

FORENSIC MEDICINE IN EARLY SINGAPORE (PART I) (1819—1839)

By Y. K. Lee

A brief introduction to the study of the medical history of early Singapore has already been outlined. (Lee, 1973 (b)).

Forensic Medicine has been defined as

“The Science concerned with the application of medical knowledge to certain branches of law, civil and criminal” (Glaister, 1966).

“All branches of medicine shaped to conform with the needs of law. . . . The broad field where medical matters come into relation with the law” (Simpson, 1969).

The early history of Forensic Medicine in Singapore will be described within the frame-work of these definitions. Mention will also have to be made to the Coroner, as it would be impossible to exclude this important official in any discourse on Forensic Medicine. A detailed study of the Coroner in early Singapore (1819-1869) can be found in the *Malaya Law Review*. (Lee, 1972).

The need for the application of medicine to law has been recognised for a long time. For hundreds of years, medical men have been appointed to help the Courts in all parts of the world.

Present-day Forensic Medicine is a very exact discipline, having at its disposal the resources of specialised laboratory and scientific techniques. In the early part of the 19th century, before the rapid “modern” advances of medical and scientific knowledge were made, the potentialities of Forensic Medicine were limited and the ways in which medicine could be applied to assist the law were restricted.

More so in Singapore, far away from the medical and scientific centres of Europe, during the first twenty years of its existence when the place was “primitive”. The practice of Forensic Medicine was confined to forensic pathology and elementary toxicology. There was no such thing as a forensic pathologist. The Residency Assistant Surgeon did all the medico-legal work in addition to his other medical duties. He had no alternative as he was the only civil medical officer in Singapore.

In this far-flung outpost of the Empire, where men out-numbered women 11 to 1, most of the

work of forensic nature resulted from crimes of violence or passion. The crimes were not sophisticated, and the causes of death were also straightforward or unknown or “exotic”. The Medical Officer was concerned mainly with the examination of wounds (mortal or otherwise) and the determination of the nature of injuries and causes of death. Medico-legal autopsies were not involved and medical evidence in court was not complicated.

A chronological description of the medico-legal scene in Singapore during the first twenty years of its existence will now be attempted.

For some time after the founding of Singapore in February 1819, law and order were maintained by the troops, and with the cooperation of the headmen of the various native communities. Singapore was sparsely populated and the island apart from the “Town”, the Cantonment and a few acres under cultivation, was thickly covered by jungle. From February 1819 to December 1822, there were no proper Courts nor a regular Police Force. Martial law prevailed within the limits of the Cantonment, and any civilian serving with the troops or committing offences within the confines of the Cantonment was subject to martial law. Lieut-Colonel William Farquhar as Resident and Commandant was also vested with the authority of Chief Magistrate, and it was left to his discretion to act in his capacities of Chief Magistrate or military Commandant, depending on the case that was brought before him. There is no record of any medico-legal work done during this period. Military justice was the order of the day, and the native chiefs were responsible to the Resident for the police work within their respective jurisdictions.

When Raffles returned to Singapore in 1823, he found that the Settlement had expanded and the population had increased beyond all expectations. He decided that it was time for laws to be passed. From January to August 1823, six Regulations were promulgated. Regulations III and VI provided for the establishment of Courts, the administration of justice and the police force.

It was only after the passing of Regulation VI in June 1823 that there was record of the performance of a Coroner's duty. (There was no official Coroner in Singapore until 1827—see below). Dr. John Crawford, who succeeded Colonel Farquhar as Resident in June 1823, wrote in November to Mr. S. G. Bonham, his Assistant, who was the

Thomson Road General Hospital, Singapore.

Y. K. LEE, A.M., M.D., F.R.C.P. (Lond.), F.R.C.P. (Edin.),
M.R.A.C.P., F.C.L.M., LL.B., Senior Physician.

Registrar of the Resident's Court, the following order: (S.S.R., L. 19, 1823).

"On receipt hereof you are directed to summon and warn twelve good men, one half thereof British-born subjects, and the other half Asiatics, being resident inhabitants of Singapore, to act in the manner of a Coroner's inquiry in your presence touching all such things as may relate to the death of Jaffir, a native of Bengal.

Given under my hand at Singapore, this
19th day of November, 1823.
J. CRAWFURD, Resident."

The earliest existent record of proceedings of a Coroner's Inquest in Singapore—that which was held on 3rd February, 1824—ran as follows: (S.S.R., BB. 2, 1824).

"We, the undersigned, at the requisition of S. G. Bonham, Esq., having assembled at the Court House of Singapore to investigate the circumstances attendant on the deaths of Captain John Hale, Commander of the Brig *Philotax*, and James Young, seaman of the same vessel, from the evidence hereunto annexed, are of opinion, that the said Capt. John Hale and James Young did come to their deaths by the means in the Evidence aforesaid, accidentally and casually and by misfortune and not otherwise.

A. Guthrie	D. S. Napier
J. Morgan	Chas Scott
John Purvis	Hugh Syme
J. A. Maxwell	C. R. Read
T. H. Campbell	A. L. Johnston
Claude Queiros	Chas Thomas

Evidence

Dr. Tainsh, after examining the bodies, gives it as his opinion that the death of Capt. John Hale was caused by suffocation, and that of James Young by severe bruises.

Thomas Rutherford being called, stated that he is Chief Mate of the Brig *Philotax*, that about 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon, Capt. Hale and some of the seamen were examining the bottom of the Brig where the sand had been dug away for the purpose, that the Earth giving way the Brig fell over and buried Capt. Hale and James Young under her, and that the Bodies though attempts were made to extricate them, could not be extracted till 12 o'clock, and by which time they were perfectly dead.

John Saul, Carpenter of the Brig *Donis*, being examined, stated that he was at work at the Brig *Philotax* about 5 o'clock yesterday evening, that an alarm was given that the Brig was falling over, on hearing which he sprung from

the Brig, and escaped, that few minutes before he saw Capt. Hale and James Young at work under the bottom of the Brig, and that he was present when the bodies were extricated, which took place about 12 o'clock at night, at which time they were perfectly dead.

(Sd) S. G. BONHAM
Assistant to the Resident
attending the Inquest."

Medical Officers from Britain who came to serve in India and the Straits Settlements were often puzzled by the "exotic poisons of the East". Assistant Surgeon Montgomerie served as the Residency Assistant Surgeon in Singapore from 1819 to 1827 during his first tour of duty in the Straits, and soon learnt something of the native methods of poisoning with herbs, etc.

In November 1826, he reported a case of attempted poisoning by a member of his staff. When he was away in Malacca, a Hospital Apprentice, James Bagley, was caught in the act of putting something into the food of his fellow apprentice, John Leicester, after they had a quarrel. The nature of the substance could not be exactly ascertained, but one of the ingredients was the "prickly down of the bamboo". (S.S.R., A. 32, 1826). (*Miang rebong* or *miang buloh*, the fine and very irritating hairs on the leaf-sheaths of the young shoots of edible bamboo, are employed by Malay criminals as an irritant poison. They are given in food, either alone or mixed with other fine vegetable hairs or powdered glass. The internal administration of this poison sets up a chronic pseudo-dysentery, which may end in death. (Gimlette, 1923)).

In December 1826, Montgomerie was involved in a case of a Malay running amok who was killed after having wounded a victim. Montgomerie went to the scene of the crime and was present when the man was killed. This was the report of the Acting Resident, Mr. Bonham, to the Governor who was then resident in Penang:

"I regret to report for the information of the Honourable the Governor in Council the circumstances of a Malay man running Amok and being killed in the attempt to apprehend him.

I was last night informed by the Police Officers that a man had run amok, and taken refuge on a coconut tree, which was surrounded by a great number of armed men, and being aware that should he attempt to descend, it was probable that without someone possessing authority among them that he would be killed. I personally went to the spot, when I found on enquiry that a Malay man had been found on the top of a house from which, on being discovered,

he had passed into a coconut tree adjoining the house, and had desperately wounded a man who had gone up the tree to bring him down.

Having ascertained from Dr. Montgomerie who accompanied me, that the man whom the offender had wounded was in a dangerous state, I desired him to throw down his kris which I could distinguish he had with him, and descend down when I would protect him against the bystanders, and the case would be regularly inquired into, but nothing could induce the unfortunate man to do so, and it was not till about two hours after I had been on the spot assuring him of immediate protection should he descend, and an impartial investigation hereafter into what had passed, that I was necessitated to have him pushed down with sticks, and I regret to say, from not having dropt his weapon, and being desperate, he was killed in endeavouring to apprehend him by the bystanders." (S.S.R., A. 32, 1826).

It is not often that a doctor has the experience and opportunity to give evidence both as an ordinary witness and as an expert, which Montgomerie did in this case.

The Charter of Justice which constituted the Supreme Court of Judicature of Prince of Wales Island, Singapore and Malacca was granted by Letters Patent on 27th November 1826. Singapore's first Coroner was Mr. Andrew Farquhar. He was appointed under the Charter of Justice on 17th December 1827.

In Penang where there were more than one Medical Officer, one of them was appointed as Surgeon to the Coroner, but this practice ceased on 1st September 1828, and thereafter the Coroner was at liberty to call on any Medical Officer to assist him when required. (S.S.R., I. 38, 1828). This latter practice was followed in Singapore.

The Coroner in Singapore tried to do his duty as the Coroners in England, and held inquests near the place where the dead body was found. This involved much travelling for him, his jury and the surgeon. The Surgeon, however, was allowed expenses on presenting a bill "certified on honour." (S.S.R., A. 63, 1829).

The first recorded instance of a person killed by the Police in Singapore occurred on 15th January 1828. Six prisoners had escaped from the Jail, and one of them was killed by the police officers in attempting to capture him. A Coroner's Inquest was held on the body of this Chinese prisoner and a police constable was indicted for manslaughter. (S.S.R., N. 4, 1828). He was acquitted on 22nd May 1828 at the first session of Oyer and Terminer ever to be held in Singapore. (CHR, 1828(a)).

Accidental deaths, suicide by hanging and murders made up the bulk of medico-legal work in the first two decades. A description of some of the cases will show the variety and pattern of medico-legal practice in the 1820s and 1830s.

Medical evidence was given at the following Coroner's Inquests:

- (a) On the night of 3rd April 1828, a Portuguese musician was found dead by the Police. The deceased, his brother and two friends had been drunk. The deceased struck his brother and then chased one of his friends across a narrow plank bridge. In endeavouring to cross this bridge, the deceased fell into the ditch below with his face in the mud. His brother prevented his friends from picking him up and left him to die. The verdict of the Coroner's Jury was "died from suffocation from falling in the mud whilst in a state of drunkenness, and from assistance being prevented being given by his brother." (CHR, 1828 (b)).
- (b) On 12th May 1828, a European sailor was found drowned and floating in the River. (CHR, 1828 (c)).
- (c) On 22nd May 1828, the body of a Malay was found cast by the sea upon the beach, with a severe wound on his head. It appeared that the deceased and his son took three Chinese in their sampan to a junk in the Roads. As they were by the side of the junk, the people on board threw pieces of wood at them. One piece struck the deceased and knocked him overboard. His son escaped. (CHR, 1828 (d)).
- (d) As the crew of one of the China junks in the Roads were employed in getting up her foremast on 24th May 1828, some of the ropes by which it was supported slipped. The mast fell, striking five of them, two of whom instantly died and the three others severely injured. (CHR, 1828 (d)).

Coroner's duties were not strictly carried out in these early days as the following incident will demonstrate. A letter to the Editor of the Singapore Chronicle on 28th April 1831 stated:

"Having heard from a very good authority that two murders were committed on Sunday last, probably you may be able to inform me how far the report is true as no Inquest was held on the Bodies. Far from me, that I should attribute this neglect to any particular functionary, but it appears singular, as no secret was made of it by the Chinese who were casing them for interment on the Public Road and in the presence of the Night Watch on Sunday evening." (CHR, 1831).

The official reply was that there was no murder, and that "the two men were drowned accidentally, and as no report was made to the authorities by the friends of the parties, an Inquisition was not held." Thus not all cases of unnatural and violent deaths had autopsies done by the Assistant Surgeon, which was fortunate as far as he was concerned, as he was very short-handed being the only civil Medical Officer in the place. Secret Society killings and murders occupied a lot of the time of the Assistant Surgeon. Gang robberies with violence were also common. Gangs of 50—100 Chinese issuing out of the jungle to plunder were frequent occurrences.

It was also at this period that religious prejudices against necropsies were recorded. On the night of 30th January 1832 a band of Chinese bandits attacked some Malays who were repairing their boat. At the Inquest:

"Dr. Oxley, sworn, deposed to having examined the bodies of the two Malays; that on the body of one of them who appeared to have been an elderly man, he found an incised wound in an oblique direction across the back about 12 inches in length and sufficiently deep to divide the spinous processes of the vertebrae, which wound he believes to have been the cause of death.

That upon the body of the younger man there were several bruises and other marks of violences, but nothing sufficiently obvious to discover the immediate cause of death. The prejudices of his friends prevented a post-mortem examination." (CHR, 1832(a)).

The Coroner then either had no authority or did not know that he had authority to order post-mortem examinations in cases of violent deaths. It could also be that he was prudent in not wanting to antagonise the local population.

During 1832, there were four other interesting cases of medico-legal importance:

(a) The first reported instance of a criminal lunatic in Singapore. After a quarrel, a convict was killed by another (Goroo Chand) who had hit the victim on the head with a changkol or hoe. The murderer had been considered insane for some years by those acquainted with him. After the Coroner's Inquest, he was indicted for murder and manslaughter. (CHR, 1832(b)). The trial was held on 9th May 1833. The Grand Jury did not find a "true bill" for Murder and the accused was tried for Manslaughter and was found to be insane. The law regarding criminal lunatics was uncertain then. In 1832, the Straits Settlements was a Residency under the Government

of Bengal, and under Bengal Regulations IV of 1822 "insanity debarred legal punishment." The Judge was guided by the provisions of the English Criminal Lunatics Act, 1800, which among other things stated that "if a person indicted for any offence is insane, and is found upon arraignment to be so by a jury lawfully empanelled for that purpose, so that he cannot be tried upon such indictment, or if upon the trial of any person so indicted he shall appear to the jury to be insane, it shall be lawful for the Court before whom he is brought to direct such finding to be recorded, and thereupon to order him to be kept in strict custody until His Majesty's pleasure is known." The McNaughten Rules were not formulated until 1843, and Singapore's first legislative enactment on criminal lunatics was not passed until 1849. The prisoner was remanded to the custody of the Sheriff. (CHR, 1833 (b)). Singapore had no Lunatic Asylum in 1833 and lunatics were locked in the Jail under the charge of the Sheriff. (Lee, 1973 (a)).

(b) Mr. William Faze, late Keeper of the Singapore Jail, was found floating in the River. There was strong suspicion that he was murdered. Three witnesses testified that they had seen the deceased intoxicated before his disappearance, and the medical evidence proved that there was no foul play:

"Dr. Oxley, sworn, stated that on examination, the body of the deceased presented every appearance that is generally evinced by persons meeting their death by drowning. There were no external marks of violence sufficient to induce a supposition of the deceased having been assaulted or injured by an assassin. The marks on the head are merely such as might have been occasioned from a fall. The verdict of the jury was 'Found drowned'". (CHR, 1832 (c)).

(c) Deaths from blast injuries. A schooner called "Reliance" was being repaired in the harbour when an explosion occurred on board. It was suspected that the captain had thrown his lighted cheeroot near the gunpowder store. (CHR, 1832 (d)).

(d) Murder by a local dignitary. A wealthy Bugis, Hadjee Dokeh, was charged for murder of another man. He had wrapped the body up in a mat and was taking it out to sea in a sampan when he was arrested. (CHR, 1832 (d)). He was however acquitted at the trial as the members of the Petit Jury were not unanimous. (CHR, 1833 (b)).

During the wild early days of Singapore, the population was relatively small, but it was not unusual for the Coroner to hold three inquests a week, an indication of the living conditions of the time. The Medical Officer was kept very busy, e.g.

- (a) Ah Qua, a Chinese medicine man, was waylaid on his way home and murdered. His body was severely cut and his head almost severed from it. A great quantity of blood was all over the scene of the crime. The murderer or murderers were not caught. (CHR, 1833 (a)).
- (b) George Lavorice was intoxicated, staggered and fell into a shop. A bottle of gin which he was carrying in his hand broke and cut his arm, divided the muscles and finally caused death after a lapse of one hour through blood loss. No one had attempted first aid. (CHR, 1833 (a)).
- (c) A party of Chinese bandits attacked a Bugis house. One of them received a spear wound through the heart, delivered by one of the Bugis defenders. The verdict was "justifiable homicide." (CHR, 1833 (a)).

In October 1833 was recorded the first instance of a person being found dead in a police cell. At the Coroner's Inquiry, it was learnt that this man, Thomas Smith, had been taken to the Police Station in a dazed state and put in a cell where he was later found dead. Dr. Martin, a private practitioner, testified that he had been treating the deceased for delirium tremens, and in his opinion, the man had died of apoplexy.

"Dr. Oxley having been called to examine the body of the deceased at the Police House, found it lying on its back; it was still warm; the face and anterior part of the chest were livid and blood oozed from the nose and mouth. No marks of violence were visible on the body excepting a slight impression on one side of the temple and cheek on which he had lain. On opening the head, found sufficient cause to account for death, in exceeding congestion of the membranes of the brain and effusion upon the surface. The membranes appeared to have suffered from chronic inflammation of some standing, being much thickened and of an opaque colour when dissected off. His opinion is that the deceased came by his death from the minute vessels having given away in consequence of the extreme congestion, which is proved by the blood found upon the base of the skull and brain itself in the anterior part." (CHR, 1833 (c)).

The verdict of the Coroner's Jury, however, was "Died by visitation of God"! (CHR, 1833 (d)).

In November 1833, Dr. Oxley had three cases of violent deaths. The first was that of a Bugis running amuck in a boat, killing a fellow passenger and seriously wounding three others. (CHR, 1833 (e)). The second was that of a Chinese man who had been stabbed to death:

"The body on being examined by Dr. Oxley was smeared with gore; and a quantity of frothy blood lay on one side of it. An incised wound about six inches long, was observed on the back of the left forearm, as also a punctured wound penetrating the chest on the left side opposite the fifth rib, which it divided; and entering the cavity of the chest, pierced the left lung and cut the vessels at its root, causing a considerable effusion of blood which was found in a coagulated state on opening the chest. The wound was sufficient to cause instantaneous death." (CHR, 1833 (f)).

The third case was also one of murder, and the first recorded instance of a Dying Declaration having been made in Singapore.

"Dr. Oxley stated that he had been called by a peon the previous night to attend a person who had been stabbed in the Bazar. On his way to the Hospital he was informed that the man was dead. He found the body still warm; on the left side of the abdomen was a large gash through which the intestines protruded. They were apparently wounded by a sharp cutting instrument. The wound was sufficient to cause immediate death."

The deceased had made a Dying Declaration to a passer-by before he was brought to hospital. (CHR, 1833 (f)). The murderer was found guilty and was sentenced to be executed and his body given for dissection.

1834 was a very busy year where forensic medicine was concerned. There were the usual cases of sailors falling into the river while intoxicated and were drowned (CHR, 1834 (a)); persons stabbed to death (CHR, 1834 (c)); and suicide by hanging (1834 (e) (f)). Interesting and instructive cases were:

- (a) a case of sudden death. A Chuliah dealer bought five boxes of goods at an auction. He employed a Chinese labourer to carry them for him. While doing so, this Chinese man suddenly fell dead. The Chuliah ran away in fright leaving his goods behind. The verdict of the Coroner's Jury was "Died by the visitation of God". (CHR, 1834 (a)).
- (b) the first recorded instance of the use of chemical tests for the detection of poisons. Two Malays had thrown some white powder into the cooking

pot of some Chinese, three of whom ate the rice and two of them died. Dr. Oxley's evidence was recorded thus:

"Dr. Oxley, having examined the two bodies, stated on oath that from all the circumstances attending the deaths of Assoon and Ah Huy, and the examination of the bodies, it is in his opinion that they must have come by their deaths from poison. First, the simultaneous and sudden illness of the three persons partaking of the same meal, who had all previously been in good health. Secondly, the appearance of the survivor; for had it been an attack of sporadic cholera, his appearance, instead of being flushed and excited, would have exhibited a sunken and depressed appearance. Thirdly, upon examination of the abdomen, the stomachs of both presented a lively red appearance on the inner surface, such as the acrid poisons are known to produce. And fourthly, the contents of the stomachs having been carefully preserved, and a portion having been subjected to the two delicate tests of the ammoniacal nitrate of silver and sulphate of ammonia, with a view to forming the arsenite of silver and sulphurate of arsenic, had precipitates highly indicative of those substances; the latter test more particularly threw down its characteristic precipitate of a fine lemon colour." (CHR, 1834(b)).

(c) a brutal murder of a young girl.

"The body on being examined by Dr. Oxley appeared to have been immersed in the water some time, but could not have been very long dead, as the process of decomposition had scarcely commenced. The throat was severed to the spine on the anterior side, but there were no other marks of violence on the body. The wound must have been inflicted by a strong cutting instrument and with considerable force as the spine itself was partly divided. The injury could not have been perpetrated by the deceased herself." (CHR, 1834(d)).

(d) death due to a ruptured spleen.

"Dr. Oxley having examined the body, stated his opinion that death had been brought on by a rupture of the spleen caused by a external blow. There was a bruise across the loins of the corresponding side; a quantity of blood amounting to several pints was found in the cavity of the abdomen; and the large coagulation of blood in the injured organ proved that the injury must have been inflicted during life." The deceased had been attacked with an iron weapon. (CHR, 1834(e)).

(e) Murder by a gang defending their illicit still. The Spirit Farmer (the man who had the monopoly of selling spirits) sent seven of his men into the jungle at Tanah Merah to break up the stills of his rivals who were infringing his rights. They were ambushed and attacked by 30 to 40 Chinese with blackened faces, carrying spears, swords and other weapons. One was killed and the rest ran away. The body was not discovered until some days later. "Dr. Oxley having examined the body as far as practicable stated that it had advanced to such a state of decomposition as to preclude accurate investigation. Upon inspection, several incised wounds were apparent on the left shoulder, on the right hand and the right knee; and the viscera of the abdomen protruded through an incision of nearly the whole length of the body. The wounds appeared as if inflicted by a sharp cutting instrument." (CHR, 1834(g)).

(f) Coroner's inquiry on a case of tetanus.

"Dr. Oxley on examination, stated that the deceased had laboured under tetanus (a disease commonly known as the lockjaw). He attended on him before death and heard him state that he had been five days ill with the complaint, which he said arose from a severe beating he had received about 22 days previously from certain persons. There were no marks of violence on the body or any injury excepting a slight scrape over the left eyebrow. As the disease is almost invariably fatal, he never entertained much hopes of the man's recovery. The disease is likely to have arisen from the injury over the eyebrow, as a very small one is sufficient to produce it and particularly (according to observation) at particular seasons. The disease may come on of itself." (sic) (CHR, 1834(g)).

(g) Victim attacked and thrown into the Singapore River to drown. "Found floating at the entrance of the Singapore River. . . . From the surgical examination, it was evident that the person had been murdered. The body appeared to have been immersed in the water for some hours. The nostrils were filled with a bloody frothy exudation. Upon the head were five incised wounds, all of which were serious, and such as would have produced a momentary loss of the physical powers, but not such as were likely to produce instant death. It may have happened the deceased received the wounds, fell into the water in a state of insensibility and so died. The wounds are of such a nature that they would not have occurred but must have been intentionally inflicted." (CHR, 1834(h)).

(h) Rupture of an enlarged spleen after being run over by a horse. "At the post-mortem examination of the deceased, an elderly Chinese, no external violence was visible, but the spleen was rather large, and exhibited a rupture of about 2 inches or more in length, which evidently caused death." (CHR, 1834(i)).

In 1835 and 1836, Dr. Oxley testified in the following cases of medico-legal interest amongst others:

- (a) Murder of a convict by another. "On arrival of medical aid, the wound was discovered to be of the most fatal nature, the knife with which the blow had been given had broken off at the handle leaving the blade in the body, the instrument having penetrated the thorax between the 9th and 10th ribs, passing in an oblique direction and wounding the diaphragm, upper portion of the spleen and stomach." (CHR, 1835(a)).
- (b) Suicide by hanging in a police cell by a prisoner while on a charge of burglary. (CHR, 1835(b)).
- (c) Suicide by shooting. A Sepoy had shot himself after having been punished for gambling and neglect of duty. In those days, only soldiers and policemen among the non-Europeans could commit suicide by shooting as they were the only ones who had firearms. (CHR, 1836(a)).
- (d) The first case of exhumation in Singapore. A Malay, Si Dool, attacked another Malay with a kris, but was speared to death by his intended victim. "He was speedily buried by his friends and had to be disinterred previous to the Inquest." (CHR, 1836(b)).

During 1837, 1838 and 1839, the same routine humdrum cases occupied the time of the Assistant Surgeon: accidental deaths, suicides, and murders by individuals and gangs. One case could be considered of forensic medical interest. This was the case of a Bugis man shot by the Police under unavoidable circumstances. This man tried to murder his mistress, then ran to his neighbour's house where he killed one and wounded three people with his kris. He then set fire to the house, rushed out and threw wooden spears into the watching crowd. The police shot him in the left hip and left chest, and then his countrymen despatched him with spears and krises. (CHR, 1837).

Life during the wild turbulent two decades of Singapore's existence was very precarious, for in

addition to death by disease which was common, death by violence was always round the corner.

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Abbreviations used:

CHR = Singapore Chronicle. Microfilm. National Library Holdings. Singapore.

SSR = Straits Settlements Records. Microfilm. National Library Holdings. Singapore.

CHR, 1828 (a)	22.5.1828.
CHR, 1828 (b)	10.4.1828.
CHR, 1828 (c)	22.5.1828.
CHR, 1828 (d)	5.6.1828.
CHR, 1831	28.4.1831.
CHR, 1832 (a)	2.2.1832.
CHR, 1832 (b)	23.8.1832.
CHR, 1832 (c)	23.8.1832.
CHR, 1832 (d)	20.9.1832.
CHR, 1833 (a)	31.1.1833.
CHR, 1833 (b)	16.5.1833.
CHR, 1833 (c)	31.10.1833.
CHR, 1833 (d)	7.11.1833.
CHR, 1833 (e)	7.11.1833.
CHR, 1833 (f)	21.11.1833.
CHR, 1834 (a)	6.2.1834.
CHR, 1834 (b)	15.3.1834.
CHR, 1834 (c)	3.4.1834.
CHR, 1834 (d)	17.4.1834.
CHR, 1834 (e)	5.6.1834.
CHR, 1834 (f)	12.6.1834.
CHR, 1834 (g)	19.6.1834.
CHR, 1834 (h)	2.10.1834.
CHR, 1834 (i)	18.12.1834.
CHR, 1835 (a)	17.1.1835.
CHR, 1835 (b)	31.1.1835.
CHR, 1836 (a)	23.1.1836.
CHR, 1836 (b)	21.7.1836.
CHR, 1837	26.8.1837.

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SSR A. 32, 1826.

SSR A. 63, 1829.

SSR I. 38, 1828.

SSR L. 19, 1823.

SSR N. 4, 1828.

SSR BB. 2, 1824.