

own experience and observation, the collected intelligence of our best authors may throw some light.

It is well known to you, as well as the medical public of Canada, for Medical Journals, unfortunately, seldom extend farther than to our professional brethren, that after some years had been spent in agitating the question, a great reformation took place throughout England, with regard to the necessity of appointing medical men as Coroners. And I am happy to observe, that gentlemen now educated to the profession of medicine, are generally selected, not only in England, but in Upper Canada, to fulfil that judicial office; in Lower Canada, no such reform has taken place, the present incumbents are, I believe, men of respectable standing in society, but the question arises, are they possessed of those educational acquirements which are indispensably necessary to meet the high and important intentions of the law. Are they competent in all cases to decide as a Physician, or rather, as a critical anatomist would, upon the nature of wounds, contusions, fractures, &c., discoverable upon the dead body of a fellow-creature, the cause of whose death, if at all involved in obscurity, is to be first explained, as far as it can be, by that Officer. I shall offer no observation touching toxicology, because, in all cases where *poisoning* is supposed to have caused death, the analysis is generally referred to the most experienced and scientific Chemists. Yet, the Coroner should be well acquainted with the definitions of poisons, the symptoms following the taking of poison, whether irritant and corrosive, narcotic and narcotico-irritants, &c., and the certain character whereby symptoms of poisoning may be distinguished from those of disease. It is an established fact, that 12 years ago, out of 100 cases requiring medical evidence, either before the Coroner, or in the Superior Courts of Law, in England, there were of *poisoning*, 45; wounds and personal injuries, 35; infanticide, 10; all other cases, 10. Since that period, the number of cases of poisoning, has certainly much increased, particularly since the last 12 months.

A Coroner, in my humble opinion, and I believe it is one which carries conviction to every intelligent mind, should be well versed in Medical Jurisprudence; *i. e.*, the application of medicine to legislation and medical police, comprising, wounds, fractures, infanticide, burns, scalds, drowning, hanging, strangulation, lightning, inanition, insanity, (*delirium tremens*,) &c., &c.

In the *London Lancet* of March, 1851, we have the opinion of one of the most eminent judges in England, and who, during the progress of a trial, in which reference was made to the Coroner's Court, stated emphatically, "*that none but medical men ought to be appointed to the office*