

ART. XLII.—*On Poisons in Relation to Medical Jurisprudence and Medicine.*

By ALFRED SWAYNE TAYLOR, M.D., F.R.S. Third American from the third and thoroughly revised English edition. With 104 illustrations. 8vo. pp. 788. Philadelphia: Henry G. Lea, 1875.

SIXTEEN years having elapsed since the appearance of this work, a thorough revision was necessary, and in many instances this has involved remodelling and rewriting as well as the introduction of new matter which has risen into importance during this time. General observations in relation to absorption by external application, hypodermic injection, and the elimination of poisons, of valuable application, are to be found in the preliminary chapters. Here also, the process of dialysis of the late Professor Graham is clearly described as affording the means of separating soluble crystalloids from substances of a non-crystalline character. The use of this method is not insisted on except for preliminary testing, on the ground that it is impossible to separate the whole of the poison, and that it frequently occurs that a small quantity of organic matter passes through the membrane at the same time as the poison. In the examination for strychnia only, does he present this process as available, referring to its successful use by Dr. St. Clair Gray, of Glasgow. A higher opinion of this method had been impressed on the writer by a few experiments on its use, parchment paper being employed, and that in the majority of cases in which time was allowed, it should be used as a valuable preliminary step, when, if successful, it may give indications of much importance, especially where the poison may be in small amount. It, moreover, when properly performed, should not introduce any more material into matter under examination. Spectrum analysis is also noticed, but "even this delicate method of research has failed to throw any satisfactory light on the changes produced by poisons" in the blood.

The subject of antagonism of poisons is noticed, and it is stated, that, although some of the powerful remedies given in poisonous amounts appear to be antagonistic, there is absence of proof that they mutually act in the blood without being attended with danger to the patient, Dr. Fraser having shown, that, though this antagonism may be exerted within certain limits, beyond this death may be caused by the combined action of both substances. In the classification of poisons, a new subdivision of Neurotics, "cerebro-cardiac," has been introduced. In the detection of poison, much stress is laid on the examination of the urine as furnishing a clear proof that it has been taken and passed into the blood, and in cases of simulated poisoning, or imputed attempts of this kind, it gives the necessary discriminating proof whether the poison found in the matters said to be ejected may have been administered, or subsequently introduced. Few persons would be willing to take the risk necessarily incurred by swallowing the poison for the purpose of sustaining the impression they desire to produce. The case of General Ketchum is here cited as one in which this proceeding would have spared much of the conflict of opinion which characterized that case.

The very responsible position in which the physician may be placed when called to cases in which the symptoms may indicate either disease or the effect of poison should call attention to this point, in which many valuable remarks and criticisms on cases which have attracted much attention will be found. The clear and decided opinion on this and many other points of practical bearing, up to the time in which the material for chemical research is placed in the hands of the expert for examination, deserve the study of every practitioner,

lest by his acts the guilty may escape or the innocent suffer. The neglect of many of the plainest requisites in these points are frequently brought to the notice of those who are engaged in the final examination, generally arising from inexperience or the want of thought or knowledge, as to the precision and accuracy required both in their own operations and the prevention of the interference of others.

On the subject of the individual poisons the changes are too numerous to be noticed in detail. They consist principally in the omission of matter or cases of inferior value, and the substitution of others of greater significance. Thus new and more simple methods of research, tests new or hitherto little used, observations on the relative value of their results will be found scattered throughout, so as to bring the subject up to the increased knowledge and experience of the present day. New remedies, and others which though previously known had not become common, are introduced, and receive the share of attention their importance demands. Of these a few may be enumerated, as carbolic acid, the aniline colours, absinthe, chloroform, chlorodyne, chloral, etc. In this edition illustrations of the crystalline form of those of marked character are introduced. These are microscopic in character, and exhibit the great additional aid that may be obtained by this mode of investigation, especially in experienced hands. The researches of Gay and Worriley are duly noticed.

Owing to judicious pruning, the bulk of this edition is not materially increased, and the additional number of pages does not adequately represent the increased value of the work, a satisfactory estimate of which can only be obtained by actual comparison throughout with those previously issued. In typography and execution it resembles the second edition in all respects.

R. B.

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ART. XLIII.—*Diseases of the Nose and its accessory Cavities.* By W. SPENCER WATSON, F.R.C.S. Eog., B.M. Lond., etc. etc. 8vo. pp. 472. London: H. K. Lewis, 1875.

THE object of the author of this volume, as stated in the preface, was to supply the want of a treatise in the English language on the various diseases of the nose. The most extended account of these diseases was hitherto contained in Holmes's *System of Surgery*. Our author's effort has been to collect from various sources, in our own and in foreign languages, all of importance on these subjects, and to present his gleanings, duly arranged and classified, with the addition of his own original contributions.

While we are surprised at the extent of his researches in some directions, there are others in which we think he might have pursued them still farther with advantage. Our American contributions to the surgery of this department have, in many instances, received their due meed of praise, and our author has evidently kept *au courant* with much of our periodical literature; but some of our most important records on this subject have apparently escaped his notice. The field is rendered quite extensive by the addition of the "accessory cavities," and yet we question whether, in these very particulars, the work is any special addition to our stock of knowledge. The diseases of the Antrum of Highmore have been treated so thoroughly in the classic work of Mr. Christopher Heath, that but little remains to be said upon them; and the section upon the lachrymal sac and nasal ducts presents the subject in a less exhaustive manner than many of the ophthalmological treatises *pur et simple*. But we would not with-