



# People News

Stratton  
St. Margaret

There has, it appears, been a squabble over the burying of a black man who, the other day, not having the fear of the Poor Law Guardians before his eyes, had the impudence to die in the Union Workhouse, at Stratton St Margaret. In due course the Parish Clerk of Swindon was informed of the death of this poor fellow, and a day was mentioned, as an appropriate one, for his being buried in the parish grave yard at Swindon. But what had the parish of Swindon to do with the dead black man? It certainly had nothing to do with this particular black man, and nothing would it have to do with him. So said the parson and ditto said the clerk. Nor many years ago, when funds were being collected for burying grounds for enlarging the graveyard at Stratton St Margaret, the Poor Law Guardians subscribed £50 in order that a space might be reserved in which to bury the casual poor who happened to die in the 'House'. Let, therefore, Stratton bury the dead black man. But, no! Stratton would do nothing of the kind. At least, so said it's vicar. And the squabble, 'who should bury the black man' was carried on for some seven days. At length Stratton gave in, and the poor black man now lies in Stratton church-yard 'under protest'.

But, if we are not misinformed, there is another page in the last chapter in the history of this black man that should lie under protest only so long as may be necessary to clear up certain rumors. It is asserted that this black man, before he became a bone of contention for parsons, followed the respectable occupation of a 'tout' for racing and betting men, and that whilst at a neighbouring village doing his work of 'taking stock' of the horses in training in that village, in order that his employers might know how to shape their bets and swindle the public, he was met by a number of stable boys, and so ill-treated, and kicked by them, that he had to be taken to the Workhouse in Stratton, where he died. If this rumour be true, or has any foundation in it, how is that there has been no official inquiry into the cause of the man's death? How is it that those useful tools of racing and betting men, racing stable boys, are not even called on to explain why it is they kicked a man to death? Many of our readers may be in a position to give a ready answer, but it certainly is of some importance that there should be a public one.

*n.b. – Believed to be Charles Henry aged 35.*

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