

REVIEWS.

ARTICLE XXXI.—*On Poisons in relation to Medical Jurisprudence and Medicine.* By ALFRED SWAINE TAYLOR, M.D.F.R.S., Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians; Hon. M. D. St. Andrews; Member of the Royal College of Surgeons; Professor of Medical Jurisprudence and Chemistry in Guy's Hospital; and Examiner in Chemistry to the University of London, and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons; and author of a Treatise on Medical Jurisprudence. Second American, from the Second and Revised London Edition. Philadelphia: Blanchard & Lea. Montreal: B. Dawson & Son. Quebec: Middleton & Dawson. 1859.

Dr. Taylor has re-modelled his work on Poisons in the present edition. As he very properly remarks in the preface, it is impossible within the compass of one small volume to comprise all the principles and experiences which have been enunciated in reference to poisons. The list of these articles is so comprehensive as to include nearly, if not altogether, the whole number of diverse agents that belong to Pharmacology. For the difference between a remedy and a poison is only one of degree or of contingency. Within proper limits, and in conformity to certain circumstances, every substance, even the most deadly, is either harmless in general, or, under specific conditions, sanative in particular. While, on the contrary, everything by abuse is injurious, and proves deleterious. We know of nothing more toxic than Hydrocyanic Acid; but still it is only relatively so; for, in suitable portions, no substance is more efficient as a remedy. And again the usefulness and safety of bread, as a dietetical article, is a matter of general assent; and yet if an undue amount of it—"the staff of life" though it be—were taken, death would follow the rash adventure. Considerations such as these, therefore, shew that the most fit guide to choose in the determination of what are Poisons is to accept the popular view of the question, and decide from the records of historical facts. We shall then find that certain substances in preference to others have been selected and employed with a destructive intention, and of these, that some have been more frequently resorted to than others. Such is the guide that Dr. T. has followed, and it is the one which must bring the largest return of practical advantages to the reader. In speaking upon the courses an author may pursue in the discussion of such a subject, he remarks:—

"Or he may exclude those substances which belong rather to the history than the practice of the subject, and thus devote more space to the considera-