

**HAND-BOOK FOR CORONERS.** Containing a Digest of all the Laws in the Thirty-Eight States of the Union, together with a Historical *Résumé* from the Earliest Period to the Present Time, a Guide to the Physician in Post-Mortem Examinations, and Valuable Miscellaneous Matter never before collated. By JOHN G. LEE, M.D., Coroner's Physician of the City and County of Philadelphia, Pa. Published by William Brotherhead, Agent, 129 South Thirteenth Street, Philadelphia, 1881. 8vo, pp. 288.

The author of this little volume, with its somewhat elongated title, announces in his preface that he "makes no pretensions to originality," but that his "almost sole duty has consisted in the collection, selection, and arrangement of the most interesting material at his command." This, of necessity, disarms all criticism of the book as an original production. The "material" thus used appears to have been judiciously employed for the purposes designated. The author gives us a pretty full history of "coroner's law" from its earliest inception, in the time of England's great King Alfred, down to the present era, including the laws of all the different States of our own country. In fact, more than half of the volume consists of a detail of these latter State laws, which exhibit a general similarity of character, while at the same time showing some points of difference: thus, in some of the States the coroner's law is more stringent than in others, and there is a notable diversity in the *fees* of the office. These latter fluctuate between one dollar (for an inquest) in West Virginia and twenty-five dollars in Louisiana. In the cities of Philadelphia and New York, instead of a fee paid for each separate inquest, there has within a few years been substituted a regular salary for the coroner,—six thousand dollars in the former city and five thousand dollars in the latter, exclusive of contingent expenses.

The chapter on the "Coroner's Physician" contains much interesting matter, but only the usual subjects discussed in the standard works of legal medicine,—such as medical evidence, expert testimony (in the latter, by the way, the author is mistaken when he asserts that in Pennsylvania the expert may *legally* demand an extra compensation), the mode of making autopsies, the signs of death, etc.,—all of which, however, are given with sufficient precision and judgment. The book concludes with a series of anecdotes—some of them quite racy—of coroners and their juries.

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