

long standing, addicted to taking all kinds of medicines. Medicines were a favorite topic of his in conversation, and he eagerly followed the advice of his friends, sometimes doubling the recommended dose to be sure of good results. Evidence was brought from Norfolk, Virginia, where he had lived for a time, and from Liverpool itself, to the effect that he had sampled virtually the whole pharmacopoeia, with special attention to substances normally deemed lethal in sufficient quantity but including also such relatively benign items as quinine compound, cardamom pills, and Seidlitz powders. He was in the habit of dropping into a chemist's shop in downtown Liverpool from two to five times a day for a "pick-me-up" laced with liquor arsenicalis, the quantity of which was steadily increased over ten years. If this suggests sheer aberration on the part of the cotton broker, it must be noted that, as his chemist testified, many other level-headed businessmen he knew liked their daytime potations strengthened with arsenic. Whatever the practice says about Maybrick personally, it says a good deal more about the pressures of Liverpool business life.

By May 1889, one would therefore assume, Maybrick had built up a high tolerance for a wide range of chemicals, pharmaceutical and nonpharmaceutical, against those last days when, as a letter to *The Times* after the trial put it, his stomach served as "a druggists' waste-pipe." For his malady, whatever it was, his doctors prescribed, in addition to measured doses of arsenic, a variety

of substances including strychnine, jaborandi, cascara, henbane, morphia, prussic acid, papaine, and iridin. It was a formidable intake for a patient of whom one physician testified, "He seemed to be suffering from nervous dyspepsia. I should say that he was hypochondriacal." But neither nervous dyspepsia nor hypochondria would seem adequate to account for the voluminous and the disagreeable symptoms Maybrick suffered toward the end, except on the not unreasonable premise that the curative regimen was worse than the disease. In view of his well-attested appetite for those many drugs, one wonders why his wife should even have been suspected of doing away with him. If she was intelligent enough to soak flypaper in a basin, she was also surely intelligent enough to realize that nature or the doctors, or both, would eventually do her work for her. Still, considering how long he had been ingesting those potions and powders without harm, she may be forgiven for doubting that, in his case, nature was to be much relied upon.

The technical and contradictory nature, repetitiveness, and often the repulsiveness of the medical testimony do not recommend the trial record to the layman's attentive reading. But it is lightened by occasional passages in which the atmosphere and action of the courtroom are vividly evoked. At one point, for example, an expert witness handed in as evidence a glass tube containing a "film" composed of arsenic crystals obtained from Maybrick's liver. The judge, James Fitzjames Stephen,

tried two high-power magnifying glasses but was unable to see the film and asked defense counsel to point it out to him. Counsel very properly admonished, "You must look for it yourself, my lord." Stephen tried again, this time with the court chaplain's slate hat as background. After a pause of some time, during which the court was silent, his lordship handed back the tube to the jury, with his two glasses, explaining that one was much more powerful than the other, but the more powerful one required to be so near to the eye on the one hand, and so close to the object on the other that it was very difficult to manage. The jury then proceeded to use the glasses of his lordship, the black coats of their fellow-jurymen being used as a background.

That the judge had to be instructed by counsel as to his proper conduct when presented with an exhibit is a small indication of what was, in fact, a governing circumstance in the trial: his evident incompetence. James Fitzjames Stephen, a brilliant lawyer, legal historian, and man of letters, had become a judge of the high court in 1879. But by now it was obvious that his mental powers were no longer what they had been. H. B. Irving wrote of this disturbing state of affairs with exemplary delicacy:

*"It is impossible for the historian of the Maybrick case to ignore the statement, frequently made, that at the time of her trial the judge's mind was suffering from the early attacks of an insidious disease which, two years later, compelled Sir James to retire from the bench. The judge*