

William Martin Coates, obituary

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WILLIAM MARTIN COATES, F.R.C.S., late Surgeon to the Salisbury Infirmary.

THE death of Mr. William Martin Coates, to which we shortly adverted in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of April 4th, deprives the profession of a member who has contributed not a little to its honour and progress. Mr. Coates was the son of an army-surgeon who was attached to a hussar regiment, served with distinction throughout the Peninsular war, and, when peace came, settled down in practice at Salisbury. William Martin Coates received his medical education at St. Bartholomew's Hospital; he became a licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries in 1832, and a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1838; and was for some time teacher of anatomy and midwifery at the *Ecole Pratique de Médecine* in Paris.

Forty years ago, he was elected Surgeon to the Salisbury Infirmary, a position which he only resigned a month before his death. As surgeon to the Infirmary, Mr. Coates developed very high qualities; he acquired a remarkably keen power of diagnosis, and became a bold and rapid operator. His possession of these advantages having become generally recognised, he enjoyed, for many years before his death, an extensive consulting practice in the districts around Salisbury.

Mr. Coates's contributions to medical literature were all of a practical kind. In 1840, he wrote on the nature and treatment of talipes varus; subsequently, he published essays on *Chloroform and its Safe Administration*; on *The Treatment of Bronchocele and of Enlarged Glands by Injection of Iodine*; on *Puerperal Fever*; and on *Listerism*. He was President of the Section of Surgery at the meeting of the British Medical Association at Ryde in 1881, and delivered a very able practical address on the Operative Treatment of Haemorrhoids; this address was published in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of August 27th in that year.

Mr. Coates had found his health to be failing for the last two years, and had suffered from several severe attacks of jaundice, but continued to practise until the end of 1884; he then retired, and in February resigned his appointment as Surgeon to the Infirmary. He was then already suffering from the painful disease of the liver, probably of a malignant nature, which terminated his life on March 26th, at the age of seventy-three.

Mr. Coates leaves three sons in the profession, and a fourth is now studying at Edinburgh. He is succeeded in practice at Salisbury by two sons, Dr. F. W. Coates, Physician to the Infirmary, and Mr. Harcourt Coates, who was elected Surgeon to the Infirmary on March 28th last.