

use? If so, please give full particulars as to disease for which given; condition of pulse, pupils, respiration, and temperature; manner of death; condition of heart, lungs, and kidneys; general condition, age, temperament, employment, etc., etc., etc. If an autopsy was held, please state the condition there found. 7. Have you seen any peculiar manifestations from chloral—as tetanus, convulsions, or delirium? 8. Do you know of any cases of the chloral-habit? If so, please state the amount used, the disease for which the drug was originally administered, the person's age, temperament, and the present condition of the patient. Physicians are earnestly requested to answer the above questions, in order that the resulting statistics may be as full and valuable as possible. All communications will be considered strictly confidential, the writer's name not being used when a request to that effect is made. Address all letters to Dr H. H. Kane, 366 Bleecker Street, New York City.

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#### OBITUARY.

##### DR ALFRED SWAINE TAYLOR.

THIS eminent medical jurist died of chronic heart disease on 27th May. In 1870 he retired from his lectureship at Guy's Hospital, and a few years after from the investigation of criminal cases. In 1878, when the Crown authorities here proposed to avail themselves of his experience in connexion with the well known Chantrelle case, the veteran replied that he had determined never to revisit the forensic arena.

Dr Taylor might well look back with pride on his professional career. Early devoting himself to medico-legal studies, and by long residence on the Continent perfecting his knowledge of foreign languages, so that the mines of information hid in treatises and journals were made available for his prelections, he in 1831 began his lectures at Guy's Hospital. There, along with Addison and others, he upheld the reputation of this distinguished school, and for a long course of years attracted students by his name, occurring as it did repeatedly in the courts of law, and by his numerous text-books. In the following year he was appointed joint-lecturer on chemistry.

He early projected a treatise on medical jurisprudence, and in 1843 published the first volume in octavo of what promised to be an extensive work. In 1844, however, he was induced by Mr Churchill, the London publisher, to throw his materials into the form of the well-known manuals, and since then the work has been reissued in repeated editions, the last—the tenth—bearing the date of April 1879. The size of this book necessarily limited the amount of information on the numerous topics which are

generally included under the title of medical jurisprudence, and in 1865 Dr Taylor published a large octavo volume which contained a complete digest of the whole subject, and for the first time he was able to treat at length of identification and of medical evidence in all its bearings. A second edition of this work in two volumes, constituting what may be termed an encyclopædia of medical jurisprudence, and the crowning effort of his life, was published in 1873. Dr Taylor's connexion with the chemical lectureship at Guy's, and his popularity with the English coroners, led to his being largely entrusted with analyses in cases of poisoning. The experience thus gained in chemical testing, and the rapid accumulation of interesting toxicological cases, led to his writing a special treatise on poisons. This appeared in 1848, and subsequent editions in 1859 and 1875, forming a closely printed volume of nearly 900 pages. As the last edition of Christison on *Poisons*—the fourth—was published in 1845, Taylor was left without a competitor, and at once identified himself as the best exponent of British medical jurisprudence, and his volumes became the standard text-books in our schools of medicine and courts of law.

In addition to his rapidly increasing experience and his acquaintance with foreign literature, Dr Taylor possessed a calm, judicial mind which admirably fitted him for weighing the import of evidence and estimating the value of recorded cases. He never indulged in sensational writing; his style was clear, and his matter was compressed into the smallest possible compass. It is no wonder, then, that in every court of law in the kingdom he was appealed to as the leading authority in medical jurisprudence, and that it became a matter of necessity for every medical witness to master what Taylor had to say on the special case. He was a most conscientious author, subjecting his various works to most careful revision, so that the latest edition, embodying his most matured opinions, had always to be consulted. Indeed, we know of no more profitable study for the young medical jurist than, pencil in hand, to note the changes introduced by Taylor into his various editions—the introduction of a word or the recasting of a sentence indicating increased caution in the statement of an opinion, the result of increased experience, and every page bearing witness to the painstaking care with which the work of revision had been undertaken. These qualities as an author could not fail to make Taylor an admirable witness—cool, collected, ready. His appearance at the trial of Palmer, beset as he was by a host of antagonists, was admirable; but his statement of evidence in the case of Thomas Drory has always appeared to us the best specimen of his forensic skill in grouping medical facts so as to lead but to one conclusion. The conviction in this case was mainly due to him, and he had the satisfaction in finding his account of the bearing of the appearances on the body of the deceased girl borne out to the minutest particular by the confession of the accused.

As a lecturer he was rather heavy. It was only in his latter years that we had an opportunity of hearing him, and that was the impression he made on us. His matter, however, was good, and it was so clearly arranged that students could easily carry it away with them in their notes.

Dr Taylor latterly had no rival. He reigned *facile princeps*, and it says much for him that for so many years he held undisputed eminence in one important department of medical science. This can be said of none of his confrères in medicine and surgery. The various text-books on these subjects live their day, and, if not forgotten, are never appealed to as authorities, and are rarely read by the practitioner and the student. There was a freshness in Taylor, and at the same time a *reliableness*, which made the perusal of his works a pleasure and not a toil. He has stamped his imprint indelibly on British medical jurisprudence, and has so embodied English judgment and caution that we can point with pride to his writings as we contrast them with those of Orfila and Caspar.

Dr Taylor died full of honour, trusted and respected by the public and by the two great professions of law and medicine, and, conscious of this, he had doubtless his reward. But it has always struck us as remarkable that, among the many titles bestowed on court physicians, none could be spared for so eminent a citizen who had done so much by his writings and substantial professional work to uphold the honour of his country.

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