

Michael Taylor 1793-1867

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Wife and daughter murdered by Pritchard

There is no indication on this stone of the sad story behind it. **Michael Taylor** (1793-1867), born in Westmoreland, was a prosperous silk merchant in Edinburgh whose wife and daughter were poisoned by his son-in-law, Dr Edward William Pritchard (1825-1865). Michael married **Jane** Cowan (1792-1865) with whom he had a daughter **Mary Jane** Taylor (1825-1865), born in Edinburgh.

Hampshire-born Edward Pritchard (1825-1865) married Mary Jane in 1851. They lived in Glasgow from 1860 where Pritchard continued to practise as a doctor after he had left his previous position as a GP in Yorkshire in debt and amidst rumours of inappropriate relations with female patients. By 1863, he and Mary had five children.

In 1864, Mary was unwell and went to Edinburgh to recuperate with her parents at 1 Lauder Road. Feeling better, she returned to Glasgow for Christmas but soon fell ill again. Her mother went through to Glasgow to look after her but she too became ill and, in February 1865, Jane Taylor died. Dr. Edward Pritchard signed her death certificate when a neighbouring doctor refused to do so and he accompanied the body to Edinburgh where she was buried here in Grange Cemetery.



Dr Edward Pritchard

Three weeks later, Mary also died and Pritchard signed her death certificate. He came to Edinburgh with her body, making a great show of grief at Michael Taylor's home.

Following an anonymous tip-off, possibly from his medical neighbour in Glasgow, Pritchard was arrested at Queen Street Station on his return to Glasgow. It was found that his wife, Mary, and mother-in-law, Jane, whose body was exhumed, had both been poisoned by antimony.

It emerged that Pritchard was probably having an affair with his 15-year-old servant girl, who became pregnant and for whom he arranged an abortion. It was believed that his mother-in-law had caught them together. Despite maintaining his innocence during his four day trial, Edward Pritchard was found guilty of murdering both women. He was hanged on 28 July 1865 before a gathering of about 100,000 people, the last person to be publicly hanged in Glasgow.

Another murder victim in this cemetery is **Elizabeth Dyer** (1851-1878), poisoned by her language teacher husband, Eugene Marie Chantelle (1834-78), to access insurance money. She lies, unnamed, in the Dyer family grave of her father and grandmother. Chantelle was arrested in the cemetery after the funeral, tried, and hanged in 1878.