Toxicological.

Presence of Thiocyanates in the Human Organism. Post Mortem Transformation of Veronal, Dial and Gardenal into Hydrocyanogen Compounds. E. Kohn-Abrest, Mlle. H. Villard and L. Capus. (*Compt. rend.*, 1930, **190**, 281–284.)—When tested immediately after death, the blood and viscera of animals to which veronal, dial or gardenal had been administered show no trace of hydrocyanic or thiocyanic acid, but when kept for some time (20 to 30 days) so that they putrefy, these organs are found to contain appreciable proportions of thiocyanic acid. These observations must be borne in mind in the investigation of cases of poisoning by cyanides. T. H. P.

Toxic Effects of Methyl Chloride Gas. B. Buckley Sharp. (*Brit. Med. J.*, 1930, 336.)—Methyl chloride gas is used to a large extent in the smaller refrigerating plants, and medical literature contains no reference to its effects on man. G. A. Maloff (*Arch. f. Exp. Path. u. Pharmakol.*, 1928, **134**, 168–172) experimented in Germany upon the toxicity of some of the chlorine derivatives of methane, as judged by the increase of the fat content of the livers of dogs after exposure to them. He showed that whereas tetrachloromethane and trichloromethane show a toxic effect, dichlor-methane, which has fewer chlorine atoms, has no such effect. Methyl chloride was not investigated, but it is reasonable to suppose that there is no toxic effect on the liver by this gas, in view of the still fewer chlorine atoms combined with the methyl group. Two cases show that methyl chloride gas, after a certain, but unknown, amount has been inhaled, causes giddiness, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea of abrupt onset, but no permanent ill effects have so far been encountered. P. H. P.