

has occurred from violence, a suitable and competent officer shall proceed to the spot for the purpose of investigating the cause and instituting such inquiries as may be proper, in order that the facts may be properly stated, so that the public may be satisfied there was no crime or carelessness in the case, or if otherwise, that the crime may be charged upon its author. Such was the course pursued, and such was the mode of examination adopted in the present case. Now what is the value of the evidence on such an examination, and the facts which it brings here, but to derive testimony from which to form opinions. Opinions are no more evidence on medical subjects than on any other. But in matters of unknown risk, men are called to examine and give opinions because those who are not learned or skilled are incapable of forming correct conclusions. But when they have given their opinion and come here to dictate it before you, both parties have a right to question and examine them. Opinions, therefore, in such investigations are deserving of great weight and consideration, and greater liberty is allowed because they are opinions which unskilled persons cannot give.

Those who were called on this occasion were Drs. Heywood and son, and Dr. Green. Whether others should have been called was a matter for the Coroner to determine. It does not appear whether others were called, nor whether any objections were offered against it. Be that as it may, gentlemen, you have now one question to decide. It is whether this death was occasioned by strangulation or something applied to the neck. A very small amount of force would be sufficient to destroy the life of a person prostrated by disease, debility or intoxication. But was there any force applied to produce death in this case? It is proper you should bear in mind that the more feeble the person the slighter would be the physical force necessary to destroy life, and this circumstance of itself would leave less evidence of the crime. Then what are the facts in this case.

Stiles was a resident of this village. He was a diseased, deformed, and feeble man, possessing a small property, and