

OBITUARY.

HENRY HOWARD, M.R.C.S., ENG.

It is, with very deep regret that we have to record the death of Dr. Henry Howard, one of the oldest practitioners in Montreal, which event, not unexpected, took place on the 12th of October. For over a year it was evident that his health was failing; but, notwithstanding more than one warning, he continued to look after his work and move about. For several weeks before the end came, he was confined to the house, and on the date named he passed quietly away. Dr. Howard was born in Nenagh, Ireland, on the 1st of December, 1815. He studied medicine in Dublin with the celebrated Dr. Jacob. He came to Canada in 1842, first living in Kingston, and in 1845 he came to Montreal. He was, we think, the first specialist in this city on diseases of the eye and ear, and for several years conducted the Montreal Eye and Ear Institution, where thousands of the poor were treated, the Government giving it a small grant. Dr. Howard was a prolific political writer, and about 1858 wrote a series of political letters, which appeared in the *Montreal Evening Pilot* under the name of "*Little Bo-Peep*." These attracted the attention of the great political leader, Sir John A. Macdonald, and when a year or two later the Government decided to establish a Lunatic Asylum at St. Johns, Q., Dr. Howard was appointed its Medical Superintendent. The wisdom of this appointment was at the time vigorously assailed, but whatever truth there was then in the statement, that he was totally inexperienced for such an office, it is beyond question that his vigorous and scientific mind soon grappled with the subject of insanity, so that before long, even his enemies admitted that he had fully qualified himself for the position. Hampered as he was at St. Johns, with what was perhaps the worst make shift for an Asylum that the world ever saw, he produced results which were hardly credible, but redounded to his ability and foresight. When Confederation placed the care of the insane under Provincial management, and the Asylum at St. Johns was closed, and the insane removed to the St. Jean de Dieu Asylum at Longue Pointe, Dr. Howard was appointed its Government Medical Inspector. Here began the troubles of his life, for his scientific mind, now thoroughly trained to his special work, was entirely opposed to the system of farming out lunatics. We have seen and read in manuscript report after report, which he

sent to the Local Government, protesting against the system, and the general management of those placed within the walls of this large Institution; but so far as we have any knowledge, not one of these reports have ever been printed, and certainly the result he wished and worked for was never accomplished. His work as Medical Inspector, under these circumstances, can hardly have been called a labor of love; and of late years, owing to disagreements between the Government (Contractor) and the Lady Superior, his position was decidedly unpleasant; the constant worry and vexation to which he was subjected had great effect upon his system, so much so, that more than once he expressed to the writer the fear that it was undermining his constitution. In the hope, however, of yet accomplishing something for the benefit of his suffering fellow-creatures, he endured it all, and at a time of life, when nature called for quiet and repose. We have the hope, however, that what we may call his life-work has not been in vain. In his views on insanity, Dr. Howard was in advance of most of his co-temporaries. He believed that all criminals were insane, and therefore irresponsible; some held that the future would prove his theory as correct, others that it was wild and Utopian. He wrote many articles on subjects allied to his speciality, which were read before the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Montreal, and subsequently appeared either in this Journal or in the *Canada Medical and Surgical Journal*. In 1882 he published a small volume upon "The Philosophy of Insanity, Crime and Responsibility." He was an Ex-President of our Medical Society, and till a few months before his death, the most regular attendant at its meetings, setting an example to some of the elders of the profession in Montreal, which, we are sorry to say, they do not follow. At its meeting, his familiar figure with his flowing white beard and accompanying snuff box, was ever a welcome sight to his younger brethren, who, it may truthfully be said, "loved him for his kind, warm and generous nature." He was a warm debater, hit hard sometimes, but always gentlemanly. It will be many long years before the present members will cease to feel the want which his absence creates. We fully endorse the closing words of his obituary in the *Canada Medical and Surgical Journal* of this city: "A brave manly life, fought with unwavering cheerfulness through many and grave difficulties, and laid down at last with the quiet calmness begotten of conscious rectitude."

His remains were removed to St. Johns, Que., where they were interred.