autumn of 1836 and the End of the following March?

I cannot say whether I may have gone there. What took me there in the first place was the State of Sarah Mullins; she went in in a very delicate State of Health.

Were you at the Board when Mr. Baker made a Statement with respect to the House?

No; I never heard Mr. Baker make any Statement on the Subject.

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

1221 The Reverend NOBLETT RUDDOCK is called in, and examined as follows:

WHERE do you reside?

At Stockland Bristol, Seven Miles on the Western Side of Bridgwater.

Were you an ex officio Guardian or an elected Guardian of that Union?

Elected for my own Parish.

From March 1836 to March 1837?

Yes.

And from March 1837 to March 1838?

I have been a Guardian from the

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Commencement of the Union for my own
Parish, and am still.

*When first the Union was established the Diet
Table was not fixed, was it?*

No, it was not; a Committee was appointed
to determine which of the Diet Tables should be
adopted.

*Till that Time the Diet which had been used under
the old Law was continued?*

It was; it was continued.

*About the Month of August 1836 the new
Dietary was introduced?*

I cannot recollect the Date when it was
introduced, but I think it is likely to have been
about that Time.

Were you a Member of the Visiting Committee?

I was.

*After the new Diet was introduced did any
particular Disorder show itself in the House?*

Not immediately, I believe.

How soon after?

It is so long since, I cannot trace the Time
back.

*Did any Disorder at any Time show itself in the
House?*

Diarrhæa prevailed in the House, certainly.

Do you remember at what Time?

I do not recollect any particular Disorder,
because the House was more or less unhealthy
at all Times, I believe.

*Do you remember the Visiting Committee
desiring Mr. King to attend them about the 25th of
October in that Year?*

I do not recollect the Circumstance; it is not
in my Memory.

*Do you recollect a Letter from Mr. King to the
Board of Guardians on the 25th of October?*

No, I cannot; it is so far back.

*When do you recollect the State of the Workhouse
in respect of the Diarrhoea being brought to your
Notice?*

The first Time that it was particularly
impressed upon my Memory was in the Spring
of the Year 1837.

At what Time in the Spring?

In the Month of April.

*That was the first Time the Diarrhæa was brought
to your Notice?*

More particularly.

*You were a Member of the Visiting Committee
before that?*

Yes, I was; but during the Winter, as I lived
at a considerable Distance from the Town, I
attended when it was my Visiting Week
regularly, but not so regularly at the Meetings of
the Visiting Committee at other Times.

*When you attended in your Visiting Week was
there any thing struck you with respect to the State
of the House?*

I do not recollect any thing previous to the
Time I have mentioned.

1222 *Did you upon those Occasions visit the
Interior of the House?*

I did in my Week..

*Do you recollect at any Time finding Diarrhæa
prevailing there to any great Extent?*

In the Month of April I do.

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I may have found it, but it is not within my
Recollection to state that positively.

If you had found it you would have recollected it?

I remember it was felt that the House was
generally unhealthy, but I really cannot take
upon me to fix any particular Time.

Was the House offensive when you visited it?

No; I have no Recollection of its being
offensive.

*Did you ever have any conversation with the
Medical Man upon the Subject?*

I had at that particular Time I mention, but
not before.

*Previous to the Month of April you had not found
any particular offensive Smell about the House when
you visited it?*

Certainly not.

*Nor had any particular Matter with respect to the
Diarrhoea been brought to your Notice?*

No; not that I recollect.

Did you attribute that to the Diet in any respect?

I am not aware that that was made the
Subject of Conversation

*Did you ever hear that there was Infection in the
House?*

No.

Were you ever cautioned not to visit the House?

No, I was not, individually.

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Mr. King never cautioned you not to visit the House?

No.

In the Month of April you made a Statement to the Board?

I did.

What was that?

I happened to be the Visitor for the Week in the Month of April, and on going to the House I sent for the Governor, to inquire what was the State of the House, as to Health of it; the Governor stated that the House was then very unhealthy, and that the Diarrhæa prevailed to a great Extent.

Do you recollect which Day it was?

You visited on the 14th of April and the 7th of April; on which of those Days was it that was stated?

I should rather think it was the 14th; but I can easily satisfy your Lordship, if you will allow me to look at the Book.(The Book is handed to the Witness.) It was on the 14th, it appears from that Book.I was not aware that I visited on the 7th, but the 14th was my more especial Week; if I made out the Report on the 7th it was in consequence of the Visitor not being there himself.

You have signed it with your own Name; you have not stated that it was for any body else?

I thought it advisable to desire the Governor to request the Medical Officer to attend; he happened to be in the House at the Time, and came.I asked him his Opinion of the State of the House; he said the House was in a very unhealthy State; I then inquired from what Cause; he said from the Prevalence of Diarrhæa; upon which I observed that an official Note should be made to that Effect in my Report to the Board; and I requested him to state to me the Situation of the House, and I would enter it in his own Words; he did, and the Entry which I have made in that Book was taken from his own Mouth.

And that Entry is to this Effect: "There is still Diarrhea and a Disposition to increase, and the Medical Officer recommends Rice and Milk as a Substitute Bread and Cheese Dinners on Two of the Days "

1223 *That you took down from Mr. King's Mouth?*

Yes, I did.

What did you do upon that?

Upon that I made a Report to the Board; but from the Press of Business, which happened

frequently, so that it was necessary to leave the Report of the Visiting Committee to be brought on late in the Day, in order that the Paupers might not be kept waiting too long -it happened that on that Day the Report was not read till the Paupers were dismissed.

Do you mean to say that this Book was not read till after the Paupers had been dismissed?

Not on that Day; the Book was given to the Chairman, and read; and upon the Chairman reading the Report I said, "I beg to make One or Two observations." I then stated that I had made that Entry in the Book from the Mouth of the Medical Officer; that he had stated to me that Diarrhea was very prevalent, and that he had used Rice Milk instead of Gruel for those that had fallen sick of the Diarrhea, and with good Effect, and he thought it would be advisable to substitute Rice Milk, and try the Effect of it upon those who were well, by way of a Preventative; his Object was to accomplish through the Medium of Diet what he otherwise should be obliged to do by the Use of Medicine.This I stated to the Board, and I further added, that if the Medical Officer should find this salutary I thought it would be advisable for the Visiting Committee to meet and revise the Diet Table, upon which the Chairman said—

Who was the Chairman?

Mr. Warry was in the Chair. Upon which the Chairman said, "The Medical Officer must take care not to exceed his Authority; he has ample Power to deal with sick Patients as he may think proper, but he has no Right to alter the Diet for those who are well." Upon which the Subject dropped for that Day.

Did you make any Motion upon that Day?

Not on that Day.

Why did you not make a Motion?

We could not have made it with Propriety on that Day, in consequence of there being so small a Number remaining at the Board; the Members had dropped off from Time to Time, and there were very few left.

Do you mean that the Board had broken up?

No; but, as is usually the Case when a considerable Part of the Business has been disposed of, the Members take up their Hats and walk off, and leave but a few to dispose of the Remainder of the Business.

How came this Business not to be brought on earlier in the Day? The Board of Guardians sit in the

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Town Hall?

Yes.

At what Time did you go up to the Town Hall with the Book?

The Governor takes up the Book.

Do not the Visiting Committee take the Book?

Never.

At what Time did the Visiting Committee go to the Town Hall?

The Visiting Committee met at Nine o'clock, and the Board at Ten, and we adjourned from the Workhouse to the Board Table.

On that Day did you meet at the usual Hour, at Nine o'Clock, at the Work house?

I should think so.

Were you delayed any Length of Time at the Workhouse?

No; I think not.

Then you were at the Town Hall at Ten o'Clock, or soon after?

Yes.

1224 *Is it not the usual Practice for the Report of the Visiting Committee to be read as soon as it is brought in?*

No; a great deal of other Business takes Precedence of the Visiting mittee's Report.

Does the List of Paupers take Precedence?

Not always; but if there is a Press of Business which we are obliged to take in hand which occupies a Length of Time we generally find some Member of the Board make a Motion that the Paupers be called in, that they may not be kept waiting.

Was that done on this Occasion?

I should think it was.

Do you know that it was?

I cannot say that it was.

You thought this a Matter of considerable Importance, -the Change of the Diet Table, and the Report of the Governor that there was a great deal of Sickness prevailing in the House, and that it was likely to increase?

Certainly it was of great Importance.

Would it not have been a natural Mode of proceeding, if you had an important Question to bring forward, affecting the Health of all the Inmates of the Workhouse, if any Gentleman made a Motion that the Paupers be now called in, that you should

interpose, and say, "I have a most important Matter which it is desirable should be brought before a full Board; I propose that that should come on before the other "?

That Report of the Visiting Committee was frequently brought up, and laid aside till the Paupers had been disposed of.

It was not often that the Report of the Visiting Committee contained any Matter so important as this Report did. Would it not have been a natural Thing for you to say, "Let us proceed in the natural Course; the natural Course is, that the Report of the Visiting Committee shall be read before the Paupers come in. I have a most important Question to bring forward, and I move that it be brought forward now "?

It was not done.

Why was it not done?

There was no particular Reason for not doing it that I am aware of.

How many Guardians were remaining at the Time you brought the Question forward?

Perhaps Ten or a Dozen.

Can you recollect whether there were Ten or a Dozen?

No.

It may have been Five or Six?

It may have been.

Perhaps Two or Three?

No.

Were there Five or Six?

I think there must have been Ten.

Do you recollect who they were?

I recollect only One.

Who was that?

Mr. Bowen.

When you brought it forward did Mr. Bowen take any part in this Conversation?

Yes, he did.

Did he press any Change of Diet upon the Board?

No; I am not aware that he pressed any Change of Diet; he recommended the Subject to the Consideration of the Board very strongly.

1225 *But the Board had pretty well broken up?*

There was no great deal more Business to be done.

How late was it, do you recollect?

It might have been between Three and Four o'Clock, perhaps.

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Not later than that?

Very probably not, I should think.

Mr. Bowen, you said, pressed it upon the Attention of the Board; was it that he pressed it upon the immediate Attention of the Board, or that the Board should attend to it at the following Meeting?

I cannot draw a Line immediately between the immediate Attention and the future Consideration of the Board, but he pressed it generally; I should suppose that it was a Subject worthy the Consideration of the Board.

Did he urge it as a Subject that was pressing, and that ought to be taken into immediate Consideration on that Day?

I should think the Manner in which it was treated by Mr. Bowen was that the Subject should be attended to without Loss of Time; and I merely mention that, because when he takes Things up in general he does so with great Earnestness.

Did you urge it as being a pressing Matter that ought to be taken up immediately on that Day?

Not on that Day; but as a Matter that involved the Welfare of the Paupers very much.

As a Matter of considerable Importance, but not as a Matter that you thought ought to be pressed on that Day, considering the Lateness of the Hour and the Thinness of the Board?

I certainly did not remonstrate with the Chairman for not taking it up more warmly than he did; but I thought that I had done my Duty in bringing it before the Board.

Did you urge it upon the Board as a Matter requiring immediate Attention, or did you urge it as a Matter of great Importance, affecting the Welfare of all the Inmates of the House, which ought to be considered at an early Opportunity, but not pressing the Consideration of it at that Time, when the Board was so thin?

I do not imagine that I stated any particular Time when it should be taken into consideration, but merely that it ought to be taken into consideration by the Board.

Did you mean that it should be taken into consideration by the Board on that Day?

That was my Object certainly in making the Observations which I did upon my Report.

You made those Observations when the Board was reduced from a very considerable Number to about Ten?

Yes.

You meant, when you made your Proposition,

that the Board should go into the Consideration of it?

I certainly did.

Did any thing happen afterwards, on any subsequent Day, upon that Subject?

On the subsequent Board Day a Motion was made by one of the Guardians, Mr. William King, which I seconded, that the Medical Officer should be called in to make his Statement as to the Situation of the House.

Was that carried?

It was.

What happened upon that?

The Medical Officer was called in, and gave it as his Opinion that the Diarrhea which prevailed in the House was to be attributed to the Use of the Oatmeal.

1226 *Did he add the Diarrhæa which had prevailed during the last Eight or Nine Months?*

No; he did not go into that; he only went into the present State of the House, to the best of my Recollection, and he recommended that Rice Milk should be substituted for Gruel.

Had you a Discussion upon that?

No, we had not; it was adopted immediately, and carried unanimously; there was no Division at all upon it; it was proposed and carried.

Did Mr. Warry say any thing?

I am not aware that he did; I have no Recollection.

Mr. Starkey was in the Chair upon that Occasion, was he not?

I do not recollect.

Did you ever propose to make a Motion in Writing upon the first Day when you mentioned the Subject?

No; nothing was said upon that Subject.

You have a Bye Law or Standing Order that no Motion shall be made except in Writing?

Yes; there is such a Bye Law. You did not make any Motion on the 14th of April on that Subject?

No.

If you thought the Matter so urgent, and you wished it to be entertained, why did you not make a Motion?

I did not consider that it rested with me, after I had brought the Subject before the Board.

The Subject was brought before the Board on the subsequent Day, and you seconded it; if it was fit and proper to make a Motion on that Day why was it not fit and proper to make it on the former Day?

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We made a Motion on the 21st, in consequence of nothing having arisen on the former Day before the Board.

But nothing could arise till a Motion was made?

Yes; if the Chairman had suggested any thing.

But the Chairman does not put a Question unless a Motion is made?

The Chairman very frequently says, "Some one had better make a Motion upon the Subject. "

Is no Motion made unless the Chairman says, "Somebody had better make a Motion upon the Subject " ?

Oh yes.

Do you often make Motions at the Meetings of the Board?

I do occasionally.

How came you not to make a Motion upon this very urgent Case?

Because the Subject was suffered to drop, and, to make use of common Language, cold Water seemed to be thrown upon the Observations I had made.

What cold Water was thrown upon it?

By the Chairman not taking it up.

Did that prevent your taking it up; have you never made any Motion in the Board that was not supported and approved of by the Chairman?

Yes, I have, certainly.

Why then did you not make this Motion, which you say you thought was very pressing, and of the utmost Importance?

It was a Motion that would perhaps be better reserved till there was a full Board.

Was that the Reason you did not make the Motion?

I do not know whether I should have done so else, because I considered that I had made the Report to the Board as one of the Visiting Committee, and I left it to the Board to deal with it as they thought proper.

1227 *You did not make a Motion at that Time, but thought that the Subject had better be brought before a fuller Board?*

I conceived that I had done all that was incumbent upon me when I had laid it before the Board.

Are you quite certain that the Board was sitting at the Time when you brought this Matter forward?

I am; I have not a Moment's Hesitation about it.

But upon the 21st, when the Motion was made, the Thing was attended to, and the Diet Table was altered?

Yes.

It was brought forward early in the Day?

Yes; when the Medical Officer gave his personal Attendance.

He gave his personal Attendance in consequence of a Motion having been made by Mr. King, and seconded by you, that he should give his personal Attendance?

Yes.

And that Motion was made in consequence of the reading of the Visitors Book?

Yes.

Was that the first Time that you had heard that Diarrhæa was very prevalent in the House?

It was the first Time my Attention was called to it.

Had you not heard that Diarrhea was very frequent in the House before that?

I had heard of it being in the House, but I was not aware that it was at all alarming.

Had you heard that it was infectious?

No.

Did you make Inquiry of the Medical Person about it?

I am not aware that I did.

How came you not to do so?

My Attendance upon the House was not so frequent as the Attendance of some of the Members, in consequence of my Distance from the Town.

You have a Son who is a Medical Man, have you not?

Yes.

Had you any Conversation with him upon the Subject?

Never; I make it a Rule never to talk to my Son upon Medical Subjects.

Do you go to Bridgwater upon other Days besides the Days of the meeting of the Board?

Yes.

Do you live in Society there sometimes?

No; I have very little Acquaintance with Bridgwater.

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

Day 17, 24, July 1838

Evidence of Robert Jolliffe Colthurst,p 1163; Frederick Axford.p 1181; Rev Samuel Starkey, p 1199;
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Did you never hear in Bridgwater that there was Diarrhæa in the House, and that it was supposed to be contagious?

It was not made the Subject of general Conversation that I am aware of.

Are you an Acquaintance of Jonathan Toogood?

Yes; I had a Son who served his Apprenticeship to him.

Are you rather intimate with him?

I am more intimate with him than with some Families, for this Reason, that I have a high Opinion of him; and that induced me to place one of my Sons under his Care.

He is a Man in eminent Practice at Bridgwater?

Yes, he is.

1228 *Does he attend your Family?*

He did attend my Family when I came to reside in that Neighbourhood first

But not during that Winter?

No; he has not attended my Family for a Length of Time.

You had no Conversation with him upon the State of the Workhouse?

No; I can say with perfect Confidence that I never had any Conversation with him upon the State of the Workhouse.

Did you see him during that Winter?

I dare say I did, when I went into Bridgwater.

Did you ever hear from him that there was an infectious Complaint raging in the House?

No.

Do you know Mr. Abraham King?

Yes.

Did you ever hear from him that there was an infectious Complaint raging in the House?

I have no Recollection of it being stated to me by any one.

Were you ever cautioned by either of them not to go into the House?

No.

Did Mr. King ever caution you not to visit the Sick Wards?

No; not that I am aware of.

You would have remembered if he had, should you not?

If I must state either yes or no I should state, no, certainly; to the best of my Knowledge and Belief he never told me so.

Did any of the other Members of the Visiting

Committee state that they had been warned with respect to going into the House?

No.

You never heard that?

No.

Do you think you visited the House as often as once a Month in the course of that Winter?

I visited the House in my Week, which I suppose came once in Two Months, for we visited then singly; One Guardian was appointed to visit for a Week; now we visit by Pairs; Two Guardians visit by the Week; and I should suppose my Turn came about once in Eight Weeks.

When you visited the House was it just before the sitting of the Board?

Always; our Visiting Committee held its Meetings from Nine O'Clock to Ten, and at Ten the Board met. My Attendance during the Winter Months was not so constant as during the Summer, because I was not able to go out, and sometimes I have been confined at home for Two Months.

When you say you visited you mean that you went all through the House?

Yes.

You made a Motion upon some Occasion at the Board, that no Medical Man who was not already employed by the Board of Guardians should be employed unless he was a Licentiate of the Apothecaries Company, and likewise a Member of the College of Surgeons, did you not?

I did.

What would have been the Effect of making that Motion; would it not have prevented Mr. Young from acting as an Officer of the Board of Guardians?

It would have had that Effect at that Time.

Was that the Object of the Motion?

No, it was not'

What was the Object?

Mr. Young, having offered himself as a Candidate, might have suggested to me the Propriety of the Motion, but I made the Motion upon general Principles, and for these Two Reasons:-- the first was to place our Medical Establishment on the most efficient Footing; and the second was to prevent Persons setting un in our Neighbourhood, and undertaking the Care of the Poor, of whose Qualifications we were **1229** not satisfied. The Circumstance of a Medical Man being a Licentiate of the Apothecaries Company, and likewise a Member

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of the College of Surgeons, is the only Test we have to satisfy us that he is a proper Person to take the Care of the Poor, because I know, when my Son was examined before the Company of Apothecaries, one Gentleman was rejected as insufficient; and therefore if Gentlemen present themselves before us for Election, and we elect those Gentlemen to take care of the Poor of the Neighbourhood, unless they are qualified in the kind of Way that I state, we do not know that they are competent to take care of the Poor.

Were all the Medical Gentlemen that were elected before both Licentiates of the Apothecaries Company and Members of the College of Surgeons?

I think I may say with perfect Confidence, that they were.

Do not you know that Mr. Addison was not?

No; I do not at this Moment.

How came you then to make the Motion in this Form, "That Persons who shall be elected to Medical Districts of the Union from this Time, or Persons who are not already Medical Officers, shall be both Members of the College of Surgeons and Licentiates of the Apothecaries Company"? Do you recollect the Date of your Motion?

No, I do not.

How came you to put it in that Form, if you were not aware that those who were already Officers of the Union were not Members?

I might have been aware of it at that Time; I am not at present; if so, the Object was that there might be nothing invidious in the Motion.

You wanted to prevent any fresh Men not qualified from offering their Services?

I had had frequent Conversation with other Gentlemen Members of other Unions, and they had told me invariably that their Medical Men were qualified in both Departments; and it was from that Circumstance that the Necessity of it occurred to my Mind. I knew nothing of Mr. Young at that Time.

But you knew that he was settled in the District?

I knew that he was going to be a Candidate; but it was not particularly directed against him more than against any one else; but at the same Time that might have brought it to my Memory.

Do you happen to know whether the Law gives any Advantage to a Person from being a

Member of the College of Surgeons?

No; I am not aware that it does.

Do you not know that it does not?

With all due Deference to your Lordship, I think that Clause in the Act defective.

But do not you know that the Law does not require it?

It gives this Advantage, that I believe in the public Institutions of this Country, generally speaking, it is necessary that Medical Gentlemen should possess both Qualifications.

By Law?

No; not by Law; but I believe in Hospitals, generally speaking, a Gentleman would not be elected unless he was qualified in both Ways.

That depends upon the Choice of the Governors; there is no legal Dis qualification?

I am not aware that there is.

The Witness is directed to withdraw.

Ordered, That this Committee be adjourned till To-morrow'

Twelve o'Clock.

(151.32.)

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