

MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE  
AND TOXICOLOGY

A TEXTBOOK OF  
MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE  
AND TOXICOLOGY

BY

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## PREFACE TO THE TENTH EDITION

Every endeavour has been made to revise the present edition and to bring it up to date by discarding some old references and inserting new and recent ones and by making suitable changes in the chapters on Toxicology necessitated by the publication of the new edition of the British Pharmacopœia in the year 1948 even though less than two years have elapsed since the issue of the ninth edition. Consequent on the constitutional changes which occurred on the 15th August, 1947, it has been found necessary to make certain changes in sections dealing with the Indian Medical Council Act, 1933.

I desire to express my sincere thanks to Dr P Venkat Rao Chemical Examiner to the Government of Madras for valuable assistance in revising chemical tests for the identification of certain indigenous poisonous plants, to Dr S K Chatterji Chemical Examiner to the Government of West Bengal for supplying notes of interesting medico-legal cases investigated in his department during the last three years, and to Dr G B Sahay Principal and Professor of Forensic Medicine, Medical College, Darbhanga for useful suggestions and for permission to incorporate in the text cases involving important medico legal problems that came under his notice during recent years.

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

In accordance with the wishes of the Principal of the Agra Medical School and the Examiner in Medical Jurisprudence, this book has been written chiefly as a text book for students reading in medical schools and colleges, but in the hope that it may also prove useful to medical and legal practitioners I have tried to incorporate my practical experience as a medical jurist for about fifteen years and as a lecturer in this subject in the Agra Medical School for eleven years and since then in the Lucknow Medical College. I have also given in the form of appendices copies of Government orders in relation to medico legal work, and certain sections of the Indian Evidence Act, Criminal Procedure Code Indian Penal Code Lunacy Act, Poisons Act, etc., which have a direct bearing on legal medicine.

The students of medical schools and colleges while reading for their examinations may conveniently omit the text printed in smaller type which not being included in their course, is meant only for practitioners.

I must admit my responsibility for the opinions expressed in the text, though in the preparation of this book I have freely consulted various text books and periodicals to the authors of which I acknowledge my grateful thanks.

I have also to express sincere thanks to Dr E H Hankin M.A., Sc.D., Chemical Examiner and Bacteriologist to the Government of the United Provinces, for his kindness in revising certain parts of the manuscript and for much valuable assistance and suggestions, especially in the section on Toxicology and to Lieutenant Colonel E J O'Meara O.B.F. F.R.C.S., I.M.S., Principal, Agra Medical School, who has rendered every assistance to facilitate the completion of the book.

In conclusion, I further desire to acknowledge my great indebtedness to Mr H. V. Rogers of Messrs Butterworths for assisting me in reading the proofs.

LUCKNOW, }  
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# MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE AND TOXICOLOGY

## SECTION I

### MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE

#### CHAPTER I

##### JURIDICAL PROCEDURE IN CRIMINAL COURTS

**Definition**—Medical Jurisprudence, Forensic Medicine and Legal Medicine are synonymous terms used to denote that branch of State Medicine which treats of the application of the principles and knowledge of medicine to the purposes of the law, both civil and criminal. It does not include Sanitation, Hygiene or Public Health, both this and Medical Jurisprudence being distinct branches of State Medicine. Medical Jurisprudence proper as distinguished from Hygiene embraces all questions which affect the civil or social rights of individuals and injuries to the person and bring the medical man into contact with the law while Toxicology deals with the diagnosis, symptoms and treatment of poisons and the methods of detecting them.

In his professional career the medical man will have frequently to give evidence as a medical jurist in a court of law to prove the innocence or guilt of his fellow subjects, or to authenticate or disprove a criminal charge of assault, rape or murder brought against an individual. He must remember that as a medical jurist, his responsibility is very great for very often he will find that his is the only reliable evidence on which depends the liberty or life of a fellow being. He has therefore, to acquire the habit of making a careful note of all the facts observed by him and to learn to draw conclusions correctly and logically after considering in detail the pros and cons of the case instead of forming hasty judgments.

It is very essential that a medical jurist must have a fair knowledge of all the branches of medical and ancillary sciences taught to a medical student in the course of his studies inasmuch as he is often required to invoke the aid of these subjects in the elucidation of various problems of medico legal interest in the courts of law. He must also be well acquainted with the Government orders, statutes and acts affecting his privileges and obligations in medical practice and some of the sections of Indian Evidence Act, Criminal Procedure Code and Indian Penal Code relating to the various offences in the investigation of which his assistance is generally requisitioned.

It has been repeatedly remarked by judges that members of the medical profession are not very careful in drawing up medico legal reports and consequently cut a very poor figure as expert witnesses but the experience of medico legal work in India leads one to believe that this carelessness complained of by the judges is not due to any wilful negligence on the part of medical men but to want of sufficient data supplied by the Police and also to their want of practical knowledge of legal procedure in criminal courts owing to lack of opportunities afforded to students to be present in courts when any cases of medico legal interest are being tried. Again in Medical Schools and Colleges great stress is laid on the theoretical teaching of this subject but its practical side is altogether neglected. Medical Jurisprudence is a practical subject and the class lectures should be illustrated with practical examples as far as possible while the students

ought to get ample opportunities to examine cases of injury and poisoning and to conduct and witness medico legal post mortem examinations

To obviate this difficulty it is necessary to give first a brief account of the procedure adopted in a legal inquiry and of the criminal courts of India before the subject proper is treated

### LEGAL PROCEDURE AT AN INQUEST

**Coroner's Inquest**—In the Presidency towns of Calcutta and Bombay, the Coroner with the help of a jury holds inquests or inquiries in cases of sudden unnatural or suspicious deaths or in cases of deaths occurring in a jail within the jurisdiction of his court. The Coroner is authorized to order a post mortem examination of a body to be made by any medical man usually the Police Surgeon, whom he summons to his court to give evidence at the inquest. At such an inquest or inquiry he summons witnesses takes their evidence on oath, receives evidence on behalf of the accused and then with the help of the jury finds a verdict as to the cause of death. If he finds a verdict of foul play against the accused person he issues his warrant for the apprehension of such accused person and sends him forthwith to the Magistrate empowered to commit him for trial. Where there is enough evidence of foul play, but the perpetrator of the crime is not identified, the Coroner's jury returns an open verdict against some person or persons unknown, and the matter is held in abeyance, until further inquiry throws more light on the perpetration of the crime.

**Police Inquest**—In mofussil towns, an officer<sup>1</sup> usually of the rank of a Sub Inspector of Police in charge of a police station, on receiving information of the accidental or unnatural death of any person, informs immediately the nearest Magistrate of the same, and proceeds to the place where the body of the deceased person is lying and there, in the presence of two or more respectable inhabitants of the neighbourhood, makes an investigation and draws up a report of the apparent cause of death as judged from the appearance and surroundings of the body describing such wounds fractures, bruises and other marks of injuries as may be found on the body, and stating in what manner or by what weapon or instrument (if any) such marks appear to have been inflicted. The report is then signed by the investigating police officer and by the persons present at the inquest. In a case of suspected foul play or doubt regarding the cause of death the police officer forwards the dead body for post mortem examination to the Civil Surgeon of the district or other qualified medical man authorized to hold such examination, furnishing him with the descriptive roll and as full parti-

able crime the injured person may go direct to the Civil Surgeon with the permission of the police officer, if he thinks it necessary, or he may file an affidavit in the court of a Magistrate who will send him to the Civil Surgeon for medical examination and report.

### DIFFICULTIES IN THE DETECTION OF CRIME

The Civil Surgeon or the Medical Officer, who is always ready to assist the course of justice, finds it, at times, very difficult to arrive at correct conclusions in medico-legal cases for the following reasons —

(1) On hearing of an incident, the investigating police officer, being already engaged in investigating another case or for some other reason, may not proceed at once to the place of occurrence, consequently valuable time is lost in obtaining a clue to the crime. As an instance of the dilatory habits of the police I may cite below one of many similar cases.

A Hindu female, about 45 years old, of P. S. Mandiaon Lucknow District, died in the King George's Hospital at 1 p.m. on the 20th September, 1921. The Police were informed immediately of her death, and yet the necessary papers for post mortem examination were handed over to me at 9 a.m. on the 22nd September 1921. The result of this unnecessary delay was that the cause of death could not be ascertained owing to the decomposition of the body.

(2) Even if the police-officer reaches the place in time, he may not touch the dead body and scrutinize it for any marks of violence or identification on account of caste prejudices or some such scruples, but may depend on the illiterate villagers present at the inquest, who may have some motive in concealing the real facts. To illustrate these remarks I cite the following four cases —

1 In February, 1917, the body of a Mahomedan woman was taken out of a well in Akbar's palace at Fatehpur Sikri, and was sent to the Agra Medical School Mortuary for post mortem examination with a police report that she was young, had thirty two teeth and her hair was dark, while at the autopsy it was found that the woman was more than 60 years old, had no teeth all the alveoli had been absorbed and the plait of the hair of the head that was lying loose owing to decomposition was mostly of a silvery white colour.

2 In a case of double murder which occurred in Chowk, Lucknow, on or about the 10th August, 1922, the age of one of the victims was put down to be 54 years by the police officer holding the inquest but on inspection on the 12th August the age was ascertained to be only 14 years and the age of the other victim who happened to be the mother of the girl (first victim) was forty years.

3 On the 26th August 1923, a body was removed from a well situated within the jurisdiction of Police Station, Chowk, Lucknow. It was sent to the Medical College Mortuary for post mortem examination with a report that it was the body of an unknown woman. At the autopsy it was found to be the body of a tall and well built male. The body was in an advanced state of decomposition but the penis and scrotum were easily recognizable.

4 On the 10th July, 1924 a headless body was found floating in Nakaur (canal) Ghazipur Bunder within the jurisdiction of Police Station Hazaribagh Lucknow. The body was taken out and forwarded to me for examination with a report that the body was that of a woman. On Examination I found that the body was that of a Hindu male, as the penis which was distended owing to decomposition was not circumcised.

(3) The report supplied by the police officer is often quite meagre, as, for want of powers of observation and habits of accuracy, he rushes through an inquest, and omits to note many points, which would, otherwise help to prove the manner of death, or, for want of the most elementary knowledge of Medical Jurisprudence, though the subject is taught in police training schools, he mistakes the marks of post mortem staining for those of violence and describes injuries where there are none or omits to mention them when they are present, and thus unwittingly misleads the medical officer, especially if the body happens to be highly decomposed.

The following cases from my note book would be quite sufficient to substantiate the above remarks —

1 In October, 1919, the body of a Hindu girl aged 10 years was forwarded from Police Station Kakori, with the station officer's report that the deceased was found with a round at

the back of the neck. On examination eleven incised wounds were found on the right mandible chin, and the right side and back of the neck cutting into the third, fourth and fifth cervical vertebrae and the spinal cord. There was also an incised wound along the front of the left thumb.

2 In October 1921, the body of a Hindu boy about 12 years old, was brought from Police-Station Goshaingunj Lucknow District with a report that the deceased was said to have been beaten with a *lathi* which resulted in his death and that there were four marks of injuries on his body. Post mortem examination was held twenty hours after death when only one bruise  $3/4'' \times 1/2''$ , was found on the lower part of the right shoulder blade, and death was due to asthma from chronic malaria.

3 On the 1st August 1922 post mortem examination was held on the body of Budhu aged 40 years, brought from Police-Station Maihabad Lucknow District with a report that the deceased died from five injuries inflicted on the body viz. one on the right temple, one on the left shoulder, and three on the right side of the back. No external injury could however be detected except an abrasion  $1/2'' \times 1/4''$  above the left cheek bone. On opening the abdomen the spleen which was enlarged was found ruptured.

4 The body of a Mahomedan male 48 years old was forwarded for post mortem examination on the 18th March 1923 with a report that the deceased had been killed by dacoits on the night of the 1<sup>st</sup> March and that there were several bruises on the face, neck and other parts of the body. On examination no injury was found anywhere on the body except a slight laceration across the left upper eyelid and a small abrasion across the left side of the neck. The stomach and intestines on the contrary, revealed the signs of irritant poisoning.

5 On the 26th February 1927 the body of one Kashi Parshad alias Kashidin aged 22 years was forwarded to the King George's Medical College Mortuary for post mortem examination with a police report that after turning the body on all sides the deceased was found to have been shot in the head and that there was an abrasion on the right arm. On examination I found no gun shot wound on the head but detected two lacerated wounds on the head and nine contusions varying from two and a half to four inches by one inch, and five abrasions varying from one fourth to half an inch by one fourth inch on several parts of the body. There was also an extensive fracture of the vault of the skull and a laceration of the brain.

6 On the 14th March 1928 the body of one Raja Ram was sent to me for post mortem examination from Police-Station Alam Bag Lucknow with a report that the left jaw was cut and the left testicle was pierced with some sharp pointed thing and there were bruises round the joint and all over the chest and legs. On examination none of these injuries were found on any of the parts mentioned above. But death was found to be due to strangulation caused by a cord twisted twice round the neck.

(4) The police-officer is not to blame in all cases as he sometimes finds it difficult to furnish the medical officer with really trustworthy information for his guidance inasmuch as owing to the unwillingness of the relatives and neighbours to appear before a Magistrate and give evidence on oath or, owing to a false notion about the honour of the parties concerned no one comes forward to volunteer a statement even if he was present when the crime was committed.

(5) A lot of crime goes undetected owing to the prevailing custom of cremation or burial of bodies soon after death, and that too without any medical certificate. Besides owing to tanks lakes canals rivers wells and jungles situated on the outskirts of villages there is great facility for concealing dead bodies which are likely to be eaten by dogs jackals and birds of prey to an extent which will render them difficult of recognition. In October 1918 I saw the body of a Brahmin male whose ears had been so nicely gnawed through by rats that they appeared to have been cut away by a knife, unless examined very carefully.

(6) Owing to the climatic conditions in India decomposition of bodies takes place much more rapidly than in Western countries and this is a frequent occurrence in the hot and rainy seasons owing to the fact that a body has to be carried for long distances in a *dooly* either in a bullock cart or on the heads of *Chamars* before it can be taken to the *sadr* station for autopsy, for, in most districts the Civil Surgeon is the only officer authorized to hold medical legal post mortem examinations. As a precaution against decomposition the police in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh were instructed to protect the body either by wood charcoal and ferrous sulphate (*kasisi*), phenyle and mustard oil or carbolic dust but this process does not in any way, retard putrefaction. On the contrary, it helps to disfigure the external wounds so much that in some cases it may be

difficult to differentiate their varieties. Hence on my representation to the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals, U.P., these instructions have been cancelled, and the police are now required to forward the body in a shell in the state in which it was found.

A medical officer must never hesitate to hold a post mortem examination of a body on the ground of advanced decomposition, although it is, at times, very trying and disgusting to do so. It is very essential to make as thorough an examination as practicable in order to find some clue to the cause and manner of death, especially in a case where there is suspicion of foul play.

On account of districts being spread over a large area, it is impossible to avoid such difficulties. Hence it appears to be desirable for members of the Provincial Subordinate Medical Service in charge of branch dispensaries to be authorized to hold post mortem examinations and I do not see any reason why these officers should be debarred from holding autopsies seeing that they have to go through a four years' course in a recognized medical school and have to pass three stiff examinations before they are qualified to practise in medicine and surgery.

(7) To fabricate a false charge against an enemy, it is usual for one party to kill a relation, probably a child or old person and then to accuse the opposite party of murder. Even on the occurrence of a natural death in the family the relatives make a false report to implicate their enemies, and attribute the death to some previous quarrel or fight that had taken place between the two parties. Sometimes, someone disappears from the scene and after a time a decomposed body found lying on the outskirts of a village or dug up from a grave is claimed as the body of the absconding person, and a false charge of murder is laid at the door of an unwary enemy who, though innocent, not infrequently makes a confession of guilt, possibly to avoid police torture, or when, for other reasons, he finds it difficult to escape the net of conspiracy spread around him.

*gandasa* which caused her immediate death. Harbans then snatched the younger daughter from the lap of her mother and killed her also with the *gandasa*. Shortly after this the accused went to the police station and reported that his father and his brothers had killed his two daughters. Just as the writing of this report was completed the *chaukidar* of the village arrived and reported that it was generally rumoured that Harbans had himself killed his daughters with a *gandasa* and had come to report. As Tarif could not dare go to the police-station lest Harbans should assault him he went straight to the Superintendent of Police and reported the whole incident. The station-officer of Police-station Sardhana after making investigation challaned Harban<sup>s</sup> under section 302, I P C—*Leader, Sept 5, 1937*.

4 During a quarrel over a young widow one Lachman Ahir and his father, Umadi were beaten with *lathis* and admitted into hospital at Gunnaur in the District of Badaun. The father and the son were provided with only one bed, there being no more beds available in the hospital. In order to unplicate his enemies and make them responsible for his father's death Lachman got up at night and murdered his father by strangulation—*Leader, April 18, 1930*.

5 One Fauz Khan and his uncle, Roshan Khan owned a field in Dasauli village which had been under mortgage for nearly twenty or twenty two years and the mortgage was not redeemed. Roshan Khan was in pecuniary embarrassments in other ways and had many debts to pay. His nephew, Fauz Khan, asked him not to execute any fresh documents to consolidate his debts and advised him upon a new way of paying off all old debts. He asked his uncle to accompany him to their mortgaged field and receive from him two or three severe *lathi* blows so that he could bring a false charge of assault against his creditors to whom he was heavily indebted. Thus, by the threat of a criminal prosecution he could coerce them to hand back the securities relating to his loans and also make them pay him a sum of money by way of compensation. Strangely enough, Roshan Khan fell in with the suggestion and accompanied his nephew to their jointly mortgaged field. The latter then made a determined assault upon his uncle and caused him a number of injuries which soon resulted in death. The plot was, however, found out during

9 A case occurred in Bombay, where six Chinese in order to extract a confess on blindfolded and gagged a Chinese cloth hawker, and after binding his hands and legs together hung him on a wall head downwards and subjected him to terrible and brutal torture for several hours. He was whipped and battered against the wall kicked and fisted. Still he refused to confess that he had anything to do with the theft of Rs. 1 "00 worth of cloth belonging to one Sin Ying Phong.

Finding him obstinate his assailants were alleged to have stuffed his nose with chilly powder and dusted him on the knuckles. Unable to bear the pain any longer, Chang, the victim mentioned the name of another Chinese as concerned in the theft. On this he was freed of the ropes but locked up in a room where he remained without food or drink for two days. On the third day he managed to break open the window and leapt down through it. He was picked up in an unconscious state and taken to hospital where only after three days he was able to make a statement to the police.—*Times of India Dec 18 1940*

### CRIMINAL COURTS AND THEIR POWERS

There are three kinds of courts for the trial of offenders in India. These are the High Courts, the Courts of Session and the Courts presided over by Magistrates. There are three classes of Magistrates, the first, the second and the third. There is also the class of the Presidency Magistrates who are appointed for Presidency towns. First class Magistrates commit their cases to the Courts of Session and Presidency Magistrates direct to the High Courts, but the Presidency Magistrates of Bombay have to commit their cases to the Court of Session for Greater Bombay under the Code of Criminal Procedure (Bombay Amendment) Act 1948. From the class of the Magistrate of the first class a Magistrate is appointed to the charge of a district and is called the District Magistrate. A Magistrate of the first or second class, when placed in charge of a sub division, is known as the Sub Divisional Magistrate.

The High Courts are the highest tribunals in the country and are constituted by Parliamentary Statutes. They are established at Allahabad, Bombay, Calcutta, Lahore, Madras, Patna and Nagpur while the Chief Courts are the highest Courts in Oudh and Sind and the Judicial Commissioner's Court in the North West Frontier Province. These courts may try any offence and pass any sentence authorized by law. But since the advent of independence on the 15th August 1947, British India has been divided into two separate sovereign states of Indian Dominion and Pakistan, and a High Court has been established in each of the provinces of these states, where there was none. The High Court of Allahabad and the Chief Court of Lucknow of the United Provinces have been amalgamated into the combined High Court located in Allahabad, but a judicial bench has been

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seven years. The trials before these courts are ordinarily conducted by the presiding Judge with the assistance of three or four assessors, but the Local Government may with the previous sanction of the Governor General in Council by order in the Official Gazette direct the trial of all offences or of any particular class of offences before any Court of Session in any district to be by jury (I vide Appendix III Cr Proc Code sec 269). In trials by jury before the Court of Session the jury shall be composed of not less than five or more than nine men. In cases where an accused person is charged with an offence that is punishable with death, the number of the jury shall as far as possible be at the full strength and in no case less than seven.

The Sessions Judge is not bound to accept the opinion of the assessors. If he happens to differ from their opinion he can pass a sentence without referring the fact to the High Court to which he is subordinate but if he disagrees with the verdict of the jury whether it be in favour of the prisoner or against him he can only submit the record to the High Court which may, on submission being made pass any order which it deems proper to pass.

The procedure at the trial of a European or an Indian British subject is prescribed under Chapter XXXIII of the Code of Criminal Procedure which has been completely recast and remodelled by Act XII of 1923. The provisions of this chapter are only applicable to those cases where the person aggrieved and the person accused or any of them are respectively European and Indian British subjects or where it is deemed expedient owing to the connection with the case of both a European and an Indian British subject that the ordinary mode of trial should be departed from. In such cases the accused is committed to the Court of Session to take his trial in respect of offences punishable with imprisonment for a term exceeding six months. In petty cases the trial is to take place before a Bench of two Magistrates, one of whom shall be a European and the other an Indian. In the case of disagreement between the members of the special bench the file is to be laid before the Sessions Judge who may pass such order in the case as he considers proper. But thus statutory discrimination is abolished as the bill moved in the Indian Parliament in March 1949 is passed into law.

The sentences authorized by law are—

- (i) death
- (ii) transportation
- (iii) imprisonment (including solitary confinement)
- (iv) fine and
- (v) whipping

Of these a Magistrate of the first class may pass a sentence of imprisonment not exceeding two years. He is also empowered to direct that a certain portion of the sentence shall be served out in solitary confinement within the limits laid down by the Indian Penal Code. The power to inflict the punishment of whipping is also vested in a Magistrate of the first class. The term of imprisonment which a second class Magistrate may award is six months but a Magistrate of the third class cannot pass a sentence of imprisonment exceeding one month. All classes of Magistrates are also authorized to pass a sentence of fine but a Magistrate of the first class cannot pass a sentence of fine exceeding one thousand rupees a Magistrate of the second class one exceeding two hundred rupees and a Magistrate of the third class exceeding rupees fifty. Magistrates of the second and the third class are not empowered to pass a sentence of whipping. As regards solitary confinement a Magistrate of the third class is not but a Magistrate of the second class is authorized to order that a portion of the sentence of imprisonment should be of the description known as solitary confinement. Twice the amount of imprisonment which a Magistrate is authorized to award may be inflicted by him when passing a sentence for two or more offences at one trial. Of course the Court

of any Magistrate may pass any lawful sentence combining any of the sentences which it is authorized by law to pass<sup>1</sup>

In the Punjab, Sind, the Central Provinces, Coorg and Assam and in Oudh and some other parts of the country the Local Government may also confer on certain Magistrates of the first class the powers resembling those of an Assistant Sessions Judge. Such Magistrates can pass any sentence except that of death and of transportation or imprisonment in excess of seven years.

**Subpoena** — A subpoena is a document compelling the attendance of a witness in a court of law under a penalty. When it is served on a witness to give evidence and produce documents before a court, he must do so punctually. Non compliance in a civil case may render him liable to an action for damages and in a criminal case, to fine or imprisonment, unless some reasonable excuse is forthcoming.

In civil cases it is customary to offer a fee, termed conduct money, to cover necessary travelling expenses, when a subpoena is served. If this is not done, the medical man may ignore the subpoena if he so desires. In a case where a medical man considers the fee offered at the time of the service of a subpoena less than what he is entitled to, he must ask to have his proper fee paid before being sworn to give evidence, and the presiding Judge will decide the fee to be paid in the circumstances. It is possible that the fee allowed by the Judge may be much less than what he expected. Hence, in order to avoid disappointment, the medical man will be well advised to make sure of his adequate remuneration before giving a report on a case which will eventually lead to litigation, unless it happens to be a case where he is bound in duty to give evidence. It should, however, be remembered that no unreasonable difficulty in the matter of payment of fees should be raised in cases tried in civil courts under the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 as modified up to the first August, 1938.

In criminal cases no fee is tendered at the time of serving a subpoena, the independent medical practitioner may demand a fee at the time of giving professional evidence before taking the oath, but he should not insist on its payment if the presiding officer of the court is not willing to sanction the sum demanded by him. He must give evidence, or he may find himself in the inconvenient position of being charged with contempt of court. In the case of *K. L v. Ram Narain Sharma* it was held that "in a warrant case ordinarily it is the Government that may pay the expenses of the witnesses both for the crown and the defence and, therefore, it is the duty of the Magistrate to fix the fees of the witnesses. He cannot leave to the parties to negotiate with the witnesses and fix the fees, even in the case of experts. If an expert witness on payment of a reasonable

Government service are not entitled to their fees as experts but are usually paid two rupees as travelling expenses if they are employed in the town where the court is held.

When summoned on the same day to attend at two courts, civil and criminal, the medical witness should attend at the criminal court, and inform the civil court of his inability to do so on account of his presence in the criminal court which has preference over it. If summoned to two courts both civil or criminal, the witness should first attend at the higher court. If however both courts happen to be of the same status, he should go to the court from where he received the summons first, and inform the other court of the fact or should attend there after he has done with the first court.

**Oath**—On being called into the witness box the witness has to take the oath before he gives his evidence. It may be noted here that the medical witness if he happens to be a gazetted officer, has not to stand in the witness box but is usually offered a chair on the dais by the side of the presiding officer. As a rule he is shown special consideration as the nature of his duties is such that he is not kept in attendance in the court longer than necessary, and his evidence is often interposed out of its turn, so that he is released at the earliest moment.

A Christian in taking the oath has to kiss the "book", but this is not right from a hygienic point of view and he would be well advised to insist on taking it after the Scotch form raising his right hand above his head and saying in a firm and loud tone—"I swear by Almighty God as I shall answer to God at the great Day of Judgment that I will tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth". A non Christian in taking the oath has to repeat, while standing, "the evidence which I shall give to the court shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. So help me God". If a witness wishes to give his evidence on solemn affirmation, he has to say "I solemnly affirm that the evidence which I shall give to the court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but

In this examination leading questions are permissible, and the witness should be very cautious in answering them. He should not attempt to answer the questions unless he clearly and completely understands them as the cross examiner often tries every possible means to weaken his evidence, thereby showing to the court that the evidence in question is conflicting and worth nothing.

The witness may also be asked any questions which tend to test his veracity, to discover his knowledge, experience and qualifications and even to injure his character. It must, however, be remembered that the court can always forbid any question which appears to it to insult or annoy, or which though proper in itself, appears to the court needlessly offensive in form (*Vide section 152 Indian Evidence Act*).

In some instances cross examination acts as a double edged sword, which cuts both ways, i.e., it may damage the defence as much as, nay, sometimes more than, the prosecution, specially if counsel is not familiar with medical science and the witness happens to be well up in his subject, and at the same time honest and straight forward.

There is no time limit to the cross examination. It may last for hours or even days although the presiding officer can always disallow irrelevant questions and cut short the cross examination. On one occasion I was cross examined for six days (the examination lasting two hours every afternoon) in a civil case for the recovery of professional fees against a barrister who raised an issue of malpractice. In the end the case was compromised and the barrister had to pay full fees including expenses. On another occasion I was cross examined for six hours in a case of murder. At last when the defence pleader could not shake me in my statement, he appealingly asked if there was anything in favour of his clients. I replied that I would have informed the Magistrate long time ago if there was anything in their favour, as I was there to assist the administration of justice.

(3) Re-examination —The prosecuting inspector or counsel who conducts the examination in chief, has the right of re-examining the witness to explain away any discrepancies that may have occurred during cross examination, but the witness should not introduce any new subject without the consent of the Judge or opposing counsel, lest he should be liable to cross examination on the new point thus introduced.

(4) Questions put by the Judge, Juror, or Assessor —The Judge, juror or assessor may question the witness at any stage to clear up doubtful points.

#### MEDICAL EVIDENCE

✓ Medical evidence given before a court of law is of two forms, viz (1) documentary and (2) oral or parole.

(1) Documentary Evidence —This includes

- (a) Medical Certificates
- (b) Medico legal Reports
- (c) Dying Declarations

(a) Medical Certificates —These are the simplest forms of documentary evidence, and generally refer to ill health unsoundness of mind, death, etc. These certificates should not be given lightly or carelessly, but with a due sense of responsibility for the opinion expressed in them. They are not accepted in a court of law unless they are granted by a duly qualified medical practitioner registered under the Provincial Medical Council Act.

In giving a certificate of ill health a medical practitioner should mention the exact nature of the illness and preferably should take at the bottom of the certificate, the thumb mark impression or signature of the individual to whom it refers.

A medical practitioner should remember that on the occurrence of the death of a person whom he has been attending during his last illness he is legally bound to give a certificate stating to the best of his knowledge and belief the cause of death for which he is not allowed to charge a fee. The granting of such a certificate is not to be delayed even if the fee for attending the patient during his lifetime is not paid. The medical practitioner may, subsequently, sue the legal heirs of the deceased for his dues if he so desires. However he must decline to give a certificate if he is not sure of the cause of death or if he has the least suspicion of foul play. In such a case the proper course for him is to report at once to the police authorities before the body is removed for cremation or burial.

Civil Surgeons and superior medical officers are sometimes called upon to countersign death certificates but they should not do so without inspecting the body. From the non observance of such a precaution it has sometimes happened that a medical officer has been placed in an awkward position in a court of law.

(b) **Medico-legal Reports**—These are the documents prepared by the medical officer in obedience to a demand by an authorized police officer or a Magistrate and are referred to chiefly in criminal cases relating to assault, rape, murder, poisoning, etc. These reports consist of two parts viz. the facts observed on examination and the opinion or the inference drawn from the facts.

In order that they may be admitted as exhibits in evidence these reports should be written up by the medical officer at the time the examination was made or immediately afterwards. They form the chief documents in judicial inquiries and are likely to pass from the lower to the higher courts as well as to be placed in the hands of pleaders hence the utmost care should be used in preparing them. No exaggerated terms superlatives or epithets expressing one's feelings should be used. For instance one should never say that extensive damage to the skull and brain was the result of a particularly brutal murderous assault or the deceased was evidently subjected to a particularly murderous attack in which throttling was also indulged in.

After noting the facts the opinion should be expressed briefly and to the point. The medical officer must remember that he should always base his opinion on the facts observed by himself. He should not be biased by the statements of others. In drawing conclusions in medico legal reports he should not depend upon information derived from any other source. However if his opinion tallies with the information supplied he should say so in his report.

An injury case should be kept under observation and the fact notified to the police if it is not possible to form an opinion immediately after examining it, a hasty opinion should not be formed even if pressed by the police.

Articles of clothing, weapons, etc. sent for medical examination should be described with full particulars to facilitate their identification later on in court. They should be labelled with the differentiating numbers or marks and returned to the Superintendent of Police or Magistrate in a sealed cover one's private seal being used. The signature of the person usually the police constable receiving them should be taken. Those articles which are likely to be sent to the Chemical Examiner should be kept under lock and key in the custody of the medical officer.

(c) **Dying Declarations**—A dying declaration is a statement verbal or written made by a person since deceased relating to the cause of his or her death or any of the circumstances of the transaction resulting in death. The medical officer in charge of a hospital or dispensary should at once send for a stipendiary or honorary Magistrate to record the dying declaration of a person who is likely to die from the effects of criminal violence or other criminal cause.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For full details of the procedure vide *Manual of Government Orders U.P. Vol I Dept II Chapter XXXI*

If in his opinion, there is no time to call a Magistrate, the medical officer should himself record the declaration. It should be recorded in full detail in the vernacular in the identical words of the declarant, in the form of question and answer, and in the presence of respectable witnesses. The accused or his pleader, if present should be allowed to put questions to the declarant. The declaration should then be read over to the declarant, who should affix his or her signature or mark to it. When concluded, it should be signed by the medical officer recording it who should also obtain signatures of respectable witnesses. If the declarant becomes unconscious while the statement is being recorded, the medical officer writing it must record as much information as he has obtained and sign it and obtain the signatures of the witnesses. If the statement is written by the declarant himself it should be signed and attested by respectable witnesses. The declaration should then be forwarded in a sealed envelope direct to the District Magistrate or Sub Divisional Officer concerned. If it can be avoided, the police officer who is engaged in the investigation of the case should not be allowed to be present, when the dying declaration is recorded. No undue influence should also be brought to bear on the declarant who should be permitted to give his statement without any outside prompting or assistance.

It should be noted that the Calcutta High Court has ruled that in a case where a dying person is unable to speak and can only make signs in answer to questions put to him the questions and signs put together might properly be regarded as a "verbal statement" made by a person as to the cause of his death within the meaning of section 32 of the Indian Evidence Act and are therefore admissible in evidence<sup>1</sup>. But statements of witnesses as to what interpretations they put upon the signs made by the declarant are not admissible<sup>2</sup>.

Under the Evidence Act of India, a dying declaration is admissible in court as evidence whether the person who made it was or was not, at the time when it was made, under expectation of death but it is essential that the declarant must be in a sound state of mind at the time of making the declaration<sup>3</sup>. It is, therefore, the duty of a medical attendant to certify that his patient is in a fit mental condition to make a statement before it is recorded. A dying declaration is admissible in all criminal and civil cases, where the cause of death is under enquiry.

Under English law, a dying declaration is admissible as evidence if the declarant, at the time when the declaration was made, was in full possession of his senses, and believed that he was about to die and that his recovery was impossible, the legal assumption being that an individual would speak nothing but the truth during the last moments of life. The admissibility of a dying declaration is confined to criminal charges of murder or manslaughter only.

following are the exceptions —

- 1 Dying declaration
- 2 Expert opinions expressed in a treatise
- 3 Deposition of a medical witness taken in a lower court
- 4 Chemical Examiner's report
- 5 Evidence given by a witness in a previous judicial proceeding

**1 Dying Declaration**—This is accepted in court as legal evidence after the death of the person who made it Should the person chance to live, his statement ceases to have any legal force as a dying declaration but it may be relied on under section 15<sup>o</sup> of the Indian Evidence Act (*vide Appendix II*) to corroborate the statement of the complainant when examined in the case<sup>1</sup>

It should be remembered that a dying declaration does not become invalid if the declarant dies some days after making the declaration In the case of *K E v Thakura Singh and another*, where one Gurcharan who was severely beaten at about 5 or 6 30 p m and had no fewer than eight incised wounds causing a fracture of the skull bone and protrusion of the brain matter was able to make his dying declaration at 9 p m on the same day and died after six days it was held that the fact that the declarant had lingered for some days after making the declaration does not render a dying declaration inadmissible in evidence<sup>2</sup>

**2 Expert Opinions Expressed in a Treatise**—Expert opinions expressed in any treatise commonly offered for sale and the grounds on which such opinions are held may be proved in court by the production of such treatise if the author is dead or cannot be found or has become incapable of giving evidence or cannot be called as a witness without an amount of delay or expense which the court regards as unreasonable (section 60, I E Act *vide Appendix II*)

**3 Deposition of a Medical Witness taken in a Lower Court**—Under section 509 of the Criminal Procedure Code (*vide Appendix III*) evidence given by a medical witness in a lower court is accepted in a higher court, provided it is recorded and attested by a Magistrate in the presence of the accused and a certificate signed at the bottom of the deposition in the following form — The foregoing deposition was taken in the presence of the accused who had an opportunity of cross-examining the witness The deposition was explained to the accused and was attested by me in the presence of the accused His evidence without

*case of K. L. v. Mst. Gaya Kunwar charged under section 302 of the Indian Penal Code with murdering her husband Lalta Singh, by administering arsenic to him<sup>1</sup> —*

"We regret to note that what the law intended to be done as a matter of discretion has been used almost as a general rule according to the practice obtaining in this province. It is to be expected that whenever a Magistrate or a Court of Sessions finds that the report of the Chemical Examiner is inadequate, they should not admit it in evidence unless the officer concerned submits a full and satisfactory report or he has been examined in support of it."

5 Evidence given by a Witness in a Previous Judicial Proceeding — Under section 33 of the Indian Evidence Act (*vide Appendix II*) evidence given by a witness in a previous judicial proceeding or before any person authorized by law to take it is admissible as evidence in a subsequent judicial proceeding or in a later stage of the same judicial proceeding, when the witness is dead or cannot be found or is incapable of giving evidence or is kept out of the way by the adverse party, or if his presence cannot be obtained without an amount of delay or expense which under the circumstances of the case, the court considers unreasonable provided that the adverse party in the first proceeding was afforded an opportunity to cross examine him.

#### KINDS OF WITNESSES

Witnesses are of two kinds common and expert

A common witness is one who testifies to the facts observed by himself

An expert witness<sup>2</sup> is one who on account of his professional training is capable of deducing opinions and inferences from the facts observed by himself or noticed by others. Thus, it is apparent that a medical witness is both common and expert. He is a common witness when he gives evidence as regards the variety, size and position of injuries, and is an expert witness when he mentions the nature of these injuries as to whether they were caused during life or after death whether

If he does not know or remember any particular point, he should not be ashamed to say so, and must not hazard a guess in a doubtful case.

He should remember that the lawyer has practically unlimited licence and latitude in putting questions to the witness in cross examination, and consequently he should never lose his temper, but should appear cool and dignified, even though questions of an irritable nature be put to him. I may, however, mention that as a medical jurist of twenty-eight years' experience I have had no complaint against lawyers. They have great regard for me, and have shown the greatest amount of courtesy to me at the time of my deposition in Court.

The medical witness may refresh his memory from his own report already forwarded to the court, but should not do so from his private notes unless they agreed word for word with the original were made at the time of, or immediately after the occurrence of the event and were written by him or certified to be correct if written by his assistant, besides, he should be prepared to have them put in as exhibits if desired by the Judge or counsel to do so.

He should not quote the opinion of other medical men or quote from text books concerning the case. He is supposed to express an opinion from his own knowledge and experience.

When counsel quotes a passage from a text book and asks the witness whether he agrees with it, he should, before replying, take the book, note the date of its publication, read the paragraph and context, and then state whether he agrees or not, for, counsel usually reads only that portion which is favourable to his case, and the meaning may be completely altered if the whole passage is read. In spite of this precaution he should stick to his opinion if it is still his opinion, and if he finds that it differs from one expressed in the book. To avoid being surprised by such quotations, however, it is advisable to study all the available literature on the subject before giving evidence in court.

**Volunteering of a Statement** —It is said that a witness is not supposed to volunteer a statement in court unless called upon to do so. This may be true in the case of a lay witness, but it cannot be so in the case of a medical witness. Even though a medical witness is called by one side to give evidence in court he must not forget his duty towards the opposite party of honesty and fair dealing. He must also remember that the Judge regards him not as a medical advocate put forward by one side to establish the case but as an officer of justice to help the court to elicit the truth. It is therefore, the duty of a medical witness to state fairly all the medical facts bearing on the case without any reservation. Hence my advice to him is to volunteer statements and suggest questions to court, especially when he finds that there is danger of justice being miscarried owing to the court having failed to elicit any important point. Many years ago I had a talk with a Judge of the Judicial Commissioner's Court (now Chief Court) of Oudh about the volunteering of statements by a medical witness in court, and he agreed with me that I should never hesitate in making such statements. Since then I have as a rule, followed this practice, which has been appreciated so much by the Magistrates and especially lawyers that the latter very often put only one question during cross-examination, viz., "Doctor, please tell us if there is any point in favour of our client (accused)." By following this practice my evidence in a lower court becomes so complete that on a very rare occasion I am summoned to a Court of Session.

**Professional Secrets** —Under section 126 of the Indian Evidence Act (Title Appendix II) a lawyer can claim privilege and will not at any time be permitted to disclose in court the communications made to him in the course and for the purpose of his employment as such by his client except with his express consent, but a medical witness cannot claim such privilege as regards professional secrets.

communicated to him by his patients during their treatment. Nevertheless, he should, on no account, volunteer these secrets, but should divulge them under protest to show his sense of moral duty, when pressed by the court, do so. Non compliance with the order of the court may render him liable to contempt of court. In certain American and Continental courts medical men like priests in the confessional, are privileged not to divulge communications which have been made to them in their professional character by any of their patients.

It should be borne in mind that under English law a medical witness, like any other witness in court, is absolutely privileged, and no action lies against him in respect of his statement in the witness box<sup>1</sup>. He is also not compelled to answer questions which have a tendency to expose him (or the wife or husband of the witness) to any criminal charge, for no one is bound to criminate himself and to place himself to peril. Under section 132 of the Indian Evidence Act a witness is not excused from answering any question upon the ground that the answer to such question will criminate, or may tend directly or indirectly to criminate himself, but no such answer which he shall be compelled to give shall subject him to any arrest or prosecution, or be proved against him in any criminal proceeding, except a criminal proceeding for giving false evidence for such answer.

In a divorce case<sup>2</sup> before Mr Justice Horridge the question of professional secrecy arose when the husband's lawyer called a physician who had treated his wife. The physician asked to be relieved from giving evidence on the plea that the Ministry of Health had passed a regulation that all information obtained in regard to any person treated shall be regarded as confidential. But the Judge said that the Ministry of Health had no power affecting the jurisdiction of the court, physicians were subject to the orders of the court and must disclose what they knew. The physician said he was placed in a difficult position by this ruling. The Judge replied "I cannot see that you are bound to observe the regulations not to disclose voluntary information you obtained but so far as giving information which you are bound to give in assisting the administration of justice it is your duty to give it". The physician then gave the evidence.

In a matrimonial suit<sup>3</sup> where the petitioner claimed a dissolution of the marriage on account of the cruelty and adultery of her husband, an interesting point arose when the three doctors who had treated the husband for two well known venereal diseases claimed privilege urging that the relationship of doctor and patient was confidential. Mr Justice Young said that the law on this point was clear—section 126 of the Evidence Act gave protection to a barrister, attorney pleader or vakil with regard to communications made to him in the course of his employment as such by a client. There was no protection afforded by the Evidence Act to a doctor as such. When a doctor was called to give evidence he was in the same position as any other person not exempted by the Act. It was his duty to assist the court in every way possible and to disclose to the court all the information in his possession relevant to the matter in issue. His lordship therefore had to disallow the plea of the doctors that they were entitled to withhold their evidence.

## CHAPTER II

### PERSONAL IDENTITY

**Definition** —By identity is meant the determination of the individuality of a person

The question of the identification of a living person is raised in criminal courts in connection with absconding soldiers and criminals, or persons accused of assault, rape, murder, etc. It is also frequently raised in civil courts owing to fraudulent personation practised by people to secure unlawful possession of property or to obtain the prolongation of a lapsed pension.

The examination of a person for the purpose of identification should not be undertaken without obtaining his free consent, and at the same time it should be explained to him that the facts noted might go in evidence against him. It should be remembered that consent given before the police is of no account, and that the law does not oblige any one to submit to examination against his will and thus furnish evidence against himself.

The identification of a dead body is required in cases of fires, explosions, railway accidents, foul play, etc.

In India, the identification of a dead body, sometimes, becomes very difficult owing to its rapid decomposition in the hot season, or through damage caused by wild animals when exposed on the outskirts of villages. However, it is very essential that a dead body should be thoroughly identified and the proof of *corpus delicti* established before a sentence is passed in murder trials, as unclaimed, decomposed bodies or portions of a dead body or even bones are, sometimes brought forward to support false charges, and in a country like India it is not difficult to obtain such bodies, since villagers are in the habit of cremating bodies very partially, or throwing them into shallow streams, rivulets or canals, or burying them in shallow graves whence carrion feeders may dig them out.

Ram Adhar was convicted of an offence of murder and sentenced to transportation for life by Mr Asghar Hasan, Additional Sessions Judge of Gonda, with the following remarks —

"As to the question of sentence the body not having been found in an identifiable condition the mere possibility though not even the remotest improbability, remains of Ram Narain turning up alive. It would be imprudent on this ground to pass an irrevocable sentence."

During the trial evidence was led in that the accused killed the deceased with an axe. Bones of a dead body were recovered from a tank and a *dhoti* (loin cloth) found nearby was identified to be that of the deceased. In an appeal in the Chief Court of Oudh their lordships held that the identification of the bones by means of an ordinary *dhoti* was far from certain and discarded all the evidence of the eye witnesses and the motive for the murder. As to the portion of the Sessions Judge's judgment that the accused might possibly return alive and that he shrank from passing the death sentence their lordships said that it was necessary to prove first that a certain person was murdered and, secondly, that the accused person committed the murder. When first of these essential ingredients was missing, their lordships were of opinion that no conviction could result. In the result their lordships allowed the appeal set aside the conviction and sentence and directed the acquittal of the accused —*Leader, Feb 2, 1929, p 5*

Cases have, however, occurred where the death sentence was passed even when the body was not forthcoming or was not identified. Sir Samuel Stuart, Kt., Chief Judge, and Mr Justice Raza of the Chief Court of Oudh state in their judgment that where an offence of murder is proved, the mere fact that the body of the murdered man is not found is not a sufficient reason for not awarding capital sentence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *King Emperor v. Ramnath alias Natha, Criminal Appeal, No. 702 of 1925, 27 Criminal Law Journal April, 1926, p 460*

1 In the case of *K. P. v. Naik* resident of Kosi Kalan District Muttra the body of the victim Chanda was not forthcoming and yet the Sessions Judge relying on the strong evidence against the accused found him guilty of an offence under section 302 I.P.C., and sentenced him to death. It was alleged that the accused after shooting Chanda in the back carried the body to the neighbouring canal where it was dismembered with a sword and thrown into the running stream. Some of the articles recovered from the house of the accused were found to be stained with human blood by the Imperial Serologist who also found such stains on a piece of mud and a piece of bone and flesh found on the canal bank.—*Allahabad High Court Cr. Appeal No. 610 of 1923*

2 One Behari had been convicted and sentenced to death by the Sessions Judge of Etah on a charge of having murdered his cousin Lankush. The prosecution story disclosed that the deceased at about sunset on the evening of the 3rd of September 1923 went out of his house wearing a pair of wooden slippers and an *anklet* on his head and was carrying a *lota* in one hand and a *lathi* in the other. As Lankush did not return for a long time his wife and other relations went in search of him but returned disappointed and the deceased was missed the whole night. The next morning one Musammat Nasirah informed the *Mukhiya* that she had heard at night the cry of a man as if he was being murdered and a search was instituted at the spot and some blood marks were discovered which were being obliterated by Behari accused's mother. The matter was reported to the police and a suspicion at once fell on the accused who bore a long standing enmity against the deceased and who handed over a *gandara* stained with blood and *lota* belonging to the deceased. The deceased's body was never discovered and it was believed that after murder the body was thrown into the Ganges. The accused also made a confession in which he admitted having killed the deceased. The confession was subsequently retracted and the accused pleaded not guilty. In the appeal preferred by the accused before the High Court their lordships confirmed the sentence.—*Leader December 22, 1923*

It will thus be seen that identification may be required of a living person of a dead body, of fragmentary remains, or of bones only.

The following points are usually noted for the purposes of identification—

1. Race
2. Sex
3. Age
4. Complexion and features
5. Hair
6. Anthropometry
7. Footprints
8. Deformities
9. Scars
10. Tattoo marks
11. Occupation marks
12. Handwriting
13. Clothes and ornaments
14. Speech and voice
15. Gut
16. Tricks of manner and habit
17. Mental power, memory and education
18. Amount of illumination required for identification

### I RACIAL

The question of the determination of race or community arises in the identification of unknown or unclaimed dead bodies found in railway carriages or lying in streets, roads and fields in the vicinity of villages, or recovered from wells, tanks, canals and rivers. This question also arises in seaport towns, where there is always a conglomeration of races and communities.

The two important communities of Hindus and Mahomedans in India can be recognized by noting the following chief points —

Hindu Males	Mahomedan Males
1 Not circumcised	1 Circumcised A B — Jews are also circumcised
2 Sacred thread worn over left shoulder in high castes <i>dwiya</i> or twice-born	2 No such sacred thread
3 Necklace of wooden beads, ( <i>Tu'si</i> or <i>Rudraksh</i> ) round the neck	3 No such necklace
4 Marks on the forehead painted red yellow (saffron coloured) or white (sandal wood) indicating different religious sects	4 No such marks but callosities on the centre of forehead patella tuberosity of left tibia and tip of left lateral (external) malleolus owing to special attitudes adopted during prayers
5 Tuft of hair usually grown longer on middle of back of head below the crown	5 No such tuft of hair. Heel clean shaved especially among <i>Bohras</i> A B — I saw a Mahomedan male having a tuft of hair on his heel. On inquiry he said that he kept it in imitation of his Hindu friends living near his house in his village (See Fig 1)
6 <i>Angarakha</i> or <i>Mirzai</i> when worn leaves an opening about 5" or 6" x 1" along the right side of chest showing a brown sun burnt mark as nothing else is worn next to skin especially among villagers	6 Similar sun burnt mark on left side of chest on account of the <i>Angarakha</i> or <i>Mirzai</i> opening on that side
7 Ear lobules usually pierced	7 Ear lobules not pierced, but left lobule may be pierced in a few cases
8 Palms and fingers not stained with <i>henna</i>	8 Palm of left hand and tip of little finger sometimes stained with <i>henna</i>



Fig. 1 — A Malomedan male having a tuft of hair

Parsi males wear a sacred thread (*Kashtri*) round the waist and a *sadra* (muslin *luria*) on the body. Parsi women in addition tie a *Muthabani* (white piece of cloth) on the head.

Indian Christian males usually wear pants and short coats and their women put on skirts and cover their head with a *Chadar*.

Race can also be determined from certain differences in the skeleton given below in a tabulated form —

Race	Caucasian	Mongolian	Negro
1	Skull — rounded	1 Square	1 Narrow and elongated
2	Forehead — raised	2 Inclined	2 Small and compressed
3	Face — small proportionately	3 Large and flattened malar bones being prominent	3 Malar bones and jaws projecting teeth set obliquely
4	Upper extremities — normal	4 Small	4 Long in proportion to body forearms large in proportion to arms hands small
5	Lower extremities — normal	5 Small	5 Legs large in proportion to thighs feet wide and flat heel bones projecting backwards

The skull of an Indian is Caucasian with a few negroid characters. This fact must not be taken as evidence of any racial affinity between Indians and the inhabitants of Africa.

**The Cephalic Index**—The important test for determining race is the *cephalic index or index of breadth*, which is obtained by multiplying the maximum breadth of the skull measured transversely by 100 and dividing the result by the greatest length measured from before backwards. Skulls having the cephalic index between 70 and 74.5, as observed among the Aborigines and pure Aryans, are called *Dolichocephalic* or long headed, skulls denoting 75 to 79.9 cephalic index are called *mesaticephalic* and are characteristic of the Europeans and Chinese, while skulls with 80 to 84.9 cephalic index are termed *brachycephalic* or short headed, as observed in the Mongolian race.

The indices of the long bones may also be helpful in identifying races and are given below in a tabulated form —

Indices	U P Indians (compiled by Khan)	Europeans	Negroes
1 Brachial Index (Radio-humeral Index) $\frac{\text{Length of Radius} \times 100}{\text{Length of Humerus}}$	76.49	71.5	78.5
2 Crural Index (Tibio-femoral Index) $\frac{\text{Length of Tibia} \times 100}{\text{Length of Femur}}$	86.49	83.3	86.2
3 Intermembral Index $\frac{\text{Length of Humerus} + \text{Length of Radius} \times 100}{\text{Length of Femur} + \text{Length of Tibia}}$	67.27	70.4	70.3
4 Humero-femoral Index $\frac{\text{Length of Humerus} \times 100}{\text{Length of Femur}}$	71.11	69.0	72.1

**Variations in the Lower End of Femur**—From investigations carried out on two hundred femora from Indian bodies Siddiqi has come to the following conclusions<sup>1</sup> —

1 In the femora of Indians who as a rule, adopt a squatting posture, the intercondylloid line is in the majority of cases crossed by a distinct groove for the post cruciate ligament.

2 The depth of the intercondylloid fossa is greater in the femora of Indians (squatters) than it is in those of Europeans (non squatters), and that its cause is due to the pressure by the post cruciate ligament when the joint is fully flexed as in squatting.

3 The ratio between the depth of the intercondylloid fossa and the height of the articular surface is such that in non squatters (Europeans) it tends to rise above and in squatters (Indians) to fall below 3.3.

## 2 SEX

The determination of sex becomes necessary in cases relating to heirship, disposal of property, marriage, education, impotence, rape and allied subjects.

It is easy to determine sex in normal cases from external inspection only, but it becomes difficult in cases of hermaphroditism, concealed sex, advanced decomposed bodies, and in the skeleton.

1 *The Journal of Anatomy, April, 1934, p. 831*

In some cases it may be impossible to affirm sex during childhood owing to the non descent of the testicles or such other reason. If so, a positive answer must be delayed until the child reaches puberty, when characters peculiar to each sex usually arise. The distinguishing characters essential to each sex are tabulated below —

## Male

- 1 A testicle secreting semen the prostate vesicula seminalis, penis etc., being mere appendages

## Female

- 1 A functioning ovary with periodic discharges of blood the uterus Fallopian tubes and vagina being appendages only. In the absence of an ovary the presence of uterus or the opening of a cul de sac below the mouth of the urethra and in front of the rectum

*Additional confirmatory signs*

2 Build generally larger	2 Build generally smaller
3 Shoulders broader than hips	3 Hips broader than shoulders
4 Poxum Adun <i>m</i> developed and prominent	4 Po <i>m</i> A land not developed
5 Breasts not developed, though may be so very rarely	5 Breasts developed
6 Linee Albieantes found on abdomen breasts and buttocks as well as on thighs in heating previous pregnancy	6 Linee Albieantes found on abdomen breasts and buttocks as well as on thighs in heating previous pregnancy
7 Pubic hair thick and extending upwards to the navel	7 Pubic hair, horizontal and covering mons veneris only
8 Hair on the face and chest more or less present	8 Hair on the face and chest absent

**Hermaphroditism** — This means the combination of the essential parts of the generative organs of both sexes in the same individual but a double set of organs with the power of self reproduction is never found in the human species. Cawadias therefore suggests that the term hermaphroditism be regarded as synonymous with intersexuality, which is a condition of imperfect sexual differentiation or sex formation and that the intersex be considered as an individual in whom the male and female features co-exist in various proportions. Intersexuality represents a constitutional disturbance involving particularly the endocrine system.

There are two classes of intersex, viz. the male or androgynoid and the female or gynandromorph, who are distinguished as male or female according to the predominant sex. Thus the intersex is either a male who possesses certain female sexual features or a female who shows certain masculine sexual features. Individuals who possess both testis and ovary are either genetic males or genetic females in whom intersexualisation has progressed far.

2 R Ravnaud F C Marill and R Nicluna<sup>1</sup> describe a case in which a young native of Algeria aged 18 years had feminine breasts a scrotum testicle, epididymis and vas deferens on the left side and a labium majus uterus and ovaries on the right Physiologically the presence of ovulation and menstruation on the one hand was balanced by erection of the small penis and ejaculation of semen with active spermatozoa



3 John W Heeke<sup>2</sup> reports the case of a female intersex, aged about 32 years well developed of average height and with normal breasts She had externally the external genitals quite normal the vagina being about three inches long but internally she had no cervix or uterus She had never menstruated She was operated for appendicitis and was found internally to contain two white structures which were found to be normal testicles and the tubules were vestigial Fallopian tubes without cilia

4 In his communication dated the 17th July, 1946 Rai Saheb G B Sahay Civil Surgeon Purnea describes to me the case of a Hindu male intersex aged 22 years who had 22 teeth and a thick bushy growth of dark hair in his axilla and over his pubes but had no moustache or beard His penis was tolerably thick imperforate and 1½ inches long and looked like an enlarged clitoris The scrotum was just like a bag of loose skin containing only the left testicle as big as a bean The right testicle was absent Below the scrotum there was a rudimentary vagina without any orifice except the urethral opening through which urine was passed The labia were tiny flaps but the shape and colour were normal The breasts were well developed the nipples and areolæ being dark At times he used to have slight erections and sexual desire but never ventured to approach a female as he was ashamed of his enlarged breasts However he acted as a passive agent He had two brothers and one sister who were sexually normal (See Fig 2)

In the case of a doubtful sex a very thorough examination should be made bimanually as well as by rectal palpation and an opinion should be given from the anatomical condition and the habit of the individual predominating most In this connection it may be mentioned that Frank and Goldberger<sup>3</sup> have devised a test which permits of the determination of sex owing

proceedings which led to the discovery of her sex it is possible that she might have kept up the deception until her death. During this period she adopted the name of Colonel Victor Barker, lived with another woman as her "husband," opened an antique shop, played for the Andover Cricket Club, sang as a tenor in the church choir, strode the streets in Khaki shorts with a shirt open at the neck and dropped in at the "Star and Garter" for chota pegs.

**Decomposed Bodies**—In the absence of all other evidence the presence of the uterus, which, if unimpregnated, resists putrefaction for a considerable time, will decide sex. In the case of mutilated remains the determination of sex is only likely to be accurate from hairiness of the head, face, chest or pubes, prominence of the Pomum Adami, development of the breasts and *lireæ albicans* if any of these parts are available. The prostate gland which resists putrefaction should be carefully looked for, as its presence will at once indicate sex.

In the case of a head and two upper extremities taken out of a well in Police Station Goshungunj, Lucknow District, in December 1921, the sex was determined to be male from the presence of dark hair about 1" to 5" long on the crown of the head about 1" long on the temples and very short dark hair on the chin and face even though these parts had been heavily decomposed. In another case the male sex was determined from the growth of dark hair on the skin of the chest and on the abdominal skin below the navel when a decomposed trunk without any organs and a few bones had been sent for examination from Police Station, Mandiaon District Lucknow. These were afterwards identified to be the remains of one Ahir, a male by the dhoti left round the trunk.

**Skeleton**—It should be borne in mind that it is not possible to determine sex from a skeleton with a full amount of certainty in individuals who have not reached puberty, seeing that the sexual characteristics of the bones do not begin to manifest themselves until this period is attained.

The bones of the adult female are usually smaller and lighter than those of the adult male, and have less marked ridges and processes for muscular attachments.

The adult female skull is, as a rule, lighter and smaller, its cranial capacity being about ten per cent less than that of the adult male. The glabella, zygomatic and superciliary arches, mastoid processes, and the occipital protuberance are less prominent. The facial bones are more delicate and smaller, especially the maxilla, mandible and the teeth contained in them.

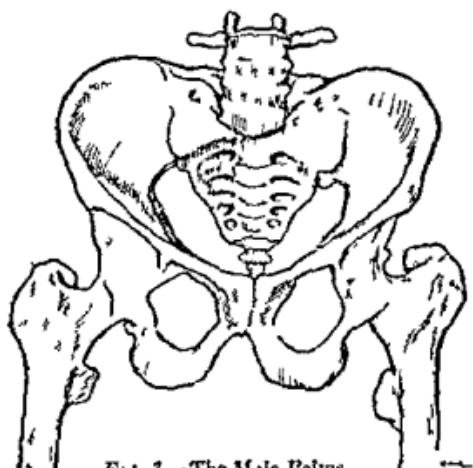


Fig. 3.—The Male Pelvis

The female thorax is shorter, and wider than the male. The sternum is shorter and its upper margin is on a level with the lower part of the body of the third thoracic (dorsal) vertebra while in the male it is on a level with the lower part of the body of the second. The ribs are thinner and have a greater curvature, and the costal arches are larger.

The pelvis affords the best marked and most reliable characteristics for distinguishing sex. The female pelvis is shallower, wider and smoother than the male pelvis.

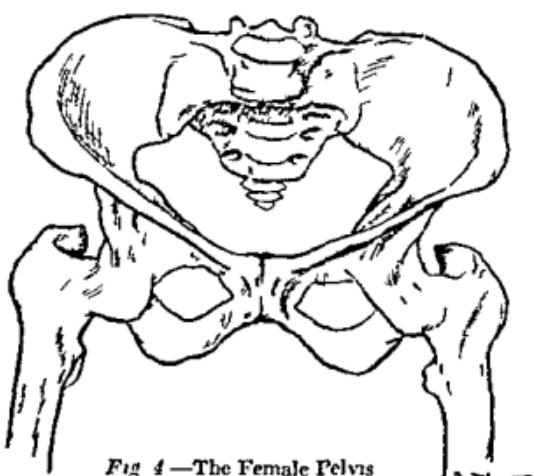


Fig. 4.—The Female Pelvis

The ilia in the female are less sloped, their posterior borders are more rounded, the anterior iliac spines are more widely separated and the great sciatic notches are much wider, forming almost a right angle than in the male. The female sacrum is short and wide, and is sharply curved forward in its lower half, while the male sacrum is long and narrow and has a uniform curvature along its whole length. The auricular surfaces extend over two to two and a half

stunted bodies in the female and over two and a half to three elongated bodies in the male. The obturator foramina are triangular in the female and ovoid in the male. The pre-auricular sulci are commonly present and well marked in the female, and are usually absent in the male. The superior aperture of the lesser pelvis in the female is larger, more nearly circular, and its obliquity is greater than in the male. The ischial tuberosities are everted in the female, and are inverted in the male. The acetabula are narrow in the female and wide in the male. The pubic symphysis in the female is less deep, and the pubic arch is wider and more rounded than in the male, where it forms an angle rather than an arch.

The neck of the femur forms almost a right angle with its shaft in the female, and an obtuse angle in the male.

### 3 AGE

The principal means which enable one to form a fairly accurate opinion about the age of an individual especially in earlier years are teeth height and weight, ossification of bones and minor signs.

**Teeth**—The estimation of age from the teeth with some amount of certainty is only possible upto 22 to 25 years of age, beyond that it is merely guess work.

There are two sets of teeth, called *temporary* and *permanent*.

The temporary teeth are also called deciduous or milk teeth and are twenty in number four incisors, two canines, and four molars in each jaw. They appear in infancy, are shed in the course of a few years and are replaced by the permanent teeth which are thirty two in number, consisting of four incisors, two canines, four premolars or bicuspid, and six molars in each jaw.

The following table shows the average periods of eruption of the temporary and permanent teeth.

	Temporary	Permanent
<b>Central Incisors</b>		
Lower	6th to 8th month	"th to 8th year
Upper	8th to 10th month	
<b>Lateral Incisors</b>		
Lower	10th to 12th month	8th to 9th year
Upper	7th to 9th month	
<b>Canines</b>		
Anterior	17th to 18th month	11th to 12th year
Premolars or First Bicuspid	Absent	8th to 10th year
Posterior Premolars or Second Bicuspid	Absent	10th to 12th year
First Molars	1st to 11th month	6th to 7th year
Second Molars	2nd to 24th month	1st to 11th year <sup>2</sup>
Third Molars or Wisdom Teeth	Absent	17 to - th year <sup>3</sup>

From investigations carried out in schools of boys and girls in Madras and Lahore Shourie<sup>2</sup> has prepared the following table showing the mean ages at which the permanent teeth erupt —

Tooth	Years
Central Incisor	" 10
Lateral Incisor	" 88
Canine	10 8"
First Bicuspid	10 .0
Second Bicuspid	11 57
First Molar	6 48
Second Molar	11 70

**General Characteristics of Teeth** — In some rare cases the temporary teeth may either appear abnormally early or be present at birth, a condition probably due to hereditary syphilis. P. S. Khosla<sup>3</sup> reports the case of a Hindu male child in whom he found the lower central incisor coming out of gums when he saw him the next day after his birth. S. N. Chatterji<sup>4</sup> also reports the case of a male child who was born with two well marked incisor teeth in the lower jaw.

In certain diseases affecting the bony skeleton e.g. rickets the eruption of the temporary teeth may be delayed for a considerable time. Herbert Gregory<sup>5</sup> reports the case of a man who had never had any teeth till the age of 54. In that year the upper right canine appeared but disappeared a year later. It should also be remembered that some of the temporary teeth or all of them may be retained till advanced adult age. Professor Glaister<sup>6</sup> has seen them in a man over sixty years in whose upper jaw especially there was a double row of teeth.

1. In one case I found that a boy aged 15 had no second molar teeth. Dr. Sahay of Patna reported to me that he examined two police recruits aged 120 and 21 years respectively. The first of them had only twenty three teeth. He had not cut the right upper canine tooth and the second molars. The second had only twenty four teeth. None of his second molars had erupted. Both of them were well built and had no abnormality or deformity.

2. Ind. Jour. Med. Res. Vol. XXXVI No. 1 1946 p. 105

3. Indian Med. Gaz. Feb. 1927 p. 68

4. Indian Medical Gazette January 1919 p. 57

5. Brit. Med. Jour. 1902 Vol. I p. 1060

6. Med. Juris and Toxic. Ed. III, p. 79

The temporary teeth commence to be shed about the sixth or seventh year after the eruption of the permanent first molar teeth. Hence in a child of six years there will be twenty four teeth viz., twenty temporary teeth and four permanent first molar teeth.

The permanent teeth erupt at first in the lower jaw and after short intervals in the upper jaw, but are not always regular in their appearance. In a few cases they may appear earlier than the average period. The time of eruption of the third molar teeth or wisdom teeth is more uncertain. After the eruption of the second molar teeth the body of the jaw grows posteriorly and the ramus is elongated to make room for the appearance of the third molar teeth. Hence during the examination of a minor for determining his age a note should always be made as to whether there was a space in the jaw behind the second molar teeth if the third molars were absent. These teeth are usually cut between 17 and 20 years of age but I have seen the left lower third molar tooth in a Mahomedan boy and a Mahomedan girl aged 14 years respectively, and in a Hindu boy of 13 years. I have also found the lower third molar teeth in a Hindu boy of 16 years. Sahai found three third molar teeth in a Barati boy aged between 10 and 16 years. Lall and Townsend<sup>1</sup> found one third molar tooth between the ages of 15 and 16 years two third molar teeth between the ages of 16 and 17 years and three third molar teeth between 17 and 18 years of age in a majority of 120 girls examined in Lucknow. On the other hand in some rare cases the third molar teeth may not appear till adult age is advanced. I have seen a man of 40 and another of 48 who had not cut their third molar teeth. K Venkat Rao<sup>2</sup> reports the case of a man who at the age of 54 years cut his third molar tooth in the right upper jaw while it was still absent in the left upper jaw. Both the third molar teeth were present in the lower jaw.

The notched and stunted upper central incisors of inherited syphilis known as Hutchinson's teeth are always permanent. In old age the teeth have either fallen out or the crowns are worn away to the sockets. Sometimes a smooth rounded surface is to be seen in place of alveolar cavities. Cases have been recorded in which a third eruption of the teeth occurred in advanced age.<sup>3</sup> For instance a Mahomedan male who died in Bombay at the age of 117 years was reported to have cut a third set of teeth on completing his hundredth year. Although not of the normal size the new teeth functioned well and were responsible for giving him the look of a much younger man.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The crowns of the temporary teeth are of a white china like colour and are marked with a ridge or thick edge at their junction with the fangs, while the crowns of the permanent teeth are ivory white and have no ridge. The anterior temporary teeth are vertical and the permanent teeth are usually inclined a little forward.<sup>5</sup>

**Height and Weight** — A full term child at birth is on an average 19 to 20 inches in length and 6 to 7 pounds in weight. It is generally 24 inches in length at the age of the sixth month and 27 inches at the end of the first year. At the end of the fourth year it is on an average double its length at birth. If the health and nutrition are maintained the child gains in weight nearly one pound a month during the first year, so that it is generally double its birth weight at the end of the fifth month and treble its birth weight at the end of the first year. But the progressive increase in height and weight according to age varies so greatly

<sup>1</sup> Ind Med Ca Oct 1929 p 614

<sup>2</sup> Indian Med Cal Gazette March 1933 p 122

<sup>3</sup> Collis Barr, Leg Med and Toxicol II p 31

<sup>4</sup> Times of India Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 1926 p 10

<sup>5</sup> Lowell Ind Med Gt Jun 1901 p 223

Table showing the Age in Years of the Appearance and Fusion of some of the Epiphyses as observed by different Authors

	Golstain (Bengalees) Tentacles	Bash & Basu (Bengalees) Lentiles	Hepworth (Punjabis)	Jall & Tounsend (Clemes of United Provinces)	Jall & Nat (Males of United Provinces)	Pallal (Madrasa)	Ickler (Australians) Females	Davies & Parsons (Highlanders)
Medial epicondyle								
Appearance	5	"					6	5
Fusion to shaft (Distal humeral epiphysis)	14	16	13 to 14	14	14 to 15	15 to 17	15	16
Head of Ulna	0	8	11 to 14				5	4
Appearance	14	16	11 to 14	14 to 15	10	17	14	16
Ulna	1	1			14 to 17			
Distal I. of Ulna	10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	18	16 to 17	10 to 17	10	17	18	10 to 12 Months
Appearance	9 to 12	11 to 13			14 to 18		10	19 to 20
Fusion	11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	17	13 to 14		15 or earli- er		6	
Olecranon					14 to 16		16	
Appearance							17	
Fusion								
Distal I. end of Ulna								
Appearance								
Fusion								
Crest of Ulna	8 to 10	10 to 11					6	7 to 8
Appearance	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	18	16 to 17				19	>0
Fusion	14	17						
Inchium in I. Pubis	17 to 19	19 to 20					11	18
Inchium	8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>						>1
Art. Inulum							7	8
In appearance of I. Inulum								
Cartilage	14	15 to 16					12	16
In I. of I. Pubis	14 to 16	16 to 18					10	19
Appearance	10	—0					—0	
I. Inulum								
Head of Femur								
Appearance								
Fusion								
Great Trochanter	11 to 15	10 to 17	11 to 14	13 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> to 17			14	17
Appearance								
Fusion								
Lesser Trochanter	14	17	14	16 to 17			14	17
Appearance								
Fusion	14 to 17	15 to 17	17				14	12 to 15

	Galstaun (Bengaloes)	Bassi & Brsu (Bengaloes) Hindu Females	Hepworth (Punjabis)	Lall & Townsend (Females of United Provinces)	Pillai (Madras)	Flecker (Australians*)	Davies & Parsons (Englanders)
	Females	Males				Females	Males
Distal End of Lemur : Appearance	..	Before Birth 11 to 17	Before Birth 11 to 17	..	..	..	Before Birth 10
Fusion	..	11 to 17	10	10½ to 17½	..	14 to 17	19
Proximal End of Tibia : Appearance	..	Shortly after Birth 11 to 15	Shortly before or after Birth 13 to 17	15 to 10	16½ to 17½	..	Before Birth 17
Fusion	..	14.1 to 14.4	16	14 to 15	16 to 17½	14 to 17	17
Proximal End of Fibula : Appearance	..	14 to 16	14 to 16	10 to 17	10½ to 17½	14 to 17	17 to 19
Fusion	..	13 to 15	14 to 16	15	17 to 18	14 to 17	17
Distal End of Fibula : Appearance	..	13 to 15	14 to 16	4 to 7	..	..	..
Fusion	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Patella : Appearance	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Fusion	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Carpal Bones : Capitate (Os magnum) :	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Appearance	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Hamate (Unciform) : Appearance	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Triquetrum (Cuneiform) : Appearance	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Lunate (Semilunar) : Appearance	..	2 to 3	3 to 4	8 to 14 Months	..	..	3 to 4
Multangular Majus (Trapezium) - Appearance	..	5	5	..	..	..	3 to 4
Multangular Minus (Trapezoid) - Appearance	..	3 to 6	7	..	..	5	5 to 7
Navicular (Scaphoid) : Appearance	..	3 to 6	4 to 7	..	..	6	7 to 8
Pisiform : Appearance	..	6	7 to 11 12 to 17	..	..	5	6 to 8 11 12

	Galsdau <sup>1</sup> (Bengaloes)	Basu & Basu (Bengaloes)	Leppworth & Hindoo Females	Lall & Towndre <sup>2</sup> (Females of United Provinces)	Pillai <sup>3</sup> (Madras) (Provinces)	Flecker <sup>4</sup> (Australians)	Davies & Parsons <sup>5</sup> (Englanders)
	Females	Males			Females	Males	
<b>First Metacarpal bone</b>							
Apparance	9	6				2	2
Fusion	16 to 16	16 to 18	..		14 to 17	16	18
<b>Second, third, fourth and fifth Metacarpal Bones.</b>							
Apparance	2 to 3	3 to 4			2 to 4	2	3
Indian	16 to 13	16 to 18	..		14 to 17	16	18
<b>Phalanges of the Hand:</b>							
Proximal Row : Appearance	11	2 to 4			14 to 17	16	18
Fusion	11 to 15	17 to 18	..		14 to 17	16	18
Middle Row : Appearance	2 to 3	3			14 to 17	16	18
Fusion	14 to 16	16 to 18	..		14 to 17	16	18
Terminal Row : Appearance	3	3 to 5			14 to 17	16	18
Fusion	15	17 to 18	..		14 to 17	15	18
<b>Tarsal Bones<sup>6</sup></b>							
Calanctus (Os Calcis) and Talus (Astygala): Appearance	..	At Birth	At Birth		..	Before Birth Before Birth	Before Birth
Cuboid: Appearance	..	At Birth	At Birth		..	Before Birth Before Birth	1
<b>Internal Cuneiform:</b>							
Appearance	..	1 to 3	1 to 4		..	2	2
Middle Cuneiform:	..	1 to 3	2 to 4		..	2	2
<b>External Cuneiform:</b>							
Appearance	..	1 to 3	1 to 4		..	2	2
Appearance	..	1 to 3	2		..	2	2
<b>Navicular:</b> Appearance	..	1 to 3	4 to 5		..	3	3
<b>Metatarsal Bones:</b>							
Appearance	..	1 to 3	4 to 5		..	3	3
Fusion	..	15 to 15	16 to 18		14 to 17	16	18
<b>Tarsal Phalanges:</b>							
Proximal Row : Appearance	..	1 to 3	2 to 4		2 to 4	2 to 3	3 to 5
Fusion	..	14 to 15	16 to 18	..	14 to 17	16	18
Middle Row : Appearance	..	3 to 5	3 to 4		14 to 17	14	17
Fusion	..	14 to 15	16 to 18	..	14 to 17	14	17
Terminal Row : Appearance	..	3 to 6	4 to 7		14 to 17	13	17 to 19
Fusion	..	18 to 14	15 to 17	..	14 to 17	11	17 to 19

1. *Ind. Jour. Med. Res., July, 1927, p. 207.* 2. *Jour. Ind. Med. Inst., Aug., 1928, p. 371.* 3. *Ind. Jour. Med. Res., Sept., 1928, p. 601.* 4. *Ind. Jour. Med. Res., April, 1928, p. 601.* 5. *Ind. Jour. Med. Res., April, 1928, p. 601.* 6. *Ind. Jour. Med. Res., April, 1928, p. 601.* 7. *Ind. Med. Gaz., Oct., 1928, p. 158.* 8. *Jour. Anat., Sept., 1927, p. 158.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ind. Med. Gaz., Oct., 1928, p. 124.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ind. Med. Gaz., March, 1928, p. 124.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ind. Med. Gaz., April, 1928, p. 124.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ind. Med. Gaz., April, 1928, p. 124.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ind. Med. Gaz., April, 1928, p. 124.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ind. Med. Gaz., April, 1928, p. 124.*

The four middle pieces of the sternum which constitute its body fuse with one another from below upwards between 14 and 20 years of age. The xiphoid unites with the body at about the 40th year of age while the manubrium rarely unites with the body except in old age.

In old age the long bones become lighter and more brittle owing to the increase in the inorganic constituents. The skull bones tend to become thinner and lighter from absorption of the diploë and are therefore liable to fracture more easily through violence. In a few cases however the skull bones become thicker and heavier owing to hypertrophy of the inner table. The sutures of the vault of the skull commence to be obliterated between the ages of thirty and thirty five first on the inner surface and later on the outer surface. They are ossified and are completely obliterated in advanced age although the parietal sutures may remain separate throughout life.

The laryngeal and costal cartilages become ossified and the greater cornua of the hyoid bone are firmly joined to the body by bony union. The lesser cornua which are usually connected to the body by fibrous tissue throughout life may occasionally become ankylosed in advanced life.



people. In a few cases it is a hereditary peculiarity. Cases have occurred in which the hair of the head has suddenly changed to grey from extreme terror, grief, shock or some unaccountable reason. A case is recorded in which hair turned snow white a day or two after an automobile accident.<sup>1</sup> Circumscribed patches of grey hair on the head may also be due to trophic changes produced by neuralgia or other diseases affecting the fifth nerve. Pubic hair begins to turn grey usually after the age of fifty.

Atheromatous arteries, and an opaque zone in the cornea known as *arcus senilis*, are rarely seen before forty. Wrinkles on the face begin to appear after this age, but no reliance can be placed on these signs inasmuch as *arcus senilis* has been seen as early as twenty eight and wrinkles may not appear until a very late age as they depend more or less on the nutrition of the body.

A horoscope may form a very important piece of evidence in deciding the question of age but every one knows how easy it is to produce a fictitious one. Birth registers maintained in Municipalities may be of much assistance in determining the age of a particular individual, as the names of children are now given in the registers.

**Medico-Legal Aspect of Age**—The following are the cases in which a medical man is called upon to give his opinion as regards age—

- 1 Criminal responsibility
- 2 Marriage contract
- 3 Kidnapping
- 4 Raja
- 5 Attainment of Majority
- 6 Competency as a Witness
- 7 Eligibility for employment
- 8 Judicial Punishment
- 9 Infanticide
- 10 Criminal abortion

**1 Criminal Responsibility**—A child under the age of seven years (eight years according to the Children and Young Persons' Act, 1933, of England) is presumed by Indian law to be incapable of committing an offence, and is therefore exempt from punishment<sup>2</sup> but this presumption is only confined to the offences prescribed under the Penal Code of India and does not extend to local or special Acts. For instance, a child even under seven years of age is liable to punishment under section 130 of the Indian Railways Act 1890 (Act IX, of 1890), if it does anything maliciously to wreck or attempt to wreck a train, to hurt or attempt to hurt persons travelling by railway or to endanger the safety of persons travelling by railway by wilful act or omission or by way of rash or negligent act or omission (*Ide Appendix II*).

In a case<sup>3</sup> where one Inderjit, a lad of about six years of age was sent up to the Sessions at Budaun for trial on a charge of pelting stones at the engine of the 10 down mixed train under sections 1-7 130 of the Indian Railways Act, the learned District Judge held the accused guilty of pelting stones at the engine. But taking the lad's tender age into consideration, the Judge ordered him to be set off with admonition on his father's executing a bond in a sum of Rs 100 binding himself in such penalty to prevent the minor accused from being again guilty of any of the acts referred to in sections 127 and 130 of the Railways Act.

A child above seven years of age and under twelve in India and more than eight and under fourteen years of age in England is presumed to be capable of committing an offence, if he has attained "sufficient maturity of understanding".

1 *Medico-Legal Jour*, Vol 49 No 2, 1932 p 50

2 *Appendix II, Section 82 Indian Penal Code*

3 *Lester, May 28, 1933*

to judge of the nature and consequences of his conduct on that occasion' (section 83 I P C vide Appendix IV). In this connection it may be noted that according to Indian law the maturity of understanding the nature and consequences of his conduct at the time of committing an offence is to be presumed in a child between seven and twelve years of age unless the negative is proved by the defence. Where as by English law the incapacity to commit a crime by a child between eight and fourteen years is to be presumed until the contrary is proved.

In a case in which two Pasi Boys of ten and twelve years respectively and one Pasi girl of ten years were put on their trial on a charge of murder of a Brahmin girl of nine years by strangulation the Sessions Judge of Sitapur held that the accused were undoubtedly old enough to understand the nature and consequences of the act committed by them but in view of their tender age and the fact that they were compelled by hunger to resort to such a crime he thought fit to exempt them from the extreme penalty of law. He accordingly passed a sentence of transportation but ordered them to be sent to the Reformatory School.<sup>1</sup>

A child under twelve years of age cannot give valid consent to suffer any harm which may occur from an act done in good faith and for its benefit while a person under eighteen years cannot give valid consent whether express or implied to suffer any harm which may result from an act not intended or not known to cause death or grievous hurt (sections 83 and 87 I P C Appendix IV).

**2 Marriage Contract.**—In India there was no limit of age for contracting marriage till the Child Marriage Restraint Act (Act XLV of 1929) came into force on the first day of April 1930. By this Act a girl under fourteen years of age and a boy under eighteen years of age cannot contract marriage. A bill to modify this Act was introduced in the Indian legislature and was referred to the select committee on the 23rd August, 1948. It raises the age of a girl from fourteen to fifteen and that of a boy from eighteen to twenty. It affords protection to young girls under eighteen years of age against ill matched marriages for instance with men over forty five years.

**3 Kidnapping**—To constitute the crime of kidnapping or abducting a child with the intention of taking dishonestly any moveable property from its person the age of such child should be under ten years.<sup>2</sup> To constitute the offence of kidnapping or abducting a minor from lawful guardianship the age of a boy should be under fourteen years and that of a girl under sixteen years.<sup>3</sup> To constitute the offence of procuring a minor girl for illicit intercourse or of selling or buying a minor girl for purpose of prostitution her age should be under eighteen years.<sup>4</sup> An accused person can be indicted for importing into British India from a foreign country a girl for purpose of illicit intercourse, if she happens to be under twenty one years of age.<sup>5</sup>

**4 Rape**—Sexual intercourse by a man with a girl under thirteen years of age even if she be his own wife or with any other girl under fourteen years of age even with her consent constitutes rape (section 375 I P C vide Appendix IV).<sup>6</sup> According to the law of England a boy under fourteen years of age is presumed to be incapable of committing rape. In India there is no such limit of age at which a person may be presumed to be physically incapable of committing rape but the court is guided in this respect by sections 82 and 83 of the Indian Penal Code.

**5 Attainment of Majority**—Under English law a person attains the majority at twenty-one when he enjoys the full privileges of an adult. Legally

1 Leader April 30 1927

2 Appendix II Section 360 Indian Penal Code

3 Appendix IV Sections 361 to 366 Indian Penal Code

4 Appendix II Sections 368-A 372 and 373 Indian Penal Code

5 Appendix II Section 366 B Indian Penal Code

6 The section will have to be amended if a bill for raising the ages to 15 and 18 years respectively is passed in the Indian Dominion Parliament

is supposed to have attained majority a day previous to his twenty first birth day Under the Indian Majority Act (Act IX of 1875) a person is deemed to have attained his majority when he has completed his age of eighteen years Where a minor is under the guardianship of the Court of Wards or is under a guardian appointed by court he is not deemed to attain his majority until he is of twenty one years of age A minor is incapable of selling his property making a valid will or serving on a jury

Under the Bombay Prevention of Hindu Bigamous Marriages Act 1946 a minor means any person who is under sixteen years of age

**6 Competency as a Witness**—There is no fixed limit of age at which a person may or may not give evidence in a court of law According to section 118 of the Indian Evidence Act every person is competent to testify unless the court considers that he is prevented from understanding the questions put to him or from giving rational answers to those questions by tender years old age disease whether of body or mind or any other cause of the same kind Before a child of tender years is examined as a witness it is necessary for the court to be satisfied that the child is capable of understanding the difference between truth and falsehood and the necessity of speaking the truth Under the Indian Oaths Amendment Act, 1939 (Act No XXXI of 1939) the unsworn evidence of a child under twelve years of age is admissible if the court or person having authority to examine such witness is of opinion that though he understands the duty of speaking the truth he does not understand the nature of an oath or affirmation

**7 Eligibility for Employment**—Twenty five years is ordinarily the limit for entering into Government service The Indian Draft Constitution provides that a child below the age of fourteen years shall not be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in other hazardous employment Under the Factories Act,<sup>1</sup> 1948 (Act LXIII of 1948) an adult is defined as a person who has completed his eighteenth year an adolescent is defined as a person who has completed his fifteenth year but has not completed his eighteenth year and a "child" is defined as a person who has not completed his fifteenth year A young person means a person who is either a child or an adolescent No child who has not completed his fourteenth year shall be required or allowed to work in any factory A child who has completed his fourteenth year or an adolescent shall not be required or allowed to work in any factory unless a certificate of fitness granted to him by a certifying surgeon is in the custody of the manager of the factory, and such child or adolescent carries while he is at work a token giving a reference to such certificate A young person who has completed his fifteenth year shall be allowed to work in a factory as an adult if a certificate has been granted to him that he is fit for a full day's work in a factory While at work in the factory an adolescent who is granted a certificate of fitness to work in a factory and carries a token giving reference to the certificate shall be deemed to be an adult for all purposes But an adolescent who has not been granted such certificate of fitness to work in a factory as an adult shall be regarded as a child for the purposes of this Act No child shall be employed or permitted to work in any factory for more than four and a half hours in any day and between the hours of 7 p m and 6 a m No adult worker shall be required or allowed to work in any factory for more than nine hours in any day and for more than forty eight hours in any week The period of work of adults employed in a factory shall be so fixed for each day that no period shall exceed five hours and that no worker shall work for more than five hours before he has had an interval of at least half an hour

The Bombay Shops and Establishments Act 1948 provides that no child who has not completed twelve years shall be employed in these establishments No

<sup>1</sup> Vide sections 2 51 54 55 67 68 69 "0 and "1

employee shall be allowed to work in any shop or commercial establishment for more than nine hours in a day and forty eight hours in any week. Women shall be prohibited from work before 6 a.m. and after 7 p.m.

Under the Indian Mines Act, 1923 as modified up to the first October, 1938, no child shall be employed in a mine, or be allowed to be present in any part of a mine which is below ground. No person who has not completed his seventeenth year shall be allowed to be present in any part of a mine which is below ground, unless a certificate of fitness granted to him by a qualified medical practitioner is in the custody of the manager of the mine, and he carries while at work a token giving a reference to such certificate<sup>1</sup>.

Under section 22 of the United Provinces Excise Act (Act IV of 1910) a licensed vendor is not permitted to sell any spirit or intoxicating drug to persons apparently under the age of sixteen years, while under section 23 a licensed vendor is not allowed to employ children under the age of fourteen years in the premises in which foreign liquor or country spirit is consumed by the public.

**8 Judicial Punishment** — Males above forty five years of age are exempt from whipping. A youthful offender is a person who has been convicted of an offence punishable with transportation or imprisonment and who, at the time of such conviction, was under the age of fifteen years<sup>2</sup> (sixteen years in the Presidency of Bombay<sup>3</sup>). Such an offender may be sent to a reformatory school, but must not be detained there beyond the age of eighteen years. He may also be ordered by the court to be committed to the care of his parent or guardian or to be placed under the supervision of a trustworthy person. Under the several Children's Acts<sup>4</sup> in India no child under the age of fourteen years shall be sentenced to death or transportation and no young person who is fourteen years of age or upwards but under the age of sixteen years shall be committed to prison unless the court certifies that he is of so unruly or of so depraved a character that he is not a fit person to be sent to a reformatory school and that none of the other methods in which the case may legally be dealt with are suitable.

Under the Children and Young Persons' Act, 1933, of England, a person under the age of eighteen years cannot be sentenced to death. There is no such statutory provision in Indian Law, although it is in the discretion of the court to regard youth as an extenuating circumstance justifying the imposition of a lesser sentence of transportation instead of death. The Calcutta High Court sentenced a girl of sixteen years to transportation for life who was charged with deliberately killing her husband by administering arsenic<sup>5</sup>. The Nagpur High Court sentenced a boy, aged 13½ years, to transportation for life for having killed a man by shooting him with a rifle, but ordered him to be detained in a reformatory school for a period of four years<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand cases are recorded where the tender age of the accused is not taken into consideration for awarding the lesser penalty of transportation for life, especially in cases of a ruthless and brutal murder. The Amritsar Sessions Judge sentenced to death one Didar Singh, 16 years old, for cutting off the head of his relative with a sickle<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Vide Sections 26 and 26 ½ of the Indian Mines Act 1923, as modified up to the 1st October, 1938.

<sup>2</sup> Section 4 Bombay Reformatory Schools Act 1897.

<sup>3</sup> Bombay Act No. LIII of 1924.

<sup>4</sup> Sect. 22 of Madras Act II of 1920. Section 21 of Bengal Act II of 1922, Section 22 of Bombay Act No. LIII of 1924. Section 26 of Central Provinces Act X of 1928.

<sup>5</sup> Jasha Rewa (1907) 11 C.W. No. 904 Crim. Law Jour., p. 154 Ratnaiak and Thakore, The Law of Crimes Pd. VI, p. 702.

<sup>6</sup> Dalip Singh v. K.T. 10 Cr. Law Jour. 1938, p. 92.

<sup>7</sup> Times of India, Dec. 11, 1934. Madras High Court Cr. Appeal No. 254 of 1942 K.E. v. Chetteti and another 44 Cr. Law Jour. 1943, p. 299. In this case the accused who were between 16 and 17 years of age were sentenced to death under section 302, I.P.C.

**9. Infanticide**—In a charge of infanticide, where a newly born infant alleged to have been killed shows the signs of immaturity, it is necessary to determine whether the infant had attained the age of viability, which is certain after the 210th day of intra uterine life and may, in exceptional cases, be after the 180th day. An infant born earlier than this period is not in ordinary circumstances capable of maintaining a separate existence after birth. Hence the charge of infanticide may fall through, if the infant is proved to be under the age of six months of intra uterine life.

**10. Criminal Abortion**—In criminal abortion it is necessary to find out whether a woman has passed the child bearing period, lest it might be a false charge. It is also necessary to find out the age of the foetus from the characteristics of its development.

#### 4 COMPLEXION AND FEATURES

The complexion may be fair, wheat coloured, dark, brown or sallow. The colour may change from residence in a tropical country. The features of an individual may resemble those of his supposed parents or relatives, or his photograph but this is not always the case. The features may change considerably from disease or dissipation or even from worries of a long duration. Again, there are some persons who can cleverly alter their features by changing the expression of their face, so as to evade detection. Peterson, Haines and Webster<sup>1</sup> quote a case of Tidy in which Charles Peace, a burglar, who was executed for the murder of William Dyson in 1879, had such a remarkable power of changing his features and altering his expression that he was accustomed to face the detectives who not only knew him well but were actually seeking to arrest him at the time he was talking to them and was, moreover, able to deceive his wife and son as to his identity.

Photographs of the front and profile views of the face may serve as a means of identification, and are specially useful in cases of disputed paternity. While examining photographs the chief point to note is the character of the angle which the eye forms with a line drawn through the middle of the forehead or nose, but the medical man should never risk an opinion on this point, as he should remember that he is not an expert in photography whereas a photographer or an artist is better qualified to give an opinion on such a point.

The details of the features as regards the eyes, nose, ears, lips, chin and teeth should be carefully noted. The irises of the Indians are generally dark brown, but are grey in a few cases especially among the Punjabis. In some individuals the colour of one iris may differ from that of the other. Coloboma or hiatus may be found, if an operation has been performed on the iris. The bridge of the nose may be narrow, flat or broad, and the nostrils may be distended or the reverse. The ears may be small or large in size. Their lobules may be free or adherent to the face. The lips may be thin or thick, and the upper lip may hang over the lower lip or may look shorter owing to the upper incisor teeth projecting outwards. The chin may be rounded, square, protruding or double from excessive fat.

Kumar Ramendra Narayan Roy, the second son of Raja Rajendra Narayan Roy Bahadur of Bhawal estates in Dacca went to Darjeeling in 1909 where he died of bilious colic. Twelve years later in 1921, a Sadhu came to Dacca and declared that he was Kumar Ramendra Narayan Roy and claimed one-third share of the Bhawal Raj Estate. He further declared that in 1909 he went to Darjeeling on a rest cure and while there he was the victim of a murder conspiracy. He alleged that arsenic was administered to him with the intention of killing him, and that owing to its administration he relapsed into coma and was taken for dead. His body was accordingly removed to the cremation ground at night but a heavy storm came up and the funeral party left

his body on the cremation ground without attempting to light the funeral pyre. While still in an unconscious condition he was found on the funeral pyre by some *Naga Sanyasis* who revived him and carried him with them. Thereafter, he suffered from complete amnesia, and stayed with them as a pupil of their religious doctrines until 1921.

The Kumar being baffled in all his attempts to regain his share of properties brought a suit in the court of the Subordinate Judge of Dacca in 1930 which was eventually transferred to the file of Mr Pannalal Bose the Subordinate Judge, who during the course of the trial was promoted to be an Additional District and Sessions Judge of Dacca. The suit was keenly contested by Shrimati Bibhabati Devi who was married to the second son of the Raja Bahadur and others. Their contention was that the plaintiff was an impostor, named Sunjardas Naga a disciple of a Hindu holy man from the Punjab and that the second son of the Raja Bahadur actually did die at Darjeeling in 1909 and that his body was duly cremated.

During the hearing of this remarkable case popularly called Bhowal Sanyasi Case which lasted for more than two years about 1 000 witnesses on the plaintiff's side and 470 on the defence side were examined, and photographs and documents numbering over 2 000 were exhibited before the court. The judgment was delivered in favour of the plaintiff who was declared to be Kumar Ramendra Narayan Roy and was declared to be entitled to the status and title of the second Kumar of Bhowal and to one third of the property. The judgment was later upheld by the Calcutta High Court and by the Privy Council but the Kumar died shortly after the decision of the Privy Council in July 1946.

The following marks and features which are exceptional serve as identifying marks:—

Kumar	Plaintiff
Complexion—Pink and white	Pink and white
Hair—Brownish	Brownish
Hair form—Wavy	Wavy
Moustache.—Lighter than hair	Lighter than hair
Eyes—Brownish	Brownish
Lips—Twist on the right lower lip	Twist on the right lower lip
Ears—A sharp angle at the rim	A sharp angle at the rim
Lobes of ears.—Not adherent to the cheeks and pierced	Not adherent to the cheeks and pierced
Adam's Apple—Prominent	Prominent.
The left upper first molar tooth—Broken	Broken
Hands—Small	Small
Index and middle fingers of the left hand—I less unequal than those of the right	Less unequal than those of the right
Point of flesh or something in the right lower eye lid—Present	Present
Teet.—Scaly Size, 6 for shoes	Scaly Size 6 for shoes
Irregular scar on the top of the left outer ankle—Present	Present
Syphilis.—Present	Present
Syphilitic ulcers—Present	Marks of such ulcers

permitted a cast of his teeth to be made, which was found to fit exactly into the marks on the cheese. A dentist stated in his evidence as an expert that no two sets of teeth were identical. This accused was very anxious that his mouth should be examined to see if his teeth would fit the impression on the cheese. When this was done, the very damning evidence was ascertained that since his arrest, he had knocked out a stump<sup>1</sup>.

In December 1918 a Mahomedan prostitute was sent to me for examination by a Bench Magistrate. She had superficial lacerations in the form of a circle on her right cheek as a result of teeth bite, but in the upper half of the circle there was a blank space which coincided with the missing right upper central incisor tooth of the accused.

In connection with a burglary in a jeweller's shop in Lucknow the police arrested a goldsmith who was found in possession of several diamond crystals. When the crystals were identified by the proprietor of the jeweller's shop the goldsmith confessed that he got the crystals from a Sindhi merchant who had one gold tooth which gleamed whenever the man smiled but was not visible otherwise. Later in a restaurant in Aminabad the proprietor of the jeweller's shop came across a man who answered to the general description of the suspect given. The difficulty was about the gold tooth, for when the man spoke it was not visible. The proprietor was wondering whether he should send for the police when some one in the restaurant cracked a joke in Sindhi. The suspect laughed at the joke revealing the gold tooth. His doubts being at rest the proprietor of the jeweller's shop immediately sent for the police and had the man arrested.<sup>2</sup>

The record which a dentist keeps of the condition of his patient's teeth or the cast which he takes of his patient's jaw for fitting artificial teeth may, sometimes, be very valuable for purposes of identification.

A diplomatic official in Chile complained of threatening letters and one night the embassy was burned down and his charred body was found in the ruins and buried with great public lamentation and eulogy. The Director of the Chilean Dental School had his doubts and examined the corpse an hour before burial. The next day he announced that the deceased was not a missing official within a few days the latter was arrested on the frontier with the whole negotiable wealth of the embassy. The body was that of the night porter who had never been to the dentist, although the murderer had been to particular pains to mutilate the teeth they were easily distinguishable from his own described in the dentist's records.<sup>3</sup>

Owing to decomposition, more often in summer the features of a dead body become blotted beyond recognition. It has been suggested that the altered features due to decomposition may be restored to natural features by bathing them with chlorine, salt and hydrochloric acid as well as by injecting them with chlorine, zinc chloride and ferrie chloride, but this does not seem to be possible.

## 5 HAIR

This forms an important means in establishing identity, as it resists putrefaction. The hair of the Indians is generally dark and fine. That of the Chinese and Japanese is dark and coarse while that of the Negroes is curly and woolly. It has been observed by Tidy that hair grows even after death but this growth is only apparent probably from the shrinking of the skin which takes place after death.

**Change in Colour**—To disguise identity hair may be artificially coloured with henna darkened by dyes and cosmetics containing metallic salts of lead, bismuth or silver, or rendered lighter by using chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, dilute nitric acid or nitrohydrochloric acid. In India some old people colour their hair red or black for the purpose of concealing their age and of looking young. It must be remembered that a change may occur in the colour of the hair of men working in certain trades. For instance the hair of ebony turners and copper smelters may acquire a greenish hue, while that of indigo workers becomes blue and cobalt miners exhibit a bluish tint.

<sup>1</sup> Brit Med Jour Feb 10 1906, p 343

<sup>2</sup> Pioneer, Dec 2 1933

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Klein Schmelz. Monat f Zahnh., 1929, XXXIV Lancet May 17 1930

A Mahomedan midwife, named Sharifun, disappeared suddenly from her house in Ganda Nalla, Delhi. On suspicion the police raided the house of one Shahab ud Din in Hamilton Road after several weeks, and unearthed the dead body of a woman after getting a large portion of the house dug. The body was in an advanced state of decomposition, but it was identified as that of the missing midwife from the dyed hair which was intact. A rope was found round the neck, which led to the suspicion that death was in all probability brought about by strangulation. The owner of the house was arrested, against whom a case under section 302, I. P. C. had been registered.<sup>2</sup>

**Detection of Colour.**—The colouring of the hair can be detected by examining the scalp, which will, as a rule, be found dyed, and the colour of the hair will not be uniform, the roots being different in tint from the rest. Such hair is rough, brittle and lustreless. The colouring can also be ascertained by comparing the hair of the head with that of other parts of the body, such as pulses and armpits, which is usually not dyed, as it is not likely to be open to the gaze of the public. In doubtful cases the hair should be shaved or cropped closely and the colour of the growth of the new hair should be observed, while the person is kept in custody, for a few days.

**Chemical Examination.**—To find out the mineral used for dyeing, some hair should be steeped or boiled in dilute hydrochloric or nitric acid to dissolve out the metal and the appropriate tests should then be applied to the solution thus obtained.

#### 6. ANTHROPOOMETRY

This is a system chiefly used for the identification of habitual criminals. There are two methods by which this is carried out. One is called the *Bertillon System* or *Bertillonage* and the other is called the *Galton System*.

**Bertillon System.**—This system is called *Bertillonage* from the name of its inventor, M. Alphonse Bertillon. It is applicable only to the adult, since it is based on the principle that after twenty-one years of age no change occurs in the dimensions of the skeleton during the rest of the life and that the ratio in the size of the different parts to one another varies considerably in different individuals.

It consists in taking the measurements of certain parts of the body and then classifying the individual. The measurements that are usually taken are the height of the person while standing, the length of the head, the width of the head, the length of the right ear, the width of the right ear, the span of the outstretched arms, the height of the trunk while sitting, the length of the left foot, the length of the left middle finger, the length of the left little finger and the length of the left forearm and hand (cubit). These measurements are entered upon cards which are kept in a specially arranged cabinet, so that they can be easily picked out when required. The colour of the iris and certain peculiarities, such as scars, etc., are noted on these cards, and photographs of the full face and the right profile are also kept along with them. This system is useful for the identification of criminals, but it necessitates the employment of special instruments and a large number of men, so that there is always a possibility of errors creeping into the records of the actual measurements.

**Galton System.**—This system which is also known as dactylography consists in taking the impressions of the bulbs of the fingers and thumbs with printer's ink on an unglazed white paper and then examining them with a magnifying lens. It is based on the principle that the individual peculiarities of the patterns formed by the arrangement and distribution of the papillary ridges on the finger tips are absolutely constant and persist throughout life, from infancy to old age, and

that the patterns of no two hands resemble each other. It has been estimated that the chances of two persons having identical finger impressions is about one in sixty four thousand millions.

The following case<sup>1</sup> well illustrates the fact that it is possible for any two persons to bear striking points of resemblance on the body, but it is never possible for them to have identical finger impressions —

In 1917, Professor Canella of Milan while serving the Army in Macedonia, was reported missing and was never heard of again. In 1921 a man suffering from loss of memory was admitted into a Piedmont asylum and he remained there for two years. Afterwards the wife and the daughter of the professor unhesitatingly identified him as the professor, as he bore remarkable external resemblance. He was at once taken to Milan, where all the friends of the professor at once recognized him. By degrees he appeared to recover his memory and then asserted that he was indeed the lost professor and purported to recall many incidents which had happened in the latter's career. All seemed well but suddenly there fell a bolt from the blue. A woman appeared on the scene and identified him as her husband, Bruneira who had absconded three years ago after a career of crime. The family and acquaintances of Bruneira one and all likewise identified him. He was examined and found to possess certain marks on the body, which however, curiously enough were alleged by both parties of relatives to be life long marks of Canella and Bruneira respectively. The Italian Police produced the finger prints of Bruneira which were alleged to be identical with those of the man whose identity was in dispute.

The ridges on the fingers and hands are studded with microscopic pores, which are the mouths of the ducts of the sweat glands situated below the epidermis. These pores may be used for personal identification, as they are permanent and immutable during life and vary in size, shape, position, extent and number over a given length of the ridges in each individual. This method of identification by examining the pores is known as poroscopy, and is of the greatest value when a small fragment of a finger impression or an impression of a part of a palm is available for comparison.

Before taking the impressions the fingers should be thoroughly washed and rubbed clean and dry, as the slightest perspiration will cause blotches and blur the print. It should be remembered that the finger prints of lepers should, on no account, be taken, while those of persons suffering from infectious or contagious diseases should not be taken until they have completely recovered.

Fingers smeared with blood, grease, dirt or slight perspiration may leave their impressions on weapons, clothing, glass panes, utensils, furniture, etc., hence considerable care should be taken in handling such articles during the investigation of a crime and any articles found to possess such prints should be preserved for further examination.

Finger impressions are either rolled or plain.

A rolled impression is obtained by first inking the bulb surface of the finger or thumb between the nail boundaries and then placing the inked finger or thumb on the paper so that the plane of the nail is at right angles to the plane of the paper. The finger or thumb is then pressed lightly on the paper and turned over so that the bulb surface which originally faced to the left faces to the right and vice versa the plane of the nail being again at right angles to the paper. A plain impression is obtained by lightly pressing the inked bulb surface of the finger or thumb upon the paper without any turning movement.

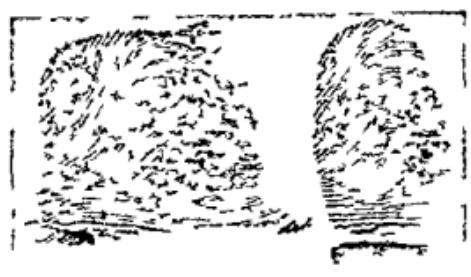


Fig. 5.—Rolled and plain impressions of the left thumb.

In a plain impression the whole contour of the pattern does not appear whereas in a rolled impression the whole pattern is delineated. It is therefore easier to determine the type of pattern from a rolled impression and its greater surface enables the expert to select a larger number of points for comparison.

All impressions are classified as arches, loops whorls and composites. In arches the ridges run from one side to the other without marking any backward turn. The ridges may converge



A



B



C



D

*Fig. 9.—Patterns of finger impressions*

- A Arch  
C Whorl

- B Loop  
D Composite

(By permission of the Superintendent Finger Print Bureau,  
U.P., Allahabad)

together and by an upward thrust in the middle look like a tent, when the arches are known as tented. In loop whorl and composite types there are fixed points which are known as the *delta* or *outer terminus* and the *point of the core* or *inner terminus*. These serve a useful purpose in the classification of finger impressions. The *delta* may be formed by the bifurcation of a single ridge or by the abrupt divergence of two ridges running side by side. The *core* of the loop may consist either of an even or uneven number of ridges termed rods, not joined together, or of two ridges joined together at their summit termed *staple*. Some of the ridges exhibit a backward turn without any twist. The ridges round about the *core* frequently deviate in course from the general course of the other ridges and leave a space which is described as a *pocket* and the loop is then known as a *jacket* loop. Again loops are described as *fringed* when a well-defined loop rests upon or surrounds another of the same variety. In circular or elliptical whorls the centre of the first ring is the *point of core*. In spiral whorls the point from which the spiral begins to revolve is the *point of core*. In composite types, arches, loops and whorls are grouped together in the same impression. They also include a small number of irregular patterns which cannot be classified under any known variety of loops. For want of a better designation they are known as *accidentals*. The finger impression printed on a paper is a reversal of the pattern on the finger. For instance if the pattern on the finger is a loop with slope from right to left, it will appear in the print as a loop with slope from left to right. A loop is called radial when the downward slope of the ridges about the core is from the direction of the little finger towards that of the thumb. A loop is ulnar when the downward slope is from the direction of the thumb towards the little finger. About 5 per cent of impressions are arches, 60 per cent loops and 35 per cent whorls and composites. For the purposes of primary classification for criminal work arches are included under loops and composites under whorls. All the ten fingers are taken in the following pairs —

Right index	right ring finger	left thumb	
Right thumb	right middle finger	right little finger	
	left middle	left little	
	left index	left ring	

When a whorl occurs in the first pair it counts 16, in the second pair 8, in the third 4, in the fourth 2 and in the fifth 1. No value is fixed for loops. Obtain a new numerator and a denominator by adding together all the numerators and all the denominators. Add 1 to the numerator and also to the denominator thus obtained. The fraction now obtained is the classification number and indicates that the slip is to be placed in the pigeon hole bearing that number.

Primary classification numbers are  $\frac{1 \text{ to } 32}{1 \text{ to } 32}$  or 1024 pigeon holes. The formula for the classification of these digits may be represented as  $\frac{W}{L}, \frac{W}{W}, \frac{L}{L}, \frac{W}{W}, \frac{W}{L}$ .

The system was first used by Sir William Herschel, I.C.S., but the credit is given to Sir Francis Galton for having systematized it for the identification of criminals. The system is so perfect that it has now been adopted all over the civilized world. It may be noted that this science of finger prints was known in ancient Assyria, and was used for purposes of identification in 700 A.D. The Chinese police were using it in the thirteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In 1890, an Act was passed by the Indian Council that the evidence given by experts to decipher finger prints was relevant in any case (*Vide Appendix II, section 45, I.E. Act*). Persons have often been convicted of a criminal charge from the only evidence of their finger impressions left on furniture or some articles, as in the Muttra murder case of 1901, where the murderer's thumb impression was left on a brass *lota* which he had used in washing his hands after killing his victim. One Elahi Bux was arrested for committing dacoity in a village of Saichi Raipura, from the impressions of his right thumb and index finger, which were completely separated with a *dao* by the inmate of the house and handed over to the police.<sup>2</sup> In a case where burglary was committed in the house of a doctor in the small hours of May 5, 1929, the burglars were arrested and convicted from the finger impressions left by them on the

<sup>1</sup> For detailed description see *Finger Print Manual*, U.P., 1923 Reprint.

<sup>2</sup> R. Schlesser Zentralblatt Gynakologie, Leipzig Oct 2, 1920 p 2530 Journal Amer Med Assoc, Jan 15, 1927, p 214.

<sup>3</sup> Leader, Aug 22, 1930 p 6.

broken glass panes of the sky lights through which they effected entrance into the room.<sup>1</sup>

The London Police have devised a system<sup>2</sup> by which finger prints can be sent by cable or wireless telegraphy to all parts of the world. In this system the various arches, whorls and loops are described by index letters and figures. At the receiving bureau the finger prints can be reconstructed in five minutes. In one case the finger prints thus sent to New York enabled a counterfeiter who had escaped while on bail, to be identified, and in another a man detained by the London Police was believed to be wanted by the Chicago Police and his finger prints were taken and sent by wireless to the United States.

Fugitives know full well that as long as their finger prints are on the files of the Criminal Investigation Department they cannot hope to avoid detection by merely adopting aliases and changing their bases of operation. Hence they sometimes attempt to mutilate the patterns by inflicting injuries such as wounds or burns on the bulbs of their fingers but they forget that the resultant scars do not necessarily obliterate the patterns as there will still exist definite delineations unless the true skin is completely destroyed.

In the case of criminals and emigrants and in the case of persons in subordinate Government service—both civil and military—while preparing their service books and pension papers, impressions of all the ten fingers are taken but for the purpose of identification while giving a medical certificate and for other civil purposes the left thumb impression only is taken.

The police are required to take the finger prints of an unidentified corpse or of a person whose identity has not been established by ordinary enquiries and who has died in an accident or under suspicious circumstances or in the commission of a crime. Ordinarily there is not much difficulty in taking impressions from the fingers of a corpse but it is sometimes difficult to obtain decipherable prints in a body, which has far advanced in decomposition. In such cases the police should request the medical officer holding the post mortem examination to remove the skin from the bulbs of the fingers. The medical officer should pack each piece in a separate envelope marking on the outside the finger to which it belongs. For the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh these envelopes should then be sent to the Finger Print Bureau at Allahabad for opinion.

It must be remembered that impressions of the ridge patterns left on the dermis can be used for identifying a dead body after the epidermis of the finger tips has been shed through putrefaction. The inner surface of the skin which has come off like a glove especially in a drowned body that has undergone putrefactive changes can also be used for the purpose of identification. On the other hand in a decomposed body where the skin is hard contracted and wrinkled impressions of the ridge patterns can be obtained by soaking the fingers in a weak solution of caustic alkali to make them swell up, but the impressions thus obtained are not usually sharply defined, hence it is advisable to take a photograph of the ridge patterns after they are restored to their normal state.

Faint and invisible finger prints can be rendered quite clear and distinct by dusting them with some fine, impalpable powder. They can then be examined with a lens or enlarged permanently as a photograph<sup>3</sup>. If the finger prints are on paper or a light coloured surface graphite (plumbago) or lamp black is used.

<sup>1</sup> Lahore High Court Criminal Appeal No 1169 of 1929 King Emperor v Sardara 31 Criminal Law Jour Sep 1930 p 877

<sup>2</sup> Jour Amer Med Assoc June 9 1928 p 1883 Lancet Oct 10, 1931 p 812

<sup>3</sup> J G Garson Trans of the Medico Legal Soc, Vol II 1904 1905, p 115

If the prints are on glass or a dark coloured surface, grey powder, magnesium carbonate, white lead red lead or ferric oxide will develop them.

Finger prints on paper, wood and textile fabrics may be successfully developed by treating them with 5 per cent silver nitrate solution and then fixing them with sodium thiosulphate<sup>1</sup>. Finger prints on paper may also be developed by exposing it to the vapours of iodine or osmium tetroxide and by brushing the surface with some coloured solution. The prints developed with the aid of iodine vapours are fugitive, and should therefore, be photographed at once. Mitchell<sup>2</sup> suggests the application of osmium tetroxide by exposing the prints to the vapour of a boiling one per cent solution of this reagent in water. The colour solution may be writing ink of any colour or some dye dissolved in water or alcohol. A solution of osmium pyrogallate prepared by mixing 2 c.c. osmic acid and 0.05 grammes pyrogallic acid in 2 c.c. water gives satisfactory results<sup>3</sup>.

Major Henry Smith, I.M.S. has discovered that it is possible to forge thumb impressions by covering the original thumb impressions with a piece of damped paper and pressing, by which method the reverse of the original is transferred to the damped paper. Another piece of damped paper is then put over the reverse and pressed, and a true copy of the original is thus obtained<sup>4</sup>.

## 7 FOOTPRINTS

The impression of a foot or a boot left on the ground in the vicinity of the place of occurrence of a crime has often led to the arrest of the criminal. To identify the footprint a fresh footmark of the suspected person should be obtained and compared with the original. During the examination a careful note should be made if there are any peculiarities in the foot, such as flat foot, scars resulting from wounds, or callosities as these are likely to be found in the footprint if it is well marked. In the case of a bookmark the peculiar arrangement of the nails or holes in the sole may be useful in comparing with the original. It is often said that a footprint made by an individual while he is walking is smaller than the one made by him while he is standing, but I have found from experiments that a footprint produced in walking is generally larger than the one produced in a standing position. It is usually assumed that the impression left on the material composed of loose particles such as sand is smaller than the foot or boot producing it, while the impression on mud, clay or some material not composed of freely movable particles, is larger.

Casts of footprints may be taken by first spraying the print with a rapid drying fixative, such as an 80 per cent alcoholic solution of shellac or a 1 per cent solution of cellulose acetate and then smearing it with a thin film of lubricant e.g. a mixture of mineral oil and melted lard. The print is afterwards surrounded by a wall of cardboard or wood, about 1½ inches high. An aqueous mixture of plaster of Paris of the consistency of ordinary cream is gently poured on the print within the enclosed area. After 10 to 15 minutes the cast is set completely but it is desirable to let it stand for a further period of 15 minutes before it is removed. The setting of plaster of Paris may be hastened by dissolving salt in the water used or may be retarded by adding 7 per cent of acetic acid or a little calcined lime to the water<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Henry T F Rhodes *Forensic Chemistry* 1941 p 10  
The Analyst XI 1920 pp 122-29 *Tucas Foren Chem and Scientific Investigations*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* III p 184

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* p 185

<sup>4</sup> *Ind Med Gaz* June 1902 p 255

<sup>5</sup> *Bulletin, Bureau of Criminal Investigation New York State Police Sep., 1941 Med Leg and Criminolog Rev*, Vol XI, Part II, 1943, p 196

The skin patterns of the toes and heels are as distinctive and permanent as those of the fingers. Hence in some maternity hospitals the system of taking the impressions of footprints of newly born infants has lately been introduced to avoid the confusion of their being mixed or to prevent their deliberate substitution or changing. These form a permanent record for future identification.

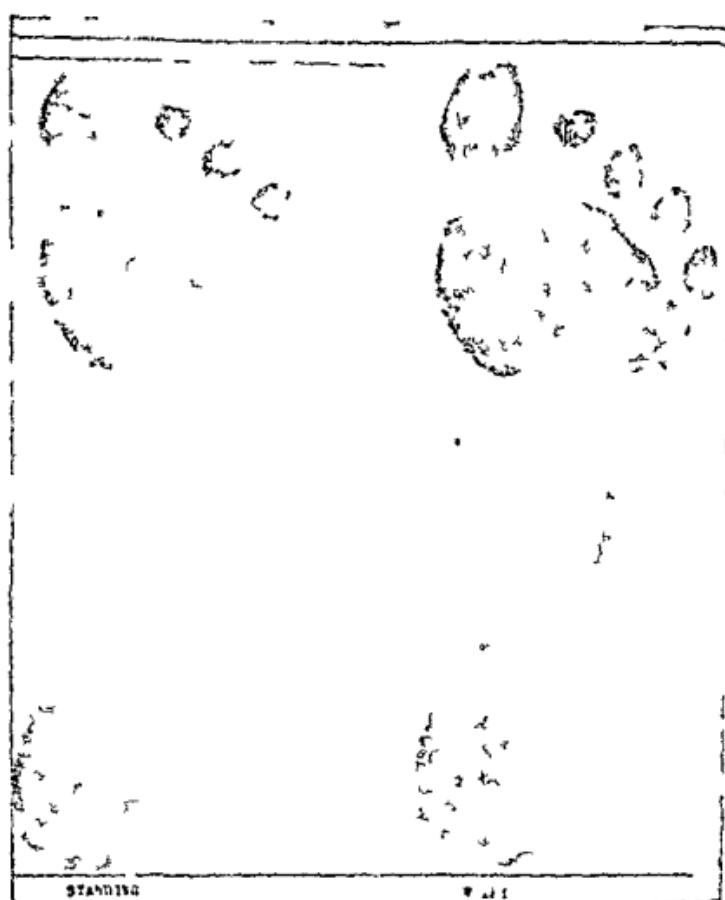


Fig. 10.—Footprints Standing and Walking

### 8 DEFORMITIES

Deformities form an excellent means of identification hence they should be very carefully noted in the description of the person of a living individual or in the external examination of a dead body. They may be congenital or acquired. Congenital deformities such as cleft palate, harelip, supernumerary fingers or toes, supplementary mammae, web fingers or toes, birth marks (naevi) and moles are hereditary in many cases and are known to occur through successive generations in the same family.

Dr Young of Parkhead, Glasgow, has recorded a very interesting case in which he could trace the heredity of gout and deformity through four generations. It had been transmitted almost

Invariably from the paternal side<sup>1</sup>. A genealogical tree is given of a family with supernumerary digits in which the deformity skips two generations to reappear in one member of the third and in five of the fourth<sup>2</sup>.

Acquired deformities such as malunited and ununited fractures, are the results of previous injuries.

Two cases are recorded by Chevers<sup>3</sup>. In one the identity of a murdered person was established by a peculiarity in the jaw bone. In the other an impostor pretended that he was identical with a Bengal gentleman whose death and consignment to the Ganges some years before were plainly proved. He allowed the latter fact though he denied the former, and declared that he had revived after he was thrown into the river and had since lived as a *fakir*. Medical evidence was of great importance in this case as it helped to expose the imposture by proving that the body of the deceased had been eaten away by an incurable disease.

The body of Livingstone, the great African traveller, was recognized by the ununited oblique fracture of the humerus exactly in the region of the attachment of the deltoid to the bone.

## 9 SCARS

A scar or a cicatrix is a fibrous tissue covered by epithelium formed as a result of the healing process of a wound or injury in which there has been a breach of continuity of substance. It has no hair follicles or sweat glands but it is slightly vascular owing to the presence of a few capillaries.

**Character of Scars**—A scar generally assumes the shape of the wound causing it. A scar resulting from an incised wound which has healed by first intention is usually linear and straight. If it has healed by the formation of granulation tissue the resulting scar will then be wider and thicker in the centre than at the periphery. But a scar following an incised wound in the axilla or upon the genitals may be irregular on account of the loose folds of the skin. Such a scar may also be smaller than the original wound.

Broad and irregular scars are caused by lacerated wounds. Large, irregular scars accompanied very often by keloid patches are the results of extensive burns and scalds. Scars resulting from bullet wounds are generally irregular in shape and larger than the bullet, and are usually surrounded by the grains of unburnt gunpowder if the weapon was discharged within a few inches of the body. While they are depressed, disc shaped, adherent in the centre and smaller than the bullet if discharged from a distance. The scar of the wound of entrance is, as a rule, smaller than that of the wound of exit. Doubtful cases should always be examined by X-Rays in order to determine the presence or absence of shots embedded in the underlying tissues or of injuries to the underlying bones.

In January 1924 the District Magistrate of Gonda referred to me a case in which one Bisheshwar Singh was suspected of having taken part in a dacoity that took place three years ago and was consequently injured in the thigh by the discharge of fire-arms. On examination I found several rounded nodular and depressed scars on the front of the thigh resulting probably from gun shot wounds. Skilograms that were taken in the X-Ray Department of the King George's Hospital Lucknow, showed several shots embedded in the soft tissues of the thigh. The man was prosecuted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment for the offence of committing dacoity.

Scars from wounds produced by stabbing instruments are triangular in shape smaller in size than the blade of the weapon and are less depressed than the scars of gunshot wounds. Scars resulting from leech bites are triradiate. Scars due to syphilitic and tuberculous ulcers are irregular and thick in parts while those due to vaccination and small pox are pitted.

1 Brit Med Jour Sep 10 1894 p 715

2 Ibid May 28 1903 p 124

3 Med Jours 11 49 and 109

**Appearance of Scars**—A scar appears in four or five days when a wound heals under a scab as in the case of a superficial cut on a finger or a shave cut on the chin or cheek. In the case of a clean aseptic wound which is caused by a surgical operation, and heals by first intention, the scar usually appears in a fortnight, while in a suppurating wound it appears from two weeks to three months, or more.

**Disappearance of Scars**—Scars resulting from wounds and skin diseases which involve the whole thickness of the skin are always permanent, but superficial linear scars involving only the epidermis or cuticle layer of the skin may disappear in the course of a few years. It is not possible to remove a scar successfully but its size and shape can be altered by an operative procedure. A faint scar may be made more visible by rubbing or slapping, or by applying heat to the part when the surrounding skin will be red, and the scar will appear whitish in colour. If necessary, it should be examined by the aid of a lens. While describing a scar for the purpose of identification its shape, size and situation should be mentioned.

**Age of Scars**—It is difficult to tell the exact age of a scar, hence the medical witness must be very cautious in answering this question which may connect an accused person with the perpetration of a crime in which he is alleged to have been wounded. When first formed a scar is red, tender and covered by a scab, subsequently it becomes brown and lastly, on account of the obliteration of the capillaries due to their being affected by the growth of connective tissue, it acquires a white and glistening appearance which remains permanent for the rest of life. These changes are generally produced in three to four months, but the variations in the time are so great that it is not safe to fix any time limit within which these changes are produced.

**Growth of Scars**—Scars produced in childhood grow in size with the natural development of the individual, especially if situated on the chest and limbs.

**Case.**—At the trial of Crippen charged with having murdered his wife Belle Elmore, Mr Pepper and Drs Spilsbury and Willcox were able to establish the identification of the mutilated remains found buried in a hole dug in the floor of the cellar occupied by Crippen to be those of his wife by the discovery of an old scar on a piece of skin measuring seven inches by six inches which came from the lower and front part of the abdominal wall. At its lower margin there was a row of short dark hairs. The scar was situated in the middle line commencing just above the pubic region and extending vertically upwards for four inches or a little over. It was bigger at the bottom, being seven-eighths of an inch wider than at the top where it tapered to something like one fourth of an inch while it measured half an inch in middle. It was in a place corresponding with an operation performed for removal of the ovaries or uterus. Mr Pepper also said in his evidence that a scar in that position in the male as the result of an operation performed for removing stones or tumours from the bladder would be 'least likely to be so wide because, as a rule there is not so much distension'. It was proved beyond dispute that Belle Elmore had undergone an abdominal operation for ovariotomy. It was further brought out in evidence that a scar viewed under a microscope might show a sebaceous gland or a hair follicle, if, in stitching up a wound a piece of epidermis was turned in and involved in the wound.—*Brit Med Jour Oct 29 1910, p 1372*

## 10 TATTOO MARKS

The practice of tattooing is prevalent all over the world, though more common among the lower order of society. Designs of all sorts varying from initials to gods of worship and even those indicating emblems of moral depravity are not only found tattooed on the arm, forearm and chest but on the other parts of the body. While describing tattoo marks, their design and situation should be carefully noted. It is possible to find the same design at the same situation in more than one individual, if the operator happens to be the same person. Complications, such as septic inflammation erysipelas, abscess, gangrene and even syphilis, leprosy and tuberculosis are known to have followed this operation.

**Disappearance of Tattoo-marks**—From experiments<sup>1</sup> Hulin Casper and Tardieu have proved that tattoo marks may disappear during life without leaving any trace on the body after a period of at least ten years provided the pigment used is vermillion or ultra marine and if it has not penetrated deep into the skin. Even in these cases the pigment may be seen deposited in the neighbouring lymphatic glands, if examined after death. But the marks are indeleble if some such pigment, as Indian ink, soot, gunpowder or powdered charcoal has been used and this has penetrated deep into the fibro-ela tie tissue of the skin. These marks are so permanent that they may be recognized even in decomposed



Fig. 11.—Des gns of Tattoo-marks

bodies after the skin has peeled off. The letters 'P. I.' tattooed on the left forearm were evident in a badly decomposed body examined a fortnight after death. A faded tattoo-mark may be revealed by the use of the ultra violet lamp or may be rendered visible by rubbing the part and examining it with a magnifying lens in strong light.

**Artificial Removal of Tattoo marks**—These may be removed artificially (1) by the surgical method (2) by electrolysis and (3) by the application of caustic substances.

(1) **Surgical Method**—The earliest surgical method employed for the removal of tattoo-marks was the production of a burn by the application of a red hot iron to the design. When the dead tissue sloughed off it took the tattoo mark with it but usually left a bad scar in its place. The use of carbon dioxide snow produces similar results. The simplest surgical method used at present is the excision of the tattoo-marks either without skin grafting. This is quite a successful method but is always followed by some scarring.

<sup>1</sup> Casper Forens Med Vol 1 Eng Transl pp 100-108

- K E v Ma gali III H Cr Crim al Appeal No 149 of 1951

mark made of Indian ink in six days by first macerating the skin in a paste of lard and acetic acid then thoroughly rubbing it with a solution of caustic potash or soda, and lastly with dilute hydrochloric acid. Brault<sup>1</sup> recommends the tattooing of a solution of zinc chloride to 40 parts of water by means of a needle into the design. After a few days a crust forms which removes the pigment when it falls off. These caustic substances have to be used with great care as they are not only dangerous but are often followed by disfiguring scars and keloids. Shue<sup>2</sup> has obtained very satisfactory results from Variot's method which consists of tattooing into the design a 50 per cent solution of tannic acid in water and then rubbing it vigorously with a stick of silver nitrate until the whole surface becomes black from the formation of silver tannate in the superficial layers of the skin. The field of the operation is then washed with cold water. After 15 to 16 days a black, dry slough comes off spontaneously resembling a thin piece of leather and leaving a thin new layer of epithelium formed beneath it. This gradually assumes the appearance of the normal skin, and in favourable cases no scarring persists. If, however, the hair follicles have been destroyed with the tattoo mark, there will be some scarring. This method is also suitable for the removal of blemishes caused on the face by accidental tattooing.

It may be mentioned that confluent small pox has been known to obliterate tattoo-marks in children,<sup>3</sup> and chronic eczema may also cause the disappearance of tattoo-marks.

to write when a plea of mental incapacity or some paralytic affection is raised. He should therefore, remember that mental and nervous diseases especially those attended with tremors as also rheumatic diseases of the joints of the hand alter the character of the handwriting by producing more or less irregularity in the formation of letters.

### 13 CLOTHES AND ORNAMENTS

These do not form any essential piece of evidence in the identification of a living person as the individual can change them at will but they are very valuable in establishing the identification of a dead body. It is therefore, necessary to preserve them along with any articles such as a watch visiting card diary, etc found on a dead body or living in its vicinity for the purpose of future identification. The clothes should be examined carefully for the presence of the name of the owner or tailor or the mark of a *dhobi* (washerman) on any of them. In the Kakori conspiracy case one of the accused was identified by means of a bed sheet found in his possession as it had the marks of the *dhobi* employed in a hotel in Lucknow where he was alleged to have stayed for some time. The clothes should also be examined for the presence of cuts or rents or for the presence of blood, seminal or other stains. If dust of organic or mineral matter is found clinging to the clothes or in the pockets it should be collected and submitted to microscopic examination as it may give some indication of the business of the person.

### 14 SPEECH AND VOICE

There are certain peculiarities of speech e.g. stammering, stuttering, lisping and nasal twang. These peculiarities become more evident when an individual is talking excitedly, is in a quarrel. Speech is also affected in nervous diseases such as general paralysis of the insane and disseminated sclerosis. Defective speech depending on some organic defect of the mouth such as cleft palate may be cured by a surgical plastic operation while functional stammering can be cured without any operation.

To recognize a person from his voice is an every day occurrence though it is too risky to be relied upon in criminal cases. In the case of *King Emperor v. Bhakta*<sup>1</sup> it was held that the identification of the accused in a pitch dark night by the modulation of his voice could not be relied upon for his conviction. It is possible for a person to alter his voice at will. The best example of this is the ventriloquist. The absence of the teeth, the use of false teeth and the presence of diphtheria may alter the voice. With the progress of science it may be presumed that the registering of the voice by a gramophone disc will be used in the near future for the purpose of identification in court.

### 15 GAIT

An individual can be recognized even from a distance by watching his gait but such evidence is far from conclusive inasmuch as the gait may be altered by an accident or disease, especially of a nervous nature such as locomotor ataxy, hemiplegia, spastic paraparesis, etc. In civil suits the medical man may sometimes be requested to express his opinion if a particular individual is really lame or malingering if he has filed a suit against his employer for the recovery of damages for an accident caused to him during his legitimate work.

### 16 TRICKS OF MANNER AND HABIT

These are not infrequently found to be hereditary as an example left handedness may be cited.

<sup>1</sup> Lahore High Court "9 Crim Law Jour January 1938 p 709 Rajguru High Court 30 Crim Law Jour January 1938, p 34

## 17 MENTAL POWER MEMORY AND EDUCATION

The consideration of these points for the identification of an individual is of great importance especially in cases of imposture as in the well known Tichborne case

## 18 AMOUNT OF ILLUMINATION REQUIRED FOR IDENTIFICATION

In questions regarding the amount of light sufficient for recognition of the features for subsequent identification of the individual the following points should be borne in mind —

1 A flash of lightning produces sufficient illumination for the identification of an individual

A lady on her passage from India was awakened one dark night by some one moving about in her cabin. A sudden flash of lightning enabled her to see a man bending over one of her trunks and his features appeared so distinct that she was able next day to recognize him. The stolen articles were found upon him and he acknowledged the theft.<sup>1</sup>

2 According to Tidy the best known person cannot be recognized in the clearest moonlight beyond a distance of seventeen yards. Colonel Barry LMS is of opinion that at distances greater than 12 yards the stature or outline of the figure alone is available as a means of identification. To define the features even at a shorter distance is practically impossible by moonlight

3 No definite statement can be made about artificial light. The best thing is to make actual experiments with the class of light used before an opinion is given

4 In the absence of any other light the identification of a person is possible with the flash of light produced by a firearm if the person is standing in close proximity of five to twenty paces on one side of the line of fire and if the powder is at the same time smokeless though it is not possible to mark the different characters of the features beyond three paces. In such cases an experiment should be tried with the weapon and powder used before an opinion is given

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<sup>1</sup> Montgomery's Encyclopedia of Practical Med. Petersen's Histories of Webster Legal Med. 1 Toxic Ed II Vol I p 10<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> Legal Medicine Vol I p 572

**A—EXTERNAL EXAMINATION**

- 1 Condition of body as regards muscularity stoutness emaciation rigor mortis and decomposition
- 2 Marks of identification especially in the case of the body of an unknown person
- 3 Eyes
- 4 State of natural orifices, ears nostrils mouth, anus urethra, vagina
- 5 Injuries—nature exact position and measurements including direction, especially in incised wounds
- 6 Bones and Joints
- 7 External organs of generation
- 8 Additional remarks

**B—INTERNAL EXAMINATION****I—Head and Neck**

- 1 Scalp skull bones (Vertex)
- 2 Membranes
- 3 Brain.
- 4 Base of skull
- 5 Vertebrae
- 6 Spinal Cord <sup>1</sup>
- 7 Additional remarks

**II—Thorax**

- A Walls ribs cartilages
- B Pleura
- C Larynx, Trachea and Bronchi
- D Right lung
- E Left lung
- F Pericardium
- G Heart with weight
- H Large vessels
- I Additional remarks

**III—Abdomen**

- 1 Walls
- 2 Peritoneum
- 3 Cavity.
- 4 Buccal cavity teeth tongue and pharynx
- 5 Oesophagus
- 6 Stomach and its contents
- 7 Small intestine and its contents
- 8 Large intestine and its contents
- 9 Liver (with weight) and gall bladder
- 10 Pancreas
- 11 Spleen with weight
- 12 Kidneys with weight
- 13 Bladder
- 14 Organs of generation
- 15 Additional remarks with where possible medical man's deduction from the state of the contents of the stomach as to time of death and last meal

<sup>1</sup> Spinal Cord need not be examined unless any indications of disease *strychnia poisonis* or injury exist

**C.—DATE AND HOUR OF ONSET OF SYMPTOMS** To be answered

Do OI DI ATH

In case of poison ng\*

**D—OPINION AS TO CAUSE AND MANNER OF DEATH**

Place

Date

Medical Officer

The medical officer holding a post mortem examination should be familiar with the normal and pathological appearances of the viscera. He should note the time of the arrival of the body at the morgue the date and hour of the post mortem examination and the name of the place where it was held. The necessary papers authorizing the medical officer to hold an autopsy are frequently brought by the police long after the body has arrived. This dilatory method on the part of the police has occasionally led to the decomposition of the body in the post mortem room even when it has arrived in a good condition. It is therefore safer to note the exact time of delivery of these papers. There should be no unnecessary delay in holding a post mortem examination. It should be made as soon as the papers are brought and the excuse of attending upon a midwifery case or any other similar reason should not prevent him from performing this most important though too frequently unpleasant, duty.

No outsider should be allowed to be present at the autopsy.

**Instruments**—The following instruments should be at hand before commencing the examination—

1 Scalpel 2 Large Section knife 3 Dissecting forceps 4 1 pair of sharp pointed Scissors 5 Saw 6 Costotome 7 Enterotome 8 Blunt probe 9 Blow pipe 10 A pair of iron hooks 11 Straight and curved needles 12 Strong twine 13 A measuring tape 14 Measuring and graduated glass containers 15 China plates 16 Basins to contain water 17 Sponges 18 A pair of thick India rubber gloves with gauntlets or photographic gloves 19 Machine for weighing organs 20 At least two wide mouthed white glass bottles (with glass stoppers) of about one litre capacity to contain portions of viscera.

of blood semen, vomit or faecal matter should be described and preserved for chemical analysis Cuts or rents caused by a cutting instrument, burns caused by fire or acids, or blackening caused by discharges from firearms should be carefully noted and compared with injuries on the body

4. In the case of a cord or ligature round the neck, its exact position, manner and application of a knot or knots and its material should be noted

5. Age should be given from the presence of the teeth and other appearances. If owing to rigor mortis, the jaw cannot be opened to count the teeth, the cheeks should be cut to expose them

6. Time since death should be noted from the temperature of the body post mortem staining rigor mortis stage of putrefaction, and even from the degree of digestion of the stomach contents which, however, only yields evidence of doubtful value

7. The condition of the body, whether stout, emaciated, or decomposed should be mentioned. The eyes should be examined and the opacity of the cornea and lens should be noted particularly in vehicular accidents. The state of the pupils should also be noted as to whether they were contracted or dilated

8. The natural orifices viz., nose, mouth, ears, anus, urethra and vagina should be examined for the presence of injuries, foreign bodies or discharges such as blood, pus, etc. The mouth and nostrils should be particularly examined for the presence of froth and the position of the tongue should be noted in connection with the front teeth

9. The hands should be examined for any article, such as hair, fragments of clothing or a weapon grasped by them or the presence of mud or blood on them or under the nails

10. The direction of blood smears and the signs of spouting of blood should be noted if any

11. The situation of post mortem staining, if present should be noted

12. After washing the body a careful search for the presence of injuries or marks of violence should be made all over the body from head to foot on the front as well as on the back. In the case of a female body the hair of the head should be removed to examine the scalp. If any injuries are found on the body, they should be photographed or marked carefully on sketches before they are described in detail in the post mortem report. Such a procedure is very helpful in enabling the Magistrate and counsel of both sides to understand the exact nature, extent and situation of the injuries on the body.

Contusions and abrasions if any should be described as regards their length, breadth and their exact position. Contusions should be incised to find out if they were inflicted before or after death and to differentiate them from suggillation.

Wounds if present should be described as regards their nature, size, direction and position. The conditions of their edges should also be mentioned. The exact size ought to be noted with a measuring tape and some fixed bony points should be taken to describe their exact position. The means by which they were inflicted should also be noted.

Deep or penetrating wounds should not be investigated by means of a probe until the body is opened.

In the case of gunshot wounds the course and direction of the bullet should be ascertained by dissection rather than by the use of a probe, and the injured nerves and blood vessels, if any are found should be noted. If there is only one opening a search should be made for the bullet, which must be preserved. It should be remembered that a bullet takes a very tortuous and erratic course in

its passage through the body. A note should also be made, if the skin in the vicinity of the wound is blackened and if the hair is scorched.

Ligature marks or finger marks, if present on the neck should be noted.

In the case of burns their position extent and degree should be mentioned as also the manner of their causation as to whether they were caused by fire scalding fluids corrosives or explosives.

13 All the bones should be carefully examined for the presence of fractures and the joints for dislocations. If any fracture is present the soft parts overlying the fractured piece should be dissected and examined for laceration or contusion.

Lastly, all the external injuries should be compared with those noted in the descriptive roll supplied by the police and any discrepancy should be mentioned in the report.

14 In the case of the body of a newly born infant it is necessary to examine the lower epiphysis of the femur for the centre of ossification to prove its maturity.

For this purpose the knee joint should be opened by making an incision across its front and the lower end of the femur should be pushed through the wound. The epiphyseal cartilage should now be sliced off in thin sections until a central pink spot is seen. The slicing of the cartilage should be continued till the greatest diameter of the ossified point is reached.

#### INTERNAL EXAMINATION

If there be a fatal wound leading to one of the cavities that cavity should be opened first or the head should be opened first and then the thorax and the abdomen. Professor Harvey Littleton<sup>1</sup> recommends the examination of the head first in cases of alleged infanticide so that the examiner may have an opportunity of inspecting the contents of the skull before the blood can possibly drain away during the examination of the thorax and trunk and also because he will be better able to interpret any caruncles in the lungs when they are examined. Every organ contained in the cavities must always be examined but the spinal cord need not ordinarily be examined unless there is suspicion of some injury to the vertebral column or the alleged cause of death is due to some spinal poison or some such disease as tetanus. In that case it should be examined last of all.



Fig. 14.—Section through the lower epiphysis of the femur showing centre of ossification

#### HIFAD

A transverse incision across the vertex should be made from ear to ear and after reflecting the flaps anteriorly up to the orbits and posteriorly up to the occipital protuberance the inner surface of the scalp should be examined for extravasation of blood and the skull bones should be examined for evidence of any fracture or separation of sutures after the periosteum is denuded and the temporal muscles have been dissected off. In a doubtful case the skull should be

tapped with a hammer, it would elicit a ringing note if there is no fracture. To remove the skull cap a circular cut is then made with a saw round the cranium keeping close to the reflected flaps. Its inner surface should then be examined for fracture of the inner plate, or effusion of blood which may be found on the dura mater. The longitudinal venous sinuses should be examined for evidence of laceration or thrombosis. The dura mater should be removed by cutting longitudinally along both the sides of its middle line noting any effusion of blood or serum or the presence of pus. It would not be out of place to note here the distinction between meningitis and mere effusion of blood in the meninges. In the former the surface of the brain looks greasy and dull but not so in the latter. The brain should now be removed by raising the anterior lobes with the fingers of the left hand and cutting through the various nerves at its base and the medulla as low down as possible. The brain should be placed in a large clean receptacle or dish and examined minutely on its upper as well as under surface (base) for the evidence of any injury, effusion of blood, inflammatory products, embolism of arteries, morbid growths or any disease of its tissue. The ventricles should also be examined.

The dura mater should lastly be stripped from the base of the skull to facilitate its examination for the presence of fractures.

### THORAX

Before examining the thorax, both the cavities—the thorax and the abdomen—should be opened by making a longitudinal incision from above the middle of the sternum to the pubic bone, keeping wide away from any wounds existing in its line. In infant bodies the incision should be carried a little to the left of the umbilicus. The integument, fascia and muscles should now be reflected and examined for extravasation of blood in their inner surface. The abdominal cavity should be examined before the chest cavity is opened. The colour and appearance of the abdominal viscera as also the position of the diaphragm with respect to the ribs (especially in full term newly born infant bodies) should be noted. It should also be noted if there is any collection of blood, serum, pus or faecal matter in the cavity.

After this preliminary, the examination of the thorax should be proceeded with. The ribs and sternum should first be examined for evidence of fracture and then the cavity of the thorax should be opened by dividing the ribs at their cartilages and the sternum at the sternoclavicular junctions with the chstotome and lifting up the sternum separating it from the underlying parts without injuring them. The pleural cavities should be examined for the presence of adhesions, foreign bodies or fluid of a bloody or purulent nature. The pericardium should be opened and examined for any adhesions between its two surfaces or if there is any abnormal quantity of fluid present in its cavity. Normally about a drachm of bloody serum is found in the pericardial sac. The condition of the chambers of the heart should be examined by opening them *in situ*. The lungs and heart should be removed from the cavity and laid on the table. The lungs should be cut open for evidence of disease, congestion, injury, Tardieu's spots etc and the bronchi should be examined for the presence of pent up expectoration, pus or any foreign body. The heart should be opened and its chambers examined for the presence of valvular disease, and the condition of the endocardium should be noted. The coronary arteries should be opened and examined for obstruction of, or thrombosis in their lumen. The aorta should be examined for aneurysm or calcareous degeneration.

To examine the larynx, trachea and oesophagus an incision should be made from the chin to the upper part of the sternum after throwing the head well back ward and placing a block of wood beneath the neck. After reflecting the soft

If ticks on each side of the middle of the larynx both the trachea and the oesophagus should be removed and examined by cutting them open from their posterior surface. The interior of the oesophagus should be examined for evidence of congestion, inflammation or ulceration of its mucous membrane and the presence of a foreign body, tumour or stricture. The larynx and trachea should be examined for the presence of froth or a foreign body in their interior and their mucous membrane should be examined for congestion or inflammation.

### ABDOMEN

The peritoneum should be first examined for evidences of adhesions, congestion, inflammation or exudation of lymph or pus. The abdominal and pelvic cavities should then be examined for the presence of a serous, bloody or purulent fluid. Now the abdominal organs should be removed and examined separately as below —

**Stomach** — Under ordinary circumstances the stomach is examined by making a cut while *in situ* for the contents as regards their quantity and quality and the degree of their digestibility. But in suspected poisoning the stomach should be removed after tying a double ligature at both ends. It should then be opened in a thoroughly clean plate after emptying the contents its mucous surface should be carefully examined noting its appearance and any suspicious particles found adherent thereto should be picked off with a pair of forceps and placed in a separate small phial for chemical analysis. The contents of the stomach should also be examined as regards their smell, colour and character and for the presence of any foreign particles or lumps these if present should be felt between the thumb and index finger as to their roughness or smoothness.

**Intestines** — The intestines should be removed after ligaturing at both ends and should be cut longitudinally to examine the inner surface for the presence of congestion, inflammation, erosions, ulcers, perforation or any other lesion. In cases of suspected poisoning the contents should be preserved and sent for chemical analysis wherever possible as they may sometimes give valuable clues as to the nature of the poison.

**Liver** — The surface of the liver should be examined as regards its smoothness or roughness. If there is any injury to the liver its nature and dimensions should be noted as well as the size and weight of the liver. Normally the liver measures  $12'' \times 7'' \times 3\frac{1}{2}''$ . The organ should be cut open by deep incisions in several places and the colour, consistence and blood supply of its tissue should be carefully marked at the same time the presence of an abscess, new growth or amyloid degeneration should be observed.

The gall bladder should be opened and the presence or absence of bile stones and the character and quantity of the bile should be noted.

**Spleen** — The size, colour and consistence of the organ should be noted as well as the condition of its capsule. In the case of a rupture of the spleen its size and position should be described as well as the size and weight of the spleen. The normal spleen in the adult measures  $5'' \times 3'' \times 1''$ .

**Kidneys** — The size, colour and weight of the kidneys should be noted. Normally the size of a kidney is  $4'' \times 2'' \times 1''$ . Its capsule should be examined as to whether it is adherent or strips off easily. The kidney should be cut open and the internal cut surface should be examined for the presence of Bright's disease or amyloid degeneration. The pelvis should be examined for calculi and evidence of inflammation.

**Bladder** — The bladder should be examined for congestion, haemorrhage, inflammation and ulceration of its mucous membrane. It may be opened *in situ*.

and its contents noted but in a suspected case of poisoning the urine should be removed and preserved for chemical analysis as it may, sometimes give a valuable clue as to the nature of the poison. Dr Gopi Billabhi Sahay late Lecturer in Forensic Medicine at the Prince of Wales Medical College at Patna suggests the following method for drawing urine uncontaminated with blood or other extraneous matter from the bladder of a dead body —

Squeeze the penis and mop out the external urethra. Put the glans in the mouth of a small glass jar or a wide mouthed glass bottle and press the bladder *in situ* after opening the abdominal cavity. Urine will pour out in the jar or bottle unless there was a very bad stricture of the urethra or an abnormally enlarged prostate. In the case of a female body keep the mouth of an ordinary glass bottle close to the urethra and press the bladder. Urine will pour out in the bottle if there is any in the bladder.

**Uterus** —In female bodies the uterus should always be examined for its size and shape. The normal size of the organ is  $3'' \times 2'' \times 1''$  and weight from one to one and a half ounces but the size and weight vary considerably during pregnancy or when there is any tumour. The condition of its mucous membrane and the thickening of its wall should be examined after the uterus is opened longitudinally. During menstruation the mucous membrane is thickened softer and of a darker colour and covered with blood and detritus. In old age it becomes atrophied and paler and denser in texture. If the uterus contains a fetus the age of its intra uterine life should be noted. The ovaries and Fallopian tubes should also be examined. The ovaries should be chiefly examined for corpora lutea. The vaginal canal should be opened and examined for the presence of a foreign body or marks of injury. The colour of its mucous membrane and the condition of the hymen should also be noted.

**Spine and Spinal Cord** —The spinal canal need not be examined unless there is any indication of disease or injury. If necessary the body should be turned over on the face with a block beneath the thorax and an incision made along the entire length of the vertebral column extending from the occiput to the lower end of the sacrum. After reflecting the integuments dissecting away the muscles and noting extravasation of blood in the soft tissues the laminae should be sawn through vertically on each side and the detached portions removed when the dura mater would be exposed. After noting its appearance the dura mater should be opened and an examination made for the presence of haemorrhage, inflammation, suppuration or tumour. The cord should now be removed laid on the table cut transversely in several places and examined for evidences of haemorrhages, softening and inflammatory lesions.

The vertebral column should be examined for the presence of fractures or dislocations after the cord has been removed.

As soon as the post mortem examination is finished the body should be thoroughly washed the organs should be replaced into the cavities and the dissected flaps should be brought in apposition and well sutured with strong twine. The body should then be covered with a cloth before it is returned to the relatives or friends so as to avoid hurting their feelings. In the absence of the relatives or friends the body should be returned to the police constable accompanying it who should cremate or bury it according to the religious customs of the deceased but should never throw it into a running stream or river as is often done.

#### PRESERVATION OF VISCERA AND OTHER ARTICLES IN CASES OF SUSPECTED POISONING AND RULES FOR TRANSMITTING THEM TO THE CHEMICAL EXAMINER

In fatal cases of suspected poisoning the following viscera should ordinarily be preserved for chemical analysis in clean wide mouthed white glass bottles

informing the Chemical Examiner of the despatch of the parcel. After locking the door of the box a piece of tape should be passed across the key hole and sealed in the depression made in the wood near the key hole. The address label should be pasted to the door of the box in such a position as to cover the key hole. On this label the number and date of the letter advising despatch to the Chemical Examiner should always be inserted to prevent mistakes in identification. Viscera and articles belonging to separate cases should never be packed in the same box. The box should be forwarded to the Chemical Examiner by railway parcel, and the railway receipt together with the forwarding letter should be sent to the Chemical Examiner under a registered cover. The forwarding letter should contain the number, date, numbers of the bottles used, and case number in which analysis of the viscera is required by the District Magistrate. All the articles should be packed and sealed in the presence of the Civil Surgeon, the special medico legal seal being used for the purpose. Along with the letter a copy of the post mortem report should also be forwarded.

In addition to the above mentioned viscera the following articles are to be preserved in certain cases of poisoning —

i Urine and faeces, when available. Urine should be preserved in a clean glass bottle with an equal quantity of rectified spirit or with fine grains of thymol if rectified spirit is contraindicated. Faeces should also be preserved separately in a clean glass bottle in rectified spirit.

ii The heart and a portion of the brain. These should be preserved in separate glass bottles with rectified spirit, if poisoning by *nux vomica* or strichnine is suspected.

iii Lung tissues and blood from the cavity of the heart. These should be preserved separately in clean glass bottles without adding any preservative in cases of suspected poisoning by carbon monoxide, coal gas hydrocyanic acid, alcohol or chloroform and should be forwarded for chemical examination as soon as possible. The cerebro spinal fluid should also be preserved in a suspected case of poisoning by alcohol.

iv A portion of the skin and subcutaneous tissue in cases where poison was suspected to have been administered by subcutaneous injection.

v Portions of the long bones. These should be preserved in suspected cases of subacute or chronic poisoning by arsenic and antimony, especially when a body is exhumed after a long burial or when a body has undergone extensive putrefactive changes.

vi A quantity of hair from the head. This should be preserved in suspected cases of subacute or chronic poisoning by minerals, as most of the minerals are eliminated by the hair<sup>1</sup>.

vii The uterus and its appendages together with the upper part of the vagina in fatal cases of suspected criminal abortion, if considered necessary by the medical officer. Sticks or other foreign bodies found in the genital tract should be preserved in a separate glass bottle after removal and drying when practicable.

Unless the viscera and other articles are forwarded to the Chemical Examiner they are to be preserved for a period of six months, and are then to be destroyed after obtaining the District Magistrate's assent<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Bagehot and Ganguli *Annals of Biochemistry and Experimental Medicine*, Vol 1, No 1, March, 1931

<sup>2</sup> For fuller details see the U.P. Medical Manual, 1934 pp 210-220

Table showing the weights of the chief viscera of healthy Indians of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, varying from 10 to 70 years of age, who died from violence

Organs	Males			Females		
	Weight in ounces			Weight in ounces		
	Min	Max	Average	Min	Max	Average
Brain	35	57	47.34	30	48	38.29
Right Lung	7	30	18.15	6	20	13.5
Left Lung	5	30	16.58	5	18	11.75
Heart	3.5	13	10	4	8	6.5
Stomach	3	9	5.6	3.5	8	5.75
Liver	26	64	43.78	30	50	38.25
Spleen	2.5	12	6.02	2	9.5	5.25
Right Kidney	2.5	6	3.64	2	4	3.08
Left Kidney	1.5	6	3.63	2	4	2.93

### CAUSE OF DEATH

After completing post mortem examination, the medical officer should form an opinion as to the cause and manner of death, based on the appearances observed by him and should immediately give in the vernacular the abstract of his opinion to the police constable accompanying the body for communication to the investigating officer. If he has based his opinion on the post mortem appearances, as well as on the statement of the police, he should mention the fact in his report. The report should be as complete as possible, but concise and clear, it should be forwarded to the Superintendent of Police as soon as possible, but not later than two days. Post mortem reports drawn up by Civil Assistant Surgeons (members of the Provincial Medical Service in charge of dispensaries) have to be countersigned by Civil Surgeons, but this appears to be unnecessary and meaningless, as responsibility still rests with Civil Assistant Surgeons.

Some medical officers labour under a mistaken belief that they should never be definite in their opinion as to the actual cause of death and should therefore, qualify their opinion by using the word, "probably," in their post mortem report. This dictum is, sometimes, carried so far that instead of helping the Judge to come to a definite conclusion their opinion unnecessarily creates a bad impression on his mind. For instance, a Civil Surgeon mentioned in a case where a man was murdered by the discharge of a gun in the abdomen that in his opinion death was probably due to shock and internal hemorrhage resulting probably from the wound in the abdomen which was probably caused by the discharge of a fire arm. In cross examination he had to admit that there was no possibility of any other cause of death in the case, and he used the word "probably," so often in his report as it was customary to do so among medical officers. In connection with the use of the word, 'probably,' by medical officers in their post mortem reports the

Sessions Judge of Agra made the following interesting observations in the course of his judgment in the case of K E v Gulkandi charged under section 302 of the Indian Penal Code —

' I have already drawn the attention of the District Magistrate to the deplorable manner in which medical evidence is often recorded in Magistrates Court. Medical officers appear to derive some inward satisfaction from the use of the word "probably," in giving the cause of death and Magistrates blindly record such statements. In this case I had to ask the Magistrate to recall for proper examination the medical officer whose evidence was for the purpose of this case vitiated by the use of the word "probably." A medical officer should be asked what in his opinion was the cause of death and every effort should be made to root out the vagueness against which I am perpetually fighting in Court in this as in other matters.

In a case where a jugular vein and an external carotid artery were cut in an incised wound 4" by 4" by 1" the medical officer holding the post mortem examination gave an opinion that the deceased appeared to have died from the wound of the neck thus implying that the actual cause of death might be something else.

My advice to medical officers is that they must never hesitate to give a definite opinion whenever they can reasonably do so. But in those cases where they are unable to find any cause of death all the organs being healthy, and there being no injury sufficient to account for death they must mention in their post mortem report that they cannot come to any definite conclusion and in doing so they must explain their position by reasoning out all the facts. In such cases it is advisable as a precautionary measure to preserve the necessary viscera for chemical analysis and pieces of the brain lungs liver spleen etc for microscopic and bacteriologic examinations.

#### EXAMINATION OF DECOMPOSED BODIES

The examination should be complete and should be held on the same lines as in ordinary autopsies. To save hand work on decomposed bodies and thus to lessen the chances of septic poisoning a pair of hooks made of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " iron or steel 9" long and with 3" bent in to form a handle is very convenient for hooking up the abdominal and other incisions so as to keep the parts open and also for opening the pericardium and hooking up the heart lungs and other organs.<sup>1</sup>

In cases of external fatal injuries it is not difficult to find out the cause of death. In October 1930 the body of a Hindu male 40 years old was brought in a very advanced state of decomposition with a police report that death was caused by the deceased being thrown into a well with the hands and legs tied together. On examination I found that the lower limbs were flexed at the hip joints and passed over the trunk near the neck where the hands feet and neck were tied together by several turns of a loin cloth (*dhoti*). The soft tissues from over the trunk had given way exposing the thoracic and abdominal cavities. The buttocks and soft tissues of the upper and lower limbs had been converted into adipocere. The windpipe and gullet were cut through below the thyroid cartilage. There were two cuts obliquely across the front of the left seventh rib and three vertical cuts through the upper part of the sternum near its junction with the cartilage of the left first rib. The thoracic and abdominal organs were mostly absent. I give my opinion that the deceased was first killed by a wound on the neck and stab wounds on the chest and then tied with a *dhoti* and thrown into a well (Fig 1).

<sup>1</sup> Circular No. 50 of the I C C H L P 1910 The L P Medical Manual 1934 p. 117

body, he hurriedly runs to the police station to make a report about this wonderful discovery, and the remnants of the body are forwarded to the Civil Surgeon for post mortem examination.

In such cases the medical examiner should first ascertain if the parts sent are human or not. This is only difficult when a piece of muscle without the skin or a viscous is sent. In such a case a definite opinion can be given by resorting to the precipitin test which is equally applicable to blood as well as muscle or any other soft tissue. Having determined that they are human he should try to elucidate the following points —

1 All separate parts should be fitted together, and it should be determined whether they belonged to one and the same body.

2 The nature and character of the parts should be described, as also the colour of the skin, if any.

3 The manner of separation as to whether they had been hacked, sawn through, cut cleanly, lacerated, or gnawed through by animals.

4 Sex can be determined if the head or trunk is available, from the presence or absence of hair and general conformation.

5 The probable age may be ascertained from the skull teeth colour of the hair, trunk, size and degree of development of fragments, and ossification of the bones.

6 Identification can be determined by tattoo marks, scars, colour of hair, deformities recent and old fractures or by the discovery of certain articles of clothing known to have belonged to a missing person in association with the mutilated bodies or fragments of a skeleton.

7 The probable time since death may be ascertained from the condition of the parts.

8 The cause of death can be ascertained if there is evidence of a fatal injury to some large blood vessel or some vital organ. For instance, a penetrating wound on the left side of the chest cutting the left ventricle of the heart was noticed on the mutilated body of a Hindu male packed in a steel trunk and found lying in a first class compartment of No. 6 down train of R. M. Railway at Agra Fort Station on the 7th August 1909. The head, upper half of the lip, penis and extremities had been severed from the trunk.

In September 1922 a body found in a well in a very advanced state of decomposition was sent for examination from Police Station Hasanganj Lucknow. All the internal organs had disappeared except a small portion of the small intestine and the uterus. The lower jaw and the hands were missing. The skull was denuded free of soft tissues but had a depressed fissured fracture at the junction of the parietal bones with the frontal. There was a necklace of glass beads round the neck, the soft parts of which were destroyed in front by maggots which were crawling all over the body. The body appeared to be that of a Hindu female who had been killed by fracturing the skull bone with a blunt weapon and then thrown into a well.

**The Ruxton Case.**—On the 29th September, 1935 several mutilated and dismembered human remains consisting chiefly of two heads, thorax, pelvis, segments of the upper and lower limbs, three breasts, portions of female external genitalia and the uterus and its appendages were found lying in the bed of Gardenholme Linn below the bridge on the Moffat-Lдинburgh road. With a view to effacing all evidence of sex and identity the ears, eyes, nose and lips had been removed from both the heads. The skin of the faces had also been removed and the teeth had been extracted. The terminal joints of the fingers had been removed from the hands so that no identification could be possible from finger prints or some peculiarity of the nails or finger tips.

All the remains were assembled and found to represent two female bodies, apparently well developed and well nourished. From investigations carried out by several specialists it was proved beyond doubt that these bodies were those of Mrs Isabella Ruxton, the wife of Dr Ruxton aged about 35 years and Miss Mary Rogerson the nurse-maid of Dr Ruxton, aged about 20 years who had both disappeared from the house of Dr Ruxton in Lancaster on the 15th September, 1935 and were never again seen alive. Photographs were taken of the skulls and super imposed on those of the heads of Mrs Ruxton and Miss Rogerson and were found to tally in every respect. Casts made of the reconstructed left feet of both the bodies fitted perfectly shoes belonging to Mrs Ruxton and Miss Rogerson.

The police searched the house of Dr Ruxton and found numerous stains of human blood in the bath room, on the bannister, stair rails, stair carpets, pads, surgical towel, and a suit of clothes belonging to him. The police subsequently arrested Dr Ruxton, who was charged with having wilfully murdered Mrs Isabella Ruxton and Miss Mary Rogerson. He was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death.<sup>1</sup>

**The Baptist Church Cellar Murder** —On July 17, 1942, a gang of demolition workers who were sent to clear out the damaged premises at 302, Kennington Lane, discovered remains of a body covered with lime and buried under the floor of a cellar at the rear of a Baptist Chapel. The remains consisted of a head lying loose and the trunk, with parts of the arms and legs missing. The body had been dismembered after death by some one without particular skill and knowledge of the parts. The head was decapitated through the joints between the upper end of the spine and the base of the skull. In order to conceal identity efforts had been made to destroy tissues by fire. Thus, the scalp and hair, face, eyes, lower jaw, hands and feet were missing. There were signs of burning on the head down the left side of the trunk, and at the level of each knee. Owing to the sprinkling of slaked lime the uterus and soft tissues especially of the neck were well preserved though they were dry. The remains were removed to the Department of Forensic Medicine at Guy's Hospital where after cleaning and reassembling the parts Dr Keith Simpson was able to determine the following points: —

## EXAMINATION OF BONES

When a skeleton or isolated bones are sent for medical examination, the usual questions that a police officer puts to a medical officer are (1) whether the bones are human or not, (2) if human whether they are male or female, (3) whether



*Fig. 16.—The body of a female showing insect wounds on the head. It was decomposed and mutilated by animals after death. Maggots were also crawling all over the skin. Post mortem examination was held 4 or 5 days after death.*

they belong to one or more individuals, (4) the stature of the individual to whom the bones belonged, (5) the age of the individual to whom the bones belonged, (6) the time of death, (7) whether the bones have been cut, sawn, gnawed by animals or burnt, (8) the probable cause of death.

The above questions may be answered by observing the following points —

(1) Owing to prevailing ignorance the police as well as the public not infrequently mistake the bones of animals especially dogs, pigs and goats for those of human beings. Thus, a village chaukidar in the district of Lucknow mistook a few bones of a bird lying near a tree in a field for those of a newly born infant, suspected a case of criminal abortion and sent them for medical examination. In a suspected case of murder in the District of Meerut during the month of September, 1921, several bones were picked up by the police and forwarded to me for expert opinion. Among these the bones of the upper extremity were human while the remaining including the jaw and skull were animal bones. The knowledge of human as well as comparative anatomy is, therefore necessary to find out whether the particular bones are human or not. The answer is quite easy when the bones are entire or when the skeleton is sent but great caution should be used in giving a definite opinion when a fragment of bone is available without any characteristic features, such as tuberosities etc. Such fragments should be examined under the microscope or forwarded to an expert for his opinion.

(2) Sex may be determined from the distinguishing marks of the male and female bones. The determination is more accurate if the adult pelvis is forthcoming.

Certain measurements of the limb bones, especially the humerus radius femur and tibia are also useful for estimating sex and are given below in a tabulated form as compiled by Klein —

	Bones	Males	Females
1	Humerus Length Vertical diameter of head Bicondylar width	722 mm 48 mm 60 mm	290 mm 10 3 mm 5 5 mm
2	Radius Length Vertical diameter of head	242 mm 22 5 mm	201 7 mm 21 5 mm
3	Femur Length Vertical diameter of head Bicondylar width	419 mm 48 mm 79 5 mm	412 mm 41 mm 70 5 mm
4	Tibia Length Bicondylar width	370 mm 75 mm	358 mm 65 8 mm

(3) The bones sent for examination should be assorted according to the side to which they belong and then it should be noted if there were bones of one kind more than necessary as required for one individual, or if there were bones of the same kind more than necessary on the same side.

(4) To estimate the height of an individual an inch or an inch and a half for the soft parts should be added to the length of the entire skeleton if it is available. As a general rule the stature of an individual is approximately the length measured from the tip of the middle finger to the tip of its opposite fellow when the arms are extended fully in a horizontal position, but this is not always the case. If only one arm is sent for examination the height can be fairly ascertained by multiplying its length by two and adding twelve inches for the clavicles, and one and a half inches representing the width of the sternum. The length of the forearm measured from the tip of the olecranon process to the

tip of the middle finger is also stated to be equal to five-nineteenths of the height of the body. The symphysis pubis forms the exact centre of the body usually from the 20th or 25th year until old age.

From investigations carried out in the Anatomical Departments of the Medical Colleges of Calcutta, Lucknow and Lahore it is possible to estimate the stature of an individual within an error of one and a half to two inches from a long bone by multiplying its maximum length by a multiplication factor given in the following table —

*Table showing the multiplication factors for estimating the stature of an individual of some provinces of India as determined by different authors*

Long Bones	Pan <sup>1</sup>		Nath <sup>2</sup>		S. H. Q. U. in I. Shah <sup>3</sup>
	Hindus of Bengal Bihar and Orissa		Residents of United Provinces		Punjabi
	Males	Females	Males	Males	Males
1. Humerus	2.31	2.31	2.3	2.3	2.3
2. Radius	6.78	6.7	6.9	6.3	6.3
3. Ulna	6	6	6.9	6	6
4. Femur	3.82	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.6
5. Tibia	4.49	4.46	4.49	4.2	4.2
6. Fibula	4.46	4.43	4.48	4.4	4.4

The stature of a normal European may be estimated within an error of one to two centimetres from certain long bones especially the femur, humerus, tibia or radius by using the following formulae compiled by Karl Pearson<sup>4</sup> —

I Formula for calculating the stature in centimetres when the long bones are in a humid state with the cartilages attached

Male

Female

(5) Age may be determined with a certain amount of accuracy from the presence of the teeth in the mandible and maxilla as also from the formation of the centres of ossification and the junction of epiphyses with shafts or of bones with one another. For this purpose it is better to tabulate the reports as under, so as to avoid any mistake.

Kind of bone	Centre of ossification	Junction of epiphyses with shaft	Union of bones with one another	Age	Remarks
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Lastly, the approximate age should be given considering all these points.

The weight of the bones is not helpful in forming an opinion about the approximate age, however, when the bones of an alleged adult are forwarded by the police and the medical officer finds them to be those of a boy or a child, it is much safer to weigh them to avoid future complications, as some cases have happened in which medical officers were put to some inconvenience owing to their not having done so.

The specific gravity of a bone which forms the densest part in the human body, is two. The average weight<sup>1</sup> of an Indian male skeleton, especially that of a Punjabi, is ten pounds and six ounces, which is about the same as that of a European male skeleton, while that of an Indian female (Punjabi) weighs six pounds and two ounces which is less than that of a European female skeleton which weighs eight pounds and thirteen ounces. Children attain half the adult weight at about 12 in the case of boys and under 11 in the case of girls.

(6) It is extremely difficult to tell the precise time of death from examining bones, but a guess may be made by noting the existence of fractures, odour and the condition of the soft parts and ligaments attached to them. In the case of a fracture the time may be judged with a certain degree of accuracy by examining the callus after dissecting it longitudinally. The odour emitted by the bones of recent deaths is quite characteristic and offensive. It should be remembered that dogs, jackals and other carrion feeders denude the bones free of the soft tissues and even the ligaments in a very short time, but their peculiar odour will be still evident and will be different from that of the bones cleaned by decomposition in the earth.

After all the soft tissues have disappeared bones begin to decompose from three to ten years, which is the usual period taken up by bodies when laid in cofins, but this period is much shorter in India, where most of the bodies are buried without any such protection.

Changes occurring in bones from decomposition are accompanied by the loss of organic matter and weight. Such bones become dark or dark brown in colour, and may be fragile. It is extremely difficult to assign the time when these changes occur, but it depends on the nature of the soil, the manner of burial (with or without coffin) and the age of the individual (more rapidly in young persons).

(7) Bones, particularly the ends of the long bones, should be examined very minutely and carefully to find out if they have been cut by sharp cutting instruments or sawn or gnawed through by animals and the medulla eaten away. Sometimes inexperienced police officers mistake the gnawing of bones by animals

<sup>1</sup> Major H. Charles's paper on the identification of European and Oriental skeletons published on page 511 of the Transactions of the First Medical Congress 1891.

for cuts by sharp instruments and then try to suggest all kinds of absurd theories to maintain their point.

Their nutrient canals should be examined for the presence of red arsenic or some other stain to ascertain if the bones came from a dissecting room as the pleader in a city where there is a medical school or college may raise the question as to whether they came from a dissecting room. To avoid such a possibility it is necessary for the authorities to see that all remaining parts are thoroughly incinerated after dissection is over.

(8) It is almost impossible to infer the cause of death from a bone or bones unless there is evidence of fractures which would under normal conditions prove fatal e.g. fractures of the skull bones or of the upper cervical vertebrae or a deep cut into any of these bones suggesting the use of a heavy cutting instrument such as a *gandasa* or fracture of several ribs. Disease of the bones such as caries or necrosis should also be noted if present.

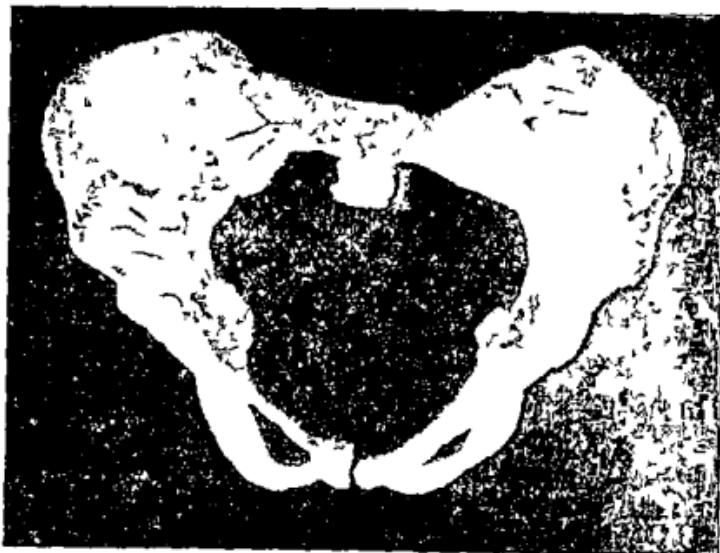
Bones should not be returned to the police after medical examination but should be retained and kept in one's own custody with a view to producing them in court if required.

**Burnt Bones.**—In some instances burnt bones and ashes are forwarded to the medical officer for inspection when the police come to suspect some foul play after a body is partially or completely burnt. If the body is not completely consumed fragments of bones left would afford sufficient evidence to say that they were human or not. The combustion of a body is rarely so complete as to reduce it to ashes. Hence by shifting the ashes through sieves fragments of bones can be collected and identified by a careful study.



Fig. 17.—Fragments of burnt bones identified as human bones  
(From a photograph lent kindly by Dr. M. I. Khan)

A bone when burnt in the open is white in appearance and black or ash grey when burnt in a closed fire. A burnt bone preserves its shape but falls to powder when pressed between the fingers. It is said that it will be reduced to charcoal if treated with hydrochloric acid but this is not necessarily true. If it is so much burnt that organic matter is destroyed no charcoal will be left on adding acid.



*Fig. 1b.—Reconstructed Pelvic Girdle  
(From a photograph lent kindly by Dr. M. I. J. J. m.)*

In cases of suspected poisoning by some mineral e.g., arsenic all the available ashes and burnt bones should be preserved for chemical analysis as it is possible to detect arsenic in large pieces of burnt bones mixed with ashes in cases of poisoning by arsenic despite its volatility for the following reasons<sup>1</sup> —

(a) Much of the arsenic in bones is converted into arsenites partially replacing the phosphates of the bones. Arsenites are non volatile, hence arsenic can be detected in the bones even after strong heating for a long time.

(b) Even if all the arsenic were present in the bones in the form of arsenic trioxide or some other volatile form, all the arsenic is not likely to be lost during the process of cremation, as complete combustion of a body does not, as a rule occur in India, hence some of the volatilized arsenic is liable to be condensed on the cooler parts of the unburnt funeral pyre where its presence may be detected.

(c) When arsenic trioxide is heated with salts of sodium or earth group, part of the arsenic is converted into arsenate and becomes non volatile.

It is reported that the Chemical Examiner of the United and the Central Provinces was able to detect arsenic in 19 out of 97 samples of ashes and burnt bones received for chemical analysis in his laboratory at Agra between the years 1921 and 1940, while the Chemical Examiner of the Punjab detected arsenic in 16 out of 92 samples of ashes and burnt bones examined between the years 1921 and 1931.

I quote the following from my case book —

1. In August, 1918 a sealed box from Police Station, Itanagar District Lucknow was brought for examination. The box contained a skull a pelvis with two femurs attached two tibiae (the extremities of which had been gnawed through by animals) three right and three left

<sup>1</sup> Chakrabarti, S. N., Narayan, M. Z., and Ganguli, K. R., *Ind. Med. Gaz.*, Dec., 1941, pp. 722-724.

ribs and a piece of a rib (the end of which had been torn away by animals) and ten dark hairs each about ten to eleven inches long. From the examination of these bones especially of the pelvis and the hairs it was ascertained that the bones were those of a female, about thirty to thirty five years of age. These were afterwards identified to be those of a female by an *orhi* (head dress) torn *saluka* (bodice) and a brass ear ring found near the spot where the bones were discovered.

2 In March 1922 an incomplete skeleton found in the Gomti river was certified to be that of a middle aged male of about 5 feet 10 inches in height the length of the femur being 19 inches. It was afterwards identified to be that of a male *Ahir* by the *dhoti* found round the pelvis to which soft parts were still attached.

3 In the case of a headless skeleton forwarded to me for post mortem examination on the 2nd August 1926 I could ascertain from a cut across the centre of the body of the third cervical vertebra and a similar cut across the upper part of the body of the fifth cervical vertebra that death resulted from the injuries inflicted on the neck with a heavy cutting weapon.

4 A man aged about 38 years was alleged to have been murdered by injuries inflicted with a spear and a *fati* (blunt weapon) and the body was dragged by a number of assailants weighted with a sand bag and deposited into the bed of a river six miles from Gorakhpur. Nine months later two segments of a trunk and certain bones of the upper and lower extremities were recovered from the bed of the river and were submitted to Dr M. A. Khan Head of the Department of Anatomy, King George's Medical College Lucknow through the Chemical Examiner

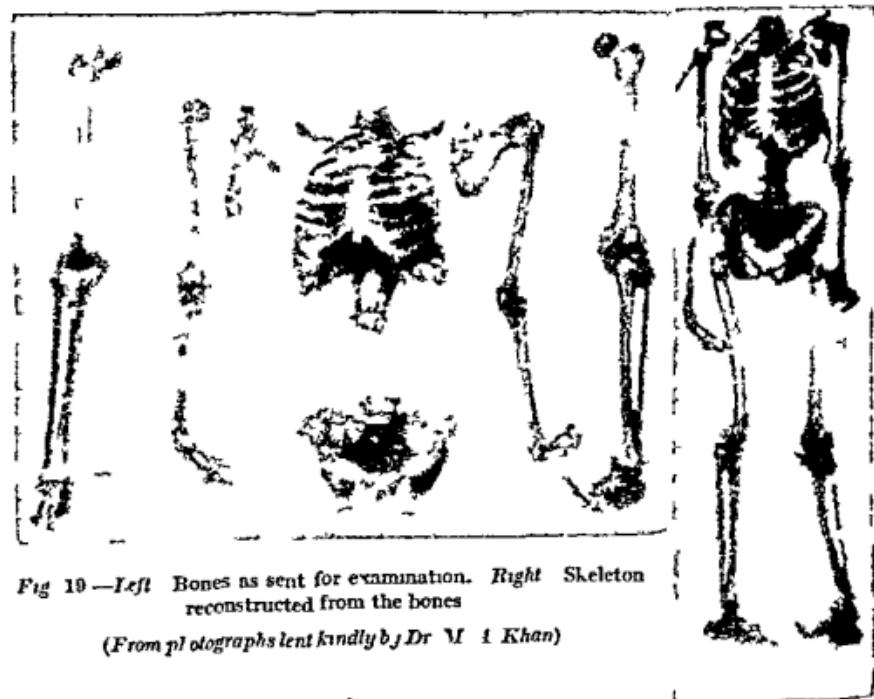


Fig. 19.—Left Bones as sent for examination. Right Skeleton reconstructed from the bones

(From photographs lent kindly by Dr. M. A. Khan)

## CHAPTER IV

### EXHUMATION

It becomes necessary to exhume bodies from graves when a suspicion of poison ing or some foul play arises sometime after death or it may be only for the purpose of identification. In India such a procedure is very rare owing to the custom of cremating dead bodies among the Hindus who constitute the larger portion of the population.

**Rules for Exhumation** — Under the written order of the District Magistrate or the Coroner the body should be exhumed in the early morning by the medical officer in the presence of a police-officer. Before ordering the digging of the grave he should examine the plan of the graveyard to fix the exact situation of the grave if any plan is available. After proceeding to the place the name plate if any should be identified and the undertaker should be asked to identify the stone if it is a *pucca* (masonry built) grave. The grave should not be dug up and the coffin if used should be identified by the undertaker who made it. Further in cases of suspected mineral poisoning about a pound of the earth in actual contact with the coffin or with the body (if the coffin is decayed or is not used) should be collected and preserved in a dry clean glass bottle for chemical analysis.

The coffin or the body should then be raised from the grave and the latter should be identified by as many persons as possible chiefly relatives friends or servants who might have been present at the time of preparing and dressing the body for burial.

**Examination** — If the interment has been recent post mortem examination should be conducted in the usual manner either in the open near the grave and but screened off from public gaze or at the mortuary. But in the case of bodies which have lain underground for a sufficiently long time to undergo putrefaction an attempt should be made to determine the sex stature and marks of identification. Hair found on the body should be preserved in a dry clean glass bottle for subsequent identification and chemical analysis. All the cavities should be examined and as many viscera as can be obtained should be preserved separately in dry clean wide-mouthed glass bottles or jars without exposing them unnecessarily to the air and a sufficient quantity of preservative should be added. The viscera should not be brought in contact with any metal. These bottles or jars should then be closed with well fitting glass stoppers covered with skin preferably chamois leather and delivered sealed to the Chemical Examiner on the same day if he was living in the same town or they should be forwarded to him by a passenger train with the least possible delay. In the case of suspected arsenic or antimony poisoning long bones such as the femur should be preserved and sent to the Chemical Examiner. Search should also be made for recent or old injuries such as fractures.

**Disinfectants** — Disinfectants should not be sprinkled on the body but might be sprinkled on the ground in the neighbourhood of the body. To avoid inhaling offensive gases the medical officer should use for the mouth a gauze mask dipped in a solution of potassium permanganate and should wear thick Indian rubber gloves with gauntlets or photographic gloves which are always kept in every public mortuary in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. He should also stand on the windward side of the body.

**Time of Exhumation** — In India and in England no time limit is fixed for the disinterment of a body but in Scotland twenty years is the limit fixed as no suspected person can be prosecuted for the perpetration of a crime after the lapse of that period. In France, this period is reduced to ten years and it is raised to thirty years in Germany.

**Report** — A verbatim report made by Major (now Lieutenant Colonel) E. J. O'Meara I.R.C.S.I.M.S., late Principal, Agric. Medical School and Civil Surgeon, Agric. on the exhumation of the body of the late Mr Fulham which was exhumed about fourteen months after death is given below with a view to illustrating the method as to how it should be made out in cases of exhumation —

\* On an order of the District Magistrate of Agra dated 6.12.1912, I proceeded to the Cantonment Cemetery of Agra at 8.45 a.m. on Sunday, the 6th December, 1912, accompanied by Mr Williamson Superintendent of Police, and Dr Modi, L.R.C.P. & S (Edin.), Lecturer on Medical Jurisprudence, Agric. Medical School.

The grave was identified by the Rev. Canon Menzies from the key to the Cantonment Cemeteries plan as Book R No 129 non masonry. A stone marked No 129, Mr E. M. Fulham stood at the head of the grave.

After 3½ hours the coffin was raised. It was then identified by Churanji Lal of Messrs Suntoke and Co., the undertakers, as having been made by that firm. There was no name plate. Samples of earth for examination by the Chemical Examiner were taken from above and below the coffin and in the direction of the flow of the sub-soil water. The coffin was then placed in a shell on a hearse and sent under the charge of Police Sergeant Charlewood to the post mortem room of the Thomson Hospital.

On arrival at the post mortem room at about 2 p.m., the coffin was taken out of the shell and opened by the undertaker Churanji Lal in the presence of—

Mr H. Williamson, Superintendent of Police,  
Mr Emery, Merchant, Meerut,  
Mr Sarkies, Military Accounts Department, Meerut,  
Dr Modi,  
Dr Vyas,  
Gur Bux, bearer to the late Mr F. M. Fulham and myself.

The coffin was much eaten by white ants and decayed but was intact with the exception of the lid which had given way down the centre of the coffin containing a quantity of earth. A sample of this earth was taken for despatch to the Chemical Examiner. On removal of this earth, the grave clothing, a white shirt, white drawers and black socks were identified by Gur Bux, the late Mr Fulham's bearer as having been the clothes in which the body had been dressed for burial.

- 1 Sex, identified as male from the scrotum there was no penis
- 2 Stature, about 5 feet 5 to 6 inches, the remains in the coffin being 5'—3½"

3 Weight during life approximately 10 stone. It was impossible to distinguish race, age, scars, birth tattoo or thumb marks. There were no peculiarities of nails, no injuries having permanent results of fractures that could be ascertained. Mr Emery and Mr Sarkies stated that Mr Fulham had a withered left arm. This could not be definitely made out as the measurement of the lower third of the left arm was only ¾" less than the right and there was only ¼" difference in the measurement of the upper third of the forearm.

The hair lying in the coffin and attached to the back of the head was identified by Mr Emery, Mr Sarkies and Gur Bux as being of the same colour as that of Mr Fulham. The upper and lower jaws were preserved for further identification of the teeth, if necessary. The body was in a peculiar condition of decomposition, there was no skin or subcutaneous tissue left a piece of white cloth adhered to the face, but all the soft parts and eyes were gone leaving the bones bare. The hair lay in a mass at the head of the coffin with some attached to the back of the head. There was a quantity of light coloured hair round the pubes. The muscles were very well preserved and of a dark red colour. The parietes were intact. On opening the chest the heart was found in a comparatively good state of preservation the lungs had entirely disappeared. The diaphragm was extremely well preserved and immediately below there was a mass of an organ in the position of the stomach. The liver was easily distinguishable. The mass of another organ was removed from the position of the spleen and another mass from the position of the left kidney. The intestines were well preserved, but it was impossible to separate the small from the large intestine. There was no sign of the urinary bladder.

The following were sent to the Chemical Examiner —

- (1) Earth taken from above the coffin
- (2) Earth taken from below the coffin
- (3) Earth taken from within the coffin
- (4) Hair from head
- (5) Hair from pubes

- (6) Heart
- (7) Stomach
- (8) Liver, spleen and left kidney
- (9) Intestines
- (10) Two femurs

Articles upto 9 were packed in standard pattern boxes and article 10 was packed in a big glass jar

All the regulations for the despatch of articles to the Chemical Examiner were complied with, with the exception that no preservative fluid was used<sup>1</sup> and the viscera were taken direct from the body and placed in tightly fitting stoppered bottles which were specially prepared. As an additional precaution glass stoppers were covered with Chamois leather. The post mortem was finished at 3-45 p.m. and all the boxes were sealed by 4.25 p.m. The boxes were taken by Dr Modi himself to the Chemical Examiner and were acknowledged to have been received by that officer at 5 p.m.

I have had occasion to hold post mortem examination of six more exhumed bodies. Of these I quote only three

1 A Mahomedan woman aged 22 years resident of Police Station Mandiaon District Lucknow committed suicide by jumping into a well on the 28th September, 1919. The deceased's father petitioned to the Magistrate that his daughter had been murdered hence the body was exhumed and sent for examination on the 9th October 1919. No marks of injury were detected on the body which was in a condition of saponification.

2 In January 1920 the body of a Hindu male about 20 years old, who died 5 days previously was exhumed on suspicion having been raised against the deceased's wife that she had poisoned him. On examination the stomach was empty and was studded with blisters on its inner wall owing to decomposition. The necessary viscera were preserved and sent to the Chemical Examiner at Agra who found no trace of any poison.

3 At 5.20 p.m. on May 19 1925 I held a post mortem examination on the body of a male infant exhumed 20 days after death as the police suspected that the father thinking that the infant was suffering from tetanus burnt him to death under a superstition that the children yet to be born might not suffer from the disease. The skin was still intact although the body had undergone putrefaction. There were no signs of burns or other injuries to the body.

## CHAPTER V

### EXAMINATION OF BLOOD AND SEMINAL STAINS, AND OF HAIR

[By RAI BHADUR K. N. BACCHI B.Sc., M.B. (Cal.) D.T.M. (Cal. & L.pool), F.R.C. (London)  
Late Chemical Examiner to the Government of Bengal]

#### BLOOD STAINS

Blood stains may be found on the garments or on the person of the suspected assailant or of the victim as well as on weapons, tools clubs articles of furniture leather goods, stones plaster earth mud grass etc. In fact every conceivable article is collected and forwarded by the police for the detection of blood in the stains which may be of various kinds and shades of colour.

The examination of all kinds of stains in this country is left entirely with the Chemical Examiners attached to the Provincial Governments and the determination of the source of blood is chiefly the work of the Imperial Serologist at Calcutta who is also the Chemical Examiner to the Government of India. According to the existing order of the Government of India, the Provincial Chemical Examiner should in the first instance, examine the article to see if the suspected stains are due to blood or some thing else. If he is satisfied that they are due to blood it is his duty to forward the cuttings where blood was actually detected or the entire article if thought necessary, to the Imperial Serologist for serological tests. The police or the trying magistrate should on no account forward any exhibits having suspected blood stains direct to the Imperial Serologist. In a case of homicide where an individual is arrested on suspicion, the medical officer is often asked by the police not only to examine the nails of the arrested individual but to cut the nails carefully, to collect them together and to keep them properly picked and sealed in his custody till he receives intimation from the trying Magistrate to forward the same to the Chemical Examiner. But it must be remembered that no medico legal value is attached to the evidence of blood found on or under the nail parings inasmuch as human nails are used for scratching purposes and, therefore, if a pimple, an eczematous patch ringworm lichen or prickly heat or any other skin disease is scratched, the nails will naturally draw blood which will remain inside them. Moreover, there is great possibility of drawing blood from the living tissue whether the nail paring is performed by a sharp instrument or a blunt instrument, and the blood thus drawn will contaminate the instrument which will convey it from one finger to another. In the case<sup>1</sup> of *K E v. Ujaghar Singh and others* tried in the High Court of Lahore it was held that the evidence of blood stained nails was not only of no value but might be extremely dangerous to innocent persons. Giving such evidence as corroborating an approver or as circumstantial evidence connecting an accused person with homicide might lead to the miscarriage of justice.

All investigating police officers are instructed to dry thoroughly all articles of clothing etc., having suspected blood stains before being sent to the medical officer for transmission to the Chemical Examiner. Exposure to the open air for a couple of hours will be sufficient in dry weather. Drying before a fire may be necessary in the rains, but when doing so, great care should be taken that the articles of clothing are not scorched. Unless the clothing is dried thoroughly, putrefaction is likely to set in and render recognition of the origin of stains either difficult or impossible.<sup>2</sup> The investigating officers are also required to forward the entire garment or weapon to the Chemical Examiner along with a history giving all relevant information about the medico legal aspects of the case and the

<sup>1</sup> 40 Criminal Law Jour July 1939 p 576

<sup>2</sup> The U.P. Medical Manual 1934, para 70 p 222

section of the Indian Penal Code under which the case has been registered. If the stains are on large and heavy articles, such as doors, cart yokes, furniture etc or on walls, floors and other places which cannot be sent entire, the stained portions should be cut out or sawn out as far as possible and sent to the Chemical Examiner.

The magistrate conducting the inquiry in a criminal case is authorized to make a reference to the Chemical Examiner for chemico-legal problems involved in the case, and the medical officer is required to prepare and despatch to the Chemical Examiner the articles having suspected blood stains which require chemico-legal investigations<sup>1</sup>. When such articles are brought by the police, it is the first duty of the medical officer to see that the articles tally with the description supplied by the police. If the description is not given, he should before transmitting them to the Chemical Examiner, describe very minutely all the features of the articles, e.g., the size, colour and consistence of the clothing, as well as the number, situation and pattern of the stains present. After completing the examination, he should label each article separately, and pack them in a sealed packet to be forwarded for chemical analysis on receiving intimation from the trying magistrate. This precaution is necessary to enable him to identify them subsequently in court that those were the articles which he was asked to forward to the Chemical Examiner.

On receiving the parcel, the Chemical Examiner should note and record the nature of the packing and compare the seal impressions affixed to the parcel with the facsimile impressed on the forwarding letter. He should also obtain a certificate from the magistrate permitting him to cut out portions of the stains or to destroy the articles, if necessary, for purposes of examination. Without such a certificate, any examination by the Chemical Examiner is an irregular procedure involving probably legal complications. After the examination is over, the articles should be packed carefully and sealed in the presence of a gazetted officer and kept in the strong room until they are required for production during the trial of the case<sup>2</sup>. If not required by the court, they are destroyed usually after six months.

The points that are usually required to be determined regarding stains on an article sent for examination in cases of alleged wounds, rape and unnatural offences are—

- 1 If the stains are due to blood or any other substance
- 2 If they are due to human blood

**Examination of Blood Stains.**—The examination of blood stains may be carried out by five methods—Physical, Chemical, Microscopical, Spectroscopic and Biological.

**Physical Examination**—It is said that the physical examination is conducted with a view to determining the age of the stain and with a view to ascertaining whether the stain is of arterial or venous blood or of blood of menstruation, abortion, parturition or haematemesis, whether it is from an assailant or a victim, and whether it was shed before or after death. But it is not helpful in solving these problems. It gives an idea about the size, thickness and colour of the stain and perhaps the direction from which the blood came.

It is difficult for a medical man, even of much experience, to offer an opinion as to the age of blood stains. It is a fact that medical men in India do, sometimes,

1 In Bihar, Orissa and Bengal the police forward the articles direct to the Chemical Examiner either through the Superintendent of Police or the Subdivisional Magistrate.

2 In the United and in the Central Provinces the Chemical Examiner is required to return clothes and other articles in blood stain cases to the District Magistrate after their examination is over (vide para 800, The U.P. Medical Manual, 1934, p. 220).

make far too definite statements in this matter. A young inexperienced doctor is apt to make such a statement under the impression that the court would think him a fool if he did not give a definite opinion as regards the age of a stain but he should remember that it is practically impossible to say more than that the stains are fresh or not fresh.

The appearances of stains as to whether they are fresh or not depend on the colour and the nature of the material. Recent stains on a white cloth are of a bright red colour which on exposure to light and air gradually changes to reddish brown in about twenty four hours especially in hot weather and subsequently changes to dull brown this is fairly permanent but in the course of time it may become black. It is therefore, evident that an expression of opinion as to the age of blood from consideration of its colour is well nigh impossible. Dry stains have a starchy feel on cloth composed of a thin fabric such as cotton silk or linen.

Stains of recently effused blood on a hard substance such as stone, iron, steel or any other metal have a dark shining appearance while dry and old ones have often a cracked or fissured look. Recent stains are also more soluble in distilled water or normal saline than old ones in which haemoglobin gradually changes to methaemoglobin and finally to insoluble haematin. Blood effused during life, when dry can be peeled off in scales owing to the presence of fibrin in its coagulum but it is liable to break up into a powder if shed after death.

The recently shed arterial blood is bright red in colour and the venous blood is dark red but this difference can hardly be distinguished in a dried stain. The arterial blood is seen in the form of jets or sprays which have an appearance of elongated pear shaped marks which may be compared to 'signs of exclamation'. The jets may be projected to a distance of three to four feet if effused from small arteries. The arterial blood is always shed during life as blood pressure in arteries falls to zero after death.

It is not possible to state from the appearance of stains whether they are of menstrual blood or from any other source. It may however be noted that stains due to menstrual blood and hematemesis are acid in reaction owing to the presence of vaginal and gastric secretions, but in blood stains the ordinary method of testing the reaction is hardly applicable. An examination under the microscope will determine the nature of the source. It is not correct to suppose that menstrual blood does not clot, the vaginal mucous secretion may only delay clotting.

Whether blood stains belong to an assailant or a victim can be determined only from circumstantial evidence by examining an article of clothing. If the stains are on the inner side of a garment it is very probable that they belong to a victim but if on the outside they may belong to an assailant though not necessarily so, as the stains would be found on the outside of a garment worn by a man who received a blow on the head while standing. Again an assailant may not show any stains of blood if he is so standing as to avoid splashing from the outflow of blood while inflicting an injury. Besides he may have changed the clothes or may have washed them but blood stains which are faint and invisible by ordinary light after the washing of the clothes are rendered quite visible when they are exposed to the ultra violet rays or when they are photographed with infra red sensitive plates.

In this connection it may be mentioned that the accused person may in defence, attribute the presence of a few blood stains on his garment to the stains left by the crushing of bugs, mosquitoes or other blood sucking insects which are not uncommon in India. These stains are small in size and sharply angular in outline, and may contain eggs and parts of the crushed insect if seen under the microscope. The body pulp of the insect does not soak into the fabric like blood. Stains caused on a garment by droplets of unaltered blood passed through the

with a bluish green or peacock blue colour by hydrogen peroxide solution. The reaction occurs also with a solution of the blood pigment previously boiled. On the other hand the reaction is negative when iron is removed from haemoglobin forming haematoporphyrin.<sup>1</sup>

The reagent is prepared by dissolving 1 gramme of leucomalachite green in 48 c.c. of glacial acetic acid diluted with double distilled water and is then made up to 200 c.c. A drop of this reagent is placed on the stain and after a few seconds a drop of hydrogen peroxide solution (3 to 3.6 per cent) is added when the characteristic colour of malachite green appears if blood is present. It is not affected by those substances which interfere with the benzidine test.

These four chemical tests are based on the fact that peroxidase present in haemoglobin acts as a carrier of oxygen from the hydrogen peroxide to the active ingredients of the reagents (guaiacum resin benzidine phenolphthalein and leucomalachite green) and produces the characteristic coloured compounds by oxidation. Oxidase and peroxidase are also present in all animal cells but they are destroyed by boiling while the peroxidase of haemoglobin is not affected by such treatment.

It is suggested that before applying these chemical tests the luminescence test be used as a preliminary test for detecting small obscure blood stains mixed with rust mud earth ashes oil paint fruit juices etc. or changed by weather temperature and age. A few drops of a solution containing either 3 amino phthalic acid hydrazide hydrochloride 1 g sodium peroxide 5 g and distilled water 1000 ml or 3 amino phthalic acid hydrazide hydrochloride 1 g sodium carbonate 50 g hydrogen peroxide (10 vol) 50 ml and distilled water 1000 ml are sprayed on a blood stain when a distinct bluish white luminescence is clearly visible in the dark. It is claimed that this test is specific for haematin of blood \* but Naidu and Pitchandi<sup>2</sup> are of opinion that it is not specific for blood as the reagent used for this test gives a positive reaction with copper sulphate verdigris cobalt chloride cobalt sulphate bleaching powder etc.

**Microscopical Examination** — This is useful not only for the detection of the red blood corpuscles but also for the recognition of pus cells epithelial cells bacteria faecal matter etc. which are sometimes found mixed with blood in the suspected blood and other stains. The presence of squamous epithelial cells from the vagina or columnar cells of the uterus in blood stains may indicate the menstrual source of the blood. Similarly the epithelial cells of the respiratory tract with a large number of pus cells or food particles with sarcina and other bacteria will help the examiner in expressing an opinion as to the gastric source of the blood. The size appearance and other histological features of the red blood corpuscles may also reveal the origin of the blood. Skill in micrometry is therefore essential for such work.

Several solvents have been recommended to dissolve out the blood stain for extraction of the red blood corpuscles for microscopic examination but the best for this purpose is Vibert's fluid which is obtained by mixing two grammes of sodium chloride and half a gramme of mercuric chloride in a hundred cubic centimetres of distilled water. A small piece of the stain should be cut out and soaked in a watch glass with 2 or 3 drops of Vibert's fluid for half an hour. It should then be teased out with needles and examined under the high power. In the absence of Vibert's fluid normal saline serves the purpose fairly well.

Some clots of blood or stains on a dyed cloth are not easily dissolved by these solvents. In such cases a dilute solution of ammonia will give much better results. Stains on leather or some kinds of wood containing tannic acid are not acted upon.

<sup>1</sup> *Allen Commercial Orga* c A albris 1933 p 33

<sup>2</sup> *St C Rath Brit Med Jour Aug 8 1941* p 156

<sup>3</sup> *Jour and Proc Inst Chem Vol VI Sep 1943 p 94*

by any of these solvents and a two per cent solution of hydrochloric acid is required for effecting the right amount of softening for proper microscopic examination.

In the case of stains on a rusty weapon, stone, plaster, mud or earth, they should be scraped with a knife and dissolved in a watch glass or test tube for examination. When investigating blood stains on a knife it often happens that there are no stains on the blade or on the handle but only in the joint. It is, therefore, necessary in such a case to dismantle the parts of the knife for finding out the suspected stain. The blood stain is generally found inside the groove in the handle of the knife and not on its blade which is washed carefully by the assailant.

A drop of the blood stain solution thus obtained, placed on a slide and viewed under the microscope may reveal the presence of the red blood corpuscles which are circular, biconcave, non nucleated discs in all mammalia except camels, in which the red blood corpuscles are oval and biconvex. In birds, fishes, amphibia and reptiles, they are oval, biconvex and nucleated. These corpuscles can only be detected and identified by one with considerable experience in microscopy and micrometry, and that too only when a stain is quite fresh, say, about twenty four hours old, and when a small fragment of a clot is available. In old stains specially on a cloth the red blood corpuscles become shrunken, disintegrated and unrecognizable, especially during the hot weather in India.

It is impossible to decide by the microscopic examination of the stain if the blood is of human origin for which the serological test is to be sought for. But in fresh cases it is possible to state that the stain is of mammalian blood. In special cases some information may be obtained by the microscopic examination of the stain which may be of immense corroborative value; for instance, in a case of murder in Calcutta, Bose found microfilaria in the stains on the assailant's shirt as well as in the victim's blood.<sup>1</sup>

**Telchmann's Test or Haemin Crystal Test** —A small crystal of sodium

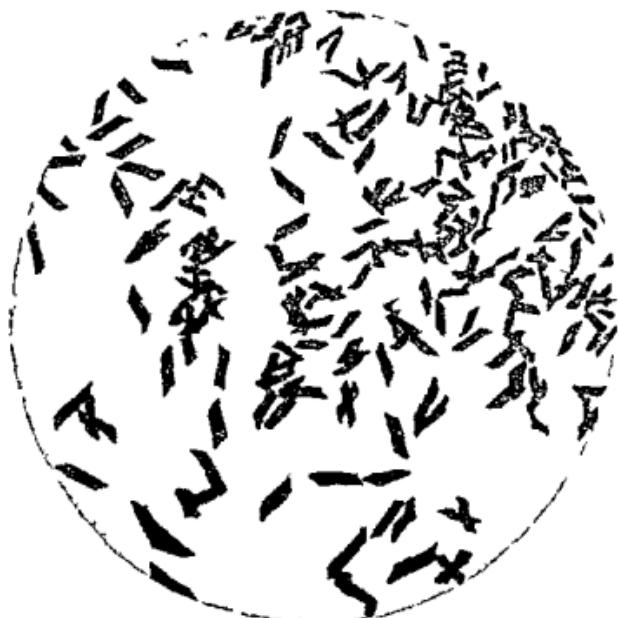


Fig. 20.—Microphotograph of Haemin Crystals  $\times 100$  (R. N. K. N. Bagchi).

chloride and two or three drops of glacial acetic acid are placed on a minute fragment of the stain on a glass slide. A cover slip is applied and the acid is evaporated by gently heating over a small flame. It is allowed to cool and examined under the high power of the microscope. Dark brown rhombic crystals of haemin or haematin chloride, arranged singly or in clusters are seen if blood is present. Similar crystals may be obtained from indigo dyed fabrics not stained with blood. Hence in a case of doubt a drop of hydrogen peroxide should be added to the crystals which if of haematin will give off bubbles of gas.

This test is of academic interest but not of much practical value. It is undoubtedly a delicate test for haemoglobin of blood but is not always successful. If the stain is too old is washed or is changed by chemical agents the crystals are not formed. The addition of too much salt or presence of moisture in the acid or overheating of the slide also results in failure.

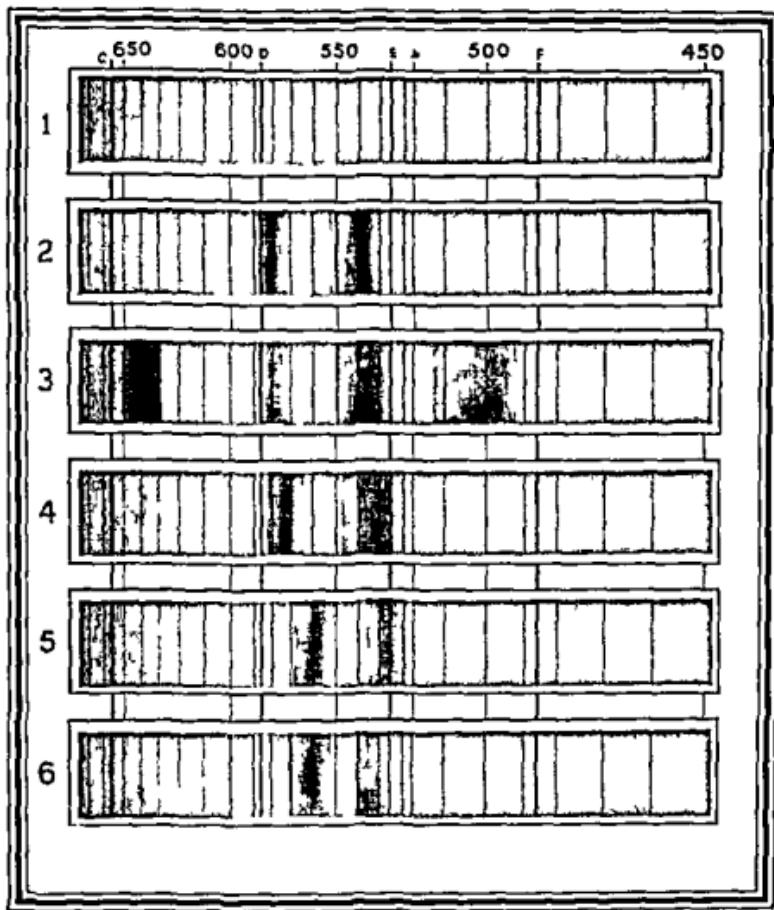
**Hæmochromogen Crystal Test**—This is a delicate and confirmatory test for the presence of haemoglobin. It consists in the addition of two or three drops of Takayama reagent to a small piece of the suspected material on a glass slide in the cold and covering with a cover slip. Large rhomboidal crystals of a salmon pink colour and arranged in clusters, sheaves and other forms appear usually within one to six minutes under the low power of the microscope. Occasionally these crystals take longer to form but slight warming of the slide especially in cold weather, hastens the reaction. A negative result should not be recorded until after the lapse of half an hour. An important advantage of this test is its adaptability for the spectroscopic test. The same specimen may be examined with the microspectroscope for the spectrum of hæmochromogen.



Fig. 21.—Microphotograph of Hæmochromogen Crystals  $\times 500$   
(Khan Baladur Dr. N. J. Iqdar)

Takayama reagent consists of sodium hydroxide (10 per cent) 3 c.c., pyridine 3 c.c., saturated solution of glucose 3 c.c., and distilled water 7 c.c. It should be

PLATE I



freshly prepared if prompt action is required. It gives satisfactory results for about two months if kept in an amber coloured bottle. Greaves<sup>1</sup> has obtained crystals using the reagent, six months old.

**Spectroscopical Examination** — The spectroscopical examination is the most delicate and reliable test for determining the presence of blood in both recent and old stains and is always employed by chemical examiners.

A recent blood stain gives a solution of oxyhaemoglobin which when examined by means of a spectroscope shows two dark absorption bands between the Traenhofer lines D and E in the yellow green in the solar spectrum. The first band is darker and more clearly defined and lies at wave lengths 587 570 while the second band is lighter and less clearly defined and lies at wave lengths 550 530. In an old stain oxyhaemoglobin is converted into methaemoglobin owing to exposure to air and light. Its spectrum consists of four absorption bands one band in the red orange between the lines C and D at wave length 634 two thinner and fainter bands between the lines D and E in the same position as those of oxyhaemoglobin and a fourth band in the green between the lines L and I at wave length 500, but it is very seldom defined and seen (See Plate I).

In India blood stains are liable to putrefy rapidly if kept damp. If they are kept dry, they become insoluble and resist the action of ordinary solvents. Either of these changes may render recognition of the stains difficult and sometimes impossible. Hence Hankin<sup>2</sup> has elaborated a method by which the stains may show the absorption bands of haemochromogen or reduced haemin even though the blood pigment is apparently insoluble. The spectrum of this compound is characterized by the presence of two absorption bands. The first is a very sharp and dark band midway between the lines D and I and lying at wave lengths 568 550, the second is a broader but paler band which commences on the left of the line I at wave lengths 537 521 and gradually fades away beyond this line. It may be noted that in alkaline solution of haemochromogen absorbs oxygen from air and readily changes to haemin (alkaline) which gives an altogether different spectrum. The following is the technique for obtaining the spectrum of haemochromogen —

A small portion of the suspected stain is placed on a glass slide and moistened with ammonium sulphide as a reducing agent. It is then focussed under the microscope. The eye piece is removed and an ordinary direct vision spectroscope with the wave length scale is inserted into the microscope tube to serve the purpose of a microspectroscope. If the stain is due to blood the two absorption bands of haemochromogen will be visible. The bands may not be visible evidently from the effects of putrefaction. In that case the stain should be treated with a drop of a ten per cent solution of potassium cyanide. A cherry red colour will develop due to the conversion of haemochromogen into cyanohaemochromogen with its characteristic absorption bands similar to those of the former but slightly wider and situated closely at wave lengths 570 550 and 540 527<sup>3</sup>.

The following procedure<sup>4</sup> is recommended for the detection of blood stains on rusty weapons and red coloured fabrics —

A small portion of the blood stain is taken on a glass slide with a ten per cent solution of caustic potash a little glucose powder is added and is covered with a cover slip. The glass slide is then warmed over a small flame when the stain

<sup>1</sup> Brit Med Jour May 21 1932 p 932

<sup>2</sup> Brit Med Jour Nov 10 1906 p 1261

<sup>3</sup> Greaves Roy Chetwaiery and Das found that the absorption band on the longer wave length side (red end) was intense and that on the shorter wave length side (violet end) was faint but broader. Vide Ind Jour Med Res Vol XXXIII No 1 May 1945 p 173

<sup>4</sup> Madras Chem Exam Annual Rep 1940 p 10

assumes a bright red colour and gives the characteristic haemochromogen bands. The red dye on fabrics is usually bleached by this procedure.

The reduction into haemochromogen may also be brought about by the Takayama reagent as described before or by an alkaline solution consisting of 4 grammes of sodium hydrosulphite 10 c.c. of potassium hydroxide (10 per cent) and 2 c.c. of alcohol which is said to be cleaner and much more efficient.

The spectrum of haemochromogen or of cyanhaemochromogen is quite enough for purposes of identification and expression of a definite opinion about suspected blood stains. It is not necessary to examine any more spectra of acid or alkaline haematin, haematoporphyrin etc. For practical purposes one chemical test i.e. the benzidine test and a confirmatory spectroscopic test for haemochromogen or cyanhaemochromogen are quite sufficient for a definite opinion and these are the principal tests usually employed in the laboratories of the Provincial Chemical Examiners. For very old and scanty stains where there is not sufficient material for repeating the examinations the Chemical Examiners are required by the order of the Government of India to forward the stains as they are to the Imperial Serologist Calcutta for identification of blood and for determination of its origin by the serological test.

**Biological Examination**—This is undertaken for the purpose of determining whether the blood of a particular stain is derived from a human being from a lower mammalian animal or from a bird.

**Precipitin Test**—This test is based on the principle that a foreign protein or a protein containing substance when injected into an animal produces antibodies in the blood serum of that animal which will form a precipitate when mixed with a solution of that foreign protein. The protein thus introduced is called the antigen and the antibody capable of forming a precipitate is called *precipitin*. Relying on this principle Uhlenhuth made several experiments and devised a method for recognizing the different kinds of mammalian blood found that the test was exceedingly delicate and suggested its applicability for the detection of human blood in medico legal inquiries. Other workers have elaborated its technique to its perfection and have given it the name of the precipitin test. The method consists in injecting subcutaneously intraperitoneally or intravenously a rabbit or a fowl with blood serum of an animal a man for instance at regular intervals. After a certain number of injections the serum obtained from the injected animal when sufficiently diluted and added to a clear serum of human blood produces at first a turbidity and then a flocculent precipitate but fails to do so with the serum of other species. Many workers prefer both intravenous and intraperitoneal injections of rabbits but the Imperial Serologist with the Government of India who examines about 14 000 articles during a year and has perhaps the largest experience of this kind of work prefers intravenous injections of blood serum in fowls except for avian serum for which he employs rabbits. He injects into the wing vein of a fowl 4 c.c. on the first day 8 c.c. on the fourth day and kills the fowl on the twelfth day in order to collect the antiserum.

The following general remarks on the precipitin sera are quoted from the annual report of the Imperial Serologist for 1937-38—

" Some antisera produced against known sera are sometimes found unsuitable for the test. They do not yield sharp reactions in the required dilution and time that is, they are not sensitive and are therefore discarded. It may be noted that every individual fowl does not yield a suitable serum, some fowls may be entirely refractory and others may produce only weak sera.

ii All antisera should be highly sensitive, reacting with solutions of animal sera in 1 in 1,000 dilution and reacting with a solution of human serum in 1 in 10,000 dilution.

iii Some antisera react with sera which have not been used for their production, that is they are not specific and should, therefore, be discarded. In order to prove their specificity the worker must observe carefully that they do not react with 1 in 1,000 dilution of sera not used in their production.

iv The antisera which give the expected result with a certain dilution of a known serum (positive control) and do not give unexpected results with a certain dilution of known sera (negative controls) are only used.

**Application of the Precipitin Test** —The antisera which differentiate the blood of closely allied species of animals e.g., cow's blood from buffalo's or sheep's blood from goat's, are not prepared in the laboratory of the Imperial Serologist in Calcutta. But the blood of cow and buffalo (taken together) is differentiated from that of sheep and goat (taken together). This is carried out by means of two antisera, anti buffalo and anti sheep. The extract from a stain from any of these four animals will react with both the antisera but much more quickly with the antiserum corresponding to its group. The result so obtained is confirmed by testing further dilutions of the extract. A dilution will be found which will react with one of the two antisera only.<sup>1</sup>

As the precipitin test indicates the presence of the blood protein of an animal of a known species, its utility has been extended to protein materials other than blood stains. The origin of skin, flesh, bone or even secretions such as saliva, milk and semen is established by this test. Small fragments of bones and remnants of soft tissues which are scattered deliberately to conceal cases of murder are sometimes recovered by the police and sent for their identification as also for the determination of their source. A histological examination will indicate their nature and a serological examination will reveal their source provided the fragments of the bones and soft tissues are not absolutely dry and decomposed.

This test is also employed in detecting the fraudulent substitution of flesh of horse, eat, dog, etc., for beef, mutton and pork, and has been lately of considerable help to the food analysis in European countries for the detection of horse flesh, for instance, in a sausage.

**Technique of the Test** —The first essential thing is to determine the presence of blood in a stain before proceeding with the serological test for ascertaining its source, otherwise, pus, semen, etc., if present, will respond to the test and will be interpreted as blood. After this preliminary precaution, it is necessary to see that all test tubes, pipettes and other glassware articles employed in performing the test are scrupulously clean. The next important item is to prepare an extract of the stained material by soaking it in a small quantity of 0.85 per cent saline solution. The addition of potassium cyanide or any other chemical for dissolving old stains is not desirable and is deprecated nowadays. The extract must be perfectly clear and bright and may be filtered or centrifuged if necessary. It should then be diluted with normal saline to make up a dilution of 1 in 1,000. The antiserum is not diluted and 2 drops of it are gently added to three fourths of a cubic centimetre of the diluted stain extract in a small tapering test tube held in a slanting position. The antiserum slowly settles down at the bottom and at the junction of the two fluids a white ring with well defined borders appears in the case of a positive reaction. The ring is situated mostly in the antiserum and not in the extract. In the case of a negative reaction no ring appears. A positive reaction should begin in 10 minutes and be read in 20 minutes. Several controls are put

up to guard against all possible errors. The following controls are the most important—

(a) The normal serum control of the extract i.e. the saline extract put up with the normal serum from the same species of the animal which has yielded the antiserum—it should give a negative reaction.

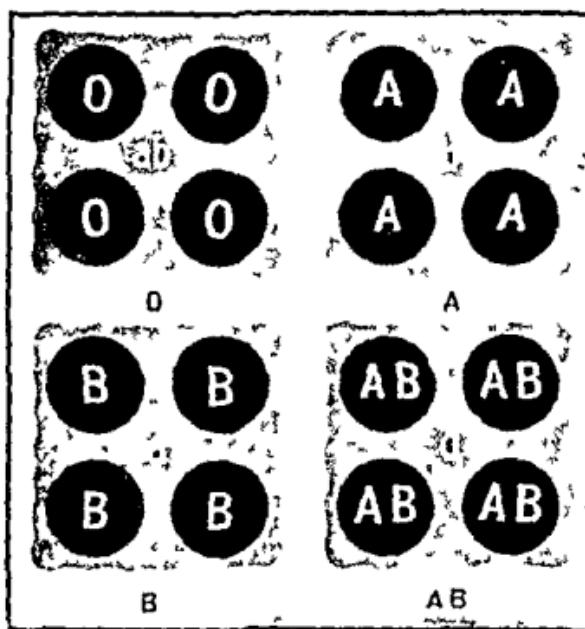
(b) The positive control and

(c) The negative controls which have already been mentioned.

The results are all qualitative and expressed as positive or negative. All doubtful reactions are read as negative for the purpose of medico legal work. The negative results of old faint and insoluble stains are reported as disintegrates with a view to avoid favouring the accused unduly by reporting that no human blood was found on the exhibit. Exhibits stained with blood of good quality but not giving the reaction of human blood however are reported as "not stained with human blood" or as stained with the blood of a ruminant animal/bird as the case may be.<sup>1</sup>

**Limitations of the Test.**—Very small stains do not give a satisfactory reaction and as such they are reported as "too small for identification of their source". Blood stains which have been washed or mixed with mercuric chloride solution (1 in 1000), potassium permanganate, copper sulphate, iron sulphate, calcium chloride, zinc chloride, sodium bisulphite, alcohol, formalin acids and alkalies will not respond partially or completely to this test. Owing to some unknown reasons the reaction in some cases may be such as no opinion can be given as to origin for medico legal purposes. A well equipped laboratory and long experience in this kind of work are essential for giving a decisive opinion. Hence one who is not conversant with the technique of the test and has not got sufficient experience in this branch of the serological work is not justified to undertake this work for giving an expert opinion.

PLATE II



*Blood Groups*

Jansky	Moss	New (International Nomenclature)
I	IV	O
II	II	A
III	III	B

adopted by the Health Committee of the League of Nations, and the four blood groups are now referred to as O A B and AB, where O represents the absence of the iso haemagglutinogens and A and B the presence of the same. Greval and his collaborators have designed a diagram which illustrates well the distribution of the iso haemagglutinogens in the red blood corpuscles and the iso haemagglutinins in the serum and also explains the equivalents in the old and new nomenclatures of the blood groups<sup>1</sup> (See Plate II)

Two more haemagglutinogens (not iso haemagglutinogens) known as hæmogens M and N which are quite unrelated to A and B occur in the red blood corpuscles, and either M or MN type is present in the red blood corpuscles of all human beings. The haemagglutinins corresponding to the M and N haemagglutinogens (hæmogens) do not occur in the human sera, hence the presence of the M and N hæmogens can only be demonstrated by immunizing a rabbit with the red blood corpuscles which contain the pure M or N hæmogen and by using the serum thus obtained to test out the unknown corpuscles. It is possible that by the help of the M and N hæmogens the four classical blood groups may be further sub divided into twelve distinct types viz., OM ON, OMN AM AN, AMN, BM BN, BMN ABM and ABMN. If sub groups with A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>2</sub> are also considered, there will be eighteen distinct types.

The following table<sup>2</sup> gives the percentage of the individuals in each group and also the percentage of the type occurring in the groups as obtained from the examination of the bloods of 300 Indians in Calcutta hospitals by Greval Chandra and Woodhead —

Groups	Types		
	M	N	MN
O Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
O 26	41.2	1.5	46.2
A 26	38	13.7	47.3
B 37	4.1	9	4.1
AB 9	48.1	0	51.8

These figures vary widely in different countries as indicated by the following relative frequency of the blood groups in England obtained by analysis of 1073 unrelated persons<sup>3</sup> —

Group O	Group A	Group B	Group AB
Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
46.0	42.0	9.8	2.7

Recent research has shown that the red blood corpuscles of certain individuals contain the Rh hæmogen (haemagglutinogen) and are agglutinated by the anti rhesus sera. Such individuals are said to be Rh positive while others whose red blood corpuscles lack the Rh hæmogen are known as Rh negative, and do not

<sup>1</sup> Greval Chandra and Woodhead Ind Jour Med Res April 1939 p 1012; Ind Jour Med Res Jan 1941 p 31

<sup>2</sup> Ind Jour Med Res April 1939 p 1018 For distribution of blood groups in a Madras population with Stet administrati onal Timoty Ind Jour Med Res July 1942 p 345

<sup>3</sup> G L Taylor and F W Hunt Brit Med Jour May 20 1939 p 1027

normally have Rh haemagglutinins in their sera. These Rh haemagglutinins are liable to be formed in the sera of Rh negative individuals by the introduction of Rh haemogen in their circulation through transfusion of Rh positive blood or by the passage through the placental circulation in pregnant women of the foetal blood containing the Rh haemogen inherited by the fetus from its Rh positive father. These two types of blood are independent of the four blood groups and the M and N blood types. The Rh haemogen is inherited as a simple Mendelian dominant by a pair of allelic genes Rh and rh. The Rh type is further subdivided into Rh<sub>1</sub> and Rh<sub>2</sub>, and resembles the subgroups A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>2</sub> in hereditary transmission.

The normal distribution of the Rh types in different races is given below in a tabular form —

Race	Rh positive Type	Rh negative Type
Inians in Calcutta <sup>1</sup>	1 er cent	10 0
Indians in Bombay <sup>2</sup>	98 0	2 0
English People <sup>3</sup>	84 0	15 0
White Americans <sup>4</sup>	85 0	15 0

Some more haemogens such as P, Q, G and H haemogens have been found in the human blood but they have not been studied so elaborately as to be applicable in medico-legal work.

**Technique for Determining Blood Groups** — The technique for determining blood groups consists in the use of stock sera of group A and group B and a 2 per cent suspension in normal saline of the red blood corpuscles derived from the individual to be grouped. The stock sera should be obtained from a reliable institution and should be fresh and of high titre strength.

A 2 per cent suspension of the red blood corpuscles is prepared approximately by taking a large drop of blood obtained by pricking with a needle the finger or ear of the individual to be grouped and mixing it with 1 c.c. of normal saline solution in a test tube. A small quantity of 3 per cent sodium citrate solution should be added to the saline solution before preparing the solution if it is thought necessary to keep the red blood corpuscles for more than a few hours before grouping. This suspension may be used directly or may be centrifuged and the supernatant fluid pipetted off. The sediment is then suspended in normal saline solution to form a 2 per cent suspension. After the sera and the red blood corpuscles are ready, the following method is used for the application of the test —

A drop of group A serum is placed on one end of a perfectly clean and dry glass slide and a drop of group B serum on its other end. A drop of the red blood cells suspension is added to the serum on each end of the slide and stirred with a platinum loop. The slide is gently rocked to and fro to ensure a thorough mixing of the serum with the suspension and is then allowed to stand for half an hour. After the expiry of this period irregular clumps of the red blood corpuscles will be noticed by the naked eye with a hand lens or under the low power of a microscope if haemagglutination is present. These clumps cannot be disturbed on tapping the slide. On the other hand, in the case of pseudo-agglutination or rouleaux formation which is a common phenomenon the red blood corpuscles are arranged in regular piles, these can be easily disturbed on tapping the slide.

The group can be determined by observing the following rules —

If agglutination occurs with group A serum alone, the blood belongs to group B. If it occurs with only group B serum, the blood belongs to group A. If agglutination occurs with both the sera, the blood belongs to group AB. If neither of the sera causes agglutination of the red blood corpuscles, the blood belongs to group O.

It is a useful thing to have also a stock of potent serum of group O. This serum agglutinates the red blood corpuscles of every group except group O. Group O serum enables one to have a decision when there is a poorly marked reaction with either group A serum or with group B serum. If the red blood corpuscles from such an individual are not agglutinated by group O serum, the poor reaction with group A serum or with group B serum is negligible, whereas if agglutination with group O serum occurs, the poorly marked reaction with group A serum or group B serum must be read as positive.

It should be noted that dried serum retains its agglutinating property and even though drying destroys the red blood corpuscles it does not destroy their agglutinogens. Moreover, it has now become evident that the agglutinogens A and B are not only confined to the red blood corpuscles, but are also to be found in the cells of practically every tissue and even in body fluids, such as saliva, urine, semen, milk, bile, sweat, etc., they are not found in cerebro spinal fluid. The agglutinins a and b, on the other hand, besides being present in the serum are also present in body fluids rich in serum proteins, e.g., milk, lymph, exudates, transudates, etc. Strictly speaking the groups are not of the blood but of the whole tissue structure of the body. Thus, the group of a dead body may be determined by means of the serum agglutinins as long as any serum is available and, after that, by means of the tissue agglutinogens. These persist and remain identifiable until putrefaction is far advanced.

The medico legal application of this test lies in the determination of cases of disputed paternity and in the grouping of blood stains in criminal cases.

*Cases of Disputed Paternity* — In 1910, Von Dungern and Hirschfeld showed from experiments that the agglutinogens A and B are Mendelian dominants, and are transmitted from parent to offspring according to the well-established laws of inheritance. Bernstein has demonstrated that O is recessive to both.

Weiner<sup>1</sup> has drawn up the following table showing the possible and impossible children occurring in various blood groups of parents —

Blood Groups of Parents	Possible blood groups of Children	Impossible blood groups of Children
O×O	O	A, B, AB
O×A	O, A	B, AB
O×B	O, B	A, AB
A×A	O, A	B, AB
A×B	O, A, B, AB	None
B×B	O, B	A, AB
O×AB	A, B	O, AB
A×AB	A, B, AB	O
B×AB	A, B, AB	O
AB×AB	A, B, AB	O

Many thousands of families have been examined by the above described formula and no real exceptions have been discovered. It is obvious from the above mentioned table that a specific agglutinogen cannot appear in a child unless it was

<sup>1</sup> Amer Jour Med Sc, Aug, 1913, CLXV VI I, p 257

Reddish stains are also produced by henna, catechu, *pan* juice (with lime and catechu), tobacco, and by the barks, leaves and fruits of some trees, such as *babool* (*Acacia Arabica*) and *gab* (wild mangosteen or *Diospyros Embryopteris*). Most of them grow all over India and contain tannin, which will blacken the stain if a drop of ferric chloride solution is added to it. The addition of ammonia will change the colour to green, red or bluish-black, and dilute mineral acids will heighten the original colour, while chlorine water will bleach it. An acid decolorizes a stain caused by *pan* juice, while an alkali restores its colour. The spectroscope does not show any absorption bands.

Certain red colouring matters, such as cochineal, lac dye, alkanet root, madder red, *munjeet* (*Sanskrit—Manjistha*) and petals of red hibiscus, give spectra which may be mistaken for those of blood, but the positions of the absorption bands in these spectra are not identical with those of haemoglobin and its derivatives nor are they affected by reducing and other reagents in the same way as haemoglobin changes to oxyhaemoglobin, haemochromogen, etc. Moreover, these colouring matters do not give the benzidine reaction in the preliminary chemical tests, and their solutions, when treated with alum, boric acid, dilute ammonia, sulphur dioxide solution or chlorine water, show well-marked alterations in the tone and depth of their colour, as also in the position of their absorption bands. Such changes never occur if the colouring matter is blood.

**Other Stains.**—Spots of grease, resin, tar and pitch, especially on dark fabrics, may resemble very old blood stains, but their solubility in alcohol, ether, chloroform, turpentine, or xylol differentiates them from blood stains. When a clean white filter paper is pressed on any of these spots with a hot iron the paper absorbs the material and is stained.

Reddish-brown faecal stains, sometimes, simulate old blood stains. Even the benzidine test may show a positive reaction owing to the presence of undigested fish or meat fibres. An examination under the microscope will, however, reveal the undigested food particles and decide the question.

present in at least one of its parents. For instance if the iso-hæmagglobinogen (isogen) A is present in a child but not in its mother, it must have been present in its father. If two men are alleged to be the fathers of the child and if one of them shows the iso-hæmagglobinogen (isogen) A in his blood and the other does not the one who has the isogen A must be the father. If both men have the isogen A no definite opinion regarding the paternity can be given. Either of them can be considered to be the father of the child as far as the evidence from the blood groups is concerned.

The M and N hæmogens are also inherited and transmitted as Mendelian dominants and the following table gives the possible combinations of inheritance in the blood types —

Types of Parents	Types of Possible Children	Types of Impossible Children
M × M	M	MN
M × MN	M MN	M N
M × N	MN	None
MN × MN	M N MN	M
MN × N	N MN	MN
N × N	N	

The following two rules are deduced from the above table —

- (i) The hæmogens M and N cannot appear in the blood of a child unless present in the blood of one or both parents.
- (ii) A parent of type M cannot produce a type N child and a parent of type N cannot produce a type M child.

The Rh hæmogen is also determined by heredity. Greval<sup>1</sup> has prepared the following table showing the possible and impossible children occurring in the Rh blood types —

Types of Parents	Types of Possible Children	Types of Impossible Children
Rh+ × Rh+	Rh+ Rh—	
Rh+ × Rh—	Rh+ Rh—	
Rh— × Rh—	Rh—	Rh+

The following two rules emerge from the above table —

- (i) Rh negative parents cannot produce an Rh positive offspring.
- (ii) Rh positive and mixed parents can produce Rh positive and Rh negative offspring.

Blood group testing should always be performed first and would be quite sufficient in many instances. The advantage of testing the M and N types is that these have no relation to the primary blood groups. Thus, two individuals for example two possible fathers may belong to the same primary blood group and yet may have a different content of the hæmogens M and N.

In cases of disputed paternity it cannot be said by reference to blood groups that a particular man is the father of a given child but it can be ascertained that he is not the father of the child. The importance of this means of establishing non-paternity is obvious and has its application in suits of maintenance of illegitimate children and in suits of nullity, alleged adultery and blackmailing. The blood grouping tests have been accepted as evidence in the courts of India, England and other European countries.

In June, 1941, a case<sup>1</sup> where the maternity and paternity of a child were under dispute in the criminal court at Mercara was decided for the first time in India entirely on the results of the blood grouping test.

A case<sup>2</sup> is recorded where the petitioner sued for nullity on the ground that his wife was pregnant by another man at the time of marriage. In his evidence before the Divorce Division Court he stated that he had cohabited with his wife once on June 15, 1940 before his marriage, that he married her in the following August, and that she was delivered of a full term female child on January 8, 1941. Dr. Roche Lynch gave evidence that he had grouped the bloods of the husband, the wife and the child, and had found that the husband belonged to group OM, the wife to group BM and the child to group ABMN. As a child can only inherit the group characters from one or other of its parents, this child's A and N characters must have come from another man. The Judge pronounced a decree of nullity, as the evidence proved conclusively that the husband was not the father of the child.

On the other hand, in a case<sup>3</sup> of summons by a wife against her husband for maintenance heard in the South West London Police Court, where the wife's blood group was AM, the husband's blood group OM and the baby's AMN, it was apparent that the N character of the blood type must have come from another man but the Judge did not depend upon the evidence of the blood and ordered that the husband had to maintain the wife and the baby.

In certain cases of disputed maternity or of alleged substitution of one baby for another, it may be possible to identify the baby by knowing the blood group of each parent. For example if the father and mother belonged to group O, and the two babies in question belonged to groups O and A respectively, the baby of group O must be the offspring of the two parents under consideration.<sup>4</sup>

**Grouping of Blood Stains**—About 150 mg of the blood stained material or about 75 mg (about 1½ grain) of dried blood and a control free from the stain should always be available for applying the grouping test to blood stains. When a comparison is to be made between the groups, both the blood stained materials should be adequate in quantity.<sup>5</sup> The determination of the group of a blood stain is more difficult than that of fresh blood, and success depends to a certain extent upon the age of the blood stain, upon putrefaction and upon chemical changes.

be of the same blood group, and the victim of a different group the test will be of great help in proving the innocence of the accused.

Roche Lynch<sup>1</sup> cites a case in which an assailant murdered a young typist by cutting her throat and disappeared and the razor which was assumed to have been used for cutting the throat was found subsequently on an omnibus eight or ten hours later. The blood stained clothing of the deceased girl and the blood stains on the razor were examined and both were found to belong to Group AB, hence he concluded that the razor was used in the crime. A case<sup>2</sup> is also recorded in which an American coloured soldier was convicted and sentenced to death for strangling a crippled taxi driver at Ipswich on the ground that the blood on the accused's clothing and the blood of the victim were found to belong to Group AB, even though the accused had given evidence that he was in London on the night of the murder and that the blood on his clothing was due to his having had a fight.

### SUBSTANCES RESEMBLING BLOOD STAINS

Certain substances produce beautiful dark or reddish brown stains especially on clothes which resemble fresh and old blood stains very closely. The most important of them are rust or iron mould stains red synthetic dye stains stains caused by red paints of mineral origin and stains of vegetable origin produced by certain fruits, flowers leaves barks and roots.

**Rust Stains**—Rust stains on knives and steel weapons often look like dried blood stains but they seldom have a dark and glazed appearance and do not fall off in scales, when the other side of the blade is heated. Similarly rust stains or iron mould stains on linen may present the appearance of old dried blood stains but these stains do not stiffen the cloth. They are reddish brown in colour and insoluble in water but are soluble in dilute hydrochloric acid. The usual tests for iron viz., potassium ferrocyanide and potassium sulphocyanide tests may be employed after oxidizing the stain with a drop of nitric acid if necessary. The addition of glacial acetic acid to the stain followed by a drop of tannic acid solution produces a blue or bluish purple colouration if it is due to oxide of iron.

**Synthetic Dye Stains**—These stains often resemble old blood stains but they may be easily recognized by treating them with strong acids and alkalies. Nitric acid for example changes them to a yellow colour and a strong solution of an alkali may restore the red colour in most cases. No such reaction takes place in the case of blood stains.

**Mineral Stains**—These are mostly due to red paints containing oxides of iron. After dissolving with hydrochloric acid, the solution may be tested for iron. In certain circumstances stains of red paint consisting of red lead or red sulphide of mercury (vermilion) are found in the garments of Hindu women or in Hindu temples. They can be easily identified by the application of chemical tests for lead and mercury.

**Stains of Vegetable Origin.**—Stains resembling blood may be produced on clothing from certain fruits such as mulberry currants, mangosteens, gooseberries and jambans (*Eugenia jambolana*). They are changed to a greenish yellow colour on the addition of ammonia and are bleached by chlorine water, which has practically no effect on blood. Knives which are used to cut acid fruits not unfrequently present stains having a strong resemblance to blood stains. These stains are due to the formation of citrate and malate of iron are soluble in water and give rise to Prussian blue if a drop of hydrochloric acid and potassium ferrocyanide solution be added. They do not show red blood corpuscles under the microscope but present vegetable cells and detritus.

<sup>1</sup> *Medico-Legal and Criminological Review April 1933 p. 112*

<sup>2</sup> *Med Leg and Crimnol Rev 1944 Vol III Part II, p. 10.*

Reddish stains are also produced by henna, catechu, *pan* juice (with lime and catechu), tobacco, and by the barks, leaves and fruits of some trees, such as *babool* (*Acacia Arabica*) and *gab* (wild mangosteen or *Diospyros Embryopteris*). Most of them grow all over India and contain tannin, which will blacken the stain if a drop of ferric chloride solution is added to it. The addition of ammonia will change the colour to green, red or bluish black, and dilute mineral acids will heighten the original colour, while chlorine water will bleach it. An acid decolorizes a stain caused by *pan* juice, while an alkali restores its colour. The spectroscope does not show any absorption bands.

Certain red colouring matters, such as cochineal lac dye alkanet root madder red, *mungeet* (*Sanskrit—Manjistha*) and petals of red hibiscus give spectra which may be mistaken for those of blood, but the positions of the absorption bands in these spectra are not identical with those of haemoglobin and its derivatives nor are they affected by reducing and other reagents in the same way as haemoglobin changes to oxyhaemoglobin, haemochromogen, etc. Moreover, these colouring matters do not give the benzidine reaction in the preliminary chemical tests, and their solutions, when treated with alum, boric acid, dilute ammonia, sulphur dioxide solution or chlorine water, show well marked alterations in the tone and depth of their colour, as also in the position of their absorption bands. Such changes never occur if the colouring matter is blood.

**Other Stains**—Spots of grease, resin, tar and pitch especially on dark fabrics, may resemble very old blood stains but their solubility in alcohol, ether, chloroform, turpentine, or xylol differentiates them from blood stains. When a clean white filter paper is pressed on any of these spots with a hot iron the paper absorbs the material and is stained.

Reddish brown faecal stains sometimes, simulate old blood stains. Even the benzidine test may show a positive reaction owing to the presence of undigested fish or meat fibres. An examination under the microscope will however, reveal the undigested food particles and decide the question.

### SEMINAL STAINS

The question of detecting seminal stains arises in cases of alleged rape or unnatural offence. They are usually found on clothing but may be found on the person of either the victim or the accused. The matting of the pubic hair with semen is not an uncommon occurrence. Seminal stains may also be found on bed clothes, on the seats of a motor car, on the floor, or on the grass where the offence was committed. They, are sometimes, found mixed with blood, mucus, pus or faeces, especially on the articles of clothing. In cases of rape on small girls, injuries to the genital organs, sometimes cause considerable haemorrhage, so that semen gets mixed up with a large proportion of blood which renders the identification of seminal stains difficult if not impossible.

**Examination of Seminal Stains**—The examination of seminal stains may be carried out by the following methods—

- 1 Physical
- 2 Chemical
- 3 Microscopical
- 4 Biological

**Physical Examination.**—Semen, when fresh, is a viscid, albuminous fluid of a faint greyish yellow colour, possessing a characteristic odour and containing spermatozoa, epithelial cells, lecithin bodies, etc. When dry, semen gives a stiff, starchy feel to the cloth and produces slight deepening of the colour with the disappearance of its odour. In fabricated cases of rape or sodomy which are not uncommon in this country a solution of starch or white of egg is used in produc-

ing stiffening of the cloth which looks like a seminal stain on dirty and coloured garments. In fact, dry seminal stains have no reliable distinctive characteristics when examined with the naked eye. Under certain conditions stiffness may disappear if the garments are not properly dried in the open air before they are packed for despatch for medico legal investigation. It is believed that in the presence of moisture certain bacteria act upon the protein constituents of semen digest the dried protein and thus destroy its stiffness. The bacteria not only remove the albuminous matter but also disintegrate the spermatozoa beyond recognition. It is therefore, necessary that the police and medical officers should thoroughly dry the garments having suspected stains before they are sent to the Chemical Examiner. They should also be careful not to fold or twist the cloth on the stained portion to prevent damage to spermatozoa.

Invisible and softened seminal stains on cloth can be rendered quite distinct by properly filtered ultra violet rays which produce a bluish fluorescence on the stains, provided the cloth is clean and not dark coloured. More often than not the victim's *sari* or underwear, coming as it does usually from the poorer classes, is so dirty that ultra violet rays are not very helpful in searching for seminal stains. It may also be noted that a bluish fluorescence is not specific for seminal stains and may be seen in some other albuminous materials. The stiffening of cloth if due to starch, pus, sputum, leucorrhœal discharge, etc., may be proved by the presence of starch granules, pus cells, squamous and other epithelial cells and different kinds of bacteria under the microscope, these will also indicate the source of the stains.

**Chemical Examination**—The chemical examination of seminal stains consists in the application of (1) Florence test and (2) Barberios' test.



Fig. 22.—Microphotograph of Choline Periodide Crystals  $\times 500$   
(Khan Bahadur Dr. N. J. Iazidfar)

**Florence Test**—This is known after the name of Dr. Florence of Lyons who first introduced it. It is based on the formation of characteristic crystals

of choline periodide, when a solution of a seminal stain is treated with Florence's reagent containing iodine 2.54 grammes, potassium iodide, 1.62 grammes and distilled water, 30 c.c. It is not absolutely necessary to stick to this formula. In fact a slightly weaker mixture acts equally or better according to some workers.<sup>1</sup> A mixture consisting of 5 per cent of iodine and 8 per cent of potassium iodide in distilled water is used in our laboratory with satisfactory results. It keeps well for at least three months.

The following technique for Florence test has been found quite satisfactory and may be recommended for general application —

The stained portion is snipped off with a pair of scissors and divided into small bits which are soaked in a watch glass with a small amount of water acidulated with hydrochloric acid (about 0.1 per cent solution or one drop of strong hydrochloric acid in 1:100 of distilled water) for about half an hour. A wet piece is transferred to a slide, is carefully teased with a pair of dissecting needles and is allowed to evaporate almost to dryness. A drop of Florence's reagent is added and a cover glass is placed over the specimen, which is then examined under the microscope.

If a stain be seminal, dark brown crystals in the form of monoclinic prisms or rhombic plates, often crossed or grouped in clusters, appear immediately at the contact of the two solutions and then gradually throughout the specimen. The crystals resemble haemin crystals in shape size and colour. In dilute solutions the crystals are smaller and may appear as needles or thin black rods instead of the usual rhombic plates. In scanty stains three, four or more pieces of wet specimens may be taken from the watch glass teased on a glass slide and then squeezed between the thumb and index finger to obtain as much of the extract as possible. It is then evaporated and proceeded with as before.

It is claimed that this test is extremely delicate, even with minute traces. A negative reaction is conclusive proof that the stain is not seminal, but a positive reaction is merely a preliminary test like the phenolphthalein or benzidine test for blood and must be confirmed by the detection of spermatozoa in the remainders of the stains on the articles. After careful investigations on several thousands of specimens for a number of years we have come to the conclusion that the Florence test is not very delicate, and some chemical changes of an unknown nature frequently interfere with the test and give a negative reaction. Hence a negative reaction is not of much consequence. In such a case a thorough search for spermatozoa is necessary. Entire spermatozoa were detected in several cases where the Florence test was absolutely negative. If the clothes having seminal stains are not dried carefully choline which originates from the lecithin of semen and combines with iodine to form choline periodide is decomposed completely and a negative reaction is obtained. If the seminal stains are wet and mixed with blood the Florence reaction is negative even after twenty four hours owing to rapid decomposition although entire spermatozoa are detected under the microscope.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand a positive reaction given by an aqueous extract of a suspected stain on an article received in connection with a sexual offence indicates the presence of semen only and search of spermatozoa in such a case is useless. If the seminal stains are free from blood and other albuminous substances and are thoroughly dried and preserved they are known to have given a positive reaction after several months. In one case a well marked positive reaction was obtained after two and a half years but a negative reaction was obtained from a specimen of six years' standing although spermatozoa were well preserved in both the cases. It is said that choline periodide crystals may be obtained from watery extracts of various internal organs and certain other biological substances.

<sup>1</sup> U.P. Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 11-4 p. 7

<sup>2</sup> S. N. Chakravarti in S. N. Roy *Iti Med Ga* July 1938, p. 11.

but this is not true, inasmuch as several samples of pus blood sputum faeces, nasal secretion, leucorrhœal discharge etc., which contain choline and which are likely to be found in the garments of persons involved in sexual offences were examined and showed the absence of such crystals<sup>1</sup>

It may be mentioned in this connection that the material richest in choline is the spermatic fluid with 0.514 per cent the brain comes next with 0.325 per cent and the blood contains only 0.031 per cent\*. However, the spermatic fluid alone responds to the Florence test, while the brain and the blood require very complicated processes for the extraction of choline

While performing the Florence test it is essential to bear in mind the following points —

i The aqueous extract of the stains must be slightly acid or neutral. Alkali interferes with the formation of the typical crystals Dilute hydrochloric acid (0.1 per cent) may be used to acidify the stains

ii Esters of choline do not give a positive reaction<sup>2</sup>. They are likely to be formed in the presence of other extraneous materials Hence the extracts of such stains as give negative results should be hydrolyzed with one per cent solution of sodium hydroxide, acidified with dilute hydrochloric acid and then filtered

iii The crystals of choline periodide are not permanent They gradually lose their form and become unrecognizable The time usually required for taking a microphotograph of the slide is, sometimes, sufficient to cause the disintegration of a fine crop of the crystals

iv The presence of blood and other albuminous substances along with semen interferes with the test and gives a negative result even in those cases where the garments were carefully dried

about an hour. The tube is then centrifuged and the clear supernatant fluid is added to an equal amount of a saturated aqueous solution of picric acid on a glass slide, when yellow crystals varying considerably in size and shape are seen under the microscope. These crystals may be described as (1) needle shaped crystals arranged singly, in crosses or in stars, (2) lenticular crystals resembling Charcot Leyden crystals with a refrangent line at their long axis, (3) crystals with irregular outlines and (4) crystals with feathery appearances<sup>1</sup>. The reaction is probably due to the prostatic secretion as a positive reaction is given by semen in which there are no spermatozoa. Seminal stains, as old as six years, are stated to have responded to this test, but we noticed that a stain of two and a half years' standing failed to give a positive reaction. In fact, we obtained negative results with this test even in some fresh stains where the Florence test was strongly positive.

Harrison<sup>2</sup> applied this test to cloth stained with human whole blood, oxalated plasma, serum, urine, faeces, sputum, pus, nasal discharge and cow's milk. Pus gave a slight amorphous precipitate, but no crystals. All other materials gave no precipitate and no crystals.

Considering its uncertainty, the time it takes, the pleomorphism of the crystals and the amorphous deposit it produces, this test has not been popular with the workers who are required to handle a large number of seminal stains.

**Microscopical Examination.**—The chief purpose of examining seminal stains under the microscope is to detect the presence of spermatozoa, which are



Fig. 23.—Microphotograph of Human Spermatozoa  $\times 900$  (*Rai Bahadur K. N. Bagchi*)

usually associated with epithelia, faecal matter, starch granules, pus cells, cloth fibres, etc. A medical jurist is rarely required to examine a fresh specimen of

<sup>1</sup> Harrison G. A., *Lancet* Oct 29 1932, p 940

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p 940

semen, although he may be called upon to find out living spermatozoa in the vagina, if a female is brought to him soon after an alleged rape. A drop of mucus is removed from the vagina by means of a glass rod, is placed directly on a slide and is diluted with a drop of normal saline. It is then covered with a cover glass and examined under the high power of a microscope, when motile spermatozoa if present, will be seen. Dried seminal stains cannot be examined so easily. They require suitable solvents for bringing out spermatozoa under the microscope. A solution containing one drop of hydrochloric acid in 44 c.c. of water is considered the most suitable for obtaining the suspensions of spermatozoa from dried stains on fabrics. A ten per cent solution of glycerin in water or in normal saline has been suggested as a useful solvent but it is regarded as unsuitable for making dry specimens on slides for staining. To suit the climatic conditions of Upper India Dr Hankin<sup>1</sup> late Chemical Examiner to the Governments of the United and the Central Provinces, elaborated a method for detecting spermatozoa in seminal stains. The method consists in boiling the stained fabric in a tannin solution before dissolving it in a solution of potassium cyanide so as to render the spermatozoa capable of removal. The fabric is then placed on a slide, teased with dissecting needles and stained with carbol fuchsin, when it is examined with a medium power lens. This method is too long and complicated to be of any use in a laboratory where a large number of seminal stains is examined every day.

A simpler method, which is equally effective and is largely used consists in moistening a small strip of the stained fabric with a few drops of acidulated water in a watch glass for thirty to sixty minutes in the case of fresh stains and for three to four hours in the case of old stains and keeping it covered to prevent drying. During this period the spermatozoa are softened completely and are easily detachable from the fabric. A piece is transferred to a slide with its stained surface downwards, and is gently dabbed on the slide with a pair of forceps. It is then teased with needles to disentangle completely the spermatozoa left in the meshes of the fabric. Two or three slides may be prepared from this specimen. One of them is covered with a cover slip and examined for entire spermatozoa under the high power of the microscope and the other slides are allowed to dry by evaporation at the room temperature. In cases where seminal stains are not mixed with blood or pus spermatozoa with their characteristic refractile heads and long tails will be seen in fair numbers and sometimes in clusters. If no entire spermatozoa are found, the other slides are carefully dried, fixed by passing slowly over a flame two or three times and stained in the usual way, by means of methylene blue or methyl green and eosin. Stained with methylene blue or methyl green for about fifteen to thirty minutes and counterstained with eosin for about two minutes the posterior half or one third of the head assumes a deep red or pink colour, while the anterior half or two-thirds of the head will appear to be unstained or faintly stained with the basic dye. The tail is also

and pearshaped when viewed in profile. It is about 5 microns in length or about one tenth of the total length of the spermatozoon and is about 3.5 microns in its greatest diameter or about one half of the diameter of a red blood corpuscle. The neck is very short. The tail is the longest part of the spermatozoon and consists of a long, slender filament which tapers to a point at its end and has a vibratile ciliary motion which gives the spermatozoon its motile power. Spermatozoa lose their activity in the mediums of acids, strong alkalies, metallic salts, alcohol, glycerin and urine or when heated above 50°C., but they retain their characteristic form for a long time if not disintegrated by decomposition. In properly preserved garments they have been identified in stains of from five<sup>1</sup> to eighteen<sup>2</sup> years' standing. Spermatozoa are easily destroyed in contact with water but some of them escape on account of careless washing, when the stained portion of a garment is not completely soaked in water. It is interesting to note that spermatozoa can withstand the action of concentrated sulphuric acid but cannot resist the action of the bacteria which produce decomposition. Their disintegration may be complete in less than twenty four hours at temperatures obtaining in India, especially during the rainy season if the stains are kept damp. Hence it is necessary to dry the clothes suspected to bear seminal stains at air temperature, before they are wrapped up and sent for medical examination. That the presence of moisture in the garments having suspected seminal stains is not only conducive to the growth of moulds and bacteria which are frequently noticed but also to the growth and development of certain insects may be realized from the following case —

In connection with a case under section 376 I.P.C., the clothes of the accused suffering from itches were received for the detection of seminal stains. While searching for spermatozoa in the suspected seminal stains the eggs of *Siroptes Seabiei* (Itch mite) in various stages of development with a few beautiful hexapod larvae with active movements were detected under the microscope. The clothes were kept packed and sealed for over a month. It appeared that the moisture originally present in the stains was sufficient to keep the eggs fresh for further development.<sup>3</sup>

The detection of even one entire spermatozoon is quite sufficient for an experienced examiner to give a definite opinion. If no spermatozoa are found, but if the Florence test is positive, there should be no difficulty in affirming that a particular stain is due to semen. If Florence test is negative and if a few detached heads of spermatozoa are found, it may be assumed that the specimen has perhaps been badly handled and a careful examination of another specimen from the same garment is likely to reveal entire spermatozoa. It may also be mentioned that during the decomposition of a seminal stain the tail of a spermatozoon is the first to suffer and to disappear, but the head resists for some time, hence it is quite possible to find only a few heads of the spermatozoa in a decomposed seminal stain. An experienced examiner is not likely to miss the characteristic appearances of these heads and his opinion in such a case is quite valid. However, an inexperienced examiner is not justified to base his opinion on the finding of heads alone as, certain spores of fungi and some bacteria may resemble the heads of spermatozoa, although a well stained slide should leave no room for any doubt.

Some medical jurists believe that there can be no semen without the presence of spermatozoa, but this is not true, inasmuch as cases of aspermia, i.e., semen

<sup>1</sup> In his annual report for the year 1924 the Chemical Examiner U.P. mentions that some dried films of semen on glass slides which were kept in his laboratory untreated and unstained for five years, showed the spermatozoa in good condition and quite intact. Scrapings from these failed to respond to Florence test.

<sup>2</sup> Witzhaus and Becker Med. Juris Forens. Med. and Toxic., Bd. II, Vol. III, p. 859

<sup>3</sup> Beng Chem. Exam. Annual Report, 1936 p. 16

without spermatozoa or of oligospermia *i.e.* semen with a few spermatozoa are occasionally seen. These conditions may be found in the very young in the very old, or in those suffering from chronic epididymitis and other testicular diseases. Chronic venereal disease, excessive sexual intercourse or onanism or some constitutional causes may produce these conditions even in healthy young men.

A man aged 20 years married a girl 19 years old but as he had no issue by her he married again at the age of 30 years. He had no issue even by this wife. At the age of 37 years while he was thinking seriously of marrying for the third time his semen was examined and found to be absolutely aspermic. In another case a man married at the age of 30 and had a child within a year and a half but he had no other issue during the next twelve years. His seminal fluid was examined and was found quite free from spermatozoa. There was a history of excessive sexual indulgence in both these cases. In a third case a young man aged 25 who had been addicted to excessive self abuse since the age of 14 years sought the advice of his doctor for scanty semen as he thought that it was an indication of impending impotency. A fresh specimen of his semen obtained in the laboratory did not contain any spermatozoa and the quantity was only half a cubic centimetre—about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the normal. It did not give a satisfactory positive reaction with Florence test.<sup>1</sup>

**Biological Examination**—In 1901 Farnum<sup>2</sup> proposed a biological test for human semen based on the same principles as the precipitin test for blood. He used human semen or testicular emulsion for the antigen and injected 5 to 10 c.c. of it into the peritoneal cavity of a rabbit from five to eight times at intervals of from six to eight days. He found that the serum obtained from the blood of the rabbit thus treated gave a precipitate with both recent and old emulsions of human semen which had been dried and kept for thirty four days. In 1928 Hektoen and Rukstina<sup>3</sup> showed that an antiserum produced by immunizing rabbits with human semen is both species specific and semen specific that is it gives a positive reaction with human blood and also with human semen. In order to demonstrate the semen specific property of the antiserum its species specific property is at first exhausted completely by precipitation with human blood serum and then the residual or semen specific property is tested with human semen.

This test has evidently a bright future and is likely to be of much practical value in those cases where it has to be determined whether a seminal stain is of human origin or derived from an animal. It must however be remembered that the bacterial action which produces disintegration of spermatozoa in seminal stains in the tropics is equally effective in decomposing or digesting the protein constituents of semen which acting as the antigen produce antibodies. Such seminal stains with their completely disintegrated protein constituents cannot possibly give a positive precipitin reaction and therefore offer the greatest difficulty in giving a definite opinion.

The group specific agglutinogens when present occur in a highly concentrated form in the seminal fluid and it may be possible to ascertain the group of the individual by performing the test for detecting the presence of these agglutinogens in the seminal stains in the same manner as with blood stains.

## HAIR

The detection of hairs upon weapons blood stains or upon the clothing or person of an assailant or a victim forms not unfrequently a very important chain in the evidence of cases of alleged assault, murder, rape and unnatural offence.

<sup>1</sup> For cases of aspermia and oligospermia vide also Currie and Lissimore *Brit. Med. Jour.* Jan. 28 1939 p 189

<sup>2</sup> *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.* Dec. 28 1901 p 1721

<sup>3</sup> *Ireh. Path.* 1928 6 p 96

The examination of hairs also becomes very necessary in identification, particularly when unknown bodies or fragmentary remains have been sent for medical inspection

While examining hairs the following points have to be determined —

- 1 The nature of hairs
- 2 The source of hairs
- 3 The character of hairs showing the manner of extraction

**1 The Nature of Hairs** — Human hairs have to be distinguished from those of lower animals as also from fibres derived from clothing. For this purpose hairs should be washed in water, alcohol, ether and oil of cloves successively and mounted in Canada balsam, and then should be examined under the microscope.

A human hair consists of a root and a shaft. The root is lodged in the hair follicle which is implanted in the skin. The shaft is that portion of the hair which projects from the surface of the skin. It is entirely epithelial and consists from without inwards, of the cuticle, cortex and medulla. The cuticle is composed of a thin layer of very fine imbricated scales which overlap one another from below upwards. The cortex consists of elongated cells which are closely joined together to form flattened fusiform fibres. These fibres contain pigment granules in dark hair and air in white hair. The medulla is lacking in many fine hairs and, when present in the thicker hairs, it consists of polyhedral cells arranged in double rows. Minute air-bubbles are present between, and sometimes within the cells of both the medulla and cortex, and cause the hair to look white by reflected light.

**Distinction between human and lower animal Hairs** — To distinguish between the hairs of human beings and those of lower animals the microscopic features represented by the cuticle, medulla and cortex should be observed.

In animal hairs the imbricated scales of the cuticle are very large, and marked with step like or wavy projections. The medulla of the human hair is narrow and in some cases absent, while in the animal hair the medulla is conspicuous and, when seen under low power, is found to contain round or oval and prominent, cuboidal epithelial cells. The cortex forms the bulk of the shaft in the human hair, and is, as a rule, four to ten times as broad as the medulla, while in that of the lower animals the cortex is rarely more than twice as broad as the medulla, and often presents only a thin shell enclosing the medullary cells.

Before giving a decisive opinion it is advisable to compare under the microscope the specimen of the hair sent for medical examination with a sample taken from the same part of the individual or animal whence it is alleged to have been derived.

**Fibres** — The fibres which are most commonly used in the manufacture of clothing are those of cotton, linen, jute, silk and wool. Of these the first three are of vegetable origin and the latter two are of animal origin.

When examined under the microscope, cotton fibres are seen as flattened bands, having spiral twists, thickened edges and bluntly pointed apices. In transverse section they exhibit a flattened, reniform dumb bell shaped or irregular outline and an elongated lumen. Linen fibres are derived from flax, and consist of thick walls with jointed markings at unequal distances and sharply pointed apices. Transverse sections are uniformly polygonal and show a narrow lumen. Jute fibres are smooth, and do not show transverse lines or longitudinal markings. The cell cavity is not uniform throughout the length of the fibres and may disappear.

in some places. The ends are mostly blunt or rounded. Silk fibres are structureless and non cellular when examined microscopically. They are externally smooth and finely striated. Woollen fibres are fine, curly and subcylindrical and consist of a medulla of polyhedral or rounded cells a cortex of spindle shaped fibres with nuclei and an epithelium of imbricated scales the free edges of which point towards the apices of the fibres and give rise to characteristic transverse markings on the surface.

A rough physical test to distinguish between vegetable and animal fibres is to burn them in a flame. Vegetable fibres burn very readily without producing any disagreeable odour, while animal fibres burn with some difficulty and emit a disagreeable odour resembling that of burning feathers. Vegetable fibres burn off sharply at the end, whereas animal fibres fuse to a rounded bead like end.

The following chemical tests may be employed for determining the source of the fibres —

1 Cold concentrated sulphuric acid (66 per cent) dissolves silk and cotton fibres but does not dissolve linen, jute, and woollen fibres

2 Warm hydrochloric acid readily dissolves silk fibres whereas it has no action on the fibres of wool, cotton, linen and jute

3 A five per cent solution of potassium or sodium hydroxide dissolves animal fibres but not vegetable fibres

4 Thymol and sulphuric acid give a violet colour to cotton, linen and jute fibres but no colour to silk or woollen fibres

5 Sodium nitroprusside (2 grammes in 100 c.c. of water) produces a violet colour with woollen fibres but not with cotton, linen, jute or silk fibres

6 One millilitre of water two drops of a 15 per cent alcoholic solution of alpha-naphthol and one millilitre of concentrated sulphuric acid are added to about 0.01 gramme of fibre placed in a test tube. The mixture, when shaken assumes a deep violet colour if the fibre is of vegetable origin but it has no such action if the fibre is of animal origin. This test is known as Mollisch's test.

2 The Source of Hairs — It is extremely difficult to determine whether the hairs sent for examination belong to a particular individual or not, though it may be easy to ascertain the source (part of the human body) from which they are derived. This may be easily done by observing the following characteristic features —

Hairs from the head are usually long and soft, and taper gradually from root to point. Hairs from the female head are generally thinner and much longer than those from the male head.

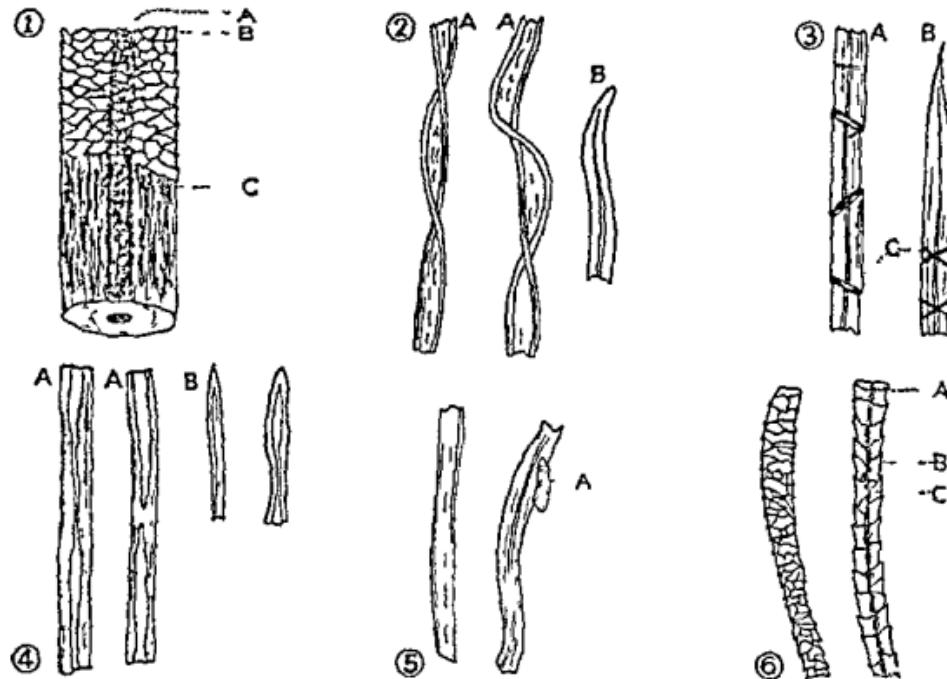
Hairs from the beard and moustache are usually thicker than those derived from any other part of the body.

Hairs from the chest, axilla and pubic region are short, stout and curly. Those from the axilla and pubic region also show split ends.

Hairs from the eyebrows, eyelashes and nostrils are stiff and thick, taper to a point and are  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long.

Hairs from the body surface are generally fine, short and flexible and do not show pigment cells in the cortex. The medullary canal is also apt to be relatively

small, or may be altogether absent. The downy hairs of the new born infant have no medullary canal or pigment cells.



**Fig. 24.—(1) Human Hair exposed**      A Medulla B Cuticle C Cortex with cuticular substance  
**(2) Cotton Fibre**      A Portions of fibre B Apex  
**(3) Linen Fibre**      A Portion of fibre B Apex, C Transverse markings  
**(4) Jute Fibre**      A Portion of fibre B Apices  
**(5) Silk Fibre**      A Fragment from sericin layer (silk glue)  
**(6) Wool Fibre**      A Medulla B Cuticle, C Cortex  
 All  $\times 150$  (B I. Pach)

**3. The Character of Hairs showing the Manner of Extraction**—When examined under the microscope, hairs cut by a sharp weapon will not show the roots, and the cut ends will exhibit a more or less regular section. Recently cut hairs show a sharply cut edge with a projecting cuticle and a few loose fibres. After a week the end becomes square, smooth and rounded but blunt. After three to four months the end becomes elongated but not similar to the original uncut end, and the medulla is always absent from such ends.

The root should be examined to determine whether a hair has fallen out, or has been pulled forcibly. The root of a hair that has fallen out spontaneously is round and solid, but atrophic, while the root of a hair that has been extracted forcibly has a hollow, concave surface, which covers the papilla of the corium.

## CHAPTER VI

### DEATH IN ITS MEDICO LEGAL ASPECTS

**Definition** —Death is classified as *somatic or systemic* and *molecular*. Somatic death is that state of the body in which there is complete cessation of the functions of the brain, heart, and lungs which maintain life and health and are, therefore, called "the tripod of life". Molecular death means the death of the tissues and cells individually, which takes place some time after the stoppage of the vital functions and is accompanied by cooling of the body, the temperature of which is reduced to an equilibrium with the external world.

#### MODES OF DEATH

In all kinds of death, whether natural or accidental, there are three primary modes of death, viz.,

- 1 Coma
- 2 Syncope
- 3 Asphyxia

#### COMA

Coma means insensibility resulting in death from some cause preventing the action of the brain.

**Causes** —1. Compression of the brain resulting from injuries or diseases of the brain or its membranes, such as concussion, effusion of blood on, or in, the brain substance due to fracture of the skull, inflammation, abscess or new growth of the brain or embolism and thrombosis.

2. Poisons such as opium, alcohol, carbolic acid, etc., having a specific action on the brain and nervous system.

3. Poisons acting on the brain after they are generated in the body in certain diseases of the liver and kidneys, e.g., cholæmia, acetonæmia, ureæmia, etc.

**Symptoms** —First of all, there is a condition of stupor from which the patient may be roused temporarily for a few seconds or more. In this condition the reflexes are usually present, or are exaggerated, and the patient may be able to swallow fluids. This is followed by complete unconsciousness from which the patient cannot be roused. In some cases sudden insensibility supervenes without an initial stage of stupor. During the comatose condition the reflexes are lost, the sphincters are relaxed, and the pupils are dilated or contracted and insensible to light. The skin is generally covered with cold perspiration, and the temperature is sub normal or normal, except in the lesions of Pons Varoli where it is high. The pulse is usually full and bounding but slow. The breathing is slow, irregular and stertorous. Mucus collecting in the air passages causes the sound which is known as "the death rattle".

**Post-mortem Appearances**.—Injuries of the skull bones or of the brain and consequent effusion of the blood into the cranial cavity may be present. The brain and its membranes are found congested. Haemorrhages within the cranium due to disease are found within the membranes or in the brain substance but when due to injury, are commonly found in clots between the skull bones and the membranes, or on the surface of the brain. The right side of the heart is usually full and the left empty. The lungs and the venous system are gorged with blood, but not so much as in death from asphyxia.

## SYNCOPE

In this, death occurs from the stoppage of the heart's action, the causes of which are as follow —

1 Anæmia due to the sudden and excessive hemorrhage from wounds of the large blood vessels, or of the internal organs, such as lungs, spleen etc., or bursting of an aneurysm or a varicose vein

2 Asthenia from the deficient power of the heart muscles as in fatty degeneration of the heart, aortic regurgitation and certain poisons

3 Shock inhibiting the action of the heart from sudden fright blows on the head or on the epigastrium drinking a large quantity of cold water when in a heated condition, extensive injuries to the spine or other parts of the body, or from the sudden evacuation of natural or pathological fluids from the body

4 Exhausting diseases

**Symptoms** — These are pallor of the face and lips dimness of vision dilated pupils, cold perspiration, feeling of sinking and impending death great restlessness air hunger, noises in the ears, gasping respirations, nausea and possibly vomiting The pulse is slow, weak and fluttering in anæmia and rapid in asthenia Slight delirium, insensibility and convulsions precede death In collapse the patient retains consciousness, though the condition is attended with failure of the heart's action

**Post-mortem Appearances** — The heart is contracted and the chambers are empty when death has occurred from anæmia, but both the chambers are found to contain blood in the case of death resulting from asthenia The lungs, brain and abdominal organs are usually found pale

## ASPHYXIA

Death is said to have taken place from asphyxia when the respiratory function stops before the heart ceases to act

**Causes** — 1 Mechanical obstruction to the air passages e.g., foreign bodies, exudations, tumours, suffocation and drowning by blocking their lumen from within strangulation and hanging by their compression from without, and spasm of the glottis from mechanical irritation and irritant gases

2 Absence of sufficient oxygen as in high altitudes or presence of inert gases in the atmosphere

3 Stoppage of movements of the chest resulting from exhaustion of the respiratory muscles due to cold or debility, paralysis of the respiratory muscles from disease or injury of the medulla or phrenic or pneumogastric nerves, mechanical pressure on the chest or abdomen, and tonic spasm due to tetanus or poisoning by strychnine

4 Collapse of the lungs from penetrating wounds of the thorax and diseases such as pleurisy with effusion, empyema, or pneumothorax

5 Non entrance of blood into the lungs, as in embolism plugging the pulmonary artery

**Symptoms** — These are divided into three stages (1) The stage of exaggerated breathing, (2) the stage of convulsions, and (3) the stage of exhaustion

In the first stage the face bears an anxious look, and the patient complains of heaviness in the head and ringing in the ears The lips are livid, and the eyes are prominent The accumulation of carbon dioxide in the blood stimulates the respiratory centre in the medulla and the respirations become deep hurried and laboured, the extraordinary muscles of respiration being called into play The blood pressure rises and the pulse becomes rapid

In the second stage the expiratory muscles of respiration become more active with spasmodic movements which are followed by convulsions of nearly all the muscles of the body. Owing to venous and capillary stagnation the face and hands are deeply congested and cyanosed. Consciousness becomes confused and the sphincters are relaxed.

In the third stage the respiratory centre is paralysed. The muscles become flaccid there is complete insensibility the reflexes are lost and the pupils are widely dilated. The blood pressure falls. Prolonged sighing inspirations occur at longer and longer intervals until they cease altogether and death ensues. The pulse is scarcely perceptible but the heart may continue to beat for some minutes after respirations have quite ceased.

The three stages last for about five minutes before death takes place. They may be prolonged for two or three times as long. Occasionally asphyxia may bring about death almost instantly.

**Post mortem Appearances—External**—The face is either calm and pale in slow asphyxia or distorted congested and blue in cases of sudden asphyxia. The lips and nails are livid. Cadaveric lividity is more marked. The tongue is protruded in most cases and frothy and bloody mucus comes from the mouth and nostrils. Rigor mortis is usually slow to commence but may be rapid in some cases.

**Internal**—The mucous membrane of the trachea and larynx is crimson red due to its injection and contains froth. The lungs are dark and purple in colour and gorged with dark venous blood. On being cut they exude frothy, dark fluid blood. The air-cells are distended or even ruptured due to emphysema. The right cavity of the heart is full containing dark coloured imperfectly clotted blood and so are the pulmonary artery and the vena cava. The left cavity, the aorta and the pulmonary veins are empty. In many cases both sides of the heart are found to be full if examined soon after death but after rigor mortis has set in the heart is found contracted and empty or the tension in the abdomen presses on the inferior vena cava and drives blood up into the heart. Similarly the lungs are found heavier with blood collected in the dependent parts if examined sometime after death or the tension in the abdomen or contraction of the heart muscle will drive more blood into the lungs irrespective of the cause of death.

The brain is congested but not so much as in death from coma. The abdominal organs are found congested. Numerous small petechial haemorrhages or ecchymoses known as *Tardieu's spots* are seen under the serous membranes of various organs due to rupture of the capillaries caused by intra muscular pressure. These are usually round dark and well defined varying in size from a pin's head to a small lentil. They are found under the pleurae, pericardium, thymus, meninges of the brain and cord, conjunctiva and even under the skin of the face and neck. They are sometimes seen in deaths occurring from scurvy or purpura.

**Gordon's Classification of Death**—Gordon<sup>1</sup> has suggested a classification of medico legal deaths which is based upon the concept that the cessation of the vital functions depends upon tissue anoxia which is brought about in the following four different ways—

I Defective oxygenation of the blood in the lungs—*anoxic anoxia* which is produced (a) by obstruction to the passage of air into the respiratory tract as in suffocation, smothering and overlaying (b) by obstruction to the passage of air down the respiratory tract as in drowning, choking from impaction of a foreign body, throttling, strangulation and hanging (c) by external compression on the chest and abdominal walls e.g. from falls of earth (d) by primary cessation of respiratory movements causing respiratory failure e.g. narcotic poisoning and deaths from electrical injuries (e) by breathing in vitiated atmospheres in which there is an excess of carbon dioxide or inert gases.

**II** Reduced oxygen carrying capacity of the blood—anaemic anoxia occurring in acute poisoning by carbon monoxide, chlorates, nitrites, and coal tar derivatives

**III** Depression of the oxidative processes in the tissues—histotoxic anoxia seen in acute cyanide poisoning

**IV** Inefficient circulation of the blood through the tissues—stagnant anoxia occurring in deaths from traumatic shock, heat stroke, and acute irritant and corrosive poisoning

All these types of anoxia produce circulatory failure, which may lead to death

The post mortem findings in all forms of death of medico legal importance should be divided into two groups, namely, the basic pathological changes of circulatory failure, such as visceral congestion and capillary haemorrhages and the special pathological changes depending upon the particular type of death e.g., local injuries to the neck in throttling strangulation and hanging. Gordon is of opinion that tissue anoxia, however induced, leads to circulatory failure, hence the fundamental pathological changes are uniform in all forms of death although they vary in degree. He adds that the relative absence of visceral congestion in deaths occurring from sudden primary cardiac failure supports the view that the degree of visceral congestion is relatively less in rapid deaths as compared with deaths occurring slowly. He further remarks that asphyxia cannot be regarded as a distinct pathological entity which is recognizable on the basis of morbid anatomy.

### SUDDEN DEATH

Sudden or unexpected death occurs from unnatural causes such as violence or poison, as well as from natural causes. Unnatural deaths have always to be investigated by the police, but very often natural deaths form the basis of medico legal investigations if they have occurred suddenly and under suspicious circumstances. In such cases a medical practitioner should not certify to the cause of death without holding a post mortem examination even if there is strong evidence of disease.

**Causes**—The natural causes producing sudden death are—

1 Diseases of the heart especially fatty degeneration, angina pectoris, aortic regurgitation, rupture of the heart or of its valves, and diseases of the pericardium

2 Diseases of the blood vessels, especially arteriosclerosis, thrombosis, embolism and rupture of aneurysms or varicose veins

A case<sup>1</sup> is recorded in which an enema caused fatal cardiac embolism. Two weeks after a suprapubic cystostomy was performed under laughing gas anaesthesia by Henry an orderly gave the patient aged 72 a simple soap water enema. He suddenly gave a gush and ceased to breathe. The autopsy showed that the pressure of the water dislodged some blood clots in the prostatic venous plexus and that the patient died of an embolism in the right side of the heart.

3 Cerebral and cerebellar apoplexy caused by the bursting of intracranial aneurysms even in children and young persons. Chronic alcoholism and syphilis largely predispose to this condition.

4 Fright, dread, anger or any other emotional excitement may lead to such a degree of shock as to result at once in a fatal termination. This will be more so in those persons who have an unstable nervous system or who have some organic disease, especially of the heart or large blood vessels.

A woman, who was brushing her teeth accidentally swallowed a mouthful of harmless mouth wash. She cried out that she had swallowed poison and immediately died.<sup>2</sup>

A young woman walking with her sweetheart along a country road received such a fright from a horse pushing its white head through a hedge by her side that she collapsed in her companion's arms and died.<sup>3</sup>

1 C P. Henry and Marsbury, *Atlantic Med Jour*, Nov 1927, p 77

2 I Robertson, *The Practitioner*, Aug., 1923, pp 115-116

3 *Ibid*

5 Certain diseases of the respiratory organs producing asphyxia, such as œdema of the glottis, membranous deposit in the larynx or trachea, or tumour pressing on the trachea, spasm of the vocal cords or embolism, pneumo-thorax, haemo thorax, pleuritic effusion, haemoptysis in the course of pulmonary tuberculosis, œdema of the lungs, asthma and whooping cough

6 Rupture of chronic ulcers of the stomach, duodenum, or other parts of the alimentary canal Large draughts of cold liquids drunk when overheated

7 Rupture of the impregnated uterus, extra uterine gestation, uterine hematocoele, or uterine appendages

8 Rupture of the over distended urinary or gall bladder or enlarged spleen

9 Acute hemorrhagic pancreatitis

10 Certain diseases, such as Addison's disease, diabetes and epilepsy, aryngismus stridulus and status lymphaticus occurring in young persons usually during the first stage of chloroform inhalation

11 Trivial procedures may, sometimes, induce syncope and lead to death, e.g., vaginal examination vaginal and uterine douching, or passing of a uterine sound

Vipert<sup>1</sup> reports the sudden death of a young woman, four months pregnant, while a small cannula was being inserted into the uterus to produce abortion

Even slight compression of the larynx has induced fatal inhibition

A little boy, noticing a very prominent pomum Adami in an old woman, gave it a gentle flick with his finger The old woman died immediately<sup>2</sup>

12 Catheterization of a distended bladder and sudden withdrawal of large quantities of fluid from the pleural, pericardial or peritoneal cavities may lead to death by rapidly lowering the blood pressure

13 Zymotic diseases, such as cholera and influenza

### SIGNS OF DEATH

The signs of death are—

- 1 Entire and continuous cessation of circulation and respiration
- 2 Changes in the eye
- 3 Changes in the skin
- 4 Cooling of the body
- 5 Cadaveric lividity, hypostasis, sicculation or post mortem staining.
- 6 Cadaveric changes in the muscles
- 7 Putrefaction or decomposition
- 8 Adipocere
- 9 Mummification

### I ENTIRE AND CONTINUOUS CESSATION OF CIRCULATION AND RESPIRATION

Ordinarily these signs are considered sufficient to determine that death has actually taken place but these alone should not be relied on as absolute signs to avoid premature burial or cremation, inasmuch as persons like hibernating animals are known to have been resuscitated to life after having remained for some time in a condition in which the action of the heart and lungs was in abeyance and the muscles stiff and motionless This state of suspended animation lasting from a few seconds to half an hour or more may be found in cases of trance, yog, cataplexy,

<sup>1</sup> *Annales d' Hygiène publique* 1890 xxi p. 541, Peterson Haines and Webster, *Leg Med and Toxic*, Ed II Vol 1, p 213

<sup>2</sup> A Robertson, *The Practitioner*, Aug., 1923, p 119

hysteria as well as in cholera, sunstroke, concussion, drowning, hanging tetanus, convulsions, chloroform poisoning and the so called still born infants.

As an illustration of suspended animation Guy and Ferrier<sup>1</sup> quote the case of Colonel Townsend, related by Cheyne in his *English Malady* who possessed the power of voluntarily suspending the action of his heart. He sent for Drs Cheyne and Baynard and Mr Skrine, whom he told about the peculiar sensation he had observed and felt in himself for some time. They all three felt his pulse first, it was distinct, though small and thready, and his heart had its usual beating. He composed himself on his back and lay still for some time while Dr Cheyne held his right hand. Dr Baynard laid his hand on his heart and Mr Skrine held a clean mirror to his mouth. Dr Cheyne found his pulse sink gradually till at last it was quite imperceptible. Dr Baynard could not detect any motion of his heart nor could Mr Skrine discern any dimness on the bright mirror which he held over the mouth. They failed to discover any symptoms of life in him. After Colonel Townsend had been in this state for half an hour, all the three were about to leave him thinking him dead, when they observed some motion about the body and on examination found both his pulse and respiration gradually returning. This happened in the morning and he died the same evening. On examination of the body all the viscera were found perfectly healthy except the kidneys which had been diseased and for which he had been under medical treatment.

Major N. C. Kapur<sup>2</sup> I M S, reports a case of resuscitation after cessation of the vital functions for over fifteen minutes. A Hindu male 80 years old was brought to the Medical College Hospital Calcutta at 10 p.m. on July 13, 1925, suffering from severe dyspnoea, the result of laryngeal obstruction due to a malignant growth of the larynx. As his case was urgent he was taken straight to the operating theatre for the performance of tracheotomy. When the patient was placed on the table, he suddenly stopped breathing. On examination, the heart sounds were found absent, the pupils were dilated and the eyes were fixed. Artificial respiration was immediately started and tracheotomy was performed when the patient was apparently dead. The patient's chest was continuously flicked with a cold wet towel. For fully fifteen minutes there was no response. There was complete cessation of breathing, heart sounds were absent, there was no pulse at the wrist, and the patient's face had the usual cadaveric characters. Just when all hopes seemed to have been lost the patient's chest was flicked in a forcible manner, and to the surprise of everybody present the patient took a shallow breath. The flicking was continued and after a minute the patient took another breath. The pulse was now perceptible at the wrist and the heart sounds could just be heard. The respiration gradually established itself.

A careful examination of the heart and lungs with the stethoscope lasting for five minutes, and repeated at short intervals, if necessary, will enable an opinion to be formed as to whether the circulatory and respiratory functions have ceased or not. In a case of doubt this may be supplemented by the under mentioned tests.

#### The tests to determine the stoppage of circulation are—

(a) *Magnus's Test*—This is one of the most reliable tests, and consists in tying a ligature tightly round the base of a finger, sufficient to cut off the venous channels without occluding the arteries. The finger remains white if circulation has entirely ceased, otherwise the seat of the ligature is marked by a bloodless zone, and the portion beyond it becomes gradually blue and swollen.

(b) *Diaphanous Test*—During life the webs of the fingers appear scarlet or very red and translucent, if the hand with the fingers abducted is held against a strong light, artificial or natural, while they appear yellow and opaque after death. The hand may, however, appear red in carbon monoxide poisoning and yellow in anæmia or syncope.

(c) *Icard's Test*—The hypodermic injection of a solution of fluorescein does not produce any discolouration of the skin, if circulation has stopped; but it renders the neighbouring skin yellowish green, if circulation is still going on. The substance may also be detected in the blood drawn by pricking the skin at some distance from the seat of injection. If some white silk threads are immersed in the blood, and then boiled in a test tube containing distilled water, the threads

<sup>1</sup> *Forens Med*, Ed VI, p 214

<sup>2</sup> *Ind Med Gaz*, Dec, 1925, p 582 vide also *Shelley, Kenya Med Jour* Nairobi East Africa Sep, 1926, p 174, *Young Brit Med Jour*, Aug 3 1935, p 230

will become greenish in colour. The solution of fluorescein is obtained by dissolving 1 gramme of resorcin phthalein and 1 gramme of sodium bicarbonate in 8 c.c. of water.

(d) On the application and withdrawal of pressure to the finger nail it does not assume alternately a white and a pink colour as in life.

(e) The application of heat e.g. a burning match or melted sealing wax to the skin will not produce a true blister with a red line of demarcation if circulation has stopped.

(f) If a small artery is cut there will be no jerky flow of blood if circulation has stopped.

#### The tests to determine the stoppage of respiration are—

(a) The surface of a cold bright looking glass held in front of the open mouth and nostrils becomes dim due to the condensation of warm moist air exhaled from the lungs if respiration is still going on but not otherwise. This test is useful in the cold weather.

(b) There will be no movement of a feather or cotton fibres held in front of the mouth and nostrils if respiration has stopped but this is not a reliable test as the slightest draught of air or nervousness on the part of an observer will move the feather or cotton fibres.

(c) Winslow's Test.—There will be no movement of an image formed by reflecting artificial or sun light on the surface of water or mercury contained in a saucer and placed on the chest or abdomen if respiration has ceased. Similarly water will not be spilt from a vessel filled to the brim and placed on the chest or abdomen if respiration has stopped.

### 2 CHANGES IN THE EYE

Soon after death the eye loses its lustre. The cornea loses its reflex action and becomes opaque and looks like dimmed glass. Such a condition may be present before death in uremia, narcotic poisoning and cholera while the cornea may retain its transparency for some time after death from apoplexy and from poisoning by hydrocyanic acid or carbon monoxide. The pupils are usually moderately dilated and are insensible to strong light but react to solutions of atropine or eserine probably for an hour after death but not longer. The pupils also change their form and become oval, triangular or polygonal when pressure is applied by the fingers on two or more sides of the eyeballs of a really dead person but they retain their round form in a living person or in one who is apparently dead.<sup>1</sup>

### 3 CHANGES IN THE SKIN

After death the skin of the whole body assumes a pale and waxy white appearance especially in fair bodies and loses its elasticity hence incised wounds will not gape after death. But the edges of ulcers and wounds caused during life retain their red or blue colour after death and so do ecchymoses. Further the icteric hue produced in jaundice or phosphorus poisoning and tattoo marks are not at all affected by this change.

### 4 COOLING OF THE BODY

After death the body commences to lose its animal heat and gradually attains the same temperature as that of its surrounding medium. But it must be borne in mind that this loss of heat cannot be considered as a certain sign of death until

<sup>1</sup> L. Tonelli, *Il Pol. clin.* 193<sup>o</sup>, ser. prat. XXXIV pp. 20, 210. *Med. Leg. and Crim. n. olog.* Review April 1933 p. 13<sup>o</sup>.

the body has lost 15 to 20 degrees of the normal heat i.e.  $98.4^{\circ}\text{F}$  for a rectal temperature of  $90^{\circ}$  to  $94^{\circ}\text{F}$  may be observed in the algid state of cholera and severe cases of collapse and a much lower temperature of  $75^{\circ}$  or  $76^{\circ}\text{F}$  may be noted in cases of long exposure to cold.

The rate of cooling is not uniform but it is almost proportional to the difference in temperature between the body and its surroundings. The rate is therefore rapid during the first few hours after death and is slow afterwards as the temperature of the body comes nearer to that of its surroundings. Simpson<sup>1</sup> has found from investigations on dead bodies that under average conditions a clothed body in a temperate country loses about  $2.5^{\circ}\text{F}$  per hour for the first six hours and 1.5 to  $2^{\circ}\text{F}$  for the next six hours. Thus the whole surface of the body takes about twelve hours and the internal organs take twenty to twenty four hours to reach the temperature of the environment but much less time in a tropical country like India. From observations<sup>2</sup> made in 1902 at the famine hospital in Bombay where the temperature is seldom above  $98^{\circ}\text{C}^{\circ}\text{F}$  it was found that in those cases where the body temperature was normal at the time of death the average rate in the fall of temperature during the first two hours was one half of the difference between that of the body and that of the air. During the next two hours the temperature fell at half this rate and during the next two hours at half the last mentioned rate or about a quarter of the initial rate. Thereafter the cooling took place at a much slower rate the body attaining the temperature of the air in from twelve to fifteen hours after death. In one case in which the temperature recorded at death was  $105.8^{\circ}\text{F}$  the body temperature came down to that of the air and then rose 18 degrees above the air temperature in thirteen hours and a half after death.

The rate of cooling of the body may be influenced by such causes as age condition of the body manner of death and surroundings of the body.

*Age*—The bodies of young and middle aged persons cool more slowly than the bodies of children and old people.

*Condition of the Body*—Fat and well nourished bodies retain heat much longer than lean and weakly bodies.

*Manner of Death*—Cooling of the body is more rapid in deaths occurring from severe hemorrhage or chronic and wasting diseases than in deaths occurring suddenly from accident acute disease or apoplexy whereas the body keeps warm for a long time when death has resulted from asphyxia as in lightning suffocation or poisoning by carbon dioxide.

*Surroundings of the Body*—A dead body cools more slowly when kept in a small room with still air than when kept in a large room with access of cold draughts of air from outside. Similarly a body covered with clothes and lying in bed or in a cesspool or dung heap cools less rapidly than a naked body lying on a stone flag in the open air while a body immersed in water especially in running water cools more rapidly than when exposed to the air. Cooling is delayed when the temperature of the atmospheric air or water is high.

*Post mortem Caloricity*—This term is applied to a rise of temperature observed for the first two hours or so in bodies after deaths from cholera small pox yellow fever, rheumatism cerebro spinal meningitis liver abscess peritonitis nephritis injuries to the nervous system tetanus and poisoning by alcohol and strychnine. This post mortem rise of temperature is due to the action of micro organisms in the still living fluids and tissues of the body and to the chemical changes going on after death.

1 Science Progress Oct 1946 p 713 Jan 1947 p 761  
2 Collis Barry Legal Med Vol III p 2

### 5 CADAVERIC LIVIDITY, HYPOSTASIS SUGGILATION OR POST-MORTEM STAINING

This is a discoloration of the skin due to the accumulation of the fluid blood into the capillaries and small veins of the *rete mucosum* in the most dependent parts of the body according to its position, as the body after death, like all other inert matter, obeys the law of gravitation. If the body is lying on the back, the staining will be seen on the posterior parts of the head, ears, neck, trunk and extremities except on those parts which actually come into contact with the surface on which the body is lying. Similarly, it is not seen on those parts which have been compressed by tight clothing or tight wrapping of a sheet but occurs as stripes or bands called *tubices* which often resemble the marks produced by flogging. Again a white band on the neck produced by a tight collar or necklace may look like a mark of strangulation.



Fig. 29.—Post mortem Staining

In Northern India post mortem staining begins to form within an hour after death and is well marked in four to twelve hours. It is formed after every kind of death but it is more marked in the bodies of fair people than in those of dark individuals. It consists of small irregular patches on the skin having a coppery red or purple colour. At first they are single and scattered on the surface, but later increase in size and unite together forming a large uniform area of discolouration. These patches will disappear and new ones will form on the dependent parts on altering the position of the body if the blood is still fluid but they will remain permanent and no more will form if the position is changed after the blood has coagulated.

It is impossible to give the exact time at which the blood begins to coagulate after death. About four hours after death is the usual period when coagulation of the blood commences. Coagulation does not occur and the blood usually remains fluid after death from asphyxia and in cases where a large quantity of saline infusion has been injected intravenously in the treatment of acute haemorrhage. On the contrary coagulation occurs readily after death from acute infectious fevers such as pneumonia.

The colour of post mortem staining may, in certain cases indicate the cause of death. Thus the colour is intensely bluish violet and purple in asphyxia and is cherry red or pink in poisoning by carbon monoxide or hydrocyanic acid and, sometimes in burns or in cold and exposure. On the contrary the colour of post mortem staining is chocolate or coffee brown in poisoning by potassium chlorate, potassium bichromate or aniline and is usually dark brown in poisoning by phosphorus.

Rarely, hypostatic congestion resembling post mortem lividity may be seen a few hours before death in cases of cholera, plague, uremia, morphine poisoning, typhus and asphyxia.

Post mortem lividity or staining has sometimes, been mistaken for bruises caused by violence during life, and consequently innocent persons have been prosecuted for murder but acquitted afterwards when the charge could not be

proved Dead bodies were occasionally forwarded to me for post mortem examination with a report from the police that as a result of violence there were bruises on the back, but, on inspection, the so called bruises were found to be nothing else but post mortem staining

The following are the points by which they can be differentiated —

1 Post mortem staining occurs on an extensive area of the most dependent parts of the body, and usually involves the superficial layers of the true skin, a bruise may occur anywhere on the body, usually takes the shape of the weapon used is limited in area, and generally affects the deeper tissues

2 Post mortem staining does not appear elevated above the surface but has sharply defined edges, a bruise appears raised above the level of the surface and its edges are not sharply defined

3 The colour of post mortem staining is uniform, it may become green when the body begins to putrefy, whereas a bruise exhibits the usual changes of colour, especially if it is a few days old

4 In the case of post mortem staining there will be no abrasion of the cuticle but in the case of a bruise there may be an abrasion of the cuticle

5 Post mortem staining on being cut, does not show any effusion of coagulated or liquid blood into the subcutaneous tissues but may show minute drops of blood exuding from the divided ends of the distended capillaries and small veins, a bruise on the other hand shows infiltration of the tissues either with coagulated or liquid blood

Along with the appearance of external post mortem staining internal hypostasis also takes place in the dependent portions of the visceral organs. Thus if a body has been lying on the back post mortem staining is frequently found in the veins of the cerebral and spinal pia mater, in the lateral and occipital sinuses in the posterior cerebral lobes in the lower posterior surfaces of the lungs, in the posterior surfaces of the liver spleen and kidneys, and in the posterior parts of the stomach and intestines especially those lying in the pelvis. Post mortem staining does not occur in the heart but it may contain the so called "cardiac polypi" which are post mortem fibrinous clots.

Hypostasis in internal organs, such as the brain lungs, stomach kidneys and intestines, has to be distinguished from congestion or inflammation of those organs

**Difference between Post-mortem Staining and Congestion in an Organ** — Post mortem staining in an organ is irregular, and occurs on a dependent part, redness caused by congestion is generally uniform and all over the organ. The mucous membrane in post mortem staining is dull and lustreless but not so in congestion.

In post mortem staining inflammatory exudation will not be seen and areas of redness alternating with pale areas will be found if a hollow viscous is stretched out and held in front of light

#### 6 CADAVERIC CHANGES IN THE MUSCLES

After death the muscular tissues of the body pass through three stages (1) Primary relaxation or flaccidity, (2) Cadaveric rigidity or rigor mortis (3) Secondary relaxation

(1) **Primary Relaxation or Flaccidity** — Soon after death the whole muscular system commences to relax except in those cases where the muscles have been in a contracted condition before death, hence we notice that the lower jaw of a dead body falls, the eyelids lose their tension the extremities become soft and flabby, and the joints are flexible. But the muscles are contractile and react

to external stimuli mechanical or electrical, owing to their retaining molecular life after somatic death

This stage lasts from three to six hours, but the average is two or three hours. One hour and fifty-one minutes is the average period of duration in Bengal as found by Mackenzie<sup>1</sup>

(2) **Cadaveric Rigidity or Rigor Mortis**—This phenomenon which is also known as death stiffening, comes on immediately after the muscles have lost the power of contractility, and is due probably to the coagulation of myosin within the sarcolemmas of the muscle fibres by the formation of sarcolic acid and other weak acids, which are no longer removed from the system on account of molecular death. It is in no way connected with the nervous system and occurs whilst the body is cooling. Owing to the setting in of rigor mortis all the muscles of the body become stiff hard, opaque and contracted, but they do not alter the position of the body or limb. A joint rendered stiff and rigid after death if flexed forcibly by mechanical violence, will remain supple and flaccid, but will not return to its original position after the force is withdrawn, whereas a joint contracted during life in cases of hysteria or catalepsy will return to the same condition after the force is taken away.

Rigor mortis first appears in the involuntary muscles and then in the voluntary. In the heart it appears as a rule, within an hour after death and may be mistaken for hypertrophy, and its relaxation for dilatation, atrophy or degeneration. The left chambers are affected more than the right. Post mortem delivery may occur owing to contraction of the uterine muscular fibres.

In the voluntary muscles rigor mortis follows a definite course. It first occurs in the muscles of the eyelids, next in the muscles of the back of the neck and lower jaw, then in those of the front of the neck, face, chest and upper extremities, and lastly extends downwards to the muscles of the abdomen and lower extremities. It passes off in the same sequence.

**Time of Onset**—This varies greatly in different cases but the average period of its onset may be regarded as three to six hours after death in temperate climates, and it may take two to three hours to develop. In India it usually commences in one to two hours after death, and takes one to two hours to develop.

**Duration**.—In temperate regions rigor mortis usually lasts for two to three days, though it may last several days (nine days according to Casper,<sup>2</sup> and three weeks according to Taylor<sup>3</sup>). In Northern India, the usual duration of rigor mortis is twenty four to forty-eight hours in winter and eighteen to thirty six hours in summer. According to the investigations of Mackenzie<sup>4</sup> in Calcutta the average duration is nineteen hours and twelve minutes, the shortest period being three hours, and the longest forty hours. When rigor mortis sets in early it passes off quickly and vice versa.

Cases<sup>5</sup> have occurred in which rigor mortis developed and disappeared within an hour and a half after death. In a case where death occurred from exhaustion after a prolonged illness of enteric fever rigor mortis was evident everywhere on the body in three minutes and a half after death disappeared in a quarter of an hour and in less than an hour after death putrefaction had appeared in the limbs.<sup>6</sup>

1 Ind Med Ga- June 1889 p 10<sup>o</sup>

2 Forensic Medicine translated by Balfour, Vol I p 24

3 Prince and Pract of Med Juris Ed X, Vol I, p 190

4 Ind Med Ga- June, 1889, p 10<sup>o</sup>

5 Bomb Famine Hosp Rep 1901

6 Savory, On Life and Death p 196 Taylor, Prince and Pract of Med Juris Ed X Vol I,

### Circumstances modifying the Onset and Duration of Rigor Mortis —

(a) *Age* —Rigor mortis is said not to occur in the body of an immature foetus of less than seven months. A case<sup>1</sup> is however recorded in which strongly marked rigor mortis was present in a five months foetus. Rigor mortis is commonly found in the bodies of still born infants at full term. Tarleton<sup>2</sup> relates a case where rigor mortis was seen in a well developed female child which died during delivery. Cases of ante natal rigor mortis although rare are recorded. This condition usually interferes with delivery. Dr Jitendra Desai of Ahmedabad reported to me that in October 1938 he delivered a quadruparous aged 28 of a full term dead female child which was in a state of rigor mortis. The labour was tedious and prolonged as compared to her previous labours.<sup>3</sup>

In adolescent and healthy adult bodies the occurrence of rigor mortis is slow but well marked while it is feeble and rapid in the bodies of children and old people.

(b) *Muscular Condition* —The onset is slower and the duration longer in those cases where the muscles have been healthy and at rest before death than in those cases where the muscles have been feeble and exhausted and thus have lost a greater degree of muscular irritability.

(c) *Manner of Death* —Rigor mortis sets in early and disappears soon in deaths from diseases causing great exhaustion and wasting of the muscles as in cholera plague typhus typhoid phthisis cancer uremia and chronic Bright's disease. Its onset is delayed in deaths occurring from pneumonia apoplexy asphyxia and nervous diseases causing paralysis of the muscles. In cases of strychnine and other spinal poisons the onset is rapid and the duration longer if death has occurred in a short time after the symptoms first appeared when the muscles had not been exhausted owing to convulsive fits.

(d) *Atmospheric Conditions* —Rigor mortis commences slowly but lasts for a long time in dry cold air. On the other hand its commencement is rapid and duration short in warm moist air. It comes on rapidly and disappears late in bodies immersed in cold water.

**Conditions Simulating Rigor Mortis** —The conditions which simulate rigor mortis are (a) heat stiffening (b) cold stiffening and (c) cadaveric spasm or instantaneous rigor.

(a) *Heat Stiffening* —The phenomenon known as heat stiffening is seen in the hardening and stiffening of the muscles in a body exposed to a temperature exceeding 75°C. This is due to the coagulation of other albuminates besides myosin which coagulates ordinarily at a lower temperature say 70°C.

Heat stiffening is commonly observed in the body of a person who has met his death from burning or from sudden immersion in a boiling fluid or in a body which has been burnt soon after death while the muscles were still warm. The body assumes an attitude called pugilistic attitude with the lower limbs and arms flexed and the hands clenched.

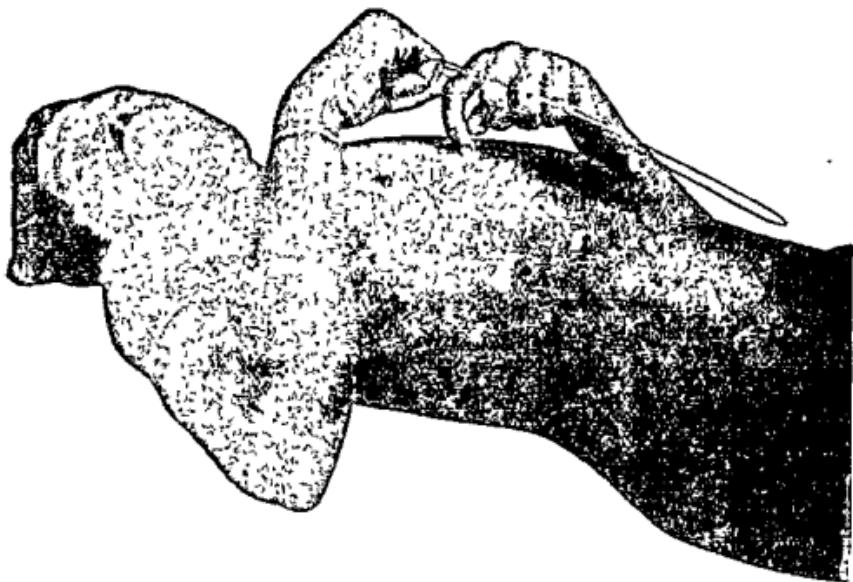
(b) *Cold Stiffening* —The stiffening of the muscles occurs in a body from solidification of its fat when it is exposed to a freezing temperature. If the body is moved to a warm atmosphere the stiffening rapidly disappears and normal rigor mortis develops but it lasts only for a short time.

(c) *Cadaveric Spasm or Instantaneous Rigor* —This is a phenomenon in which the muscles that have been in a state of contraction during life become

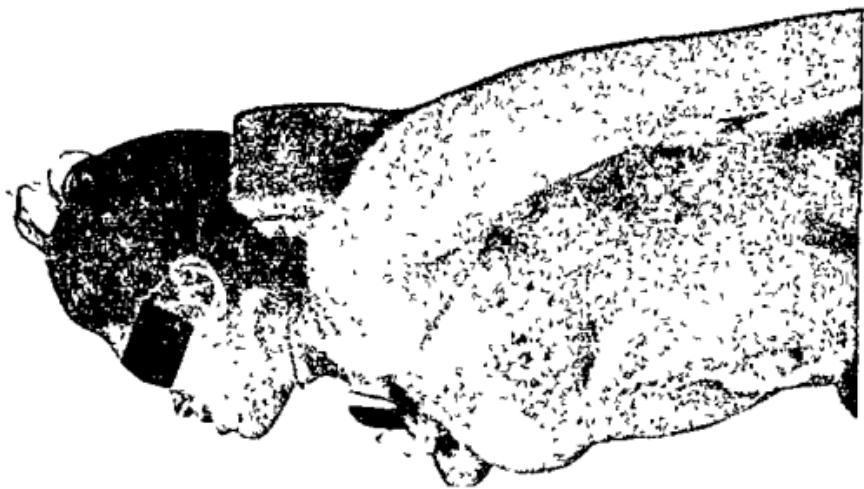
<sup>1</sup> *Bombay Hosp Rep* 1901

<sup>2</sup> *Brit Med Jour June 13 1908* p 144

<sup>3</sup> For other cases of ante natal rigor mortis see *Brit Med Jour* 1904 Vol I pp 1014 and *Jour Surg Gynaec and Obstet May 10th p 112*



*Fig. 27.—Cadaveric Spasm : Note the electric wire firmly grasped in the hands. A case of accidental death from electricity. (From a photograph lent kindly by Dr. H. S. Mehta)*



*Fig. 28.—Cadaveric Spasm : The razor is firmly grasped in the hand. A case of suicide (From a photograph lent kindly by Dr. H. S. Mehta).*

stiff and rigid immediately after death without passing into an initial stage of relaxation, hence the attitude of the body adopted at the time of death is maintained for several hours afterwards. It is due to the fact that the last voluntary muscular contraction of life does not stop after death but is continuous with an act of cadaveric rigidity and thus occurs in cases where there have been great muscular exertion and mental excitement before death as observed among soldiers killed on a battle field. It is also found in sudden asphyxial deaths and in deaths from irritation of the medulla. It is quite different from cadaveric rigidity or rigor mortis. In the case of cadaveric spasm a weapon held in the hand before death is firmly grasped and can only be removed with difficulty whereas in cadaveric rigidity the weapon placed in the hand before rigor mortis has set in is not grasped but drops down from the hand on the slightest touch. For practical purposes it is not possible for a murderer to imitate this condition.

Medico legally the condition of cadaveric spasm is very important inasmuch as the finding of a weapon hairs, pieces of clothing etc firmly grasped by the fingers of a dead body may lead to the detection of a case being suicidal or homicidal. It must however be remembered that a heavy weapon may drop down from the hand of a suicide, unless it becomes glued down by clotting of the effused blood.

A European widow aged 40 years who shot herself with a five-chambered revolver while driving in a victoria, was found with the revolver gripped in her right hand<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand an army Major who committed suicide on the 1st December 1922 by shooting himself with a revolver through the mouth was seen reclining against a wall in a bathroom at the Royal Hotel Lucknow with the head drooping forwards and the revolver lying between his legs with the right thumb and index finger loosely touching the trigger. In the case of *King & K. N. Kapoor v. Vanith Singh* a piece of cloth found grasped in the hand of a murdered person Phuloo Singh was proved to have been torn from the vest of the accused at the time of murder<sup>2</sup>.

(3) Secondary Relaxation.—With the disappearance of rigor mortis the muscles become soft and flaccid but do not respond to a mechanical or electrical stimulus as in the first stage of relaxation. This is probably due to myo in being dissolved by the excessive production of acid during the stage of rigor mortis.

### 7. PUTREFACTION OR DECOMPOSITION

This is absolutely a certain sign of death. It is a slow process and is brought about by the action of ferment produced by living saprophytic micro organisms which resolve the complex organized tissues of the body into simpler inorganic compounds. These micro organisms are both aerobic and anaerobic and during life, are found in large numbers in the alimentary canal but within a short time after death are found scattered in all the tissues organs and even in the blood. As a result of their action the dead body invariably putrefies unless special means are taken to prevent their access or the tissues are rendered unfit for their use.

**External Phenomena**—It is said that putrefaction follows the disappearance of rigor mortis but this is not always the case, since in Northern India especially during the hot months from April to October it commences before rigor mortis has completely passed off from the lower extremities. This fact has been observed by me in a large number of dead bodies in Agra and Lucknow. India being a vast country, the climatic conditions vary so much in different parts that it is impossible to give the exact time when the putrefactive processes develop in a dead body.

The two characteristic features of putrefaction are the colour changes and the development of foul smelling gases.

**Colour Changes**—The first external evidence of putrefaction in a body exposed to the air is the formation of greenish discolouration of the abdominal skin over the iliac fossæ. This discolouration is due to the conversion of haemoglobin

<sup>1</sup> Leader Feb 12 1928 p 11  
<sup>2</sup> All High Court Cr Ipp No 90 of 1925

of the blood pigment into sulphmethæmoglobin by the action of sulphuretted hydrogen diffusing from the intestine into the tissues and occurs from one to three days after death in winter and six to twelve hours in summer. This patch of green discolouration is more evident on a fair skin than on a dark one. About the same time the eyeball becomes soft and yielding the corner becomes white and milky and is either flattened or compressed. Later, the eye collapses and the cornea becomes concave.



Fig. 28.—Body of a female undergoing decomposition

From twelve to eighteen hours after death in summer the green coloration spreads over the entire abdomen and the external genitals. Green patches also make their appearance successively on the chest, neck, face, arms and legs. These patches gradually deepen in colour and later become purple and dark blue. They are at first separate and distinct but later on coalesce together and the whole skin of the body appears discoloured.

Soon after the discolouration of the skin has commenced the superficial veins look very prominent like purplish red or green streaks owing to the decomposed blood setting free the colouring matter of the red blood corpuscles which stains the walls of the blood vessels and infiltrates into the tissues which also appear coloured. The clotted blood becomes fluid hence the position of post mortem staining is altered and the fluid blood collects in the serous cavities, especially in the pleure and pericardium.

**Development of Foul-Smelling Gases.**—Side by side with the appearance of the greenish patch on the abdomen the body begins to emit a nauseating and unpleasant smell owing to gradual development of the gases of decomposition, some of which are sulphuretted hydrogen, marsh gas, carbon dioxide, ammonia and phosphoretted hydrogen.

From twelve to eighteen hours after death in summer these gases collect in



*Fig. 29.—Decomposed body of a male showing especially blisters*

the intestine, consequently the abdomen swells up. The sphincters relax and the urine and faeces may escape.

From eighteen to thirty six or forty eight hours after death the gases collect in the tissues, cavities and hollow viscera under considerable pressure with the result that the features become bloated and distorted. The eyes are forced out of their sockets, the tongue is protruded between the teeth and the lips become swollen and everted. A frothy reddish fluid or mucus is forced from the mouth and nostrils. Ultimately the features become obliterated and unrecognizable. The abdomen becomes greatly distended, hence on opening the cavity the gas escapes with a loud explosive noise. Owing to the pressure of the gases the stomach contents are forced into the mouth and larynx and are seen running out of the mouth and nostrils. The breasts of female bodies are greatly distended. The

penis and scrotum become enormously swollen. The cellular tissues are inflated throughout, so that the whole body appears stouter and older than it actually is.

Owing to the formation of these gases under the skin blisters containing a reddish coloured fluid form on the various parts of the body. When these burst the cuticle being softened peels off easily. Bruises and abrasions may become unrecognizable when the cuticle is denuded. Wounds, whether caused before or after death, begin to bleed once more owing to the pressure of gas within the heart and blood vessels. Wounds also become so altered in appearance that it may be difficult to form an opinion as to whether they were caused before or after death unless the presence of the clotted blood can be distinctly made out.

Flies such as common house flies and blow flies are attracted to the body, and lay their eggs, especially in the open wounds and natural orifices. The eggs hatch into maggots or larvae in from eight to twenty four hours during hot weather. The maggots crawl into the interior of the body, and help in destroying the soft tissues. Sometimes, maggots appear even before death, if a person has ulcers on him. The maggots become pupæ in four or five days and the pupæ develop into adult flies in the course of three to five days.



Fig. 20.—Decomposed body of a female showing maggots.

From forty eight to seventy two hours the rectum and uterus protrude. The gravid uterus may expel its contents. The hair becomes loose and is easily pulled out. The nails are also loose, and are easily detached.

In three to five days or more the sutures of the skull, especially of children and young persons, are separated, the bones are loosened, and the liquefied brain runs out. The teeth become loose in their sockets, and may fall off.

The next stage of putrefaction is known as *colligative putrefaction* which begins from five to ten days or more after death. During this stage the walls of the abdomen become softened and burst open protruding the stomach and intestine. The thorax, especially in children, bursts. The diaphragm is pushed upwards.

If the putrefactive processes still go on the tissues become soft, loose and are converted into a thick semi-fluid black mass. They ultimately separate from the bones and fall off. The bones are consequently exposed and the orbits are empty. The cartilages and ligaments are similarly softened, and ultimately the bones are destroyed so that after some years no trace of the body is left. The time taken up by these changes varies considerably with the temperature and the medium in which the body lies.

The conclusions arrived at by Mackenzie<sup>1</sup> from his observations of dead bodies in Calcutta are given below in a tabulated form.—

<sup>1</sup> *Ind. Med. Gaz.*, June, 1889, p. 167.



Fig. 11.—Decomposed body of a boy, 8 years old.  
The cuticle has peeled off at places.

	Average	Minimum	Maximum
	hr m	hr m	hr m
Muscular irritability			
Onset of rigor mortis	1 .1	0 .0	4 .30
Duration of rigor mortis	1 .6	0 .10	— .0
Cadaveric lividity	19 .12	3 .0	40 .0
Green discoloration	14 .33	1 .38	11 .30
Ova of flies	.6 .4	7 .10	41 .0
Maggots	2 .5	3 .0	43 .30
Formation of bullae	11 .43	24 .18	71 .0
Involution of gases	40 .94	35 .0	72 .0
	18 .17	5 .00	34 .30

Table<sup>1</sup> showing the chronological sequence of the putrefactive changes occurring in the temperate regions

Putrefactive Changes	Time
1 Greenish coloration over the illae fossae The eyeballs soft and yielding	1 to 3 days after death
2 Green coloration spreading over the whole abdomen external genitalia and other parts of the body. Frothy blood from mouth and nostrils	3 to 6 days after death

2 Abdomen distended with gas Cornea fallen in and concave Purple red streaks of veins prominent on the extremities Sphincters relaxed Nails firm	8 to 10 days after death
4 Body greenish brown Blisters forming all over the body Skin peels off Features unrecognizable Scrotum distended Body swollen up owing to dis-tension Maggots on the body Nails and hair loose and easily detached	14 to 20 days after death
• Soft parts changed into a thick semi fluid black mass Skull abdon en and thorax burst Bones exposed Orbita empty	2 to 3 months after death

**Internal Phenomena**—The changes of discoloration similar to those described in the external phenomena of putrefaction are observed in the various visceral organs such as the liver spleen and kidneys but the colour is usually dark red changing to black instead of a greenish colour This discoloration should not be mistaken for the greenish yellow or black coloration imparted to the neighbouring organs by the bile soaking through the gall bladder The pathological changes are still evident hence it is necessary to go on with the examination The viscera subsequently become greasy and softened so that it is difficult to remove them entire

The rate of putrefaction in the internal organs varies greatly owing to the differences in their structure as regards firmness density and moisture From his long experience Casper<sup>1</sup> has drawn up the following table showing the order in which the internal organs putrefy —

Those which putrefy soon	Those which putrefy late
1 The Larynx and Trachea	9 The Heart
2 The Brain of Infants	10 The Jungs
3 The Stomach	11 The Kidneys
4 The Intestines	12 The Liver
5 The Spleen	13 The Oesophagus
6 The Omentum and Mesentery	14 The Pancreas
7 The Liver	15 The Diaphragm
8 The Adult Brain	16 The Blood Vessels
	17 The Uterus

**The Larynx and Trachea**—The decomposition of these organs coincides almost with the appearance of the greenish coloration over the abdomen Their mucous membrane appears first uniformly brownish red without any vascular injection and later becomes greenish and softened Lastly, the cartilages separate from one another, but this change takes place after some months

**The Brain of Infants**.—Owing to the thinness of the skull bones and the presence of the fontanelles the brain of infants very rapidly becomes soft and pulpy and soon turns into a greyish fluid so that it flows out on removing the cranial bones

**The Stomach**—Owing to the presence of the fermenting food digestive ferments and bacteria and a large amount of blood supply, the stomach as a rule putrefies much sooner after death It putrefies usually from twenty four to thirty six hours in summer and from three to six days in winter, but it may, sometimes

begin to putrefy much earlier. As a consequence of putrefaction dark red, irregular patches are first seen on the posterior wall, and then appear on the anterior wall. These patches may be mistaken for the effects of irritant poisoning but can be readily distinguished as putrefactive changes involve the whole thickness of the stomach wall, while the effects of irritant poisoning are observed usually in the mucous membrane only. Afterwards blebs form on the inner surface of the walls, which become softened, dark brown and ultimately change into a dark, pultaceous mass.

**The Intestines** —The putrefaction of these organs follows that of the stomach. The intestines are rapidly inflated with the formation of gases in the interior and the mucous membrane undergoes exactly the same changes as are observed in the stomach. Owing to the walls being softened the intestines burst and discharge their contents.

**The Spleen** —In some cases the spleen decomposes earlier than the stomach and intestines especially if it is swollen and hyperæmic from an acute infectious disease, or enlarged from chronic malaria, but it may resist putrefaction longer if it happens to be firm and comparatively bloodless. Owing to putrefaction the spleen becomes soft, pulpy, greenish steel in colour, and within two to three days in summer it may be reduced to a diffluent mass.

**The Omentum and Mesentery** —These withstand putrefaction for a long time, if they are free from fat, but decompose sooner, if loaded with fat. In that case they appear greyish green and dry.

**The Liver** —Owing to the effects of decomposition the liver usually becomes softened and flabby in consistence during summer from twelve to eighteen or twenty four hours after death, and owing to the evolution of gas in its substance it becomes studded with blisters from twenty four to thirty six hours. Later, the usual greenish discolouration appears on the upper convex surface, and gradually extends to the whole organ, which ultimately becomes coal black. The liver putrefies earlier in new born children than in adults. The gall bladder is recognizable for a long period owing to its resisting action against putrefaction, but bile pigments may diffuse early through the adjacent tissues.

**The Adult Brain** —The putrefaction of the adult brain first begins at its base and then proceeds to the upper surface. It is hastened if any injury to the brain or skull is present. The brain becomes soft and pulpy within twenty four to forty-eight hours in summer, and becomes a liquid mass from three to four days.

**The Heart** —The heart putrefies much later than the stomach, intestines and liver. The organ first becomes soft and flabby, and the cavity appears dilated and is usually empty containing a few gas bubbles. The organ itself can be recognized for several months.

**The Lungs** —These organs putrefy at about the same time as the heart or a little earlier in a few cases. The first sign of putrescence in the lungs is the formation of gaseous bullæ under the pleucal membranes. These are at first pale red, small, and scattered over the various parts of the lungs and later on they coalesce. The colour of the lungs does not change with the development of these bullæ but it then changes to dark black and green as putrefaction progresses. Later on the lungs become soft, collapse, and are reduced to a small black mass which is ultimately completely destroyed. The diaphragm resists putrefaction for a long time, and may be recognizable even after six months.

**The Kidneys** —The kidneys become brown and greenish but retain their consistence for long, so that diseases, such as nephritis and cancer, can be detected for a long time after death.

**The Bladder** —This organ, if empty and contracted, resists putrefaction for a long time, but undergoes decomposition rapidly if it has been distended and inflamed. Within forty eight hours after death the urine in the bladder may

usually contain albumin owing to the transudation of serum albumin and globulin from the blood.

**The Oesophagus**—The oesophagus withstands putrefaction for a very long time, and may be recognized long after the stomach has entirely disappeared.

**The Uterus**.—The virgin uterus is the last organ to putrefy, and may be useful in determining the sex long after the complete destruction of the external genitals from advanced decomposition. Casper<sup>1</sup> records a case where the uterus in a body, which had lain in a cesspool for nine months and which was in an advanced stage of decomposition, was found "of a bright red colour, hard and firm to feel and to cut, its form perfectly recognizable and normal its size that of a virgin uterus, its cavity unimpregnated and empty." In another case he found the uterus in a well preserved condition in a mature foetus which had lain in the earth for about a year. It should, however, be remembered that the impregnated uterus or the gravid uterus soon after delivery rapidly undergoes putrefaction. I have seen some cases in which the uterus was found decomposed in three to four days after death and completely destroyed by maggots in four to five days after death, especially during summer.

**The Blood Vessels**—The blood vessels, particularly large arterial trunks resist putrefaction for a long period. The aorta can be recognized after a burial of even fourteen months.

**Putrefaction in Water**—The rate of putrefaction of a body in water is more reliable than that of a body exposed to the air or interred, as the temperature of the water is more uniform and the body is protected from the air, as long as it remains submerged in water. Ordinarily, a body takes twice as much time in water as in air to undergo the same degree of putrefaction. Putrefaction is retarded, when a body is lying in deep water and is well protected by clothing, while it is hastened in a body lying in water contaminated with sewage. Putrefaction is accelerated, when once a body has been removed from water, as the tissues have imbibed much fluid. In such a body decomposition is so rapid that the changes occurring in twenty-four hours' exposure to the air will be more marked than those ordinarily resulting from a fortnight's further submersion.

Owing to the blood gravitating towards the head which sinks low in water the colour changes of decomposition are first noticed on the face instead of on the abdomen as in ordinary putrefaction. These changes gradually spread downwards from the face to the neck, upper extremities, chest, abdomen and lower limbs.

The following table drawn up from the observations of Devergie shows the putrefactive changes occurring at different periods of time in a body submerged in water—

Putrefactive Changes	Time
1 Very little change if water is cold Rigor mortis may persist	First four or five days
2 The skin of the hands and feet becomes sodden and bleached. The face appears softened and has a faded white colour	From five to seven days
3 Face swollen and red. Greenish discolouration on eyelids, lips, neck and sternum. Skin of hands and feet wrinkled. Upper surface of latter greenish in colour	One to two weeks
4 Skin wrinkled. Scrotum and penis distended with gas. Nails and hair still intact. Lungs emphysematous and cover the heart	Four weeks
5 Abdomen distended. Skin of hands and feet comes off with nails like a glove	Six to eight weeks

The above table applies to bodies immersed during winter in temperate regions. Bodies immersed in summer undergo the same changes from three to five or six times as rapidly as in winter, or even more quickly than that.

If fish and crabs happen to be present in water, they destroy the soft parts, and expose the bones in a very short time. On the 2nd June 1919 a boy, about twelve years of age, was drowned in the Gomti at Lucknow. On the 4th June, when the body was recovered, almost all the soft parts had disappeared leaving the bones bare.

**Floatation of a Body**—The gases of decomposition developed within a submerged body cause it to rise to the surface unless it is entangled in weeds, ropes, or any other impediment. In India a submerged body comes to the surface within twenty-four hours in summer, and within two to three days or more (rarely more than a week) in winter<sup>1</sup>. In temperate climates a submerged body floats in about a week in summer, and in about a fortnight in winter. The power of floatation of a decomposing body is so great, that it may come to the surface in spite of its being weighted with a heavy stone.

Hehir<sup>2</sup> records the interesting case of a woman who was murdered on a Friday night in September, 1883, and whose body was thrown into a well about midnight. On the following Sunday at about 8 or 9 a.m. the body was found floating with a heavy stone attached to it. The woman was of slight figure and short stature and while alive did not probably weigh more than 100 to 105 lbs. The stone, the specific gravity of which was 2.7, weighed 92 lbs. It appears that decomposition in thirty hours was so rapid as to generate gas capable of raising not only the body itself but the dead weight attached to it. The stone was attached to the waist and the body, when found, was lying horizontally on the surface of the water on its side. The water in the well was from ten to twelve feet in depth.



Fig. 32.—Skin from hand after three to four days immersion in water

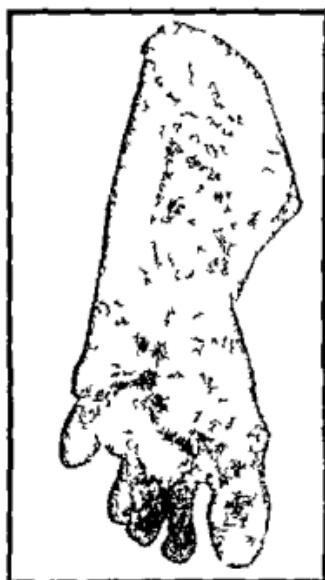


Fig. 33.—Skin from foot after three to four days immersion in water

The period of floatation depends on the age, sex, condition of the body, season of the year and water.

<sup>1</sup> Mackenzie Ind. Med. Gaz. May 1880 p. 131 Charters Med. Juris p. 640

<sup>2</sup> Outlines of Med. Juris Ed. 1, p. 56

*Age*—The bodies of newly born infants if fully developed and well nourished float rapidly.

*Sex*—Owing to the lightness of the bones and a greater proportion of fat the bodies of women are of less specific gravity than those of men and therefore float sooner.

*Condition of the Body*—Fatty bodies float quicker than lean and thin bodies as fat has a lower specific gravity. Bodies wearing loose clothes will soon come to the surface.

*Season of the Year*—The moist, hot air of summer is favourable to putrefaction, hence dead bodies float quicker in summer than in winter.

*Water*—Dead bodies float in the shallow and stagnant water of a pond sooner than in the deep water of a running stream, as the water of a pond being warmer from the action of the sun's rays favours putrefaction. Bodies float more readily in sea water than in fresh water, the specific gravity of the former being higher.

*Circumstances Modifying Putrefaction*—These may be divided into external and internal.

*External Circumstances*—These are warmth, moisture, air, and manner of burial.

*Warmth*—Putrefaction commences at a temperature above 30°F, and is most favoured between 70°F and 100°F and even upto 115°F. The rapidity of the change considerably lessens as the temperature advances above 100°F. It is altogether arrested below 32°F and above 212°F. A higher temperature accompanied by dry air generally retards putrefaction.

*Moisture*—This is very essential for the occurrence of putrefaction as the micro-organisms which are the causative agents of decomposition thrive well in both heat and moisture. Hence the organs which contain water decompose more rapidly than dry ones.

*Air*—The presence of air promotes and its absence retards putrefaction. Closely fitting clothes on the body retard decomposition by excluding the air. Similarly bodies placed in air tight lead or zinc coffins resist putrefactive processes for a long period. Moist air favours putrefaction by diminishing evaporation while dry air retards it. In the same way still air helps putrefaction and air in motion retards it. Putrefaction is also delayed in bodies completely submerged in water to the entire exclusion of air, and it has been ascertained that at the same temperature the putrefactive changes observed in a body exposed to the air for one week will almost correspond to those in a body submerged in water for two weeks or buried in a deep grave for eight weeks.<sup>1</sup>

*Manner of Burial*.—Putrefaction is hastened in a body buried in a damp marshy, clayey soil or in a shallow grave, where the body will be exposed to constant changes of temperature. It will also be hastened in the case of a body buried without clothes or coffin in a porous soil impregnated with organic matter. Putrefaction is, however retarded if a body is buried in a dry, sandy or gravelly soil on high ground or in a grave deeper than six feet and also if the body is well covered with clothes and placed in a tightly fitting coffin. Lime and charcoal when sprinkled on the body do not hasten or retard putrefaction but act as deodorizers to some extent as they have the power of absorbing gases emanating during decomposition.

*Internal Circumstances*.—These are age, sex, condition of the body, and cause of death.

<sup>1</sup> Casper Forens Med Balfour's Eng Transl Vol I p 77

*Age.*—The bodies of children putrefy more rapidly than those of young adults. The bodies of old people do not decompose rapidly, probably owing to a less amount of moisture.

*Sex.*—Sex has no influence on putrefaction, but the bodies of females dying soon after child birth decompose rapidly, especially if death has been due to septicemia.

*Condition of the Body.*—Fat and flabby bodies putrefy more quickly than thin and emaciated ones. Those parts of the body which are the seats of bruises, wounds or fractures or which have been mutilated decompose very early.

*Cause of Death.*—The bodies of persons who have died from acute infectious fevers and chronic diseases terminating in septicæmia or general anaæmia decompose more rapidly than those of healthy persons who have died suddenly from accident or violence. Putrefaction is hastened after death occurring from asphyxia as in lightning strangulation, and suffocation by smoke coal gas, hydrogen sulphide or sewer gas and certain poisons e.g. hydrocyanic acid and opium. On the other hand, putrefaction is retarded after death occurring from wasting diseases attended with emaciation and anaæmia and also from certain poisons which act on the body tissues as antiseptics e.g. arsenic, antimony, zinc chloride, phosphorus and mineral acids, especially sulphuric acid. Death by chronic alcoholism generally hastens decomposition, while death by chloroform and strychnine poisoning delays it.

### 8 ADIPOCERI

Under certain conditions the progress of putrefaction in a dead body is checked, and is replaced by the formation of adipocere which is a waxy looking substance having a greasy feel and a pure white or faint yellowish colour. It cuts soft and melts at a flame or burns with a feebly luminous flame giving off a dull cheese like but by no means disagreeable smell. Its specific gravity being less than that of water, it floats when placed in the latter. It is more or less permanent lasting for several years but becomes hard, brittle and yellow when exposed to the air. The results of chemical analysis of my cases (see below) go to support the following remarks of Lucas<sup>1</sup> regarding the chemical composition and formation of adipocere—

"It is evident that adipocere is composed almost entirely of fatty acids but that it contains a certain amount of calcium soap and probably in the early stages of its formation some ammonia soap and therefore from its chemical composition



Fig. 34.—The body of a child converted into adipocere.

there can be little doubt that adipocere is the residue of that fat pre-existing in the body, the greater part of which has undergone slow hydrolysis by water but some small part of it has been saponified by ammonia (derived from decomposing nitrogenous tissue) this ammonia being ultimately replaced by lime.

Sydney Smith<sup>1</sup> believes that adipocere is not connected with the formation of soaps but it is formed by a gradual hydrogenation process in which pre-existing fats in the body are converted into higher fatty acids.

Adipocere commences first in the subcutaneous fat, and then in the skin muscles and organs. It occurs soon in the female breasts, cheeks, buttocks and other parts of the body where large accumulations of fat are found. As fat is distributed extensively throughout the body nearly all parts may undergo this change.

It is rare for the whole body to be converted into adipocere but when this occurs the body retains its natural form, outline and facial features so well that it may be easily identified years after death. Wounds inflicted on the body before death may also be easily recognized.

Water is necessary for the formation of adipocere so that the process takes place in bodies which have been submerged in water buried in damp clayey soils or thrown into cesspools. It may however occur in bodies exposed to the air especially in hot and damp climates. Vaughan<sup>2</sup> reports two cases of such an

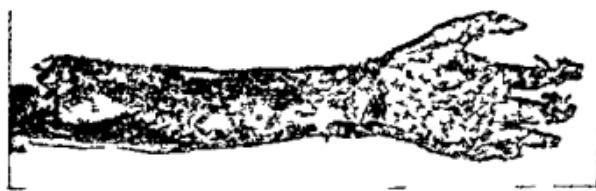


FIG. 3.—A forearm converted into adipocere.

occurrence. In one case the body of a Hindu female lay in a dry bed covered with bedding and heavy pillows in a room and in the other case the body of a man had lain absolutely naked on the ground in a hut in a plantation of trees and shrubs.

**Time of Formation of Adipocere.**—The time required for the formation of adipocere varies according to the climate. In Europe, it ranges from three months to one year though the change may occur in five weeks or may be delayed to three years. It is more rapid when a body is submerged in water than when it is buried in the earth. In India Dr Coull Mackenzie<sup>3</sup> found it occurring within three to fifteen days after death in bodies drowned in the Hugli or buried in the damp soil of Lower Bengal. I have observed adipocere taking place in seven to thirty five days after death in bodies submerged in wells or buried in shallow graves. Professor Powell<sup>4</sup> records its formation in three days and twenty two hours after death in the body of a healthy male buried in a gravelly and sandy soil.

Of twelve cases of adipocere which came under my observation during a period of six years between 1918 and 1923 I quote the following typical cases:—

1. On February 26, 1920 a report was made at Police Station, Malihabad, Lucknow District that Ramadhan Brahmin, 30 years old resident of Ramgarh was missing. On the 2nd

1 *Forensic Medicine* Ed. III p. 5.

2 *Ind. Med. Gaz.* May 1906 p. 161.

3 *Ind. Med. Gaz.*, Feb. 1889 p. 42.

4 *Brit. Med. Jour.* Vol. I 1917 p. 842.

April, the body of the said Itanadham was found in a well in village Hamurpur. Post mortem examination was held on the following day. The body was well preserved. There was no disagreeable smell. The eyeballs had been disintegrated and the teeth loosened. Saponification had taken place in the soft tissues of the trunk, scrotum, penis and extremities. There was an incised wound measuring four inches by two inches across the right side of the neck, cutting the larynx below the thyroid cartilage and the fifth cervical vertebra. The brain was liquefied. The lungs were decomposed and disintegrated to a small black mass. The abdominal fat and mesentery were saponified. The liver appeared to be undergoing saponification. The spleen was reduced to almost a liquid mass. The kidneys were reduced to a small untreated mass but the bladder was normal and empty.

2. The body of Musammat Jasoda a girl of 1 year was taken out of a well on the 26th March 1923. On examination externally the buttocks were found saponified and internally the mesentery and omentum. The girl was robbed of her silver ornaments and thrown into the well about 10 days ago.

**Pathological Examination**—In these cases pieces of saponified tissues viz. muscle, mesentery, omentum and liver, were sent to the Pathological Department of the King George's Medical College for section cutting and examination. Dr Mukerji Reader in Pathology furnished me with the following report—

Microscopically the tissues appeared to be yellowish white disintegrated masses. Under the microscope no definite structure was seen but masses of acicular crystals and round bodies about three times the diameter of a red blood cell were detected. When treated with xylol most of the above were dissolved leaving a hazy round outline. In all probability the round bodies consisted of neutral fat and soap.

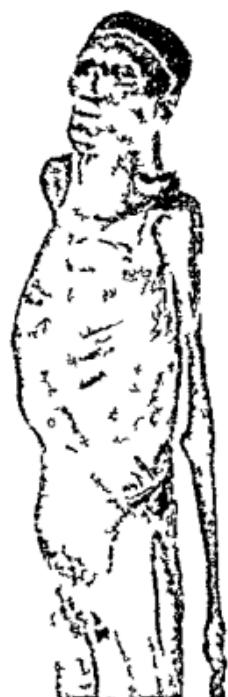
**Chemical Analysis**—The following results of analysis were obtained in the laboratory of Mr D N Chatterjee Chemical Examiner for the United and Central Provinces at 1 grm.—

#### Case No. 1

Pieces of saponified muscle, mesentery, fat and liver were removed from the body and placed in a bottle with rectified spirit. These were forwarded for chemical analysis. The fatty substance got completely dissolved in the alcohol.

The total amount of fatty substance recovered from the alcohol at the time of analysis in November (about seven months after the post mortem examination) was 63 grammes. It was practically soluble in ether and contained only traces of mineral matter. The other tissues on analysis were found to contain—

## 9 MUMMIFICATION



*Fig. 36.—A mummified body  
(From a photograph lent by Dr. G. L. Saha.)*

The term mummification is applied to a peculiar desiccation of a dead body whereby its soft parts shrivel up but retain the natural appearance and even the features of the body. The skin is dry, leathery and rusty brown in colour and adheres closely to the bones. The odour is more like that of old cheese than that of a decomposed body. The internal organs either disappear altogether or blend together and get transformed into a thick mass of a dark brown dry substance from which they cannot be separately distinguished.

Mummification occurs in bodies buried in shallow graves in the dry sandy soils of Rajputana, Sind and Baluchistan where evaporation of the body fluids is very rapid owing to hot dry winds prevailing in the summer season. It is observed also in the bodies of newly born infants kept perched up on trees or rafters of a roof as also in those kept closed in steel trunks. Arsenic or antimony poisoning is said to favour the process of mummification in dry, warm climates.

**Time of Mummification**—The time taken by a dead body to mummify is not exactly known but it may be regarded as varying from three months to a year or two.

The artificial method of mummifying or embalming dead bodies was known to the ancient Egyptians and specimens of their mummies are to be found in the British Museum of London in a very well preserved condition after thousands of years. At present it is resorted to in medical schools and colleges to preserve dead bodies for the purpose of dissection by injecting solutions of arsenic, lead sulphide and potassium carbonate into the femoral artery or into the aorta. The process has sometimes to be adopted when dead bodies have to be taken from one country to another for burial and when the time taken in transit is so much as would ordinarily lead to putrefaction.

## TIME OF DEATH

It is very important from a medico legal point of view that a medical jurist should always be prepared to give an opinion as to the time which elapsed since death when a body is brought to him for post mortem examination. The points to be noted in ascertaining the time are warmth or cooling of the body, the absence or presence of cadaveric hypostasis, rigor mortis and the progress of decomposition.

All these points have been discussed at full length but it must be remembered that the conditions producing these changes vary so much in each individual case that only an approximate time of death can be given.

In addition to these the time of death can be ascertained with some possibility from the degree of digestion of the stomach contents and from the condition of the bladder and intestines as regards their contents.

It has been ascertained by physiologists that a mixed diet containing more of animal food and less of vegetable food as ordinarily taken by a European leaves the stomach in four to five hours after it is completely digested while a vegetable diet containing mostly farinaceous food as usually taken by an Indian does not leave the stomach completely within six to seven hours after its ingestion. But this cannot always be relied upon in determining the time of death inasmuch as the power of digestibility may remain in abeyance for a long time in states of profound shock and coma. I have seen food in the stomach remaining undigested in persons who received severe head injuries soon after their meal and died within twelve to twenty-four hours afterwards. In one case the food consisting chiefly of rice and dal (pulse) remained in the stomach for about forty hours without undergoing digestion. It must also be remembered that the process of digestion in normal healthy persons may continue for a time after death.

In some cases the time of death may be calculated by examining whether the bladder or intestines are empty or not. Thus in the case of an individual having been murdered in bed at night one can state that the individual had lived for some time after going to bed if the bladder was found full of urine since people usually empty their bladder before going to bed. Similarly one can give an opinion that the death occurred some time after he had got up in the morning if the large intestine was found empty of faecal matter.

### PRESUMPTION OF DEATH

The question of presumption of death may arise at the time of inheritance of property or in obtaining insurance money when a particular person has gone abroad and has not been heard of for a considerable time or when he is alleged to have been dead and the body is not forthcoming. Under sections 107 and 108 of the Evidence Act of India if it is shown that a person was alive within thirty years and there is nothing to suggest the probability of his death there is a presumption that he is still alive unless proof be given that the same person has not been heard of for seven years by those friends and relatives who would naturally have heard from him had he been alive. But there is no legal presumption that he died at any particular time during the seven years. The onus of proving it lies on the person who asserts such fact.

### PRESUMPTION OF SURVIVORSHIP

The question of presumption as to survivorship may arise in connection with the devolution and distribution of property when two or more persons natural heirs of each other, lose their lives in a common disaster such as earthquake, shipwreck, battle, conflagration etc. Section 184 of the Law of Property Act of England 1925 provides that in all cases where two or more persons have died in circumstances rendering it uncertain which of them survived the other or others such deaths shall (subject to any order of the court) for all purposes affecting the title to property be presumed to have occurred in order of seniority and accordingly the younger shall be deemed to have survived the elder. It is however open to the parties interested to show by evidence in court that one in fact survived the other or others. The law of India does not recognize any presumption regarding the probabilities of survivorship among persons whose death

is occasioned by one and the same cause and the courts are influenced in establishing the survivorship in such cases by the facts and evidence, where available. In the absence of such evidence the following conditions may be taken into consideration in determining the question of survivorship with some reasonable certainty —

**Injury** — Wounds even if small and insignificant inflicted on the vital organs or main blood vessels are likely to produce death much earlier than injuries even though extensive inflicted on those parts of the body which are not vital.

**Age** — Adults have the power of resistance against a common danger more than the young and the old and it is therefore presumed that the former will survive the latter but much will depend on the mode of death.

**Sex** — Males being stronger are presumed to survive longer than females but when there is a question of physical endurance females will live longer than males as the former can withstand severe physical strain better than the latter.

**Constitution** — Vigorous and healthy individuals are ordinarily presumed to live longer than the weak and those debilitated from disease.

**Mode of Death** — The following modes of death should be particularly discussed —

**Drowning** — Females may be presumed to survive longer than males as the former are more likely to faint from dread which delays asphyxia. However in cases where there has been a struggle for life men being stronger will probably survive women and those who know swimming will live longer than those who do not. In cases where bodies are recovered from water the presence of severe injuries is likely to be regarded as a plea against survivorship and evidence of an attempt to save others as shown by the position of two bodies will be strong proof of survivorship.

**Suffocation** — In a common accident such as that occurring from the debris of a fallen roof persons who have least injuries and who are nearer the surface and consequently not buried deep under the debris are presumed to have died last.

**Asphyxia from Want of Oxygen or from Irrespirable Gases** — Women consume less oxygen and are therefore supposed to live longer than men in an atmosphere containing a less amount of oxygen. Again an individual will be required to consume more oxygen if he were to make a muscular effort to escape the danger as he will be more liable to the danger than one who is inactive and makes no exertion.

**Starvation** — Fatty persons have a better chance of outliving the lean as they can live on their fat for some time. Again one deprived of food alone will live longer than one deprived of both food and water as water alone enables a person to live for many days. In the case of children adults and old people exposed to starvation children will die first then adults and lastly the old as the old require less nourishment than adults and adults less than children. In the same manner women consume less food than men and can bear starvation longer and better.

**Cold** — Ordinarily adults are presumed to live longer than the young and the old as the former endure cold better than the latter. Men generally bear cold better than women but this hypothesis should be modified by the amount and kind of clothing, the physical condition of the body, and the habit of using alcohol or other intoxicating drugs.

*Heat*—Adults do not bear heat so well as children and old people, and the former are, therefore, supposed to die before the latter if exposed to a common danger of heat.

*Burns*—Children die sooner from the effects of extensive burns than adults, as the former are very susceptible to shock, the same is true of old people as compared with adults.

*Delivery*—When mother and child die during delivery without witnesses there is a strong presumption that the mother survived the child, but if she died of haemorrhage, it would be presumed that she died first. But it should be remembered that in cases of survivorship of a child it will be necessary to prove that the child was born alive.

In addition to the above considerations, the medical man should note the presence of a degree of warmth and rigor mortis to ascertain which died first if several bodies meeting with death in the same accident were sent to him for post mortem examination.

## CHAPTER VII

### DEATHS FROM ASPHYXIA

Violent deaths resulting closely from asphyxia are Hanging Strangulation Suffocation and Drowning

#### HANGING

**Definition**—Hanging is a form of death produced by suspending the body with a ligature round the neck the constricting force being the weight of the body. The term

partial hanging is used for those cases in which the bodies are partially suspended or for those in which the bodies are in a sitting kneeling reclining prone or any other posture. In all such cases death is inevitable if there is enough force upon the ligature to constrict the neck.



Fig. 3.—Suicidal Hanging

**Nature of the Ligature used**—Any substance that is available at the time of the impulse has been used by suicides as a ligature for hanging e.g. a cotton hemp or <sup>100 ft</sup> rope of any thickness ~~ne car doli saree turban (safa)~~ bed sheet, sacred thread neckerchief neck cloth (*dupatta*) etc. When a material with which an individual is alleged to have been hanged is sent for medical examination the medical jurist should see if the mark on the neck corresponds with its thickness and if it is strong enough to bear the weight of the body or the sudden strain. He should also note its texture and length and after labelling it with some distinctive mark for future identification should return it in a sealed packet to the police constable who brought it.

**Symptoms**—The first symptoms are the loss of power and subjective sensations such as flashes of light, and ringing and hissing noises in the ears. These are followed by loss of consciousness which is so very rapid that hanging is regarded as a painless form of death. Owing to this rapid unconsciousness an effort at saving oneself is not possible in accidental or suicidal hanging. In the case of judicial hanging convulsive movements of the limbs may be seen. Respiration stops before the heart which may continue to beat for about ten minutes.

**Causes of Death.—1 Asphyxia**—In most cases this is the true cause of death. The ligature is usually situated above the thyroid cartilage and the effect of its pressing the neck in that situation is to force up the epiglottis and the root of the tongue against the posterior wall of the

pharynx. Hence the floor of the mouth is jammed against its roof, and occludes the air passages.

2 *Apoplexy or Cerebral Congestion*—This is due to congestion of the venous blood in the brain from compression of the large (Jugular) veins completely blocked by the ligature passed round the neck.

3 *Combined Asphyxia and Apoplexy*—This is supposed to be the commonest cause of death, as in most cases the air passages are not completely blocked by the ligature passed round the neck.

4 *Syncope*—This results from pressure on the large arteries of the neck which prevents blood from going to the brain thus causing anaemia.

5 *Shock*—This occurs from pressure on the pneumogastric nerves.

6 *Fracture or Dislocation of the Cervical Vertebrae*—In judicial hanging a sudden drop of five to seven feet according to the weight of the condemned person produces fracture or dislocation of the upper cervical vertebrae which, compressing or lacerating the spinal cord, causes instantaneous death. Usually the first and second vertebrae are injured, but in a few cases the third and fourth vertebrae may be found fractured or dislocated.

**Fatal Period**—Death is almost instantaneous, if the cervical vertebrae are fractured as in judicial hanging. It may occur instantaneously or rapidly in cases of asphyxia, but usually in five to eight or ten minutes if the blocking of the air passages is partial only. Death is, as a rule, slow in cases of apoplexy.

**Treatment.**—The first and the most important thing to do is to let the individual down, and to remove constriction of the neck by cutting the ligature. Artificial respiration should then be used after pulling out the tongue, and wiping the froth from the mouth and nostrils. This may be supplemented by ammonia vapour to the nose and tickling the fauces. Cold affusion may be applied to the head, and the galvanic battery may be used if the body is warm but if the body is cold warmth should be restored by friction and mustard plaster on the chest, abdomen and calves. If the patient is able to swallow, stimulants should be given by the mouth, otherwise they should be given hypodermically or per rectum. It may be necessary to perform venesection to relieve distension of the right side of the heart and pulmonary circulation or cerebral congestion. The patient should be watched for some time after respiration has been established, as death may occur from a relapse of the symptoms.

The secondary effects of hanging in subjects, who have recovered, are, some times, hemiplegia, epileptiform convulsions, amnesia, dementia, bronchitis, haemoptysis, cervical cellulitis, parotitis and retropharyngeal abscess.

In August 1910 a Hindu woman, aged thirty who hanged herself while under the influence of opium was cut down. On the 3rd day she died of meningitis. On post mortem examination the brain and its meninges were congested and the lungs were congested and oedematous.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—These are external and internal.

**External Appearances**—External appearances are those due to the ligature on the neck and those peculiar to the mode of death.

**Ligature-Mark**—This depends on the nature of the ligature used, and the time of suspension of the body after death. If the ligature be soft and the body be cut down immediately after death, there may be no mark. Again, the inter-tension of a thick and long beard or clothes on the neck may lead to the formation of a slight mark only.

(1) *Situation of the Mark*—The mark is usually situated above the thyroid cartilage between the larynx and the chin, and is directed obliquely upward following the line of the mandible (lower jaw) and interrupted at the back, reaching the mastoid processes behind the ears. The mark may be found on or below the

thyroid cartilage especially in cases of partial suspension. It may also be circular if a ligature is first placed at the nape of the neck and then its two ends are brought horizontally forward and crossed and carried upward to the point of suspension from behind the angle of the lower jaw on each side. The mark will be both circular and oblique if a ligature is passed round the neck more than once.



Fig. 38.—Attempted Suicide by Hanging

and the head is always inclined to the side opposite to the knot. The face is usually pale and placid but may be swollen and congested if the body has been long suspended. The eyes are closed or partly open and the pupils are usually dilated. The tongue is drawn in or caught between the teeth or protruded and bitten. It is usually swollen and blue, especially at the base. Bloody froth is sometimes seen at the mouth and nostrils. Saliva is often found running out of an angle of the mouth down on the chin and chest. This is a sure sign of hanging having taken place during life, as the secretion of saliva being a vital function cannot occur after death. The hands are often clenched especially in violent hanging. Turgescence of the genital organs generally occurs in both sexes from hypostasis. Seminal fluid is sometimes present at the urethral meatus but it is not a diagnostic sign of hanging as it has often been observed by me in those who suddenly died from mechanical violence. Escape of urine and faeces is often found from relaxation of the sphincters. It is also of no diagnostic value as it is seen in other forms of death. Post mortem staining will be seen on the lower parts of the body if suspension has been continued for some time after death.

**Internal Appearances**—On dissection the subcutaneous tissue under the ligature mark is usually dry, white and glistening—more marked if the body

**Character of the Mark**—The mark varies according to the nature of the material used as a ligature and the period of suspension after death. It is a superficial and broad mark if a cloth or a soft rope is used while it is well defined narrow and deep if a firm string is used. The mark is a groove or furrow the base being pale, hard leather-like and parchment-like and the margins red and congealed. The colour becomes reddish brown or chocolate brown if seen after some hours of suspension. Ecchymoses and slight abrasions in the groove are rare but may be found in some cases e.g. in judicial hanging. Ecchymoses alone have no significance as to whether hanging was caused during life or not but abrasions with hemorrhage are strongly suggestive of it having taken place during life.

**Other Signs**—The neck is found stretched and elongated

**2 Whether the Hanging was Suicidal, Homicidal or Accidental—**  
 Hanging is usually suicidal. Of thirty two cases of hanging that came under my observation during a period of over six years thirty were suicidal. One was suspended after murder and in the other three was a presumption of homicide.



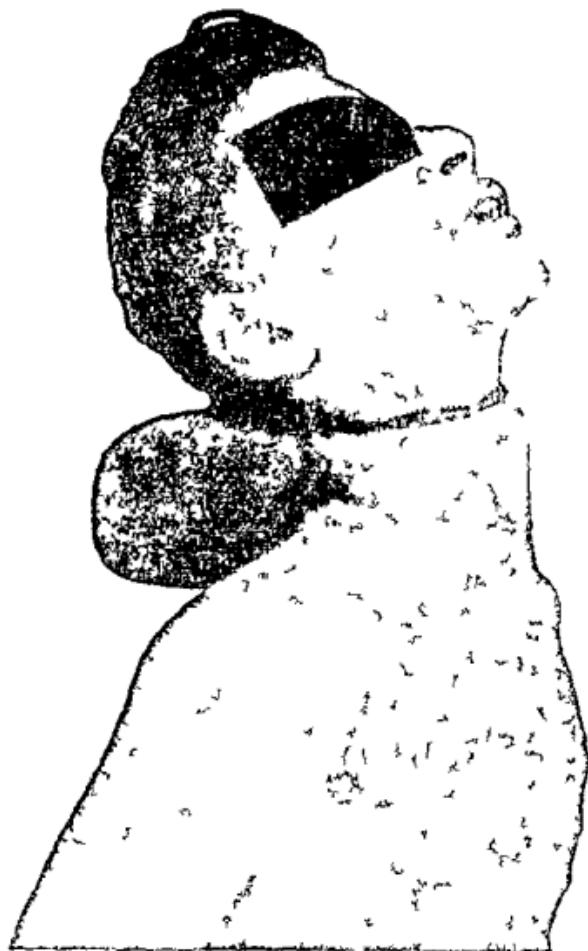
Blindness or age is no bar to suicidal hanging. A blind man of seventy five committed suicide by suspending himself from a branch of a tree in Lucknow. After chastisement or some other violence children are known to have committed suicide by hanging from shame or grief. A case occurred in Jubbulpore where a Muslim lad 12 years old, quarrelled with his elder brother one night and committed suicide by hanging himself from the ceiling of his house the next day.<sup>1</sup> In his annual report for the year 1939 the Chemical Examiner Madras also reports a case in which a girl aged ten years committed suicide by hanging. Sometimes hanging is adopted as a last resort after other forms of suicide e.g. cutting of the throat or ingestion of poison have failed.

2 On June 14, 1916, the body of a Santhal male, aged 54 years, was sent to Dr Gopi Ballabh Sahay, Civil Surgeon, Purulia, for post mortem examination with a history that the body was found hanging by a rope and that his wife stated that the deceased committed suicide by hanging. Autopsy revealed no external injury except a continuous ligature mark across the middle of the neck. The tissues under the ligature mark were infiltrated with blood. Another dry, interrupted ligature mark was noted in the upper part of the neck, but there was no change in the tissues under it. On further dissection extravasations of clotted blood were found in the subcutaneous tissues along the back of the left arm, both shoulder blades, back of the right fore arm, front of the chest, front of the right thigh, back of the left leg and right buttock. The windpipe was congested and contained the particles of undigested rice and dal as deep as the roots of the lungs, which were congested. He gave his opinion that the deceased was first belaboured with a blunt weapon on several parts of the body, and then an attempt was made to strangle him by passing a cord round the neck, but, before this was effective, he died of suffocation from food particles choking the windpipe. These were vomited and sucked in the air passages during a deep inspiratory effort. The dead body was then suspended by a rope to simulate suicide by hanging.

**Homicide.—1** A prisoner who had been sentenced to three years' hard labour was being brought from Seona to Patiala Central Jail escorted by an elderly police constable. On the way the prisoner struck the constable on the head with the handcuffs on his wrists with the result that he fell down unconscious. The prisoner then took the key of the handcuffs from the constable's belt and set himself free. He then tied a turban round the constable's neck and hanged him from a branch of a tree.—*Times of India, September 8, 1937*

2 A girl, aged 18, was found hanging from the parapet of a bridge over a stream in a kneeling posture. She was 3 ½ months pregnant. The girl was pregnant by a man aged 23, who had tried to poison her by the contents of a so called Indian "poison bladder" which contained in one 2 c.c. ampoule 0.3 gm. of hydrocyanic acid in solution. The girl inhaled the acid and immediately suffered from sickness and vomiting. The knot in the rope was made in the same way as that of the halter of the cows at the accused's home. The accused confessed that he had wound round the girl's neck the rope he had previously prepared and pushed her from the bridge and fastened the rope to the parapet.—W. Schonzacher, *Heitr Gerichtl Med*, 1931, XI, 48 53; abstr., *Deuts Zeits f d ges gerichtl Med*, 1932, LXIX, 27, *Med Legal and Criminology Rev*, Jan, 1933, p. 85.

by a cord after he has been strangled in a recumbent posture or if the victim was sitting and the assailant applied a ligature on the neck while standing behind him, thus using the force backward and upward. The base of the mark, which is known as a groove or furrow, is usually pale with reddish and ecchymosed margins. It becomes dry, hard and parchment like several hours after death, if the skin has been excoriated. Very often there are abrasions and ecchymoses in the skin adjacent to the mark. In some cases the mark in the neck may not be present at all or may be very slight if the ligature used is soft and yielding, and if it is removed soon after death.



auricle in front and a contusion of the right ventricle in the middle on its front. There was a laceration of the aorta at its commencement from the heart. There were five lacerations on the right lobe of the liver which was otherwise normal.

3 If a stick or a foot is used there is a bruise in the centre of the front of the neck generally across the windpipe corresponding in width to the substance used. There will be a similar mark on the nape of the neck if two sticks are used. In such a case severe local injury will be evident.



Fig. 13.—Strangling. Finger marks on the neck and face.

**Appearances due to Asphyxia**—The face is swollen and cyanosed and marked with petechiae. The eyes are prominent and open. In some cases they may be closed. The conjunctives are congested and the pupils are dilated. The lips are blue. Bloody sputum escapes from the mouth and nostrils and sometimes pure blood issues from the mouth, nose and ears especially if great violence has been used. The tongue is often swollen protruding and dark in colour and occasionally bitten by the teeth. The hands are usually clenched. The genital organs may be congested and there may be discharges of urine, faeces and seminal fluid.

**Internal Appearances**—There is an extravasation of blood into the subcutaneous tissues under the ligature mark or finger marks as well as in the adjacent muscles of the neck, which are usually lacerated. Sometimes there is laceration of the sheath of the carotid arteries as also of their internal coats with an effusion of blood into their walls. The cornua of the hyoid bone may be fractured but fracture of the cervical vertebrae is extremely rare.<sup>131</sup>

131 A Hindu male aged 40 years residing in Bulandshahar District was murdered by violent pressure on the neck in a chest. Among several injuries inflicted on the body there was an extensive bruising of the larynx and trachea with fracture of the right cornua of the hyoid bone.<sup>1</sup>

The hyoid bone was also fractured in the case of a boy 5 years old who was strangulated with a piece of cloth tied round the neck with two knots in it for the sake of gold and silver ornaments<sup>1</sup>

In a case of strangulation which occurred on the 16th September, 1917 I found a fractured dislocation of the first and second cervical vertebrae together with the usual cord mark. In addition to these injuries the right humerus, the left femur, and the first and second ribs of both sides were fractured. The fractured sloven of the spine was either caused by forcibly twisting the neck during the act of strangulation or by a violent blow with a blunt weapon across the nape of the neck.

In another case in which a man was murdered by a resure on his neck with a stout *lathi* the hyoid bone was fractured and the first and second cervical vertebrae were fractured and dislocated<sup>2</sup>

The larynx and trachea are congested and contain frothy mucus. The cartilages of the larynx or the rings of the trachea may be fractured, when considerable force is used.



Fig. 44.—Throttling. Effusion of blood in the epiglottis, larynx and soft tissues.

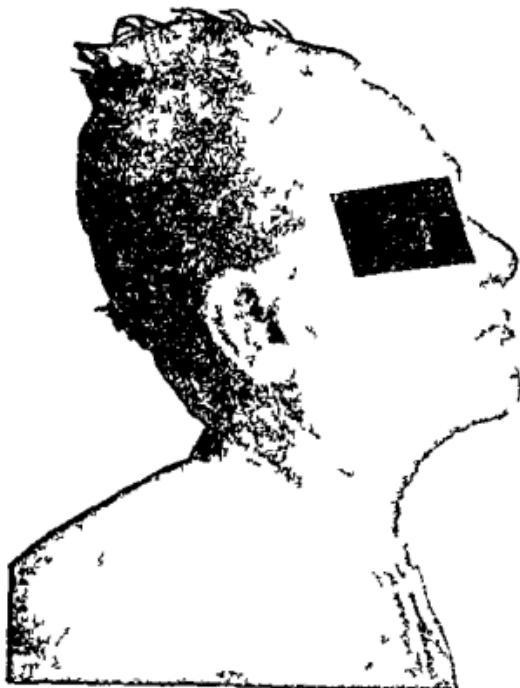
It should be noted here that the hyoid bone is not, as a rule, fractured by any other means than by strangulation, although the larynx and trachea may, in rare cases, be fractured by a fall. Junghuhel<sup>3</sup> reports the case of a labourer who fell from a roof and sustained a longitudinal fracture of the thyroid cartilage, a fracture of the left ramus of the mandible and a compound fracture of the left humerus. Chatterji<sup>4</sup> relates the case of a boy, aged 10, who fell from a chair, striking his neck against the back of the chair and sustained a small rupture at the posterolateral aspect of the trachea on the left side at its junction with the cricoid cartilage.

(c) The lungs are usually congested, showing the appearance of red hepatization and exuding dark fluid blood on section. They may show emphysematous patches on their surface due to the rupture of the air vesicles. The bronchial tubes usually contain frothy,

the neck even after death. A similar mark may be produced by a collar or neck band worn loosely round the neck when it compresses the tissues which are swollen and distended by putrefaction.

The natural folds of the skin especially of a stout person rarely produce marks on the neck which may look like those found after strangulation.

Abrasions and finger marks may be produced on the neck by a person gasping for air in an intoxicated condition or in an epileptic or hysterical fit.



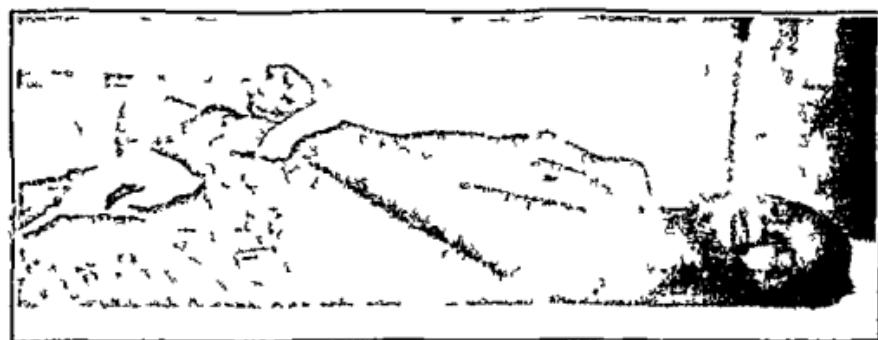
*Fig. 40.—Natural folds of the skin simulating ligature marks on the neck. (From a photograph lent kindlj b. Dr H. S. Mehta)*

To come to the conclusion that death was due to strangulation it is necessary therefore to note the effects of violence in the underlying tissues in addition to the ligature mark or bruise marks caused by the fingers or by the foot knee, etc. and other appearances of death from asphyxia. At the same time the possibility of other causes of death should be excluded.

**2 Whether the Strangulation was Suicidal Homicidal or Accidental**  
—Suicidal strangulation is not very common though sometimes met with. In these cases some contrivance is always made to keep the ligature tight after insensibility supervenes. This is done by twisting a cord several times round the neck and then tying a knot which is usually single and in front or at the side or back of the neck, by twisting a cord tightly by means of a stick stone or some other solid material or by tightening the ends of a cord by tying them to the hands or feet or to a peg in a wall or to a leg of a bed. In such cases injuries to the deep structures of the neck and marks of violence on other parts of the body are as a rule absent.

It is not possible for any one to continue a firm grasp of the throat after unconsciousness supervenes, hence throttling by the fingers cannot possibly be suicidal, although Binner<sup>1</sup> records the case of a woman aged 40, who committed suicide by throttling. She was suffering from melancholia and was found dead, crouched in her bed with both hands compressing her throat, the elbows were supported on the knees, and the back leaned against the wall, there were marks of her finger nails on both sides of the throat.

Homicidal strangulation is the commonest of the three forms. Usually there is a single turn of a ligature round the neck, with one or more knots. Sometimes there may be more turns, in which case more ligature marks will be found on the neck. In addition to the ligature mark or finger marks there is a probability of evidence of a struggle, and marks of violence on the other parts of the body.



*Fig. 4C.—Throttling. The woman was murdered by throttling after her hands and feet were tied together.*

A person may be first rendered helpless by being bound, or rendered unconscious by blows on the head or by intoxicating drugs, and then strangled by a small amount of compression. In some cases strangulation and suffocation by closure of the mouth and nostrils may both be attempted.

suicide A ligature is occasionally placed round the neck after throttling to simulate suicide but on removal of the ligature finger marks on the throat accompanied by injuries to the deeper structures will be visible thus suggesting murder

Lastly, it must be borne in mind that strangulation may be committed without any noise or disturbance even if other persons are in close vicinity they may not be aware of the act



*Fig. 1.—The noosed string ligation caused by the application to the neck of the jaw of a marking nut.*

An old woman was strangled in her shop by an apprentice in so short a time and in such a facely that her husband who was only separated from her by a small partition heard no noise or disturbance during the act.

Homicidal strangulation is sometimes feigned by an individual who wishes to bring a false charge against his enemy or wishes to exculpate himself after he

has embezzled some money entrusted to his charge Hysterical women sometimes feign it without any obvious motive whatsoever

On or about the 9th November, 1926 Mr. Masuman reported to the Sub Divisional Magistrate of Mohanlalganj District Lucknow, that her husband had attempted to murder her by strangulation. On examination I found bruise like marks on both sides of the front of the neck. The skin round about these marks was inflamed and covered with tiny blisters. She had similar marks on the palms and tips of the fingers. On further examination these were found to have been caused by the application of the juice of a marking nut (See Figure 4")

Accidental strangulation is rare, though it may occur, if a string used in suspending a weight on the back should slip from across the forehead and compress the neck. This is easy to conjecture, if the body has not been disturbed after death.

**Differences between Hanging and Strangulation**—The differences between hanging and strangulation are given below in a tabulated form —

Hanging	Strangulation
1 Mostly suicidal	1 Mostly homicidal
2 Ligature mark oblique non continuous placed high up in the neck between the clav and the larynx the base of the groove or furrow being hard yellowish parchment like	2 Ligature mark horizontal or transverse continuous low down in the neck below the thyroid the base of the groove or furrow being soft and reddish
3 Abrasions and ecchymoses round about the edges of the ligature mark rare	3 Abrasions and ecchymoses round about the edges of the ligature mark common
4 Subcutaneous tissues under the mark white hard and glistening	4 Subcutaneous tissues under the mark ecchymosed
Injury to the muscles of the neck, rare	5 Injury to the muscles of the neck common
6 Carotid arteries internal coats ruptured in violent cases of a long drop	6 Carotid arteries internal coats ordinarily ruptured
7 Fracture of the larynx and trachea very rare and that too in judicial hanging	7 Fracture of the larynx and trachea often found
8 Fracture-dislocation of the cervical vertebrae common in judicial hanging	8 Fracture dislocation of the cervical vertebrae rare
9 Scratches abrasions and bruises on the face neck and other parts of the body usually not present	9 Scratches abrasions and bruises on the face neck and other parts of the body, usually present
10 Face usually pale and no petechiae	10 Face congested livid and marked with petechiae
11 Neck stretched and elongated in fresh bodies	11 Neck, not so
12 External signs of asphyxia usually not well marked	12 External signs of asphyxia very well marked
13 Bleeding from the nose mouth and ears very rare	13 Bleeding from the nose mouth and ears may be found
14 Saliva running out of the mouth down on the chin and chest	14 Saliva no such running
15 Emphysematous patches on the surface of the lungs not present	15 Emphysematous patches on the surface of the lungs, may be present.

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

**Suicide — 1** A muddle aged woman was brought into the Hotel Dieu labouring under insanity. Soon after admission she strangled herself by passing a handkerchief twice round the neck and then tying it in front. The woman had lost four fingers of her right hand from an early period, and yet she managed to tie the kerchief round the neck with great firmness and dexterity — *Inn d Hyg*, 1837, 2, p 151; *Taylor, Prince and Pract of Med Juris*, 1d IV, Vol I p 643

**2** A Hindu lunatic in jail strangled himself by passing two or three coils of stout thread around his neck, attaching the ends securely to his wrists and then extending his arms to the utmost limit. This occurred during ten minutes when his attendant was absent — *Surgeon General Francis, Med Times and Gaz*, Dec 2, 1876 p 634

**3** A woman in Madras nearly succeeded in strangling herself by means of her long hair — *Clevers, Med Juris*, 1d III, p 580

**Homicide — I** quote the following cases from my note book —

**1** On October 14, 1912, a Hindu boy, aged 13 years resident of Agra was murdered for the sake of his gold ear-rings and a *dhoti* was tied round his neck. Autopsy revealed finger marks on both sides of the windpipe with ecchymosis of blood in the soft tissues and signs of asphyxia. In this case the Sub Inspector of Police propounded a very queer theory that the image of the murderer would have been impressed on the lenses, and he requested that the eye balls should be preserved. I need not say that he never came to trace the culprit by examining the eyes even though they had been preserved for six months.

**2** In December, 1917, Mt Munia, aged 60 years was said to have been dead of compression of the throat with pincers. On examination two bruises were seen on the front of the neck with an extravasation of blood underneath in the soft tissues, viz: one,  $1'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ , across the right side of the neck 2" to the right of the middle line, and the other,  $\frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ , across the left side of the neck 2" below the angle of the left lower jaw.

**3** On November 17, 1918 the body of a Hindu male, 30 years old was found tied up in a steel box lying near the Iron Bridge in Lucknow. At the post mortem examination the face was found flushed the eyes were closed and congested, and the lips were blue. A transverse brownish, hard and parchment like ligature mark  $\frac{1}{2}''$  broad was found encircling the neck and passing over the windpipe. There were abrasions about the margins of the mark. A similar mark  $5'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ , was detected across the left side of the neck above the first mark and a third mark  $2'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ , was seen 1" below the second mark. The larynx and trachea were congested. The lungs were congested and exuded dark, fluid blood on section. The left chamber of the heart was empty and the right was full of dark fluid blood. The body was identified to be that of a Brahmin of Hardoi by the head that had been preserved and four persons were prosecuted for having killed him by strangulation.

8 On the night of the 19th March 1920 Swami Kundana Nand Rishi about 50 years old was found murdered by compression of the throat by means of a heavy iron *belcha* 23" long and 3" to 4" in diameter. At the autopsy an incised wound,  $1\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1''$ , was found obliquely across the inferior jaw below the chin and exposing the bone. There were three bruises varying from 3" to 4" by  $\frac{1}{2}''$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}''$  across the upper part of the middle of the neck in front. There were some bruises on the face. The thyroid cartilage and the upper two rings of the trachea were fractured. There was also an effusion of clotted blood in the muscles of both sides of the neck in front.

9 At 11 a.m. on the 21st April 1926 I held a post mortem examination on the body of Mt. Miharania aged 40 years and resident of Police Station Mahhabad. Blood was issuing from the mouth and nostrils. There were small bruises with crescentic scratches on both sides of the throat. Three upper rings of the trachea were fractured.

10 On the morning of the 20th July 1927 the body of Mt. Sitala aged 70 to 75 years was found in her house by the Mukhya of her village in Police Station Goshainganj and it was believed that the deceased was strangled in the night by some one to take away her belongings. On examination on the next morning a bruise  $1\frac{1}{2}''$  by  $\frac{1}{2}''$ , was found along the front of the neck 1" to the right of the thyroid cartilage and four bruises varying from  $\frac{1}{2}''$  to 1" by  $\frac{1}{2}''$  to  $\frac{3}{4}''$ , with two crescentic nail marks were found obliquely across the left side of the neck  $1\frac{1}{2}''$  below the angle of the left inferior jaw and situated one below the other. The thyroid cartilage was fractured and the left cornu of the hyoid bone was dislocated.

11 On the 8th January 1932 I held a post mortem examination on the body of Mt. Patar Devi aged 25 years which was found lying in a park within the jurisdiction of Police Station Hazrat Ganj. The face was flushed. In addition to a reddish, transverse ligature mark  $\frac{3}{4}''$  broad encircling the neck over Adam's apple the following external injuries were found on the

## SUFFOCATION

**Definition** —The term suffocation, is applied to that form of death which results from the exclusion of air from the lungs by means other than compression of the neck.

**Causes** —The causes of suffocation are—

- 1 Smothering or closure of the mouth and nostrils
- 2 Obstruction of the air passages from within
- 3 Pressure on the chest
- 4 Inhalation of irrespirable gases

**1 Smothering or Closure of the Mouth and Nostrils** —Infants are often accidentally smothered by being overlaid by their mothers when they are drunk. This is more common among the lower classes of women in England. In India, such cases are rare, as infants are generally not allowed to sleep in the same bed with their mothers, but are placed in separate cradles; however they are, sometimes, smothered by inexperienced *girl mothers* who press them too closely to the breast when suckling. A common method of killing infants and children is to close the mouth and nostrils by means of the hand, bed clothes, soft pillows or mud.

Cases have been recorded of adults being accidentally smothered by plaster of Paris at the time of taking a cast or mould, or by falling face downwards into vomited matter, flour, cement, sand or mud, especially when drunk or during an epileptic fit.

**2 Obstruction of the Air-passages from within** —This may be due to—

(a) The presence of foreign bodies, such as a piece of meat, potato skin, fruit stone, corn, button, coin, cork, rag, India rubber teat, live fish, round worm, loose artificial teeth, mud, cotton leaves, etc.

It is not necessary that a foreign body should be of such a size as to block the air passages completely. Even a small object blocking the lumen partially may cause death by spasm.

On the 26th September, 1912 a Mahomedan girl about 10 years old was standing in a street in Agra with her infant sister one year old in her arms, when a boy playfully gave her a push from behind. The infant girl fell and died immediately. On post mortem examination a split gram (*chanchi dal*) was found to be obstructing the lumen of the larynx. It appears that the infant girl had a parched gram in her mouth at the time of the fall and it got into the larynx during the involuntary inspiratory movement.

Dr G. B. Sahay, Police Surgeon Patna described to me a similar case which occurred to him on the 12th September 1933. A male child 1 year old was playing alone on a verandah, while his mother was busy with her work in the house. All of a sudden the child shrieked became blue in the face and died in a few moments. The mother accused her neighbour of having practised witchcraft on the child but post mortem examination showed that the upper part of the windpipe was found clogged by a whole parched gram with marks of teeth bite.

On the 10th April 1929 a Hindu male, aged 60 to 65 years, died all of a sudden while trying to hire an *ekka* for proceeding to his house. At the post mortem examination I found a carious tooth lying in the glottis and death was caused by suffocation due to spasm of the glottis brought on by the tooth lying there.

Vomited matter may regurgitate into the larynx and, by inspiratory efforts, be aspirated into the smaller bronchi and cause suffocation. This is especially common in acute alcoholism and occasionally occurs during a fit of epilepsy or in a case of badly administered anaesthesia. It must be remembered that the contents of the stomach fall into the larynx and trachea after death owing to pressure of the gases of decomposition, but they cannot reach the smaller bronchi.

(b) Diseases, such as tumours pressing on some portion of the air passages, or a false membrane as in diphtheria, or oedema of the glottis, or effusion of blood from haemoptysis, epistaxis and wounds of the throat, or of pus from an abscess

in the tonsils or caseating glands ulcerating into the trachea. A foreign body in the pharynx or oesophagus may cause obstruction pressing on the windpipe from behind.

**3 Pressure on the Chest**—This may occur accidentally through the chest being pressed violently in crowds at big fairs or by being trampled upon in the rush of such crowds. Pressure on the chest may also occur in railway, motor car or other vehicular accidents or by burial under the debris of a falling wall or roof. Cases of compression of the chest homicidally are also met with in India.

**4 Inhalation of Irrespirable Gases**—Inhalation of gases such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulphide or smoke from a burning house will produce suffocation.

**Mode of Death**—Usually death is due to asphyxia but it may be due to shock when the heart stops by reflex action through the vagus nerves.

**Fatal Period**—Death occurs on an average from four to five minutes after complete withdrawal of air from the lungs although cases have occurred in which death was almost instantaneous when the windpipe was blocked by a foreign body. Recovery may occur if treated within four minutes.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—These appearances are external and internal.

**External Appearances**—These may be due to the cause producing suffocation or to asphyxia.

**Appearances due to the cause producing Suffocation**—In homicidal smothering effected by the forcible application of the hand over the mouth and nostrils bruises and abrasions are often found on the lips and angles of the mouth and alongside the nostrils. The inner surface of the lips may be found lacerated from pressure on the teeth. The nose may be flattened and its septum may be fractured from pressure of the hand but these signs are in my experience very rare. There may be bruises and abrasions on the cheeks and malar regions or on the lower jaw if there has been a struggle. Rarely fracture or dislocation of cervical vertebrae may occur if the neck has been forcibly wrenches in an attempt at smothering with the hand. No local signs of violence will be found, if a soft cloth or pillow has been used to block the mouth and nostrils.

In compression of the chest external signs of injury may not be present but the ribs are usually fractured on both sides. In homicidal compression of the chest brought about by the hands or knees of a murderer or by some other hard material bruises and abrasions symmetrical on both sides are usually found on the skin together with an extravasation of blood in the subcutaneous tissues. The ribs are also fractured symmetrically on both sides and the sternum is fractured though rarely.

lower margins of the lungs, and are characteristic of death by suffocation, though they may be present in asphyxiial deaths from other causes. They are also found on the thymus, pericardium, and along the roots of the coronary vessels. The lungs may be found quite normal if death has occurred rapidly. The right side of the heart is often full of dark fluid blood, and the left empty. The blood does not readily coagulate, hence wounds caused after death may bleed. The brain is generally congested, and so are the abdominal organs, especially the liver, spleen and kidneys.

#### **Medico-Legal Questions — These are—**

- 1 Whether death was caused by suffocation
- 2 Whether the suffocation was suicidal, homicidal or accidental
- 3 Whether Death was caused by Suffocation — Sometimes it is not easy to state whether death is due to suffocation, inasmuch as the signs of asphyxia may be altogether absent or these signs may be present in deaths from epilepsy, tetanus, or strychnine poisoning. To come to a definite conclusion it is therefore very essential to look for evidences of violence in the shape of external marks surrounding the mouth and nostrils, or on the chest, or the presence of foreign bodies in the throat. Again, it cannot be positively affirmed from the presence of Tardieu's spots that death occurred from suffocation since they are found in deaths from apoplexy, heart disease, pneumonia, etc.

Circumstantial evidence should always be taken into consideration to establish the proof of death from suffocation.

- 4 Whether the Suffocation was Suicidal, Homicidal or Accidental. — Suicidal suffocation is very rare, though a few cases of suicide among prisoners and insane persons have been recorded. They are said to have stuffed their throats with rags, pieces of blanket, hay, etc.

Homicidal suffocation is common and is usually resorted to in murdering infants and children by forcing mud, etc., down their throats or by smothering them by the hands, clothes, etc. In adults it is only possible if the victim is weak and feeble, or is unable to resist having been previously stupefied by intoxicating or narcotic drugs. Homicidal suffocation by pressure on the chest is sometimes resorted to in India, but in the case of adults it is often combined with smothering or throttling, and it is usually an act of more than one person. Burking is a method of suffocation adopted by Burke and his associate, Hare, for killing their victims. They used to throw their victims down on the ground, and kneeling on the chest, used to close the mouth and nostrils with one hand, and firmly hold the lower and upper jaws together with the other hand thus effectually blocking the air passages.

A form of homicidal suffocation practised in Northern India is known as "Bans dola," although it is not so common now as it used to be formerly. In this form the victim's chest is squeezed so forcibly between two strong wooden planks or bamboos, one being placed across the upper part of the chest and the other across the back of the shoulders, that the respiratory act is interferred with the muscles are lacerated and the ribs are fractured. If the force applied is very severe, the lungs may be crushed and lacerated.

Burying alive used to be resorted to in India as a form of punishment, and lepers used to be, sometimes, buried alive.

In the case of infants dying under suspicious circumstances and afterwards exhumed, a question may arise as to whether they had been buried alive. The presence of fine dust in the oesophagus and stomach is a convincing proof of the infant having been buried alive. In a burial after death fine dust may be found in the upper air passages, but not in the oesophagus or stomach.

Accidental suffocation is frequent and is produced as described above.

## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

**Suicide**—A middle aged man was brought to the workhouse by the police with a history of delusions. On examination no definite signs of insanity were found but it was thought desirable to keep him under observation. On the evening of the same day he suddenly became excited and violent and was therefore placed in a padded room. After a short time he quieted down and went off to sleep. At 9.20 p.m. he was found dead. Upon examination the body was found lying on its back with the arms outstretched. The face was placid, and no marked cyanosis was present; there was however lividity of the lips, ears and finger and toe nails. Inside the mouth a piece of flannel about 1" by 1", was found and behind this there were two similar strips. The last of these two was so firmly packed down over the epiglottis that it was withdrawn with some difficulty. He obtained these strips by tearing up his blanket and had evidently suffocated himself by picking them down his throat.—*J. Will Renton Brit Med Jour Feb 29 1908 p 43*

**Homicide**—The following are a few of the cases of homicidal suffocation that came under my observation—

1 A boy, 5 years old was murdered at Hardoi by his mouth being stuffed with leaves.

2 A Hindu boy about 14 years old was murdered by closure of the mouth and nostrils in a village of Police Station Molianalganj of District Lucknow. On examination of the body at noon on the 31st January 1919—48 hours after death—bruises were found across the tip of the nose and the lips. The larynx and trachea were congested and contained froth. The lungs were congested with sub-pleural ecchymoses.

3 A Hindu girl 16 years old was found dead in her house on the morning of March 26 1919. On examination it was found that she died of asphyxia due to suffocation caused by the blocking of the mouth and nostrils and by pressure on the windpipe and chest. The eyes were closed but congested. Frothy liquid was issuing from the nostrils. The lips were blue and several small bruises were seen about the angles of the mouth on both sides of the windpipe and on the right side of the upper part of the chest. There was an extravasation of blood in the soft tissues of the neck and on the right side of the chest under the bruises. The lining membrane of the larynx and trachea was congested and contained fine froth. The lungs were congested with patches of sub pleural ecchymosis and exuded dark fluid blood on section.

4 The body of Kalka Chaukidar of a village in Police Station, Banthra, was removed from a well and forwarded to the college mortuary. At the post mortem examination held on the 14th April 1919—about 60 hours after death—several small bruises were found on the face and on both sides of the throat. There were patches of extravasated blood in the soft tissues on both sides of the chest and the sternum was fractured transversely in its middle. The third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh ribs were fractured on both sides. Both the lungs were congested and lacerated at several places. Opinion. The deceased died of suffocation caused by pressure of the chest producing fractures of the ribs and lacerations of the lungs.

4 A semi circular and curved bruise 3" by  $\frac{1}{2}$ ", obliquely along the face extending between the left molar bone and the left angle of the mouth

5 Six bruises varying from  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to  $\frac{1}{2}$ " by  $\frac{1}{2}$ " on the left elbow

6 Two small abrasions on the right knee

The inside of the mouth and the lips were livid and congested. The lungs were congested and exuded dark frothy blood. There were patches of sub pleural ecchymosis on the pericardium and lungs. Death occurred from suffocation by closure of the mouth and nostrils.

**Accident — I** The body of a Hindu male 30 years old was brought to the Agra Medical School Mortuary on the 21st September 1910 with a police report that it was not known whether the deceased died from snake bite or had committed suicide. At the post mortem examination it was found that the man died of asphyxia by suffocation due to food accidentally getting in the larynx and trachea.

2 A Mahomedan male aged 25 was found dead in a street of Agra on the 23rd October 1918. Upon examination no external mark of injury was found on the body. The larynx and trachea were injected and particles of a whitish substance were found adherent to the mucous membrane. The lungs were engorged with dark blood and the finer divisions of the bronchi contained a whitish substance (not muco pus) similar to that found in the trachea. The stomach contained 14 ounces of whitish material similar to that found in the trachea and lungs. Death was due to suffocation brought about by particles of food accidentally getting aspirated into the trachea and bronchioles. The viscera were preserved but no poison was detected on analysis. There was a history of intoxication — *Agra Med Leg Post mortem Rep No 53*

3 On or about 8th April 1940 a Hindu female prisoner 25 years old who was pregnant got an attack of convulsions and died all of a sudden while she was cutting jokes with her fellow prisoners. At the post mortem examination the larynx and trachea were congested and their lumen was blocked by round worms. The lungs were congested. The pharynx was clogged by round worms and the stomach was full of undigested rice and contained four round worms. The uterus contained a four months fetus — *Case of Dr G B Saha, Police Surgeon Patna*

## DROWNING

**Definition —**Drowning is a form of death in which the atmospheric air is prevented from entering the lungs by submersion of the body in water or other fluid medium. It is not necessary that there should be complete submersion. Death is sure to occur, even if the face alone is submerged so that air is prevented from entering the respiratory orifices.

**Stages of Drowning —**When an individual in perfect possession of his senses falls into water, he sinks to a depth proportional to the momentum obtained during the fall but immediately rises to the surface owing to the struggling movements of his limbs though the specific gravity of the body is slightly higher than that of water. If he is not a swimmer, he cries and shouts for help when, his mouth being at the level of the water surface he draws water into the stomach and lungs. The water in the lungs excites coughing and during violent expiratory efforts due to cough, a certain amount of air is expelled from the lungs and its place is taken up by water which is drawn into the lungs. The weight of the body increases and he sinks. He rises again to the surface by the involuntary movements of his limbs, and draws more water into the lungs in an effort to keep above water, and consequently goes to the bottom. This alternate rising and sinking goes on longer than the proverbial three times, until all the air has been expelled from the lungs and its place has been taken up by water. He then becomes insensible and sinks to the bottom to die. Sometimes, convulsions precede death.

When an individual is rendered unconscious by shock or syncope at the time of immersion, he goes to the bottom, and may rise once to a certain height but usually sinks without a struggle. In such a case little water enters the respiratory tract.

**Symptoms —**The subjective symptoms felt by a drowning person are auditory and visual hallucinations and return to memory of past events, which had already been forgotten. In some cases there is mental confusion.

**Mode of Death—Asphyxia**—This is a common cause in the majority of cases, as water getting into the lungs gets churned up with air and mucus, and produces a fine froth which blocks the air vesicles

Occasionally, death may occur from asphyxia caused by laryngeal spasm set up by a small amount of water entering the larynx. In such a case water does not enter the lungs and the signs of drowning will be absent

**Shock**—This is brought about by fright or terror, or it may be caused during a fall, the water striking against the chest and pit of the stomach. Again, if water is very cold, it may induce shock through the recurrent laryngeal or trigeminal nerves, which reflexly inhibit the action of the heart and lungs. Shock may also be induced through the cutaneous nerves

**Concussion**—This may occur by falling into water on the head or buttocks from a height and striking against some hard solid substance or even against the water itself

**Syncope**—This may occur in persons suffering from epilepsy by falling suddenly into cold water

**Apoplexy**—Cerebral vessels especially if they happen to be diseased may be ruptured by a sudden rush of blood to the brain from cold, excitement, or the first violent struggles to keep above the surface of the water

**Exhaustion**—This results from continued efforts to keep above the surface of the water

**Injuries**—Fracture of the skull bones and fracture dislocation of the cervical vertebrae may result, if a man falling from a height into shallow water or into a narrow deep *pucca* well strikes his head forcibly against some hard solid substance

In August 1918 a Mahomedan girl 2½ years old fractured her right parietal and temporal bones by falling accidentally into a well

On January 10 1923, a Hindu male while jumping into a well with a view to committing suicide, struck his head against a wooden board fixed in the well about the surface of water. Autopsy revealed three contused wounds on the head and rupture of the left middle meningeal artery.

cold water to the face and chest, and by hypodermic injections of strychnine, atropine sulphate, adrenaline hydrochloride or coramine.

There are five methods of artificial respiration ; *t.i.z.*, (1) Schaefer's method (prone posture), (2) Sylvester's method, (3) Howard's method, (4) Marshall Hall's method, and (5) Laborde's method. But Schaefer's method is the best and simplest to perform, and has been recommended by the authorities of the Humanitarian Society of England.



Fig. 48.—Schafer's Method of Artificial Respiration. Expiration.



Fig. 49.—Schafer's Method of Artificial Respiration Inspiration.

It is carried out in the following manner :—

Lay the patient, face downwards, on the ground, with one arm stretched straight forward and the other bent under the head which is turned to one side. Place a folded piece of clothing under the lower part of the chest. Kneel either astride or by the side of the patient about the level of the hips, facing his head. Place the palms of your hands flat over the back on the lowest ribs, one on each side, and gradually throw the weight of your body forward, so as to produce firm pressure on the patient's chest. By this means, the air and water, if any, are driven out of the patient's lungs. Immediately thereafter raise your body slowly so as to remove the pressure, leaving the palms of the hands in position. Repeat this forward and backward movement from twelve to fifteen times per minute and continue it for at least an hour or until the natural respirations are restored.

After respiration has been established, the patient should be covered with warm blankets put to bed with hot water bottles at the sides and given a little brandy in warm water or warm milk if he can swallow it. The patient should be carefully watched for some time as after recovery, death may occur from exhaustion or pneumonia.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—These are the signs of asphyxia unless death occurred from shock, syncope or concussion supervening immediately upon submersion. The appearances are external and internal.

**External Appearances**—The clothes on the body are wet unless examined a long time after removal from water. The face is pale; the eyes are half open or closed; the conjunctive are congested and the pupils are dilated. The tongue is swollen and sometimes protruded.



Fig. 50.—Drowning. Trailing the nostrils.

rigor mortis of the muscle fibres of the *arrectores pilorum*, especially during winter. Moreover, *cutis anserina* is rarely seen in India as water, being usually warm, does not produce the contraction of the muscle fibres of the *arrectores pilorum*. Of 110 cases of drowning examined by me during a period extending over eight years I found marked *cutis anserina* only in 4 cases.



*Fig. 51.—Drowning : Froth at the nostrils coming out on compressing the chest.*

The penis and scrotum are found retracted and contracted, especially during winter, when water is cold. Casper<sup>1</sup> lays great stress on this point as a sign suggestive of death from drowning, but the penis may, sometimes, be found semi-erect, and the retraction and contraction of the genital organs may be encountered, if the body is thrown into water after death. The reverse condition of the genitals is usually found, if the body is taken out early, and if water is not cold ; hence in a tropical country like India no reliance can be placed on this sign.



*Fig. 52.—Opium Poisoning : Froth at the nostrils.*

Grass, gravel, sticks weeds, twigs or leaves may be found firmly grasped in the hands as the result of cadaveric spasm. The presence of this sign is indicative of death from drowning as it shows the struggle of the victim for his life. Mud or sand may be found under the finger nails, and abrasions, may, sometimes, be found on the fingers and toes.

On or about the 6th March 1906 a Hindu male aged 60 years was found drowned with shoes firmly grasped in his hands in the Jookrel Nala at Lucknow. It appears that he tried to ford the Nala with the shoes in his hands but was drowned on going into deeper water. Post mortem examination revealed the presence of water in the stomach and duodenum. The lungs were found bulky, oedematous and congested and on section frothy liquid blood poured out.



Fig. 53.—Corrugated skin of the feet in a body removed from a well.

The skin of the hands and feet shows a bleached, corrugated and sodden appearance, after the body has lain in water for ten to twelve or more hours. This condition of the skin is known as the *washerwoman's hand*. It proves only that the body has remained in water for some time without reference to the cause of death.

Post mortem lividity is most marked in the head, neck and chest, since blood gravitates to these places, which are usually the most dependent parts, when a body is immersed in water.

Rigor mortis appears early, especially when a violent struggle has taken place before death.

**Internal Appearances**—The brain is hyperæmic, and the vessels of its membranes are injected.

The lungs are distended like balloons, overlap the heart and protrude out of the thorax on laying it open by the removal of the sternum. They are often indented by the ribs, are heavy, oedematous and spongy to the feel, and pit on pressure with the finger. They are of a pale grey colour with reddish stains, and on section exude a large quantity of a frothy, bloodstained fluid. Minute, punctiform sub pleural and pericardial ecchymoses noted in other forms of asphyxia are seldom found in cases of drowning.

The larynx, trachea and bronchial tubes usually contain a fine, white froth and may contain some foreign matter, such as sand, mud or fragments of aquatic plants. Their mucous membrane is usually red and congested. Froth appears within two minutes of submersion and its quantity varies according to the length of submersion and the violent respiratory efforts. Particles of food may be found

regurgitated in the air-passages owing to the vomiting set up by the imbibition of water especially if the stomach was full at the time of drowning.

During putrefaction the watery fluid from the lungs may transude into the pleural cavities.

The heart presents the appearance usually found in death from asphyxia : the left side is usually empty, the right side is full, and the large veins are gorged with blood which is dark in colour and unusually fluid owing to admixture of water.

Alexander C. Gettler<sup>1</sup> suggests the determination of the chloride content in the blood of the right and left chambers of the heart as a specific test for drowning. This test is based on the fact that the water enters into the lungs during drowning, and dilutes the chloride content of the blood in the heart by osmosis. Normally the chloride content of the right and left chambers of the heart is almost the same, the greatest difference being 5 mg. in 100 c.c. of blood. In cases of drowning the difference is always much more than 5 mg., ranging from 19 to 294 mg. This difference depends on the amount of water going into the lungs, and also on the time interval between the entrance of water into the lungs and death. The longer this time interval, the more water passes to the left chamber of the heart. In cases where drowning occurs in salt-water, the left chamber of the heart shows a higher chloride content and in cases where drowning occurs in fresh water the left chamber shows a lower chloride content. It must be remembered that persons who die of shock immediately after submersion in water may not show this difference in the chloride content. It must also be borne in mind that water cannot get into the left side of the heart, if the body is thrown into water after death.

The presence in the stomach of a certain quantity of water is regarded as an important sign of death, particularly if the water possesses the same characteristics as that in which the body was found immersed, and contains sand, mud, algae, weeds, fine shells, etc. It is almost impossible for water to get into the stomach, if a body is submerged after death. In rare cases, it is possible that the water found in the stomach may have been drunk by the deceased immediately before submersion occurred. On the other hand, water may not be present in the stomach, if the person died from syncope or shock, or became unconscious immediately after falling into water, so that he could not struggle and swallow water in the act of drowning. There will also be no water in the stomach, if the body has undergone putrefaction for water, even if it is present in the stomach, is forced out by the pressure of the gases of decomposition. In Northern India, it is not usual to find water in the stomach, as the bodies taken out of water are brought to the Sadar mortuary in a more or less decomposed condition. In my experience at Agra and Lucknow I have found water in the stomach in about 30 per cent of cases of drowning.

The small intestine, especially the duodenum and jejunum and rarely the ileum, contain water mixed with mud, sand, etc. This sign is regarded as positive evidence of death by drowning, as the passage of water into the intestine is only due to the peristaltic movement, which is a vital act. But water is not always present in the intestine. I have found it in about 20 per cent of cases.

The liver is usually gorged with dark fluid blood, which pours out from the cut surfaces on an incision being made into its substance. The spleen and kidneys are dark in colour and deeply congested.

Water may be found in the middle ear on aspiration by a small pipette. It is possible for a small quantity of water to be forced into this cavity, especially in the violence and confusion of inspiration and swallowing in the process of drowning, when the mouth is full of water. It is impossible for water to force

its way into the middle ear after death, hence its presence is regarded as an important sign of drowning.

#### **Medico-Legal Questions—These are—**

- 1 Whether death was caused by drowning
- 2 Whether the drowning was suicidal, homicidal or accidental

**1 Whether Death was caused by Drowning**—In Northern India it is a common custom to throw dead bodies into running streams, and the fact of finding a dead body in water does not, therefore, lend one to presume that death was caused by drowning. Again, victims are often murdered or poisoned first and then their bodies are thrown into water to avoid the detection of crime. In my experience I have found that 21 per cent out of the bodies removed from water were such as were thrown into a well, pond, lake, canal or river after the deceased had been destroyed by wounds inflicted on the head or neck or by strangulation, suffocation, poisoning, etc. It is, therefore, very essential to examine the body carefully for the evidence of external and internal injuries—ante-mortem or post mortem—and for the signs of poisoning.

After excluding these possibilities, an opinion as to the cause of death from drowning should be given from a number of the following characteristic signs—

- 1 The presence of fine, white, lathery froth about the mouth and nostrils
- 2 The presence of some object firmly grasped in the hands
- 3 The presence of a fine, white froth in the air passages
- 4 The bulky and oedematous condition of the lungs which exude a copious, frothy, blood stained fluid on section
- 5 The presence of water, mud, weeds, etc., in the stomach or small intestine, or both
- 6 The presence of water in the middle ear

It must be remembered that these typical signs of drowning are seen only in the body of a drowned person when it is removed from water within a few hours after death and examined immediately. They are modified by the lapse of time and disappear altogether when the body is recovered from water after putrefaction is well advanced. Moreover, putrefactive changes in the body advance so rapidly after its removal from water that a short delay in holding a post mortem examination even of a recent case of drowning is likely to obliterate the signs to a great extent. In doubtful cases, where a definite opinion cannot be given, it is safer to preserve the viscera for chemical analysis.

**2 Whether the Drowning was Suicidal, Homicidal or Accidental**—In India, drowning occupies the first position of all the modes of committing suicide. In two hundred and thirty-one cases investigated by me during a period extending over eight years suicide was effected in the following modes—Drowning 90 (34 males, 56 females), Opium, 73 (55 males, 18 females), Irritant poison, especially arsenic, 30 (17 males, 13 females), Hanging 28 (13 males, 15 females), Cut throat, 6 (3 males, 1 female), Gunshot, 2 (1 male, 1 female), Burns, 2 females.

Females, even on the least provocation, commit suicide by jumping into a well or a tank in the neighbourhood of their house or village. Sometimes, a woman falls into water with her child. If she survives and the child dies she is tried under section 309, I.P.C., for the offence of having committed an attempt at suicide, and may be tried under section 302, I.P.C., for having committed the murder of her child, or under section 304 A, I.P.C., for causing the death of her child by negligence.

A case occurred at Agra where a woman jumped into a well with a view to committing suicide together with her daughter 3 years old. She was saved but her daughter died. During the

trial the woman put up a very ingenious plea of defence that while playing in the vicinity of the well her daughter climbed up its parapet and fell down accidentally to rescue her she at once plunged into the well but could not save her daughter The plea was however not accepted by the court as the parapet was too high for the child to climb and the woman was sentenced to death under section 302 I P C<sup>1</sup>

A woman who was harassed and ill treated by her husband in a fit of disappointment and annoyance jumped into a well with the object of drowning herself At the time when she jumped into the well she had her child tied at her back but she was not conscious of the fact and the result was that although she escaped the child died It was held that the woman was guilty of attempting to commit suicide that it could not be said that her act came within the purview of clause 4 of section 300 of the Indian Penal Code and that therefore she was guilty of a negligent omission that is the omission to put the child down before jumping into the well and that the death of the child having been caused by such negligence the accused was guilty of the offence under section 304 A, I P C<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes suicides tie their hands or feet together or attach heavy weights to their person before jumping into water Dr Godfrey Carter records the case of a man who bound himself with a rope in a way that completely inhibited the movement of his arms and legs and then threw himself in a canal a few miles from his house In such cases it would be necessary to determine whether the knots or folds of the rope or ligature were such as could have been made by the suicide himself For a murderer often ties the hands and feet of his victim before he throws him into water

Injuries are generally absent but they may be found on the body coming accidentally into violent contact with a hard substance during a fall Rarely, suicides inflict severe wounds upon themselves either by a cutting weapon or by a firearm before they take the fatal jump into water

Homicidal drowning is rare except in the case of infants and children It is a common practice to rob children of their ornaments and then to throw them into a well or a tank It is not possible to throw an adult of average strength and in full possession of his senses into water so as to drown him unless he is attacked unawares or he has been previously stupefied by some narcotic drug In the case of *Rex v George Joseph Smith* (popularly known as 'the brides of the bath') Joseph Smith was convicted in 1915 of the offence of having committed the murder of three women by drowning them in a bath a few days after he had married each During the trial it was proved from the experiments carried out by Inspector Neil in full as well as empty baths that it was possible to submerge an unsuspecting person all of a sudden into a bath and to keep the head under water for five or ten minutes for death to occur without producing any injury on the head or body Under the circumstances the person would be unable to offer any resistance as unconsciousness would supervene immediately by sudden submersion when water would rush up the nose

Accidental drowning is not uncommon in India It occurs occasionally among swimmers due to their rashness in swimming but it occurs mostly in non swimmers who venture to go beyond their depth in the sea rivers canals lakes etc It also occurs among persons at bathing places while bathing in deep water In such cases the body is usually naked with only a loin cloth having no weight attached to it Females may fall accidentally into a well while drawing water from it It must be remembered that before jumping into water with a view to committing suicide an Indian woman generally tucks up the lower ends of her garments and passing them between her legs fastens them at the loins so that the garments may not be dishevelled and expose nakedness after death when the body comes up to the surface

<sup>1</sup> *K D v Supadi Bomba* High Court Cr Appeal No 14 of 1925 26 Crim Law Jour, Aug 1925 p 1016  
<sup>2</sup> *Brit Med Jour* Aug 13 1922 p 721

Children may also accidentally fall into ponds or lakes while playing near their banks. They may even fall accidentally into domestic vessels of water, such as buckets, wash tubs, etc.

Accidental drowning in shallow water is very rare except when the individual happens to be intoxicated, insane or epileptic.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

**Suicide in Shallow Water.**—A male inmate in a lunatic asylum in the neighbourhood of Glasgow committed suicide by submerging his head in a sink filled with water. The Medical Superintendent found the upper part of his chest resting against the front of the sink, the head sunk just under the level of the brim of the basin and the legs bent under the body, but the knees were not touching the floor.—*Glaister, Med Juris and Toxic*, Ed II, p 156.

**Homicidal Drowning—Weeds in the Air Passages.**—The body of a child was discovered in a tank at a considerable distance from his own house. At the post mortem examination the fauces, larynx and trachea contained small portions of green vegetable matter, and the right bronchus was almost completely filled with a large piece of an aquatic weed doubled together. It was afterwards proved distinctly that no weed of this type grew in the tank where the body was found. Further inquiry led to the discovery that the boy's body had been found by a woman in a tank near his home, in which similar weeds grew abundantly. This woman had conveyed the corpse to the more distant tank which belonged to a person against whom she had a grudge.—*Chevers Med Juris* Ed III, p 644.

**Accidental Drowning in Shallow Water.**—1 On October 81, 1920, a British soldier was found drowned in a shallow *nala* (ditch) near the second Rajput Lines, Lucknow Cantonment. The face was submerged but most of the body was above the surface of water. The deceased had been drinking and was on the verge of delirium tremens.

2 (a) One Patu aged 20 who had been liable to epileptic fits, went to work in some muddy rice land on May 14 1890. An hour later he was found dead, lying with his face downwards in a shallow pool. The water was so shallow that his mouth, nose and the right side of his face were immersed the left eye and side of the face being above the surface. The rest of his body from the neck downwards was on dry ground. At the post mortem examination the mouth, nasal cavities and air-passages contained mud and green water weeds.

(b) One Muzli aged 26 an epileptic subject, was found dead face downwards in an almost dry drain on August 23 1890. Water was two inches deep except at a depression where it was three inches and a half and where the head was lying. Upon dissection the air-passages contained sand and muddy water with a few blades of grass.—*Powell, Ind Med Gaz*, Aug, 1897, p 300.

## CHAPTER VIII

### DEATH FROM STARVATION COID AND HEAT STARVATION

Starvation or inanition results from the deprivation of a regular and constant supply of food, which is necessary to keep up the nutrition of the body. Starvation is regarded as *acute* when the necessary food has been suddenly and completely withheld and *chronic* when there is a gradual deficient supply of food.

**Symptoms**—In the protracted absence of food the acute feeling of hunger lasts for the first thirty to forty eight hours and is succeeded by pain in the epigastrium relieved by pressure and accompanied by intense thirst. After four or five days of starvation general emaciation and absorption of the subcutaneous fat begin to occur. The eyes appear sunken and glistening, the pupils are widely dilated, and the bony projections of the face become prominent. The lips and tongue are dry and cracked, and the breath is foul and offensive. The voice becomes weak, faint and inaudible. The skin is dry, rough, wrinkled and baggy, emitting a peculiar, disagreeable odour. The pulse is usually weak and frequent but sometimes becomes slow. The temperature is usually subnormal, the diurnal variation reaching  $3.28^{\circ}\text{F}$  instead of  $0.3^{\circ}\text{F}$  to  $1^{\circ}\text{F}$  as in the normal body. The abdomen is sunken and the extremities become thin and flaccid with loss of muscular power. There is at first constipation, the motion being dry and dark but later towards death diarrhoea or dysentery generally supervenes. The urine is scanty, turbid and highly coloured. The loss of weight is most marked and constant. According to Chossat the loss of two fifths or forty per cent of the body weight ordinarily ends in death.<sup>1</sup> The intellect remains clear till death though in some cases delusions and hallucinations of sight and hearing may be met with. Occasionally delirium and convulsions or coma precede death. It should be remembered that in cases where there is a gradual deprivation of food death may occur after a prolonged period from some intercurrent disease.

**Fatal Period**—Death occurs in ten to twelve days if both water and food are totally deprived. If food alone is withdrawn life may be prolonged for a long period say from six to eight weeks or even more since some Jain Sadhus are reported to have fasted for two to three months without taking anything but boiled water. It is reported that Professor Bhansali fasted for sixty two days from November 11, 1942 to January 11, 1943. During the first fifteen days of his fast he took neither food nor water and walked about ninety miles. During the remaining period of forty seven days he took only water. His weight was 116 lbs before he started the fast and was 63 lbs three days before he broke his fast. Mayor Mc Swiney abstained from food in Brixton prison for seventy five days before he died while Jatindra Nath Das, the accused in the Lahore conspiracy case died in Borstal jail after sixty one days hunger strike. This is however, influenced by certain conditions such as age, sex, condition of the body and its environments.

**Age**.—Children suffer most from want of food. Old people require less nourishment than young adults and can therefore stand the deprivation of food better but not for a longer period owing to the weakening of their vital functions.

**Sex**.—Females can withstand starvation for a longer period than males as they have a relatively greater amount of adipose tissue in their bodies and ordinarily consume less food.

**Condition of the Body**.—Fat stored up in the body is utilized as food for the maintenance of life during starvation. It is therefore natural that fatty, healthy people are likely to endure the withdrawal of food better and longer than thin lean and weakly persons.

daughters in law to death. Two such cases came to my notice at Agra. Both were sisters and were married in the same house. They were seven and eleven years old respectively, were burnt at several places and were not given sufficient food, until they died from inanition. The Bombay Children Act, 1924, as modified upto the 15th December, 1928, provides that whoever having the actual charge of or control over a child or young person abandons, exposes or wilfully neglects or ill treats such child or young person in a manner likely to cause such child or young person unnecessary suffering or injury to his health shall be punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to two hundred rupees or with both. For the purpose of this section injury to health includes injury to, or loss of, sight or hearing and injury to limb or organ of the body and any mental derangement, and a parent or other person legally liable to maintain a child or young person shall be deemed to have neglected him in a manner likely to cause injury to his health if he wilfully fails to provide adequate food, clothing, medical aid or lodging for the child or young person (*Vide Part III, Section 9*). According to this Act a "child" means a person under 14 years, and a "young person" means a person who is 14 years of age or upwards but under the age of 16 years.

Accidental starvation may occur during famines, among shipwrecked seamen and persons entombed in mines, pits by falls of rock or wreckage by a bomb attack. It may also occur from obstruction to the passage of food into the stomach from disease such as ankylosis of the jaws, stricture or cancer of the oesophagus or stomach, etc.

### COLD

Children and old persons having little reserve of thermotactic power are very susceptible to the bad effects of cold. Individuals whose vitality has been lowered from fatigue want of food, indulgence in alcoholic drinks and previous ill health are less able to withstand the effects of cold than healthy, well nourished adults of temperate habits. Owing to a greater deposit of subcutaneous fat—a non conducting material—women are likely to endure cold longer and better than men. Dry cold is less harmful in its effects than moist cold air.

**Symptoms—Local**—These appear on the skin in the form of erythematous patches, called frost bites (frost erythema) and chilblains produced by constriction of the cutaneous vessels which deprives the tissues of their nourishment. The exposed parts, such as the ears, nose, fingers and toes, are usually affected. The condition of frost bite being a vital action can never be produced after death.

**General**—There are no bad effects from moderate cold. On the contrary, it invigorates the body, and produces appetite and hunger, but exposure to severe cold continued for a long time produces deleterious effects, especially if a person is not properly clothed to keep up the body heat, and does not get sufficient food or exercise. The skin becomes pale and numb, sometimes it assumes a dusky reddish and livid hue, with the formation of vesicles. The muscles become so stiff, rigid and heavy, that the patient is unable to move or raise his limbs. This condition is followed by general lethargy, drowsiness and inclination to sleep which, if not controlled, passes gradually into stupor, coma and ultimately death. Sometimes, convulsions, hallucinations and delirium occur before death.

**Cause of Death**—Death occurs from a lesser supply of oxygen to the nervous centres and tissues, as haemoglobin is unable to part with it at a lower temperature.

**Treatment**—This consists in covering the patient with woollen garments and placing him immediately in a warm bed. Hot water bottles should be applied to the surface, and the warmth of the body should be gradually restored by rubbing the limbs with flannel or hot towels. Hot coffee or tea and other stimulants, such

**Environment of the Body** —The effects of starvation are not felt very much so long as the body temperature is maintained by suitable clothing. Exposure to cold tends to shorten the period of life. Exposure to excessive heat also accelerates the onset of death if a sufficient quantity of water is not available. Starvation is well borne by those persons in whom the activity of their vital functions is lowered, as in the cataleptic. On the other hand, active physical exertion during starvation hastens death.

**Treatment** —In persons suffering from prolonged starvation the digestive processes have become very feeble, hence caution should be observed in the administration of food. Solid food should not be given at once, as it is likely to set up an attack of serious indigestion and even death. It is advisable to give at first sips of hot water and then to add gradually small quantities of milk. Feeds should consist of small quantities at a time, and should be repeated at frequent intervals. The simplest and most easily digestible liquid foods should be given and solid foods should be added gradually and with care, when the stomach has regained the digestive power. Warmth of the body should be maintained by the application of hot water bottles, and by rubbing the surface gently with stimulating lotions. Diffusible stimulants may be given hypodermically or by the mouth.

**Post-mortem Appearances** —**External** —The body is greatly emaciated and emits a disagreeable offensive odour. The eyes are dry, red and open, the eyeballs being sunken. The cheeks and temples are hollow. The tongue is dry and coated. The skin is dry and shrivelled, and is, sometimes, excoriated or ulcerated. Bed sores are often present. The muscles are pale, soft and wasted, and fat is almost completely absent in the subcutaneous and intracellular tissues as well as in the omentum, mesentery, and about the internal organs, although some fat may be present in cases where death has occurred rapidly from the sudden withdrawal of both food and water. It should also be remembered that the entire absence of fat throughout the body is never seen in wasting diseases, such as tuberculosis.

mucous membrane was rough corrugated and congested at places. The small intestine was shrunken and empty. The mucous membrane was pale except at the lower part where it was congested. The large intestine contained dry faecal matter in its lower part. The liver was small weighing 44 ounces. The spleen was shrunken and weighed 3 ounces. The kidneys were congested each weighing 2 ounces. The gall bladder contained dried bile and the urinary bladder was empty.

### Medico-Legal Questions — These are—

- 1 Whether death was caused by starvation
- 2 Whether the starvation was suicidal, homicidal or accidental

**1 Whether Death was caused by Starvation** — One must always bear in mind that there are certain pathological conditions viz the malignant disease of the alimentary canal, progressive muscular atrophy, Addison's disease diabetes mellitus and tuberculosis, which lead to progressive wasting and emaciation of the body. It is therefore very necessary to examine carefully all the internal organs, and to search for the existence of any of these diseases while holding a post mortem examination before one can give the opinion that death occurred from starvation. In the Penge murder case of 1877 in which Louis Staunton Patric Staunton Mrs Patrick Staunton and Alice Rhodes were sentenced to death for having killed by starvation one Harriet Staunton aged 35 the wife of the first named accused in agitation was started later in the medical press that death was not due to starvation, but was due to tuberculosis as at the post mortem examination a slight deposit of a tubercular substance was found on the membranes of the brain and there was also a tubercular deposit about 2 inches square at the apex of the left lung. It was also urged that the post mortem examination had not been thorough, inasmuch as the urine had not been examined for the presence of sugar nor had the oesophagus and suprarenal glands been examined. These criticisms led the Home Secretary to re-open the case. A free pardon was granted to Alice Rhodes and the sentence passed on the three Staughtons was commuted to penal servitude for life. Dr Halliday Sutherland<sup>1</sup> reviewed this case before the Medico Legal Society, London at their meeting held on the 15th February, 1921 and proved from the medical evidence given during the trial that death was due to starvation.

**2 Whether the Starvation was Suicidal, Homicidal or Accidental** — Suicidal starvation is rare though it may be seen among lunatics or prisoners who may go on "hunger strike". In this connection it must be remembered that the forcible feeding of prisoners when they refuse to take any food on account of passive resistance is not an assault but is quite lawful.

In India sometimes young hysterical women imagine that they are possessed by deities, and say that they can live without food for a prolonged period or they do so to practise deception on their friends and relatives. When people watch them, the fraud is exposed, but in some cases they actually abstain from food, and prefer to die rather than that their imposture should be detected. Persons watching them must be very careful as they are criminally responsible for abetting suicide, if death results from this enforced fasting.

Bai Prembai a Hindu woman of Bombay, who professed to live without food and to pass neither urine nor faeces, undertook to allow a watch to be kept upon her movements. A committee of medical men and one lady doctor undertook this duty and selected eight nurses to conduct the watch. After four days watching a packet of food was found to have been concealed upon her person and she was exposed — *Barry Legal Med Vol II p 244*

Homicidal starvation is met with in the case of old helpless, or feeble-minded persons and children or infants. Illegitimate infants are, sometimes, done to death by depriving them of proper food, and at the same time exposing them to cold. Rarely, mothers in law in the lower classes in India starve their little

<sup>1</sup> *The Transactions of the Medico-Legal Society Vol IV, p 44*

daughters in law to death. Two such cases came to my notice at Agra. Both were sisters and were married in the same house. They were seven and eleven years old respectively, were burnt at several places and were not given sufficient food, until they died from inanition. The Bombay Children Act 1921 as modified upto the 15th December, 1928 provides that whoever having the actual charge or control over a child or young person abandons exposes or wilfully neglects or ill treats such child or young person in a manner likely to cause such child or young person unnecessary suffering or injury to his health shall be punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to two hundred rupees or with both. For the purpose of this section injury to health includes injury to or loss of, sight or hearing and injury to limb or organ of the body and any mental derangement and a parent or other person legally liable to maintain a child or young person shall be deemed to have neglected him in a manner likely to cause injury to his health if he wilfully fails to provide adequate food clothing medical aid or lodging for the child or young person (*Vide Part III Section 9*). According to this Act a 'child' means a person under 14 years, and a 'young person' means a person who is 14 years of age or upwards but under the age of 16 years.

is strychnine, digitalis and alcohol should be administered. Laematsu of warm normal saline are very beneficial. It may be necessary to treat nephritis and other inflammatory conditions if they arise after the reaction has set in.

**Post-mortem Appearances—External**—The surface of the body is usually pale marked with irregular dusky red patches of frost erythema especially on the exposed parts such as the tips of the fingers and toes, nose lips and ears. These do not appear on the dependent parts as in post mortem staining. Rigor mortis is slow to appear and hence lasts longer. If a body buried in snow is found in a condition of commencing decomposition, death is very likely not from cold which prevents decomposition.

**Internal**—The brain is congested with effusion of serum into its ventricles. The heart contains fluid blood in both the chambers. The lungs and other organs are congested. Owing to the combination of oxygen with haemoglobin the blood is bright red in colour except in the heart where it appears dark when viewed *en masse*.

**Medico Legal Aspect**—Death from cold is mostly accidental though very rare in India. Drunkards may be found dead in streets when exposed to cold on a wintry night. Death from cold may form a case for medico legal enquiry as a newly born infant is sometimes murdered by exposure to cold by depriving it of the necessary clothes. Questions of responsibility as to homicide may arise in cases where insane aged sick or wounded persons have died from exposure to cold.

A newly born male infant two or three days old was found dead from exposure at night in the compound of a bungalow at Agra.

## HEAT

The effects produced by exposure to excessive heat may be considered under the following three types—

- 1 Heat exhaustion
- 2 Heat hyperpyrexia (heat stroke or sun stroke)
- 3 Heat cramps

Exposure to the direct rays of the sun is not necessary. An individual may be affected while working in a closed hot and badly ventilated room or factory especially when the high atmospheric temperature is combined with marked humidity. Ill nourished over exertion to a fatiguing point such as long marches over indulgence in alcohol mental depression vomiting diarrhoea miasma and other fevers predispose to the attack.

**1 Heat Exhaustion**—The attack may come on suddenly or gradually. In a sudden attack the patient falls down and dies immediately or within a short period. When the attack is gradual the first symptoms are giddiness nausea headache of a throbbing character dim vision with dilated pupils insomnia and frequency of micturition. Collapse then supervenes with a subnormal temperature rapid and feeble pulse and sighing respirations. Death occurs from heart failure or reaction sets in after some time followed by recovery. Throughout the course, consciousness is as a rule not lost.

**2 Heat Hyperpyrexia (Heat stroke or Sun Stroke)**—The symptoms supervene all of a sudden in a person exposed to very great heat in the summer months especially if he has been fatigued by prolonged and extreme exertion but in some cases prodromal symptoms such as a feeling of heat headache giddiness nausea and vomiting may be experienced. Insensibility soon sets in and the patient may be struck down with a temperature of  $104^{\circ}\text{F}$ . The temperature rapidly rises very high even upto  $112^{\circ}$  or  $115^{\circ}\text{F}$  and the skin is hot and dry.

The face is flushed and the pupils are first dilated and insensitive to light, but become contracted towards death. The pulse is full and bounding and the respirations are hurried and stertorous. The urine which is usually offensive contains indican. Death may occur from syncope but usually results from asphyxia and coma followed often by convulsions and delirium. The shortest fatal period is five minutes<sup>1</sup> it may be prolonged to three days.<sup>2</sup>

**After Effects**—After recovery from heat hyperpyrexia the patient becomes very susceptible to variations of temperature and usually complains of headache loss of memory mental confusion and nervous irritability. Sometimes the patient may suffer from epilepsy or insanity for the rest of his life.

**3 Heat Cramps**—These occur among workers especially ship stokers who work in hot atmospheres and perspire profusely. The cramps are caused by loss of sodium chloride in the blood due to excessive sweating. They are very severe and painful and affect the muscles of the arms legs and abdomen.

**Treatment**—In heat exhaustion give a hot bath and rub the body with hot towels or apply mustard plaster to the precordium and to the soles of the feet if the temperature is below normal. Administer enemata of hot normal saline containing alcohol or some other stimulant. Give without delay hypodermic injections of ether camphor in oil strychnine digitalis or ammonia. Administer chloroform inhalation or morphine hypodermically for convulsions.

Mrs Fulham so simulated heat apoplexy in her husband by the judicious administration of poison (a mixture of belladonna or atropine and possibly cocaine) that the medical officers of the military hospital at Meerut were completely deceived and they treated him as a case of sun stroke. It may be mentioned that at the time some fatal cases of sun stroke had already occurred in the military hospital, and the knowledge of these cases led Mrs Fulham to write to Clark at Agra to send her some poison which, when administered to her husband, would produce symptoms simulating sun stroke. A book of medical jurisprudence found in the possession of Clark at the time of his arrest was brought to me during the course of the trial at Agra. The symptoms described under certain poisons, such as arsenic, belladonna, cocaine, gelsemium, etc., had all been underlined with red pencil suggesting that he had made a special study of these poisons, most of which were alleged to have been administered to Mr Fulham on different occasions.

## CHAPTER IX

### DEATH FROM BURNS SCALDS LIGHTNING AND ELECTRICITY BURNS AND SCALDS

**Definition** —Burns are injuries produced by the application of flame, radiant heat or some heated solid substance to the surface of the body. Injuries caused by friction, lightning electricity, X rays and corrosive chemical substances are all classified as burns for medico-legal purposes.

Scalds are injuries produced by the application to the body of a liquid at or near its boiling point, or in its gaseous form such as steam.

Scalds are usually *not so severe as burns* as the liquids producing them run off the surface of the body and rapidly cool on account of their evaporation but they resemble burns very much in severity, when produced by oils or other sticky substances which boil at a much higher temperature than water. Scalds produced by molten metals cause great destruction of the tissues as they adhere to the parts struck.

Burns resulting from X rays are generally due to faulty exposure and vary from mere redness of the skin to dermatitis with shedding of the hair and epidermis and pigmentation of the surrounding skin. Severe exposure may produce vesicles or pustules which often form sloughing ulcers after they have burst and take a long time to heal. The cicatrix formed is radiate in shape with the surrounding skin marked with pigmentation or permeated with numerous capillary vessels. Persons employed in the X ray department and constantly exposed to the influence of the rays have, sometimes suffered from chronic, intractable dermatitis and cancer of the parts exposed. Burns caused by radium are very similar to X ray burns. The chemical rays of light, e.g., ultra violet rays, may produce erythema of the exposed part, or acute eczematous dermatitis. These burns are rarely seen now, as the operator uses special protective measures for himself and for his patient.

Burns produced by chemical corrosive substances such as strong acids and caustic alkalies are usually uniform in character and the resulting eschars are soft and moist, and readily slough away. In these burns the red line of demarcation is absent the hairs are not scorched nor are the vesicles formed. But Greek fire which is formed by dissolving phosphorus in carbon bisulphide produces reaction by the rapid oxidation and burning of the phosphorus.

The characteristic stains found on the skin and clothing usually assist in determining the nature of the corrosive used. Chemical analysis of the clothing is also of importance in establishing the identity of the substance used.

These burns do not, as a rule result in death but may constitute grievous injuries involving loss of sight or permanent disfigurement from unsightly scars on the head or face.

**Classification of Burns** —Dupuytren has classified burns into the following six degrees according to the nature of their severity —

**First Degree** —This consists of erythema or simple redness of the skin caused by the momentary application of flame or hot solids or liquids much below the boiling point. It can also be produced by mild irritants. The redness and swelling of the skin marked with superficial inflammation usually disappear in a few hours but may last for several days when the upper layer of the skin peels off. At any rate, they disappear after death due to the gravitation of blood to the dependent parts. There being no destruction of the tissue, no scar results from this kind of burn.

**Second Degree**—This comprises acute inflammation and formation of vesicles produced by the prolonged application of flame, liquids at a boiling point, or solids much above the boiling point of water. Vesicles can be produced by the application of strong irritants or vesicants, such as cantharides. Vesicles may also be produced on the part of the body which is allowed to soak in a decomposing fluid such as urine or faeces, and subject to warmth, especially in the case of a patient who is bedridden from some nervous disease or old age, and is not properly nursed. If burns are caused by flame or a heated solid substance, the skin is blackened, and the hair singed at the seat of lesion, which assumes the character of the substance used. No scar results as only the superficial layers of the epithelium are destroyed. Some slight staining of the skin, however, may subsequently remain.

**Third Degree**—This refers to the destruction of the cuticle and part of the true skin, which appears horny and dark, owing to its having been charred and shrivelled up. The nerve endings are exposed in this form of burn and hence it is the most painful. This leaves a scar, but no contraction as the scar which forms after healing, contains all the elements of the true skin and consequently the integrity of the part is retained.

**Fourth Degree**—This means the destruction of the whole skin. The sloughs which form are yellowish brown and parchment-like, and separate out from the fourth to the sixth day, leaving an ulcerated surface, which heals slowly, forming a scar of dense fibrous tissue with consequent contraction and deformity of the affected parts. On account of the complete destruction of the nerve endings this kind of burn is not very painful.

**Fifth Degree**—This includes the penetration of the deep fascia and implication of the muscles, and results in great scarring and deformity.

**Sixth Degree**—This involves blurring of the whole limb and ends in inflammation of the subjacent tissues and organs, if death is not the immediate result.

**Effects of Burns**—Burns and scalds vary in their effects according to the following conditions—

- 1 The degree of heat applied
- 2 The duration of exposure
- 3 The extent of the surface
- 4 The site
- 5 The age of the patient
- 6 The sex

**1 The Degree of Heat Applied**—The effects are much more severe if the heat applied is very great.

**2 The Duration of Exposure**—The symptoms are also more severe, if the application of heat is continued for a long time.

**3 The Extent of the Surface**—The involvement of one third to one half of the superficial surface of the body is likely to end fatally.

**4 The Site**—Extensive burns of the trunk, even though superficial, are much more dangerous than those of the extremities. Burns of the genital organs and the lower part of the abdomen are often fatal.

**5 The Age of the Patient**—Children are more susceptible to burns, but stand prolonged suppuration better than adults. Aged people bear burns well.

**6 The Sex**—Sensitive and nervous women are more susceptible to burns than strong women, and women generally do not bear burns so well as men.

**Causes of Death—1 Shock**—Severe pain from extensive burns causes shock to the nervous system and produces a feeble pulse, pale and cold skin and collapse, resulting in death instantaneously or within twenty-four to forty-eight hours. In children it may lead to stupor and insensibility deepening into coma and death within forty-eight hours. In order to avoid the suggestion that coma was due to the drug it is advisable not to administer opium in any form for the alleviation of pain.



Fig. 44.—Extensive burns from clothes catching fire.

Shock may also occur from fright before the individual is affected by burns if his heart is weak or diseased.

If death does not occur from shock it may subsequently occur from toxicemia due to the absorption of toxic products from the injured tissues in the burned area. In this condition the temperature rises perhaps to 104°F., the pulse rate increases in frequency, and restlessness supervenes and passes into unconsciousness and death.

**2 Suffocation**—Persons removed from houses destroyed by fire are often found dead from suffocation due to the inhalation of smoke, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide—the products of combustion. In such a case burns found on the body are usually post mortem.

On or about the 12th January 1917 a lunatic in the asylum at Agri was suffocated in bed from smoke produced by the quilt with which he had covered his face, catalyzing fire, and the extensive superficial burns found on the body appeared to have been caused after death.

Between 1 a.m. and 3 a.m. on the 6th January 1922 some dacoits broke into the house of one Kushner Lodh aged 50 years and finding him and his son 20 years old sleeping in a room chained it from outside. On leaving the house they set fire to robes lying at the door with the result that the father and the son died in the room. The post mortem examination of both the bodies afforded clear evidence of death from suffocation. The larynx and trachea in both were congested with a deposit of soot along the interior. The lungs were congested and

exuded frothy blood on section. The brain vessels were found engorged with blood. There was general venous engorgement. Externally the bodies showed a few small superficial burns on the face, thighs and legs with singeing of the hair of the head.

**3 Accidents or Injuries**—Death may result from an accident occurring in an attempt to escape from a burning house or from injuries inflicted by walls and timbers falling on the body.

**4 Inflammation of serous membranes and internal organs**, such as meningitis, peritonitis, oedema glottidis, pleurisy, bronchitis, broncho-pneumonia, pneumonia, enteritis and perforating ulcer of the duodenum.

- 5 Exhaustion from suppurative discharges lasting for weeks or months
- 6 Lardaceous disease of the internal organs resulting from suppurative exhaustion
- 7 Erysipelas, septicemia, pyemia, gangrene and tetanus

Fatal Period — As already mentioned, death may occur within twenty four to forty eight hours, but usually the first week is the most fatal. In suppurative cases death may occur after five or six weeks or even longer.



Fig. 53.—Scald is from a fall into a cauldron of boiling oil (clarified butter). Note the blisters.

any heated substance or by means of any corrosive substance or by means of any explosive substance (*Vide Appendix IV*)

**Post Mortem Appearances—External**—The external appearances of burns vary according to the nature of the substance used to produce them. Thus the skin is whitened when a burn has been caused by radiant heat.

Burns produced by flame may or may not produce vesication but singeing of the hair and blackening of the skin are always present.

A highly heated solid body or a molten metal when momentarily applied to the body may produce only a blister and reddening corresponding in size and shape to the material used but will cause roasting and charring of the parts when kept in contact for a long time.

'pugilistic' or 'fencing' posture. This stiffening is due to the coagulation of its albuminous constituents. If the heat applied is very great, cracks and fissures resembling incised wounds often occur in the skin and tissues but no blood clot, nor infiltration of the blood is found in the cellular spaces and the blood vessels are seen stretching across the fissures, as they are not usually burnt. Sometimes the skin being hard and brittle due to the effect of heat cracks easily, when an attempt is made to remove the body from a house destroyed by fire.

Scalds caused by boiling water or steam produce reddening and vesication but do not affect the hairs and do not blacken or char the skin. Superheated steam softens the skin, which has lost its elasticity, and has a dirty white appearance.

It is difficult to identify a badly charred or incinerated body, but it is possible to ascertain the sex as the uterus in the female and the prostate in the male resist the action of fire in a marked degree, and may show only slight changes even when the body has been almost consumed. If the skeleton has remained intact even though the soft tissues have been destroyed entirely by fire, the sex may be recognized from the characteristic appearances of the pelvic bones and the approximate age may be determined by noting the teeth and observing the centres of ossification in the bones and the condition of epiphyses. If the whole body has been destroyed and reduced to ashes teeth pieces of bones buttons etc. may be found on carefully sifting the ashes, and may be of value in establishing identity.

**Internal.**—The skull bones are found fractured or burst open if intense heat has been applied. There is an extravasation of blood usually brick red in colour upon the upper surface of the dura mater. The brain is sometimes shrunken though its form is retained. In a case of death from accidental burning on the

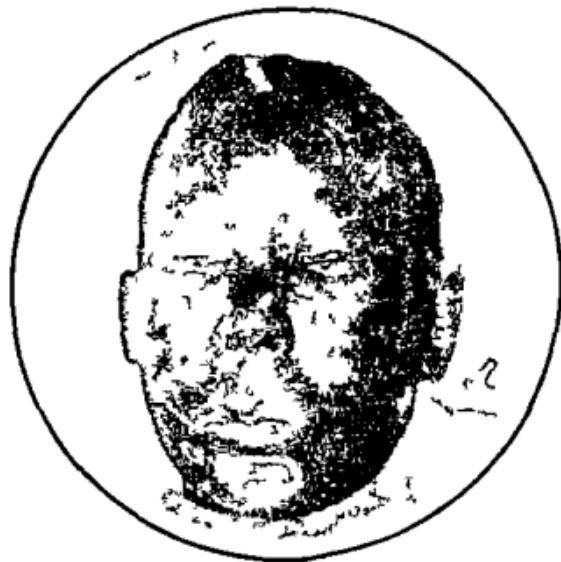


Fig. 60.—Burns on the face from a kerosene oil lamp.

30th November 1921, I found the membranes adherent to the skull cap and the brain shrunken and dried up. If death has occurred from suffocation the larynx trachea and bronchial tubes may contain sooty particles and their mucous membrane may be congested and covered with frothy mucus.

The pleurae are congested or inflamed and there may be serous effusion into their cavities. The lungs are usually congested, they may be shrunken and rarely anaemic. The chambers of the heart are usually full of blood. The blood is cherry red in colour if death has occurred from suffocation due to inhalation of carbon monoxide produced by incomplete combustion. The mucous membrane of the stomach and intestines is frequently reddened. There may be inflammation and ulceration of Peyer's patches and solitary glands of the intestines. Ulceration may occasionally be found in the duodenum when the patient dies some time after receiving burns. The ulcer probably results from the elimination by the liver of some irritating substance produced in the burnt tissues which is capable of causing thrombosis of the small vessels. This ulcer is supposed to be more common in women than in men whereas the idiopathic ulcer of the duodenum is more frequent in men. The spleen is enlarged and softened. The liver may show cloudy swelling and necrosis of the cells if death has been delayed. The kidneys may show signs of nephritis and on section the straight tubules may be filled with debris of the blood corpuscles giving the appearances of reddish brown markings.

**Distinction between Ante mortem and Post mortem Burns**—Police sometimes produce burns on a dead body to support a false charge of murder and at other times the police remove a dead body while in the act of burning on a cremating pyre and send it to the medical officer for post mortem examination when they suspect that the body is being hurriedly cremated to conceal the crime of murder. In both cases the medical officer should be prepared to tell the difference between ante-mortem and post mortem burns.



Fig. 61.—Scald caused by falling accidentally into a pan of boiling water. Note the blisters.

The three main points to differentiate between ante mortem and post mortem burns are—

- 1 Line of redness 2 Visceration 3 Reparative processes

**1 Line of Redness**—In the case of a burn caused during life a line of redness involving the whole true skin is formed round about the injured part. It is a permanent line persisting even after death but redness or erythema which is found beyond this line of redness due to distension of the capillaries is transient,

disappears under pressure during life and fades after death. The line of redness being a vital function separates living from dead tissue and is always present in burns caused during life though it takes some time to appear. Hence it is possible that it may be absent in the case of a person of a very weak constitution who dies immediately from shock due to burns.

**2 Vesication**—Vesication caused by a burn during life contains a serous fluid consisting of albumen and chlorides and has a red inflamed base with raised papillæ. The skin surrounding it is of a bright red or coppery colour. This is known as *true* as compared with *false* vesication which is produced after death. False vesication contains air only but may contain a very small quantity of serum comprising a trace of albumen but not chlorides as in a person suffering from general *anaæmia*. Again its base is hard dry horn and yellow instead of being red and inflamed.

**3 Reparative Processes**—Reparative processes such as signs of inflammation formation of granulation tissue pus and sloughs will indicate that the burns were caused during life. Burns caused after death have a dull white appearance with the openings of the skin glands coloured grey. The internal organs are rotted and emit a peculiar offensive odour.



F. 6° Body of a male burnt and charred after leaving it rotted.

**Period of Burns**—In the case of a burn a question is raised as to when it was caused and in the case of several burns on the same individual a further

question is raised as to whether they were inflicted simultaneously. Both these questions may be answered by examining carefully their condition as regards the different stages of reparative processes.

Redness occurs immediately after a burn. Vesication forms within two to three hours. Pus forms in two to three days but not before thirty six hours. Superficial sloughs separate out usually from the fourth to the sixth day, and deep ones within a fortnight. After this period granulation tissue begins to cover the surface of the burn. The last result is the formation of a cicatrix and deformity after several weeks or even months, depending upon the amount of suppuration sloughing and depth and extent of the burn.

**Suicidal, Homicidal and Accidental Burns**—Suicidal cases are rare among men. A case<sup>1</sup> occurred at Hapur, where a treasurer of the local branch of the Imperial Bank of India committed suicide at midnight by putting himself on a pyre of charcoal and wood and throwing kerosene oil on it and then setting fire to it. Occasionally women, disappointed in love or tired of domestic worries or some acute or chronic ailment, commit suicide by soaking their clothes first with kerosene oil and then setting fire to them. The pernicious custom of dowry among certain Hindu castes sometimes leads young maids to commit suicide in this manner with a view to relieving their poor parents of the anxiety to raise sufficient money for the dowry at their marriages.

A Hindu woman aged 40 years who was suffering from phthisis put an end to her life by setting fire to her clothes after soaking them with kerosene oil. At the post mortem examination held at 9.30 a.m. on the 22nd April, 1923 18 hours after death the body was found to have assumed the pugilistic attitude. The arms were extended from the shoulders and the forearms partly flexed. The thighs were almost perpendicular to the abdomen and the legs partly flexed at the knees. There were extensive burns of the whole body including the anus and private parts. The hair of the head eyebrows and eyelashes was singed. The eyes were closed and congested. The mucous membrane of the larynx and trachea was congested and covered with froth mixed with soot. The brain and its membranes were congested.

Burns are, sometimes, self inflicted for purposes of false accusations.

In August, 1923 a Mahomedan woman about 18 years old filed a complaint at the City Magistrate's Court at Lucknow that she was burnt by her husband with a pair of tongs. She had several small marks of superficial burns causing redness and vesication on the wrist, forearms, legs and thighs. Some of these had the shape of the knob of the tongs. During the trial it was suggested that they appeared to have been self inflicted *inasmuch as they were on the places easily approachable by the woman herself*. It was afterwards discovered that they had been self inflicted and the woman had brought a false accusation as she wanted divorce from her husband.

Homicidal cases are fairly common in India. Burns are often caused by a mother in law on the body of her infant daughter in law for very trifling faults. The substances selected are generally a pair of hot tongs (*chimto*) or *lathi* and the sites selected are usually the arms, hands, thighs and private parts. I have seen several such cases with three deaths—two in Agra and one in Lucknow. Among grown up females burns are produced usually on the pudenda, as a punishment for adultery. When a master becomes angry with his servant for disobedience or petty theft, he, sometimes, produces burns on his body with a heated solid substance, such as a hot pipe or *chulum*. Robbers and dacoits often inflict burns as a torture to extort information about valuables hidden in the houses of their victims. Sometimes, they burn their victim to death by pouring kerosene oil over their clothes and then setting a light to them.

**Cases**—1. Musammat Hardei owing to domestic quarrels with her daughter in law burned her to death by throwing kerosene oil over her clothes and then setting fire to them. The oil fell over the clothes of her child one and a half years old, who also died.<sup>2</sup>

2. On the night of the 21st May, 1922 a gang of dacoits went to the house of Bihari Lal at Uchasia in the Bisalpur police circle. Bihari Lal was away, but they got hold of his mother,

<sup>1</sup> Leader, March 7, 1934

<sup>2</sup> King Emperor v Mt Hardei Chief Court of Oudh Crim App No 64 of 1927

Musammat Indo, his sister Musammat Kamli and his wife Musammat Rampa. They poured kerosene oil over Musammat Indo and set a light to it. Musammat Kamli protested, hence they poured a great deal of oil over her and burnt her so badly that she died a few hours later. They had torches and after robbing the inmates they went away.<sup>1</sup>

3. At Trivandrum a servant harbouring ill feelings against his master poured petrol over the latter at night when he was lying in a chair and set fire to him. Seeing his master roll frantically over the floor the servant poured more petrol over the victim. The man sustained serious burns and died in hospital a few hours after admission.<sup>2</sup>

4. One Mami Ram<sup>3</sup> caused the death of his daughter in law aged 9 years, by burning her all over the body with a heated *karchul*. He sat on her legs and gagging her mouth with cloth in order to prevent her from crying for help. He deliberately branded her with *karchul* several times each time withdrawing it from the fire and placing the hot metal against the body and then heating it again. The burns were mostly on the chest abdomen back buttocks private parts thighs cheeks right orbit and left hand. The reason why the man branded the girl was that she had eaten some of the bread which he had kept for himself.

Sometimes murderers kill their victims by some other means, and then set fire to their bodies or to their houses in order to conceal all evidence of the crime. In such cases fatal injuries such as fractures of skull bones etc as a result of mechanical violence or signs of strangulation, suffocation or poisoning may be found on the bodies if they are not completely destroyed by fire. It must, however, be remembered that injuries on the body, such as lacerated wounds or fractures of bones may be produced by beams, walls, etc., of a burning house falling on a living or dead person.

Accidental cases are very common especially among women and children on account of their loose garments catching fire, while sitting near an *angethi chula* *Prunus* stove or an open lamp. Lately, cases of accidental death by burns sustained from *Prunus* stoves have become so frequent among the Gujarati women of Bombay that the Coroner has, on several occasions passed strong strictures against their husbands or parents and warned them not to allow the use of these stoves in their houses.

A number of persons may die from burns, when a fire breaks out in an inhabited house or when an explosion occurs in a factory of gunpowder or fireworks. In such cases wounds caused by the falling of rafters bricks, etc in addition to the burns may be seen on the bodies.

Children and feeble, epileptic, blind or intoxicated persons may fall in fire or in cauldrons of boiling water, oil or *ghee*.

Children may be scalded by trying to drink from the spout of a kettle containing boiling water or by the kettle falling accidentally upon them.

**Spontaneous Combustion**—The possibility of spontaneous combustion of a human body may be raised as a plea in defence of certain cases of homicidal burning but a body can never be consumed without the application of fire or flame though a few unauthentic cases have been recorded. It is not even possible for a body composed of seventy five per cent of its weight of water to catch fire from a spark or flame and be reduced to ashes without the surrounding objects being set on fire.

**Preternatural Combustibility**—Preternatural combustibility is rarely noticed in a body, when inflammable gases are produced in the abdomen by the action of certain micro-organisms upon organic matter during the process of putrefaction after death. If a light is near, these gases are ignited and cause partial burning of the neighbouring soft tissues.

It must be remembered that during life inflammable gases may be formed in the alimentary canal and such gases when belched, may be ignited on the application of a flame. Beatson<sup>4</sup> records the case of a man who was subject to foul eruptions

<sup>1</sup> King Emperor v. Shub Singh and Kar dhari Singh *Att. High Court Criminal Appeal No. 636 of 1924*

<sup>2</sup> *Times of India October 9 1930*

<sup>3</sup> King Emperor v. Mami Ram *Oudh Chief Court, Crim. App. No. 234 of 1931*

<sup>4</sup> *Brit. Med. Jour., Vol. 1, 1886, p. 29.*

tions. One night he got out of bed and struck a match to see the time, while blowing out the match his breath took fire and exploded with a noise sufficiently loud to awaken his wife. Martin<sup>1</sup> mentions a case in which a man used to get frequent eructations of foul gas due to a severe form of flatulent dyspepsia. One morning just as he was lighting his pipe with a match, he was obliged to eructate. The gas coming in contact with the lighted match exploded with a sparkling flash scorching the hair of his beard and eyebrows. Moutier<sup>2</sup> reported to the Society de Gastroenterologie de Paris that as he was starting to perform an intrarectal electrocoagulation, and though he had taken the precaution of plugging the recto-sigmoid junction, there was an explosion which caused the patient to collapse and gave her hiccups for a quarter of an hour. Two hours later laparotomy revealed an extensive ecchymosis at the recto-sigmoid junction.

#### LIGHTNING

During thunderstorms people are sometimes struck down by lightning or atmospheric electricity in the open fields or in their houses, especially near open doors and windows, through which it enters. It is attracted by the highest points hence it is dangerous to stand near tall trees during thunderstorms. Similarly, it is dangerous to have a good conducting material on the body or in its vicinity. Wet clothes and wet skin are also good conductors, while dry clothes and dry skin are bad conductors.

**Symptoms**—Death occurs immediately from shock, or subsequently from the effects of burns and lacerations after some days or even weeks. In non fatal cases the individual complains of giddiness, ringing in the ears and headache.

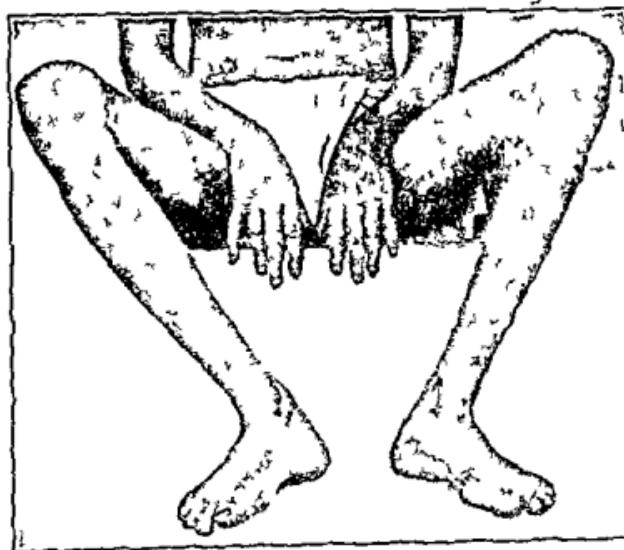


Fig. 63.—Burns caused by lightning.

These symptoms pass off very soon if hysteria and nervousness may supervene, when the lightning discharge is very slight, though in severe shock the individual may suffer from afflictions of the eyes, including conjunctivitis, clouding of the cornea, cataract and retinal hemorrhage or detachment and later from loss of memory, anesthesia, palsy, tetanic convulsions, delirium, blindness, deafness or dumbness.

<sup>1</sup> *Lancet* Vol. II 1802 p. 991. See also *East Lancet*, Vol. II, 1934 p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> *Lancet* Feb. 15 1917, p. 275.

Considerable damage had been done to the window frame where the wire entered the house, and bricks had been dislodged from the wall although the aerial was earthed by a switch inside the house. Apparently this common form of protection against lightning is useless. The aerial which was of seven strand copper wire was fused in several places.—*Brit Med Jour., Aug 15, 1923 p 291*

3 A woman, while working in a field was struck by lightning. Examination revealed a mark of the size of a penny at the top of the head where the lightning had entered the body. The hair on the occiput was singed. Along the entire course of the spinal column a mark from 25 to 30 cm wide was noticeable, and it was continued on the back of the thigh. A second track of lightning branched off at the neck, and a mark from 2 to 3 cm wide was visible along the left breast and on the left side of the abdomen and from the pubic symphysis it passed over to the right thigh. The pubic hair was singed. The mark of lightning showed several skin defects and coagulation necrosis 4 cm in diameter. Around these areas of black discoloration and numerous small black holes were noticeable. The heart sounds were weak. The other internal organs were normal. The patient was unconscious for forty-eight hours. There was a tear across the tympanic membrane of each ear. When the woman regained consciousness the retrograde amnesia with regard to the accident continued. She complained of severe pain in the region of the burned areas and of chills. She recovered in 20 days after the accident. On the sixth day a lumbar puncture was made on account of severe headache. Burns were treated by tannic acid ointment.—*Dtsch Mediziner Medicinische Wochenschrift Munich Vol 78 Jan 2 1931 p 27, Jour Amer Med Assoc April 11 1931, p 1274*

4 The following case was reported to me by Major P. N. Bush LMS Superintendent of District Jail Bareilly —

On May 1 1931 at about 6 p.m. lightning struck the undertrial ward of the district jail, Bareilly, in which about a dozen undertrial prisoners were sitting in a row of two in the middle line of the barrack facing the iron grated door.

The lightning flash struck the arch of the front iron grated door of the barrack travelled down to the floor for a distance of about 20 feet scattering in several sparks and then upward to an iron rod 6 feet long hanging from the roof. It melted the rod and then passed to the floor of one of the side iron grated windows. Here it fused two iron cups lying in the vicinity and finally passed into the earth.

All the twelve undertrial prisoners who were sitting in the barrack were simultaneously struck and were thrown upon its floor in varying states of insensibility. One of them suffered from a severe type of shock, was unconscious for twenty-four hours after which he recovered. Another person developed paraparesis of the left upper and lower limbs but recovered. Two were very severely burnt mostly in the abdomen, chest, buttocks, scrotum, penis and thighs. One of them died and the other recovered.

The characteristic features of the injuries of all these cases were as follows —

- 1 They were mostly on the lower part of the body
- 2 The burns varied in degree from mere discoloration to scorching and destruction of the skin. The burns never went deeper
- 3 Feces similar to one noticed after B.B. burns developed in most of these burns
- 4 Shock was the predominant symptom and injection of gum and pituitrin had a marked beneficial effect
- 5 Some of these patients developed a fright complex after recovery

## ELECTRICITY

Cases of injury or death from electric shocks occur in those cities where electricity is used for lighting and motive purposes. The electrical main may break, and the two ends may fall on a person thus making a short circuit or the workman may grasp the ends of a live wire, or may stand on one with the other in his hand.

**The Effects of Electricity** —The chief effect of electricity is shock produced by its current. It varies in accordance with—

- 1 The nature of the current
- 2 The resistance of the body

1 **The Nature of the Current** —Currents generated at high voltages are dangerous to life. Alternating currents are considered more dangerous than continuous currents, probably because they are usually generated at high tensions, but continuous currents of high tensions are equally dangerous under similar

skin offers very great resistance and when perfectly dry is impervious to currents of great strength. Hard and oily skins are also resistant, but moist, soft and perspiring skins are less resistant. Resistance diminishes with the continuance of the current. It also diminishes in kidney diseases, Basedow's disease and hysteria.

**Symptoms** — The symptoms produced by the passage of an electric current are local lesions at the points of entrance and exit of the current, pallor of the face, suffused eyes, dilated pupils, cold, clammy skin, stertorous breathing and insensibility. Signs of cerebral irritation may, sometimes, be present. In severe cases insensibility occurs immediately, followed by a few gasps and death.

According to Professor Jellinek<sup>1</sup> the lesions produced by the electric current are not burns, and none of the surrounding structures is altered. They heal without infiltration, suppuration or pyrexia, but when tendons, joints and large areas are involved, there may be some aseptic necrosis and it is presumably this change which accounts for haemorrhages which sometimes complicate recovery. In some cases death may occur later from extensive destruction of the tissues of a limb or limbs.

Headache, giddiness, temporary loss of memory and speech deafness and hysterical manifestations may occur after recovery from electric shock. In some instances there may be paralysis due to degenerative changes in the nervous system. Rarely, optic atrophy and other intraocular lesions may develop several months afterwards.<sup>2</sup>

Lucas<sup>3</sup> reports the case of a boy aged 15 years who while standing on a discharged transformer so as to dust a ledge, slipped and clutched at a cable carrying a current of 10,000 volts. Respiration at once ceased and the limbs were burnt swollen and stiff. The boy recovered consciousness after artificial respiration but the limbs became gangrenous. On the third day the right arm was amputated through the shoulder joint. Arterial thrombosis was found upto the origin of the superior profunda. Both legs were amputated on the sixth day. Toxæmia set in and the boy died on the ninth day after the accident.

**Causes of Death** — Death from electric shock may occur from sudden stoppage of the action of the heart or from paralysis of the respiratory centre due to nervous inhibition. According to the experiments of Langworthy<sup>4</sup> death from fibrillation of the cardiac ventricles is believed to be more common after contact with low voltage circuits, while circuits at high voltages cause death from respiratory failure due to central inhibition in the nervous system.

**Treatment** — The current should be switched off at once, or the patient should be removed from the vicinity of the live wires, but the person trying to remove him should guard himself against its effects by wearing India rubber gloves, by wrapping his hands in several folds of dry cloth by standing on hay, or by using a long stick to remove the wires. The treatment to be adopted after removal is stimulation, warmth, friction, artificial respiration and venesection, if necessary. Pometta<sup>5</sup> recommends that artificial respiration should be continued for at least five hours except in those cases where the injuries are so severe that the patient cannot possibly be alive. Carbon dioxide is a valuable respiratory stimulant, and can be given from a soda water syphon, when no cylinder is available. The syphon is half emptied and a rubber tube is attached to its nozzle, it is then inverted and the fluid is blown out of the glass tube. Gas is admitted to the patient's air passages through one nostril.

**Post-mortem Appearances** — **External** — The face is generally pale, the eyes are congested and the pupils are dilated. Local lesions are found at the points

1 Lancet Nov 5, 1927, p 1002, *Medizinische Klinik*, Sep 23 1927

2 Bainbridge Brit Med Jour Dec 6, 1930 p 933

3 Brit Med Jour Jan 21 1900, p 134

4 Jour Exper Med, June 1, 1910 p 913, Brit Med Jour, Aug 30, 1930 4 p, p 38.

5 Schweiz Med Woch, 1910, Vol II, p 82, Lancet, Feb 8 1930, p 310

of entrance and exit of the electric current Professor Jellinek<sup>1</sup> has pointed out that the micropathological changes, as observed in the skin at the site of an electrical lesion, are a compression of the horny layer into an homogeneous plaque, and an ironing out of the underlying papillary process. Occasionally fissures and hollows appear between the corneum and germinativum, but this is not invariable, and the surest sign that an electric current has passed is the coalescence into a star shaped or rod like structure of the basal cells in each group of the rete Malpighii.

**Internal**—The lungs are often found oedematous and the other internal organs are congested. Minute haemorrhages are seen in the meninges and Tardeau's spots are found on the pleura, pericardium and endocardium. Ecchymoses may be noticed along the path of the current.

In the case<sup>2</sup> of a young man about 21 years of age who was killed by a direct current of 220 volts the following post mortem appearances were found—

There was no sign of electric burn on the skin. There was intense vascular congestion of the dura mater more noticeable on the left than on the right. The cerebral vessels were similarly congested free blood being present with clots around the medulla between the cerebellum and tentorium and over the island of Reil. Both lateral ventricles were full of blood clot.

**Medico-Legal Questions**—Deaths by electric currents are mostly accidental. Recently, a case occurred in one of the suburbs of Bombay, in which a milkman was accidentally killed by touching the door of the house where he had gone early in the morning to sell milk. The owner of the house had attached a live wire to the door to prevent the entrance of thieves.

The danger of flying kites in the vicinity of overhead electric supply lines is illustrated by a fatal accident which occurred in Jullundur city. While flying a kite with the ordinary string a boy happened to touch a live electric wire with his kite, and was burnt badly and rendered unconscious. He succumbed eventually to his injuries. On the day of the occurrence, the ground was wet with rain and the string appears to have been moistened by contact with it.<sup>3</sup>

Suicide by electric currents is rare, but a few cases have been reported. A man,<sup>4</sup> named Paul Thiebault with a view to committing suicide, deliberately took hold of the electric conductors at the works of M Chertemps in Paris, and met with an instantaneous death. A case<sup>5</sup> is recorded where a young man committed suicide by attaching to himself an electric installation, operating a potential of 200 volts, and turned to make contact during his sleep.

Homicide by electricity, though extremely rare is quite possible. In January, 1927, certain colliery proprietors of Cardiff were charged with manslaughter of a collier, who was electrocuted during a ratting expedition. It was alleged that a copper wire in the fence was electrified from the powerhouse to protect the coal bunkers.<sup>6</sup>

1 *Lancet Loc Cit*

2 *Lancet April 14 1928 p 706*

3 *Times of India Feb 12 1936*

4 *Brit Med Jour March 14 1880 p 500*

5 *M Crutchley Brit Med Jour Jan 13 1934 p 71*

6 *Sydney Smith Forens Med, Ed III, p 243*

## CHAPTER X

### MECHANICAL INJURIES

For medico legal purposes mechanical injuries are divided into bruises or contusions, abrasions and wounds

#### BRUISES

Bruises or contusions are injuries which are caused by a blow from a blunt weapon, such as a club (*lathi*), iron bar, stone, ball fist etc or by a fall or by crushing or compression. These are accompanied by a painful swelling and crushing or tearing of the subcutaneous tissues without solution of continuity of the skin. The swelling is due to the rupture of the subcutaneous blood vessels producing in the cellular tissues, an extravasation of blood, which is known as ecchymosis or effusion of blood.

Ecchymosis makes its appearance over the seat of injury in one or two hours after the injury. It may appear even in less time if the skin injured is very thin as in the eyelids and scrotum. When ecchymosis has occurred into the deeper tissues or under tense fascia, it appears on the surface at an interval of one or two days or even more at some distance from the seat of injury following the line of least resistance and in obedience to the law of gravity, e.g. the appearance of a black eye in the case of a contusion on the forehead or on the head. Sometimes ecchymosis may not appear until after death when a contusion has been caused within a few hours or a day or two before death. According to Sir Bernard H Spilsbury<sup>1</sup> this is not due to any appreciable addition to the blood in the contused area after death but to a more rapid haemolysis of the stagnant blood as a part of post mortem changes. There is no circulation to carry away the pigment and the tissues are dead and cannot deal with it. The pigment diffuses locally producing a stain in the surface, dark red at first but changing sometimes to a bright red colour from absorption of oxygen through the skin, or an area of a dark green putrefactive discolouration appears over a deep bruise before the skin around it is changed.

(1) The extent of ecchymosis depends under ordinary circumstances upon the nature and severity of the force used, the viscosity of the part struck, looseness of the underlying cellular tissues and the condition of the assaulted victim. Thus ecchymosis will be extensive in the eyelids, scrotum and vulva and very little in the scalp where the skin is tense. Again it may not appear in the abdomen even if a cart wheel were to pass over the body and cause death from the rupture of an internal organ. In cases of fatal internal injuries there may not be any sign of ecchymosis on the body, when a person is assaulted even with an non tipped *lathi* (blunt weapon) after he is covered with a thick rug blanket or a quilt. No evidence of ecchymosis is also present if the weapon used is a yielding one, such as a sand bag.

(2) Ecchymosis is easily produced in children, old women and old people even by slight violence, on the other hand, it will be very slight if a person happens to be strong and muscular.

(3) In certain pathological conditions, such as scurvy, purpura, erythema nodosum, haemophilia, malignant cases of infectious disease, rashes due to the continuous use of drugs, and in the aged with sluggish circulation, a slight blow or pressure may produce an extensive ecchymosis. In such cases subcutaneous haemorrhages may occur spontaneously and may be mistaken for ecchymosis, but they can be easily distinguished from their number, size, and symmetrical situation (generally on the legs) and from the absence of abrasions over the spots. Subcutaneous

hemorrhages may also result from great muscular exertion as in epileptic seizures. These are usually numerous, but smaller in size.



*Fig. 6. —Contusions caused by blows from a blunt weapon (stick).*

Subconjunctival ecchymoses due to the rupture of small vessels may occur directly from a blow to the eye or indirectly from a blow or fall on the head. They are often seen in children suffering from whooping cough and may sometimes, result from severe straining during sneezing, coughing, vomiting or lifting heavy weights especially in old people.

Sometimes blisters at 1 halfe may form over the injured part, especially when ecchymosis is caused by an oblique and glancing blow or by fracture of a bone.

**Result of Bruises.**—Bruises are, as a rule simple injuries. They are seldom fatal unless accompanied by the rupture of an internal organ, or by extensive crushing of the tissues and large extravasation of blood, producing sloughing and gangrene of the parts. However, several bruises though trivial individually may cause death from shock.

In June 1910 Musammat Bullo 13 years old was beaten to death by her husband and father in law for neglecting the household duties. Post mortem examination showed that death occurred from shock due to twenty nine single bruises inflicted on various parts of the body.

**Age of a Bruise**—The age of a bruise may be ascertained from the colour changes which its ecchymosis undergoes during absorption. These colour changes are due to the disintegration of the red blood cells and staining of the haemoglobin.

A bruise inflicted with the length of a club or stick is, as a rule, elongated and irregular. A soft cane or whip usually produces two parallel bruises with an intervening space almost equal to the diameter of the weapon. A bruise caused by a whip may also encircle a limb or part of the body and may present an abraded surface at the end.

Bruises caused by a blunt weapon are not, as a rule, self inflicted. During my long practice of twenty eight years as a medico legal officer I have not come across a single case of this nature. But with a view to supporting a false charge of assault, bruises are sometimes simulated by the application of some irritant substance, such as the juice of *Bhila ca* (marking nut) or the root of *Chitra* (plum bago zeylanica) or *Lal Chitra* (plumbago rosea). The marks produced by these substances appear like bruises, but they are dark brown in colour with the margins usually covered with tiny vesicles and the surrounding skin is red and inflamed. The scrapings of the marks, if recent, will respond to the tests of the substance used. Owing to the irritation caused by the application of these substances it is very difficult to avoid scratching the part with the fingers, hence similar marks are usually found on the tips of the fingers and under the free edges of the finger nails.

absent in a bruise caused after death. In a doubtful case it is advisable to make a microscopic examination of the affected tissue. A bruise is likely to be disfigured by putrefaction and it is difficult to differentiate between a bruise caused during life and that caused immediately after death. Sir Robert Christison proved by experiments that it was possible to produce a bruise within two hours to three hours and a quarter after death which it would be difficult to distinguish from one caused during life but he found that very great violence had to be used and even then the resulting bruise was much smaller than what would have been produced by similar means during life. However Sir Bernard H. Spilsbury<sup>1</sup> has pointed out that two minutes after death no appreciable bruising occurs inasmuch as the development of a bruise depends upon the maintenance of the circulation which slows down owing to the fall of the arterial blood and is soon completely arrested as soon as the heart's action is stopped in death.

#### ABRASIONS

Abrasions are injuries involving loss of the superficial epithelial layer of the skin and are produced by a blow or a fall on a rough surface by scratching with



Abrasions resulting from friction against a rough surface during a fall are mostly found on bony parts, and are usually associated with contusions or lacerated wounds and sometimes with very serious injuries. Abrasions may also be covered with mud, straw, etc.

Abrasions caused by the finger nails indicate a struggle and an assault, and are usually seen on the exposed parts of the body, such as the face, neck, fore-arms, hands, etc. They may be crescentic in shape, especially if the finger nails have been pressed with violence into the skin. In such cases there will be an ecchymosis in the underlying tissues.

Abrasions caused by a teeth bite are elliptical or circular in form and are represented by two or four separate marks caused by the upper front teeth on one side and the same or less number of marks by the lower front teeth on the opposite side. The intervening space between the marks is often bruised. Sometimes, the marks coalesce together, and form a single mass of abrasions.

#### Difference between Ante-mortem and Post-mortem Abrasions —

② Abrasions caused during life appear as bleeding surfaces or scratches, and are soon covered with reddish brown crusts or scabs owing to coagulation of the blood. They generally heal in about ten to fourteen days without leaving permanent scars but in cases where abrasions involve the whole thickness of the skin and destroy the epithelial cells capable of forming a new skin, they take a longer time to heal and leave obvious scars, unless the surgeon has performed an operation of grafting.

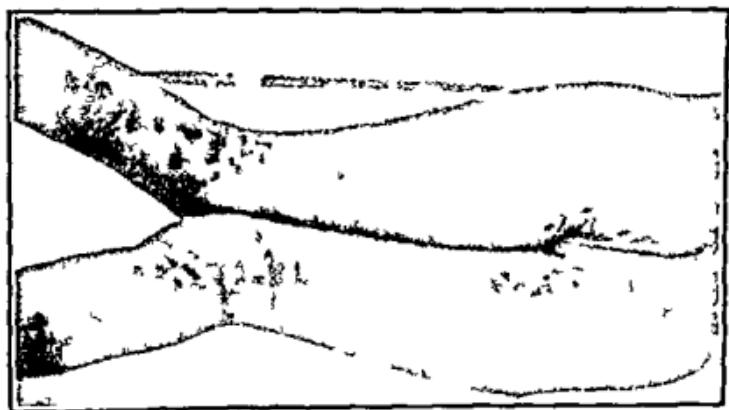


Fig. 19.—Marks simulating abrasions caused by ant bites after death.

Owing to the drying and hardening of the underlying skin abrasions produced after death are dark brown and parchment like in appearance, and look like abrasions caused during life but they are distinguished by complete absence of bleeding and injection of vessels in the underlying tissues. It must be remembered that ants sometimes attack a dead body lying on the ground and produce marks which simulate ante-mortem abrasions. The marks caused by their bites have however irregular margins and are usually seen on the eyes, nostrils, tongue, of the mouth, ears, armpits, groins, serotum and anus.

#### WOUNDS

A wound is defined as the forcible solution of continuity of the soft tissues of the body including the skin or mucous membrane. Medico-legally, wounds may be classified as—

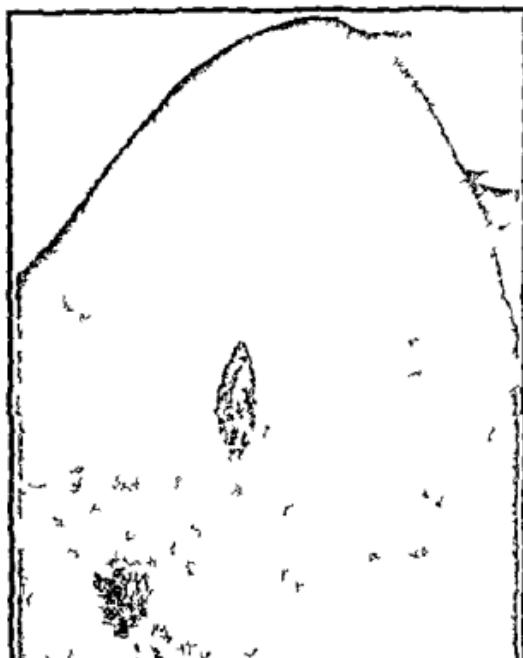
- 1 Incised wounds
- 2 Punctured wounds
- 3 Lacerated wounds
- 4 Gunshot wounds

~~5~~ wound produced by burn, scald and chemicals

1 Incised Wounds — An incised wound is produced by a sharp cutting instrument such as a knife, razor, sword, gandas (chopper), axe, hatchet, scythe, loohri, or any object which has a sharp cutting edge.

Character of an Incised Wound — An incised wound is always broader than the edge of the weapon causing it owing to the retraction of the divided tissues. It is somewhat spindle shaped and gaping, its superficial extent being greater than its depth. This gaping is greater in deep wounds when the muscle fibres have been cut transversely or obliquely. Its edges or margins are smooth even clean cut well defined and usually everted. The edges may be inverted if a thin layer of muscular fibres is closely united to the skin, as in the scrotum. They may be irregular in cases where the skin is loose or the cutting edge of the weapon is blunt as the skin will be puckered in front of the weapon before it is divided.

The edges of a wound made by a heavy cutting weapon such as an axe, hatchet or shovel, may not be as smooth as those of a wound caused by a light cutting weapon, such as a knife, razor etc. and may show signs of contusion. Such a wound is, as a rule associated with extensive injuries to deep underlying structures or organs.



and tails off towards the end, but no direction is noticeable when the weapon has not been drawn while inflicting a wound.

Hæmorrhage in the case of incised wounds is usually much more than in the case of other wounds, and it may be so severe as to cause death, especially if a main artery has been cut.

**2 Punctured Wounds.**—These are popularly called stabs and are termed penetrating wounds when, passing through the tissues, they enter a cavity of the body such as the thorax or abdomen. These wounds are produced by a piercing or stabbing instrument, such as a pin, needle, knife, scissors, bayonet, spear, digger, pick axe, arrow, etc. The point of the instrument may be sharp or blunt.

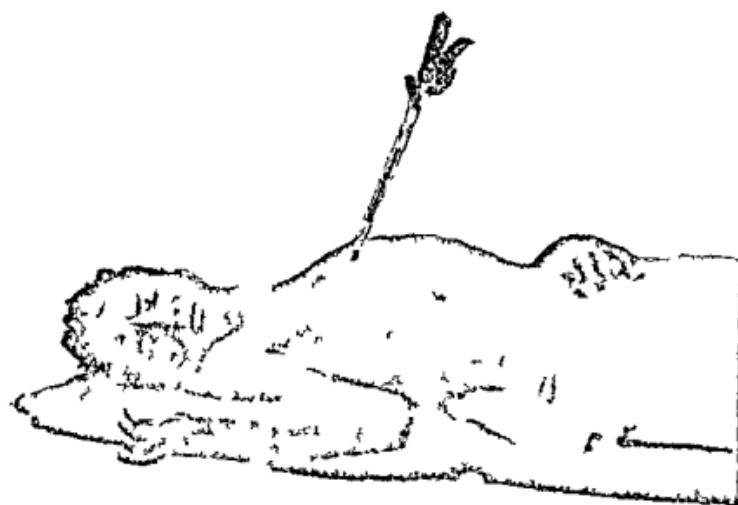


FIG. 71.—Incised wounds inflicted with a butcher's knife.  
Note also teeth bites on face and forearm.

A punctured wound caused by a sharp pointed and cutting instrument has clean cut margins which are almost parallel but slightly curved to each other and have sharp angles at the two extremities. This is commonly the case if the instru-

ment has two cutting edges and may be so with an instrument having one cutting and one blunt edge. The wound is generally wedge shaped, if it is produced by an instrument with a thick, broad back and only one cutting edge.

A sharp pointed and cylindrical or conical instrument produces a wound having a slit like opening. A blunt pointed instrument requires considerable force to puncture the skin and penetrate the soft tissues. It causes a punctured wound with lacerated margins.



*Fig. 72.—Stab wound caused by an arrow piercing the chest  
(From a photograph lent kindly by R. S. Dr G. B. Safar.)*

The aperture of a punctured wound in the skin is usually a little smaller in length than the breadth of the weapon used owing to the elasticity of the skin, although, it is, sometimes larger as the weapon enlarges the wound if it is withdrawn by lateral movements.



*Fig. 73.—Punctured wound perforating the chest caused by a dagger  
A—Wound of entrance      B—Wound of exit*



The depth of a punctured wound is much larger than its length or width, and may be equal to, or less than, the length of the blade of the instrument causing it. In some cases the depth may even be greater than the length of the blade owing

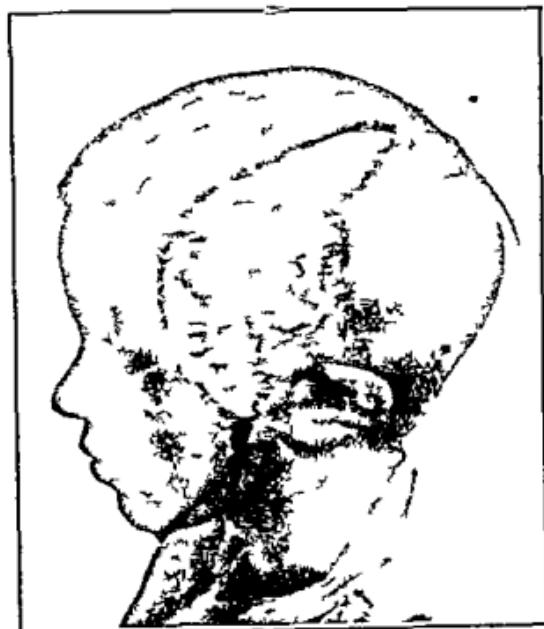
to the fact that the force of the blow may depress the tissues of the part struck allowing the point to reach the deeper tissues.

On February 21, 1913 a cobbler killed a Hindu Sadhu aged 40 years by stabbing him on the chest with an awl 8 inches long. On examination of the body two days later I found among other injuries a punctured wound in the post axillary line on the left side of the chest which passing through the substance of the lower lobe of the left lung had traversed the left chamber of the heart and lies above its apex.



*Fig. 4.—Lacerated wound caused by the leg being crushed under a cart wheel.*

Great care should be taken in probing a punctured wound. If necessary a blunt probe or catheter should be used.



*Fig. 5.—Lacerated wound of scalp caused by an ekka wheel.*

External haemorrhage is not necessarily any criterion of the danger to life. There may be very little external haemorrhage and yet profuse haemorrhage may take place internally owing to some vital organ having been penetrated.

In the case of a punctured wound perforating a part of the body there are two wounds one a wound of entry and the other a wound of exit. The wound of entry is usually larger with inverted margins and the wound of exit is smaller and has everted margins. The margins of the entrance wound may be found everted when the weapon used is rough and rusty.

In some cases two or more punctures may be found in the soft parts with only one external orifice. This shows that the instrument had been partially withdrawn after it pierced the tissues and thrust again in a new direction.

Sometimes it is argued that a punctured wound may have been caused by a fall on a sharp pointed piece of an earthenware pot or broken glass. In that case the edges of the wound are irregular and more or less bruised and fragments of such articles may be found embedded in the soft tissues.

**3 Lacerated Wounds**—These are produced by blows from blunt objects and missiles, by violent falls on sharp and hard projecting surfaces by machinery and railway accidents by the wheels of a vehicle by the claws teeth or horns of animals and by projecting nails. These wounds do not generally correspond in shape or size to the weapon producing them. Their margins are torn jagged irregular and swollen or contused. The tissues are torn and the skin beyond the seat of injury is ecchymosed and the bones which are near the surface are likely to be fractured. Foreign bodies such as earth grease machine oil cinders hair fibres of clothing etc are frequently found in the wounds.

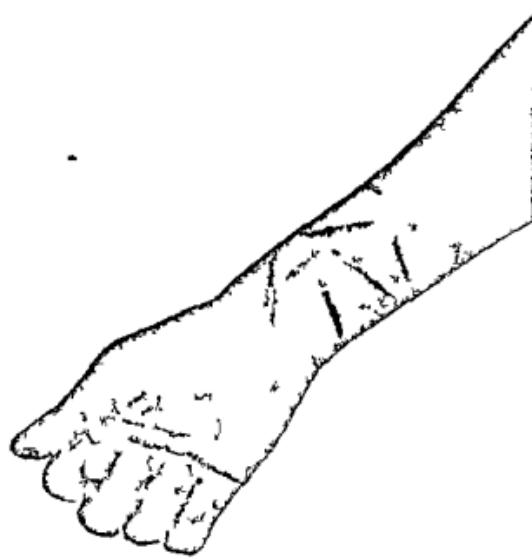


Fig. 6.—Lacerated wounds of forearm caused by broken glass pane  
(From a photograph lent kindly by Dr G. B. Saha.)

When produced by a blunt weapon such as a club (*lathi*) crowbar stone brick etc the lacerated wound is usually accompanied by a considerable amount of bruising of the surrounding and underlying tissues and it is inverted and irregular margins.

Hæmorrhage in lacerated wounds is as a rule not extensive owing to the fact that the arteries are not cut evenly but are torn across irregularly so as to facilitate clotting of the blood. But in lacerated wounds of the scalp the temporal arteries often spurt as freely and forcefully as when cut cleanly. These arteries being firmly bound are unable to contract and may therefore spurt and continue to bleed for a long time.

In a quarrel with her husband a woman sustained several injuries on her face and head. One of these was a lacerated wound on the right temple. Blood stains were found on the ceiling at a distance of four feet from her bed. These were caused by the spouting of the divided right anterior temporal artery. A young man had been struck on the right temple causing a lacerated wound. Blood spouted to a distance of three feet and a quarter from the place where he was standing at the time of the assault.<sup>1</sup>

Occasionally, wounds produced by a blunt weapon or by a fall may look like incised wounds when inflicted on tense structures covering the bones such as the scalp, eyebrow, etc., or by a fall on the knee or elbow when the limb is flexed. But the margins of such wounds will be found irregular with a certain amount of



will be found cut if produced by a cutting weapon. Similarly, wounds produced by pieces of glass broken crockery or sharp edges of stone have the characteristics of incised wounds but the margins are found irregular, inverted and contused if examined carefully with a hand lens.

**4. Gunshot Wounds**—These are injuries produced by projectiles discharged from firearms and present the characteristics of lacerated wounds but their appearances vary according to the nature of the projectile the velocity at which it was travelling at the moment of impact, the distance of the firearm from the body at the moment of discharge and the angle at which it struck the part of the body.

Gunshot wounds generally produce two wounds or apertures viz one of entrance and the other of exit of the projectile. When the wound of entrance is present but not the wound of exit, it means that a bullet is lodged in the body except in those cases where a bullet has been coughed up after entering the respiratory passages or lost in the stool after entering the intestinal tract and also where a hard bullet by coming in contact with a bone is so deflected as to pass out by the same orifice as it entered. If a bullet is lodged in the body it must be taken out if death has occurred and must be forwarded to the Superintendent of Police in a sealed envelope containing its description in the medical officer's handwriting as it forms inherent evidence of the greatest value. While searching for a bullet it must be borne in mind that it takes a very erratic and circuitous course while passing through the body.

In a case of suicide a bullet entered the mouth and was found lodged under the left scapula after a good deal of dissection at the post mortem examination. In another case a man who was working in a field was shot in mistake for a black buck while in a squatting position. On post mortem examination the bullet was found to have entered the outer side of the left arm and come out at its inner side. It again entered the body at the second left intercostal space and the left lung passed out of it at its root entered the right lung near its root passed out at its base and lodged itself in a flattened condition on the inner side of the right eighth rib causing its fracture.

In a case where death has not occurred the bullet should be located by means of X-rays if available.



Fig. 78.—Wounds on scalp inflicted with a cutting weapon (gandara). The skull bones have also been cut.

The medical officer may be asked to determine whether a bullet found within the body of the victim was fired from the weapon alleged to have been used. It must be borne in mind that the interior of the barrel of a weapon is marked by a series of spiral grooves which vary in number, depth, width and direction in weapons of different manufacturers. As a bullet passes through the barrel of a weapon it receives on its surface impressions of these grooves and also scratches known as secondary marks caused by any irregularities in the barrel. Hence it is possible to determine whether a particular bullet is fired from a particular weapon by comparing the impressions and secondary marks of the bullet to those produced on similar bullets fired from the

alleged weapon for the purpose of an experiment. These marks offer the best

**The Nature of the Projectile**—Large bullets cause greater damage to the structures than small ones. Round bullets produce larger wounds than conical ones. They cause extensive laceration of the tissues and comminuted fractures of the bones if they strike the body at a right angle, but their course is deflected if they strike the body at a different angle and sometimes their course is arrested by coming in contact with buttons or other hard articles carried in the pocket. Berg<sup>1</sup> reports a case in which a metal trouser button was hit by a bullet and while the bullet itself after hitting the button fell to the ground the button was drawn into the abdomen.

Conical bullets produce much less laceration than round ones and the wounds produced by them are punctured in appearance. Conical bullets rarely split in the tissues though round ones often do.

Modern steel jacketed bullets used in army weapons have the shape of an elongated cone and owing to their great velocity usually pass straight and direct through the body without any deflection or deviation and without causing much damage. The wounds of entry and exit are almost circular and similar in appearance without any bruising or laceration of the surrounding parts. Such wounds also heal very rapidly. Even the wounds caused by such bullets in the brain, lungs or intestines often run a perfectly normal course and heal without any difficulty.

Wadding or gunpowder may cause frightful laceration and may produce death by penetrating the internal organs of the body even if a blank cartridge is discharged close to the body.

**Velocity of the Projectile** — A bullet travelling at high velocity produces a clean, circular, punched-out aperture or slit as in a stabbing wound, and usually perforates the body. It is not deflected from its path by striking a bone, but may cause its comminution or splintering. On the other hand, a bullet of low velocity causes contusion and laceration of the margins of the wounds of entrance. It is easily deflected and deformed by striking some hard object, and often lodges in the body. The track made by the bullet widens as it goes deeper. This is the reverse of a punctured wound.

The effects produced by small shot fired from a shot gun vary according to the distance of the weapon from the body. A charge of small shot fired very close to or within a few inches of the body enters in one mass like a single bullet making a large irregular wound with scorched and confused edges and is followed by the gases of the discharge which greatly lacerate and rupture the deeper tissues. Particles of unburnt powder expelled from the weapon behind the missile are driven to some distance through the wound and some of them are found embedded in the wound and the surrounding skin which is also blackened by the smoke of combustion. At a distance of one to three feet small shot make a single aperture with irregular and lacerated margins corresponding in size to the bore of the muzzle of the gun as



*Fig. 8.—Wound of the scalp caused by the bullet of a rifle from a long distance.*

the shot enter as one mass but are scattered after entering the wound and cause great damage to the internal tissues. The skin surrounding the wound is blackened, scorched and tattooed with unconsumed grains of powder. On the other hand at a distance of six feet the central aperture is surrounded by separate openings in an area of about two inches in diameter made by a few pellets of the shot which spread out before reaching the mark. The skin surrounding the aperture is not blackened or scorched but is tattooed to some extent. At a distance of twelve feet the charge of shot spreads widely and enters the body as individual pellets producing separate openings in an area of five to eight inches in diameter but without causing blackening, scorching or tattooing of the surrounding skin. Thus scattering of shot depends upon the size of the gun, the charge of the powder and the distance of the gun from the body.

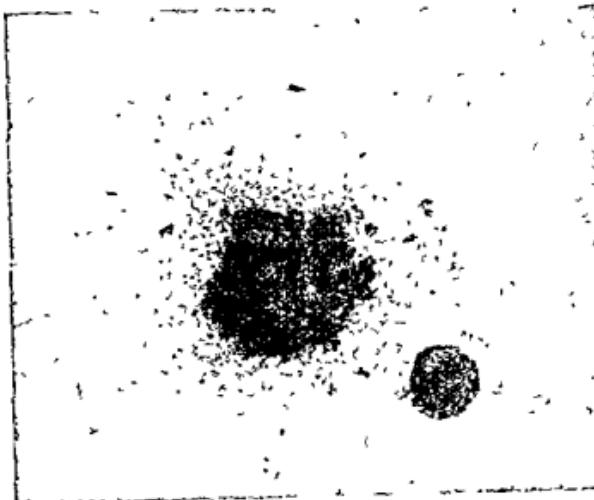
Fig. 85.—Effects of Shot No. 4 on card-board targets fired from a 12-bore shotgun at varying distances.  
 C.—At a distance of 3 feet  $\times \frac{1}{2}$ .  
 D.—At a distance of 6 feet  $\times \frac{1}{2}$ .  
 E.—At a distance of 9 feet  $\times \frac{1}{2}$ .  
 F.—At a distance of 12 feet  $\times \frac{1}{2}$ .



D



E



F



no general rule can be laid down. Experiments must be done with the weapon and cartridges (or loading) similar to those which are alleged to have been used.

**The Time when a Weapon was fired**—Sometimes, a medical man is asked to find out when a particular weapon was fired. If he is not a sportsman and not conversant with different weapons, he should never hazard an opinion. But he should remember for the purpose of rough calculation that after recent discharge a black deposit of potassium sulphide mixed with carbon is found in the barrel of the firearm if black gunpowder was used. For the first five or six hours this deposit forms a strong alkaline solution with distilled water and emits an offensive odour of sulphuretted hydrogen. If the solution is filtered and the filtrate is treated with a solution of lead acetate a black precipitate of lead sulphide is formed. After exposure to air and moisture for a few days potassium sulphide becomes converted into thiosulphite thioeyanate and finally into potassium sulphate, which forms a neutral solution with distilled water and gives a white precipitate with lead acetate. At later periods oxides of iron (iron rust with traces of iron sulphate) are formed in the barrel.

Smokeless nitro powders leave a dark grey deposit in the barrel of a recently discharged firearm. It does not change with the lapse of time. It forms a neutral solution with distilled water, and contains nitrates and nitrites but does not contain sulphides. If the chromate or bichromate powder is used, the residue in the barrel is usually of a greenish tint.<sup>1</sup>

It should be borne in mind that the composition of the deposit would vary considerably if the firearm was dirty at the time of its discharge, and the medical practitioner has no means to know its condition prior to discharge. Again, the deposit would not be found, if the weapon had been thoroughly cleansed after discharge.

**Direction from which the Weapon was fired**—The question regarding the direction from which the weapon was fired may arise in a case where it is alleged that it was fired from a certain point in a quarrel. To ascertain this it is necessary to know the position of the victim at the time of the discharge of the bullet, when a straight line drawn between the entrance and exit wounds and prolonged in front should indicate the line of direction. In some cases it is difficult to determine the direction as the bullet is so often deflected by the tissues that its course is very irregular.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE MEDICO LEGAL ASPECTS OF WOUNDS EXAMINATION OF THE INJURED PERSON

The medical officer is supplied by the Police Superintendent or the Magistrate with the following printed form the columns of which he is required to fill in after examining the injured person —

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Nature of injury, that is whether a cut, a bruise or a burn etc	Size of each injury in inches length breadth and depth	On what part of the body inflicted	Simple grievous or dangerous	By what weapon inst etc	Whether the weapon was dangerous or not	Remarks

The medical officer should be very careful in filling in this form. First of all he should write at the left hand top corner of the form the name of the injured person and the name and number of the police constable accompanying him and should note the mark or marks of identification to enable him to recognize the injured person in court. He should then note the exact time of the examination viz hour date, month and year and proceed with the examination proper as below —

Fracture<sup>1</sup> or dislocation of a bone or tooth. 8 Any hurt<sup>2</sup> which endangers life or which causes the sufferer to be, during the space of twenty days, in severe bodily pain, or unable to follow his ordinary pursuits

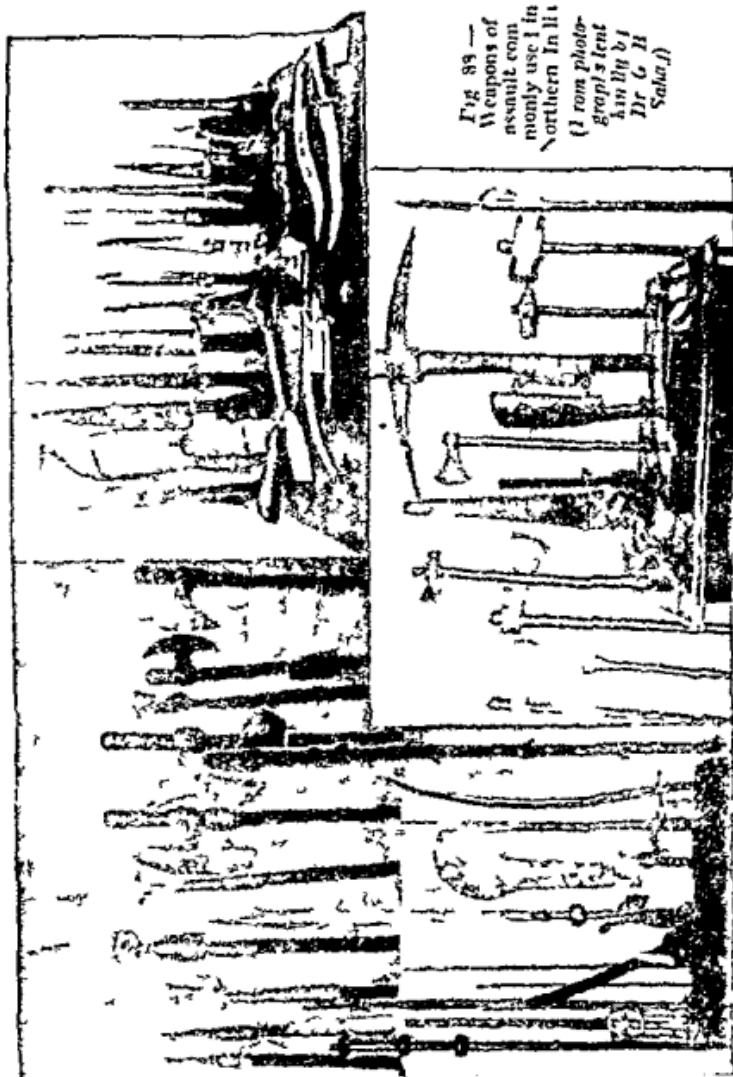
It must be remembered that a mere stay in a hospital for twenty days does not constitute a grievous injury as some doctors and even lawyers are inclined to believe. It must be proved that during that period the injured man was in severe bodily pain or unable to follow his ordinary pursuits. An injured man may be quite capable of following his ordinary pursuits long before twenty days are over, and yet may prolong his stay in a hospital by interfering with the healing of his wound or for the sake of permanent recovery or greater ease or comfort may be willing to remain as a convalescent in hospital especially if he is fed at the public expense.<sup>3</sup> I remember a case in which a man, who had received some bruises over his arms and back as a result of *lathi* blows, stayed in a cottage ward of a hospital for over a month, and yet it was held that the injuries were simple.

Danger to life should be imminent before the injuries are designated 'dangerous to life'. Such injuries are extensive, and implicate important structures or organs, so that they may prove fatal in the absence of surgical aid. For instance, a compound fracture of the skull, a wound of a large artery, or rupture of some internal organ, such as the spleen, should be considered "dangerous to life". But the injuries which prove fatal remotely by intercurrent diseases, such as tetanus, erysipelas, etc., should not be considered as dangerous.

If an opinion as regards the nature of a particular injury cannot be formed at the time of the examination, as in the case of an extensive swelling of a limb when its fracture cannot be detected, or in the case of a head injury where the symptoms are obscure, the injured person must be kept under observation until a definite opinion can be formed, and the police should be notified of the fact.

**Kind of Weapon**—In the fifth column the kind of a weapon by which the injury was inflicted should be mentioned. This can be inferred from examining the injury, for example, the margins, ends and shape in the case of a wound, but sometimes it is difficult to give an opinion as to whether a particular injury, especially a contusion or a lacerated wound, was caused by a blunt weapon or a fall. In that case it is better to give a guarded opinion, mentioning the possibility or probability, as the case may be. While forming an opinion the medical officer should not always depend upon the statement of the injured person, which is often false. Again, as a precautionary measure it is better to mention the fact, if he found that the injuries were such as could not have been caused in the manner suggested by the police or the injured person. This is important to avoid un-

If a weapon alleged to have been used in producing the injuries is sent by the police, it should be examined for marks of blood stains or fragments of hair etc adherent to it and should be returned to the police after it is properly labelled and sealed. When any foreign body, such as a piece of broken glass, a splintered piece of a bamboo staff, a broken point of a cutting instrument or a pellet, bullet



or burns coinciding with the wounds on the underlying parts of the body, but these might not coincide with the wounds, if the garment worn at the time of the assault was very loose and was disarranged during the struggle. The clothes should then be properly marked, sealed and handed over to the police.

**Dangerous Weapon**—The sixth column of the form refers to the description of the weapon as to whether it is dangerous or not. It need not be filled in. As sections 321 and 326, Indian Penal Code, describe a dangerous weapon as any instrument for shooting, stabbing or cutting, or any instrument which used as a weapon of offence, is likely to cause death (vide Appendix IV).

**Age of Injury**—In the column of remarks the age of the injury should be noted. It is frequently found that medical officers do not mention in their report the time when an injury was inflicted, but it is not fair to do so inasmuch as the guilt or innocence of a person charged with criminal wounding or with robbery, burglary, or dacoity may be proved from the injury found on the body of his victim or on his own body, for its appearance may or may not correspond to the time when it is alleged to have been inflicted according to the prosecution theory. Moreover, it is also possible that all the injuries found on a person might not have been inflicted on the same day.

third day Inflammation slowly subsides, and granulation tissue, known as the soft provisional callus is formed from the third to the fourteenth day. This callus binds together the fractured ends of the bone. The formation of the amount of callus depends on the mobility or immobility of the fractured ends. It is less if the ends are immobile and unpressed. It begins to ossify from the fourteenth day to the fifth week and six to eight weeks is the average period taken by the callus to be absorbed completely, so that the fractured ends may be entirely united with the formation of bone.

The repair of fractures of the skull is usually attended with a very slight amount of callus probably owing to the absolute rest of the fragments. The edges of a fissured fracture are usually glued together within a week, or gradually smoothed within three to four weeks, and are united by the formation of bone within two to three months or more. Bony formation does not occur in comminuted fractures the line of fracture remaining permanently visible. Gaps left in the skull due to much loss of bone from injury, or operation are filled with fibrous tissue. Infection interferes with the process of repair, and causes necrosis of the bone.

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to the right of the spine and 4" above the loins. Internally the right kidney was found lying in a pool of blood. It was enlarged and was about three times the normal size. On section a sarcomatous growth was found round the kidney between its substance and the capsule. In the lower segment a cyst, about the size of a rupee, was found affecting the whole substance of the kidney and containing clotted blood. The hemorrhage appeared to have taken place from the anterior surface of the kidney having given way and leading to the cyst. It was held that the hemorrhage occurred from a fall due to the assault and the accused was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for eighteen months.

The causes of death from wounds are *immediate* or *direct* and *remote* or *indirect*.

#### Immediate or Direct Causes—These are—

- 1 Haemorrhage ✓
- 2 Injury of a vital organ ✓
- 3 Shock ✓

**1 Haemorrhage**—This may be external or internal. External haemorrhage may produce syncope and cause death either rapidly, if a large blood vessel such as the carotid or femoral artery, has been wounded or slowly, if a number of small vessels has been injured. The amount of haemorrhage required to cause syncope varies according to circumstances. The sudden loss of blood is more dangerous than the same quantity lost slowly. According to Watson, the loss of blood from five to eight pounds in adults is almost enough to end fatally, but children, women and old persons die from the loss of a much smaller quantity. Persons with haemorrhagic diathesis or haemophiliacs may die of haemorrhage even from a trifling injury.

Internal haemorrhage may occur in penetrating and gunshot wounds. It need not be profuse for a fatal result, for a small quantity of haemorrhage in the brain or into the pleural cavities or pericardium may prove rapidly fatal by disturbing the functions of the brain, lungs or heart from mechanical pressure on them. Blood flowing into the windpipe may cause death mechanically by asphyxia.

accused was guilty of causing grievous hurt<sup>1</sup>. A case<sup>2</sup> is reported in which the deceased was stabbed with a knife on the left forearm by the accused in the course of an altercation between them. The radial artery was pierced and the deceased died of hemorrhage soon after. It was held that the forearm was not a vital part and the offence was not murder. It was not also culpable homicide not amounting to murder and the accused was only guilty of voluntarily causing grievous hurt. He could therefore be convicted only under section 326 I P C and not under section 302 I P C. He was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for three years.

A case<sup>3</sup> is also recorded where a man died of shock produced by multiple injuries including two lacerated wounds on the scalp with a fracture of the vertex inflicted with some blunt weapon on the head and other parts of the body. It was held that the accused had no intention of murder and were sentenced to seven years rigorous imprisonment under section 325 I P C.

**3 Shock**—Death may occur from shock without any visible injury from paralysis of the heart by a blow on the cardiac region or from the inhibitory action of the solar plexus caused by a blow on the pit of the stomach in the upper part of the abdomen.

Shock may be produced from exhaustion resulting from several injuries combined though each one of them separately may be very slight. Shock may also result from fright due to vagus inhibition of the heart or from pain felt in flogging. Another instance of shock is concussion of the brain resulting from a severe blow on the head.

Shock usually appears immediately after receiving the injuries but it may supervene after some time if the individual at the time of receiving injuries was in a state of great excitement and mental exasperation.

**Remote or Indirect Causes**—It is necessary to know the remote causes of death due to injury as the assailant under the law of England is responsible for the death of his victim if it occurs within a year and a day after the infliction of the injury. But there is no such statutory limit in Indian law.

The remote causes of death operating secondarily from the injury are—

1 Inflammation in the internal organs such as meningitis cerebritis pleurisy pneumonia peritonitis etc

2 Septic infection of a wound causing septicæmia pyæmia or exhaustion from prolonged suppuration

3 Gangrene or necrosis resulting from severe crushing of parts and tearing of the blood vessels

4 Infective diseases such as erysipelas and tetanus which may develop through the entrance of the casual organisms through a wound. Erysipelas occurs from three to seven days and is commonly associated with septic wounds of the scalp. It is more common in cold and temperate climates than in India and the tropics. In India tetanus occurs usually from three to ten days after receipt of a wound or even an abrasion. It may occur within a few hours of receipt of the injury, but in temperate countries it usually manifests itself in two to three weeks. Cases are on record where the disease developed from the twenty-sixth to the thirtieth day.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O'Brien (1880) 2 All 766 *Ratanlal an ITI akote Law of Crimes Ld YJH p 697*

<sup>2</sup> *Mathas H gh Court Cr Appeal No 333 of 1918 K E v I Mengodan Laxmi 40 Cr Law Jour 1939 p 303*

<sup>3</sup> *K E v Ram Lal and others Odit Ct of Court Cr Appeal No 372 of 1914 16 Crim Law Jour 1915 p 728*

<sup>4</sup> *The Med and Surg History of the War Part III Surg 1883*

5 Supervention of a disease from a traumatic lesion. For instance, a wound of the abdomen may, after healing, be followed by a strangulated hernia with fatal results. An injury affecting the lower portion of the spinal column or cord may cause paraplegia which may end fatally from septic cystitis or bed sores and general exhaustion after an interval of some weeks or months.

6 Neglect of the Injured Person.—Death may occur from complications arising from a simple injury owing to the negligence of the injured person in its proper care and treatment. In this connection it may be mentioned that a person is not bound to submit himself to medical treatment for injuries received during an assault.

In all these cases an assailant is liable to be indicted for manslaughter<sup>1</sup> according to English law, if the cause of death is directly and definitely traceable to the injury, and the relation between cause and effect is not obscured by the action of concurrent causes. In a case where a wound, not in itself mortal caused death from gangrene owing to neglect or want of proper applications it was held that the party by whom the wound was inflicted was guilty of murder. For, though the fever or gangrene, and not the wound, be the immediate cause of the death, yet the wound being the cause of gangrene or fever, is the immediate cause of the death, *causa causati*.<sup>2</sup> To justify a conviction of murder against an assailant in India it is necessary at the same time to prove that the act was committed with the intention of causing such bodily injury as the offender knew that it was likely to cause death or was sufficient in the ordinary course of nature to cause death (*Vide section 300, I P C, Appendix IV*). If these conditions are not fulfilled, the assailant may be convicted under the offence of culpable homicide not amounting to murder or grievous hurt, or even simple hurt according to the circumstances of the case. The kind of the weapon used and the site of the violence are also

It was held that the accused had no intention of committing wilful murder of the deceased still the fact of the infliction of the injuries showed that they beat him with the intent on of causing such bodily injuries as were likely to cause his death or with the knowledge that they were likely by such acts to cause his death and that in the circumstances of this case all the accused were clearly guilty of the offence of culpable homicide punishable under section 304 I P C<sup>1</sup>

An incised wound which by itself was not grievous or dangerous was inflicted on the right calf on the 22nd August 1922. Tetanus set in on the 31st August 1922 and thus caused the death of the victim on the 3rd September 1922. The assailant was sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment under section 324 I P C<sup>2</sup>.

**7 Result of a Surgical Operation** —If death follows a surgical operation performed for the treatment of an injury the assailant is responsible for the result if it is proved that the death was inevitable even without the operation and that the operation was thought necessary and was performed by a competent surgeon with reasonable care and skill. It should be noted that the liability of the offender is in no way lessened even though life might have been preserved by resorting to proper remedies and skilful treatment (*Vide* explanation 2, section 299, I P C Appendix IV).

In a case<sup>3</sup> where the deceased was stabbed in the abdomen in the night of August 19 1929 and died on the morning of August 21 it was held that the accused was guilty of murder as the stab which had penetrated the abdominal cavity and had pierced the intestines was in the ordinary course sufficient to cause death. The mere fact that the deceased might have been saved if expert medical attention had been afforded at once made no difference to the nature of the crime.

It must also be pointed out that where an injury is inflicted on a person by a blow which in the judgment of competent medical practitioners renders an operation advisable and as a preliminary to the operation chloroform is administered to the patient who dies during its administration and it is agreed that the patient would not have died but for its administration the person causing the injury is liable to be indicted for manslaughter<sup>4</sup>. On the contrary, if the hurt or wound is not mortal and if it is clearly proved that the death of the victim is caused by the application of unwholesome salves or medicines by himself or those about him this cannot be regarded as homicide.

During a quarrel over grazing cattle one Sobha struck a blow over the head of his uncle and caused a wound over the top. The injury was thought to be simple but death occurred three weeks later from sepsis consequent to the bad handling of the wound and application of wrong village remedies. Sobha and his associate were convicted under section 304 I P C. On an appeal in the Chief Court of Oudh it was held that the accused had no intention of causing death or such bodily injury as he knew to be likely to cause death nor could it be held that the accused must have had the knowledge that the blow he was dealing was likely to cause death. The conviction under section 304 I P C was therefore set aside and the accused was convicted under section 305 I P C<sup>5</sup>.

### WHICH OF THE SEVERAL INJURIES CAUSED DEATH?

In the case of multiple injuries inflicted on a person by more than one accused either at the same time or at different times it is very essential to discover the injury which proved fatal and whether it was the result of one or more blows, for the defence pleader may admit death but may plead that it was not due to the wound attributable to his client. This can be ascertained by examining the wounds individually and noting which of them involved injury to some vital organ or large blood vessel or led to secondary results causing death. For instance there may be several wounds on the scalp, but only one may cause fracture

<sup>1</sup> Oudh Chief Court Cr Appeal No 401 of 1931 K L v Sat Narain and others, 26 Cr Law Jour 1932 p 573

<sup>2</sup> 26 Crim Law Jour 1932 p 294

<sup>3</sup> Mairas High Court Cr Appeal No 124 of 1932 K F v Mahanti Sreeramulu 41 Cr Law Jour 1940 p 491

<sup>4</sup> Davis (1883) 15 Cox 1<sup>st</sup>, Ratnala and Thakore Law of Crimes Ed XI II p 701

<sup>5</sup> Oudh Chief Court Crim Appeal No 173 of 1932 K I v Sobha and another 26 Crim Law Jour 1932 p 1262

of the skull ending in death. A gun, fractures of more than one skull bone may result from only one blow. It must, however, be noted that even if he fell dead at the hands of one of them, all the accused are responsible for having caused the death of their victim, if they started with the common object of intentionally causing such hurt as would be likely to end fatally.<sup>1</sup> For example, in the case of *Emperor v Chandan and two others*<sup>2</sup> where all the three accused in furtherance of a common intention beat one Kallu Jat with *lathis* and one of the blows caused fracture of the skull, which resulted in death on the following day, the accused were found guilty under section 304, I P C, even though it was not ascertained as to who dealt the fatal blow. In the case of *Emperor v Bulshan and others*<sup>3</sup> where a woman was murdered it was held that though there was no evidence as to who actually committed the murder, the four persons having taken the woman out with the knowledge and with the purpose that one of them should murder her, the murder was committed in furtherance of the common intention of all and all the four accused were guilty of murder. On the other hand, four persons attacked another with *lathi* with the result that the latter received a single blow on his head which caused his death due to fracture of the skull. There was no other grievous hurt on his body, and there was no evidence as to which of the assailants had struck the fatal blow. It was held (1) that it was impossible to hold that the assailants had any common intention to cause death, nor could it be said that each one of them knew that death was likely to be caused, (2) that the common intention of the assailants was to give the deceased a good thrashing and they must have known that grievous hurt was likely to be caused, (3) that as it was not known which of the assailants had struck the fatal blow, they could only be convicted of causing grievous hurt.<sup>4</sup>

### THE POWER OF VOLITIONAL ACTS IN A VICTIM AFTER RECEIVING A FATAL INJURY

Sometimes, the prosecution sets up a theory that the victim, after receiving mortal injuries involving a vital organ, such as the brain, was able to speak and mentioned or wrote down the name or names of his assailant or assailants. Similarly, the defence may try to prove an alibi if the accused was seen with the victim a moment before his death at a particular spot and the victim had afterwards moved to some other place on the ground that he could not have walked after having received the fatal injury. In both these cases the medical witness is required to state whether a person is capable of speaking, walking or performing any other volitional act, which would involve bodily and mental power for some time after receiving a fatal injury. A very guarded reply should be given, seeing that a few cases have been recorded in which the victims were able to perform some act as that of walking or climbing requiring some exertion, and survived for some hours or days after receiving very grave injuries, which would ordinarily have proved rapidly fatal.

Cases—1. One evening while walking in Bow Bazar in Calcutta a young Hindu, aged about 18 years was struck on the head with a piece of wood and knocked down by the violence of the blow. He got up and after some delay, proceeded to the police station in Lower Circular Road and laid a charge against his assailant whose name was not known but who was arrested and identified by some of the eye-witnesses. From the police-station he walked to the Medical College Hospital, and was then found to have sustained a lacerated wound on the scalp, situated on the left side of the vertex in the frontal region. The wound was dressed and the injured person went to a friend's house, where he spent the night. Next morning he got into a hackney carriage to go to his uncle, during the drive he began to show signs of compression and becoming unconscious, was removed to the Campbell Hospital where he died. Post mortem examination revealed besides the external wound of the scalp, a fracture which extending vertically

1 Vide Section 34 I P C , Appendix II

2 27 Criminal Law Journal, 1926, p 619

3 27 Criminal Law Jour , 1926, p 1203

4 26 Criminal Law Jour , 1925, p 381

through the temporal region and through the middle fossa of the base terminated at the posterior part of the sphenoid —*Ind Med Gaz Jan, 1894 p 32*

2 A man received several extensive fractures of the skull with abundant sub dural haemorrhage and rupture of the diaphragm with hernia of the stomach. The stomach was ruptured and nearly a litre of its contents was contained in the left cerebral cavity. Notwithstanding all this, he was able to walk about for an hour or so and answer several questions. He died only after several hours. Another man crushed by a carriage received a large rupture of the diaphragm, complete rupture of the jejunum and rupture and crushing of the kidney. Yet he walked nearly 5 miles and did not die until the next day —*Ibert quoted by Willius and Becker, Med Juris and Toxic, Vol II, p 46*

3 A man received a cut in the carotid (it is not mentioned whether external or common) artery late at night. After receiving the cut he mentioned that he had seen the persons whom he named stealing his goat that he had seized one of them that the other cut him on the neck with a *dhalo* or knife and that both escaped. He was able to identify them when the neighbouring hours were sent for and confronted with him. He died the following day —*Chevers Med Juris Id III p 47*

4 At noon on the 23rd May 1923 a Mahomedan male aged 40 years was stabbed in the stomach with a knife and was able to walk about two furlongs and a half when his strength gave out and he lay down. He was then taken on a bed to the police station where he was in his right senses and made a report. He was sent to the hospital for medical examination where his dying declaration was recorded as he proved to be in a dangerous condition. He died at 10 p.m. on the following day —*K E v Kallankulan of District Bynor, All High Court Criminal Appeal No 57 of 1923*

5 Gurdeon of Police Station Molanlalgang aged 30 years who was assaulted with *lathis* and a sharp cutting instrument on the 9th August 1926 walked a distance of 70 to 80 paces and gave the names of his assailants before he died. At the post mortem examination on the next day I found the nostrils cut off with a portion of the septum removed two lacerated wounds on the head and eleven bruises on various parts of the body. There was also a fracture of the right parietal bone extending into the right side of the frontal bone. The coronal and sagittal sutures were separated and the temporal bones were fractured.

6 At about 6 p.m. on the 24th March 1928 Mr Bakhsh 30 years old received an incised wound 1" x ½", in the middle of the left side of the neck, causing injuries to the big vessels of the neck and tried to run after his assailant but fell after a few yards. He was removed to the police station where he was able to make a report of his assault. From there he was taken to the hospital and his condition was so grave that the doctor took down his dying declaration at 10.0 p.m. He died at midnight —*King Emperor v Chole All High Court Crim Appeal No 636 of 1928*

7 At about 9 or 10 p.m. on the 21st August 1928 Sico Narain aged 45 of District Cawnpore was assaulted by his brother with a *kanta* and received an incised wound 5" long along the left side of the chest severing completely the left 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th ribs penetrating into the left pleural cavity and cutting the diaphragm to an extent of about 4" in length. The stomach spleen and a part of the intestines were protruding outside the chest wall through the wound. The spleen had also a superficial wound 2" long. At 4.30 a.m. on the next day he was taken to the police station where he lodged a complaint. From the police-station he was sent to the nearest dispensary but was afterwards removed to the District Hospital at Cawnpore as his wound was very serious. At about midnight he made a dying declaration before a Deputy Magistrate in the hospital and died in the morning of the 23rd August —*King Emperor v Mannu Illai abad High Court, Crim Appeal No 239 of 1930*

8 On the morning of December 14 1931 Mr Stevens Collector of Comilla was shot by a girl with a .30 revolver while he was standing on the threshold of his office and on the left of his sub divisional officer. He fell against the sub divisional officer and said "I am hit" then turned and ran through the office up through the dining room into the pantry and shut the folding doors before he fell dead on the floor. Post mortem examination showed that the bullet had gone through the heart and out into the right lung —*Leader Dec 25 1931*

#### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WOUNDS INFILCTED DURING LIFE AND AFTER DEATH

In India the practice of inflicting wounds on a dead body to support a false charge against an enemy is so common that every medical officer who has done medico legal work must have come across such cases during his professional career.

The following are the principal points by which a wound inflicted during life can be recognized —

1 Haemorrhage 2 Retraction of the edges of the wound 3 Signs of inflammation and reparative processes

**1 Haemorrhage**—There is more or less copious haemorrhage in all wounds, except in lacerated wounds, when it may be very little. The effused blood is forced into the tissue interspaces in the vicinity of the wounds, and is found in filtrated in the cellular and muscular tissues. There is consequent staining of the edges of the wounds and the neighbouring tissues, which cannot be removed by washing, but the staining caused by the blood effused from post mortem wounds is easily removed by washing.

There will be clots of the effused blood in the wounds and tissues and in the neighbourhood of the body. Clotting of the blood occurs normally in about five to ten minutes.

There will also be signs of spouting of arterial blood on the body, clothing or in its vicinity.

In a contusion there will be the presence of ecchymosis absorption changes of its colour and a swelling of the neighbouring tissue. On dissection coagulated blood will be found in the subcutaneous tissues.

**2 Retraction of the Edges of the Wound**—Owing to the vital reaction of the skin and muscular fibres the edges of a wound inflicted during life retract and cause the wound to gape. On the other hand in the case of a wound inflicted long after death when the body heat has passed off the edges do not gape but are closely approximated to each other, as the skin and other tissues have lost their contractility.

**3 Signs of Inflammation and Reparative Processes**—These are the signs of vital reaction and will depend upon the period that an individual has survived the infliction of a wound. For instance tumefaction of the edges and leucocytic infiltration will show that the wound was inflicted within a few hours before death, while the presence of pus granulation tissue or scab will definitely prove that the wound was inflicted some days before death.

The absence of the above signs will show that the wound was inflicted after death, however, it must be borne in mind that haemorrhage and retraction of the edges may take place in a wound caused within one to two hours after death during the molecular life of the tissues when the body is still warm. In such a case haemorrhage is slight, unless a large vein is cut and there is no arterial spouting or formation of a firm clot which rarely occurs ten minutes after death. In a doubtful case it is desirable to preserve a portion of the wound for microscopic examination.

*Table showing the Distinction between Ante mortem and Post mortem Wounds*

Ante mortem Wounds	Post mortem wounds
1 Haemorrhage more or less copious and generally arterial	1 Haemorrhage slight or none at all and always venous
2 Marks of spouting of blood from arteries	2 No spouting of blood
3 Clotted blood	3 Blood is not clotted, if at all it is a soft clot
4 Deep staining of the edges and cellular tissues which is not removed by washing	4 The edges and cellular tissues are not deeply stained. The staining can be removed by washing
5 The edges gape owing to the reaction of the skin and muscle fibres	5 The edges do not gape but are closely approximated to each other, unless the wound is caused within one or two hours after death
6 Inflammation and reparative processes	6 No inflammation or reparative processes

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUICIDAL, HOMICIDAL AND ACCIDENTAL WOUNDS

In the case of death occurring from wounds the question is often raised as to whether they were the result of suicide homicide or accident. The answer is not always easy, but it can be given to some extent by a medical practitioner by noting the following points —

- 1 The situation and character of the wounds ✓
- The number direction and extent of the wounds
- 3 The condition of the locality and the surroundings of the wounded person

**1 The Situation and Character of the Wounds** — Suicidal wounds are usually on the front or on the sides of the body and affect the vital organs. They are usually incised punctured or gunshot wounds. Suicidal incised wounds are generally situated on the front of the body in easily accessible positions especially, on the throat or chest. These may be found in unusual regions. For instance a woman<sup>1</sup> cut the walls of her vagina and when the intestines protruded she pulled down several feet and cut them off. Incised and punctured wounds situated on the back or in such a position as cannot be easily reached by a suicide are homicidal though a suicide may rarely produce wounds on himself which may have the appearance of being homicidal. A carpenter's assistant 60 years old committed suicide by cutting the back of his neck in the middle with a sharp razor blade.

Incised or punctured wounds may be caused accidentally by falling upon a sharp cutting weapon held in the hand or upon a sharp pointed object. Such wounds may be situated at such places as may give rise to a suspicion of homicide if there was no eye witness at the time of the accident. A S Dawson<sup>2</sup> reports the case of a Burmese male who was descending a bamboo ladder in his house when he suddenly slipped and fell a distance of 12 or 13 feet. At the time when he was descending the ladder he had in his hand a long sharp knife or *dao*. His hand resting on his left shoulder as he fell this slipped off and struck him on the back over the apical region of the left lung causing a gaping incised wound 3" long and penetrating the pleura and lung. The knife was extricated by his relatives. The patient ultimately recovered. If death had taken place the question as to possible homicide might have been raised since it would be difficult for a person to stab himself in that position.

Cuts on the fingers and palms are produced during attempts by the injured person to seize the weapon and are therefore indicative of homicide. Incised or lacerated wounds inflicted on the backs of the hands wrists and forearms during an endeavour to ward off blows on the head or other parts of the body are strongly suggestive of murder.

Incised wounds on the nose ears and genitals are usually homicidal and are inflicted on account of jealousy or revenge in cases of adultery.

A case is recorded where a man had been carrying on an intimacy with a widow. The cousin of her deceased husband was much aggrieved over it. Hence he waylaid the lover of the woman tied him to a tamarind tree with a big rope and cut off his genital organ practically at the root severing it completely from the body. Not being content with this he inflicted a wound 8" by 1" right

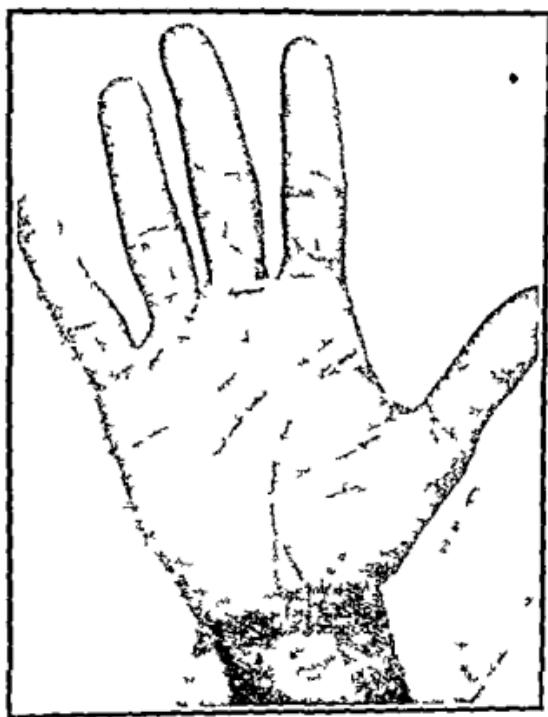
<sup>1</sup> Robertson Med Juris and Toxic Ed II p 118

<sup>2</sup> F Klein Schwei Med Woch Sep 19 1917 p 1044 Med Leg and Crim olog Rev 1943 Vol XI Part I p 17

<sup>3</sup> Ind Med Ca April 1928 p 901

round the scrotum his obvious intention being to remove it altogether<sup>1</sup>. In another case<sup>2</sup> a Brahman aged 23 years armed with a sickle (*lansia*) cut off the vagina and uterus of his wife aged 18 years and disembowelled her by wounds extending from the level of the breast to the anus cutting the heart liver lungs stomach and intestines. The motive for the crime was jealousy as he saw her lying with another man at midnight.

It should be noted that incised wounds on the genital organs are sometimes produced after death. I saw a case in which the penis was cut off after the deceased was done to death by a stab in the heart. In another case the penis was almost severed after the neck was cut off with a *gandasa*. In a third case a *kulchal* was thrust into the vagina of a Hindu woman after she was killed by inflicting several wounds on the head and neck with a heavy cutting weapon.



*Fig. 89.—Cuts on the fingers and palm caused by grasping the blade of a knife and indicating homicide.*

Incised wounds of a trifling nature on the genitals may be self inflicted. I came across a case where an adult male inflicted a superficial cut across the root of the penis over its dorsum and directed from left to right and brought a charge against his enemy who had assaulted him with a *lathi* (club).

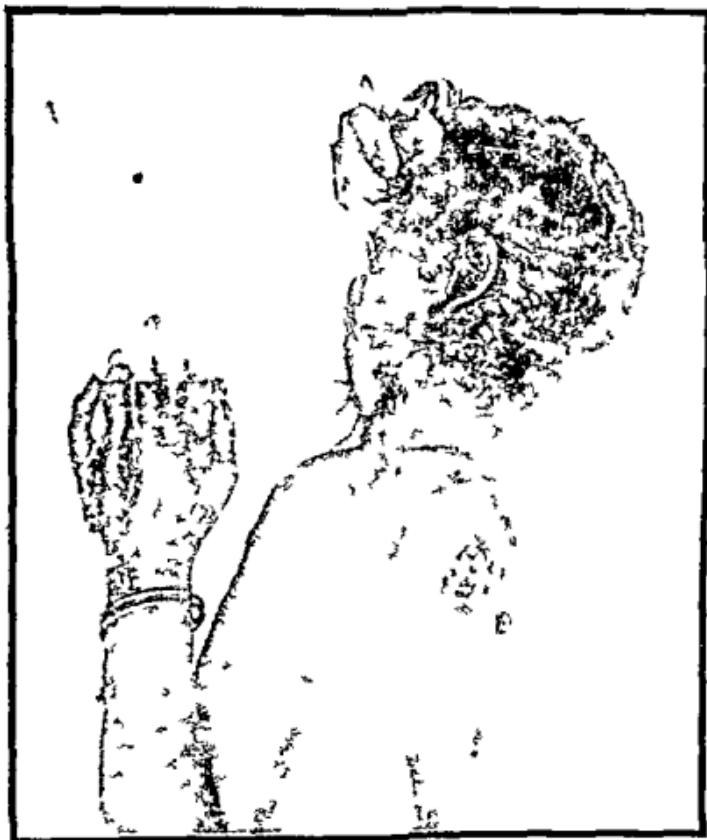
Gunshot wounds inflicted in the mouth or on the forehead temple or heart are as a rule suicidal when the skin in the neighbourhood is blackened scorched and tattooed. In such cases the hand used to steady the weapon at the muzzle end may be blackened or scorched from the discharge of the same and may be

<sup>1</sup> *Leader Dec. 7 1930*

<sup>2</sup> *K. T. v. Baldeo Prasad III H. C. Court Crim. Appeal No. 17 of 1930*

stained with spouting of the blood from the injured arteries. Gunshot wounds situated on the back and on the occipital region are usually homicidal. Those situated on the sides and front may be accidental or homicidal.

Lacerated wounds are either accidental or homicidal. Accidental wounds are generally situated on the exposed parts of the body and mostly on the same side. Lacerated wounds of the vertex are homicidal unless there is a history of some weight falling from a height on the top of the head or of the victim having



*Fig. 90.—Homicide. Incised wounds on back of hand and fingers caused by a heavy cutting weapon during attempts to ward off the blows over the head.*

fallen head downwards from a height in which latter case there will be abrasions and lacerations on other parts of the body. Lacerated wounds on the forehead may be homicidal or accidental. Lacerated wounds on the occiput are more often homicidal than accidental. If they are homicidal wounds may be found on the backs of the fingers as the assaulted person involuntarily raises his hand to guard against the blow and consequently, the fingers are likely to be injured.

**2. The Number, Direction and Extent of the Wounds**—Several injuries on the body if they are deep and extensive are as a rule homicidal if we except

accidents from falls motor cars and other vehicles. In India murderers select a heavy cutting instrument, such as a *gandasa* (chopper) *banla*, *lurpi*, *lulhari* (axe), sword, etc. and inflict several deadly wounds on the head cutting the skull bones and exposing the brain tissue or on the neck cutting the larynx, oesophagus, large blood vessels, vertebrae and even the spinal cord. They are not generally satisfied by inflicting only one wound, but inflict several mortal wounds and sometimes hack the body so much that the head is either severed altogether from the trunk or remains connected to it by a mere tag of skin. In addition to these, several wounds are usually inflicted on the trunk and limbs. In one case twenty six wounds on the body of a boy, three years old, were inflicted with a *gandasa* by a girl of twelve years of age. In another case of murder one hundred and five wounds were inflicted on the body of a Hindu woman. Of these, forty five were on the head, face and neck and the remaining on the forearms, wrists, fingers and stumps.

It must be borne in mind that in some cases a murderer kills his victim by inflicting one or more fatal wounds and then in order to divert the attention of the police to possible suicide he inflicts on the dead body other wounds which in themselves would have caused the death had they been produced during life.

A case occurred at Agra where a Umbardar killed a boy aged 17 by inflicting wounds on the face and neck with a sword and then fired rifle from a distance of a few feet causing further wounds on the face and head which resulted in the shattering of the face and skull bones and laceration of the brain substance. Afterwards he placed the rifle over the corpse to make it look as if it were a case of suicide. During the trial the defence suggested that the boy committed suicide by firing the rifle with the muzzle in the mouth. But the medical legal officer who held the post mortem examination proved to the satisfaction of the court that the rifle was not fired within the mouth and that some of the injuries on the neck and face were such as could not have been caused by the firing of a rifle but were caused by a cutting weapon and might have been caused by a sword. The Umbardar was convicted of the murder of the boy under section 302 I.P.C., and was sentenced to death.



Fig. 91.—Incised wounds on fingers and hand due to attempts to ward off assailant's knife

On the other hand, several severe injuries on the body may, sometimes, be suicidal.

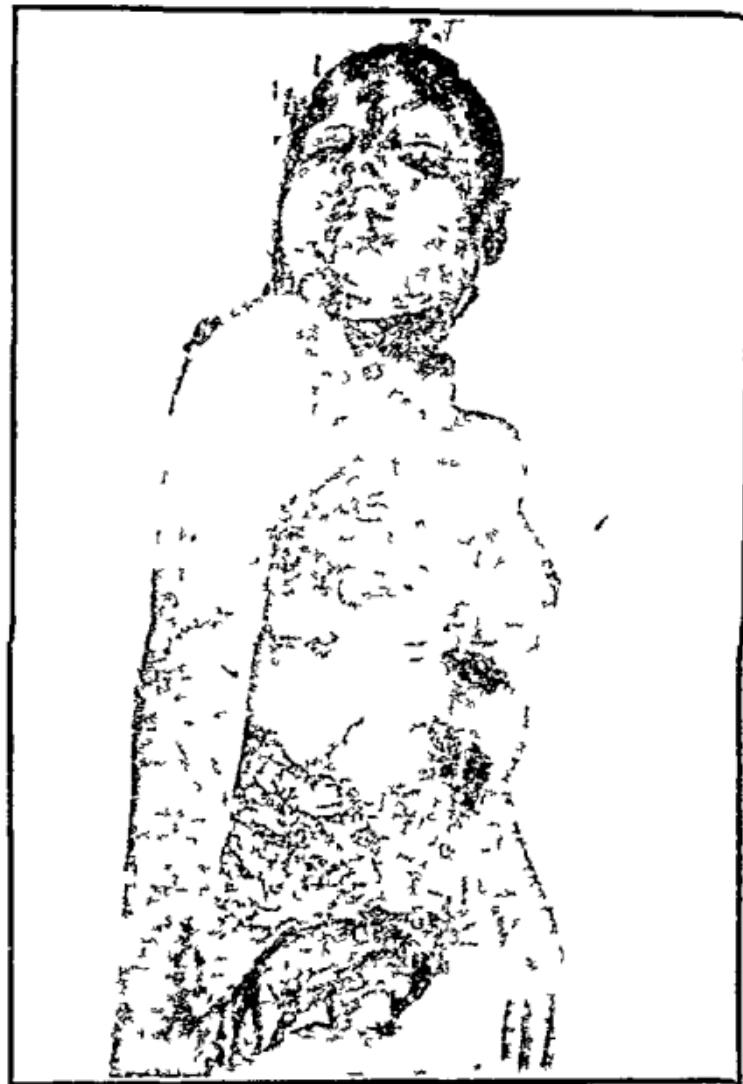
Wm. Alexander<sup>1</sup> reports a case where an officer was found lying on a couch with two deep incised wounds on the front of the abdomen and one similar wound on the back near the spine. Twenty six incised wounds were found about the left breast, some of them penetrating the thorax and others leading along the ribs. Both hands were dreadfully mutilated. Lying close by the officer was a sword covered with blood and bent to an angle of about 45 degrees. He lived for several hours and I mentioned how he had transfixed himself by placing the hilt of the sword against the wall and then pressing forward on it, but failing to effect his object, he made a second attempt. This time the blade impinging on the spine was bent so that he had great difficulty in withdrawing it, his hands being cut severely in the effort. As death did not ensue he then tried to perforate the heart but without success.

<sup>1</sup> *All High Court Crim Appeal No 1202 of 1920*

<sup>2</sup> *Lancet Jan 24 1891, p 178*

On August 27 1933 a Mohamedan male 60 years old was admitted to the King George's Hospital Lucknow as a case of suicide with multiple injuries inflicted with a razor. On examination Mr Mathur Reader in Surgery, found the following injuries —

1 An incised wound  $3'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ , round the base of the penis and the scrotum cutting off both the structures with the testicles from the body



*Fig. 92.—Homicidal cut throat with multiple injuries*

2 An incised wound  $4'' \times \frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ , along the middle line of the abdomen towards the right and directed from above downwards

3 An incised wound  $6'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}''$  across the abdomen at the level of the navel. A loop of the small intestine 4 feet long was protruding out of the wound. One foot of the intestine was slit longitudinally and then divided transversely into two

The abdominal cavity was full of blood, and the stomach was also found divided vertically into two parts in its middle.

In his statement he mentioned that he felt heat in his head and therefore inflicted the wounds with a view to ending his life.

The presence of a large number of superficial wounds is presumptive evidence of self infliction.

Douglas J Kerr<sup>1</sup> mentions the case of a healthy young man who under the influence of a delusion that he had killed his sister, had made over 400 cuts on various parts of his body e.g., on the forehead, chin front of the neck, chest, abdomen, scrotum and the dorsal and palmar surfaces of the fingers, hands and wrists. These had been inflicted with a blunt pen knife and were chiefly superficial though in a number of cases underlying muscles were divided.

Suicidal wounds caused by a cutting instrument on the neck are generally single and are situated either above the hyoid bone and open directly into the mouth or are situated below the hyoid bone and involve the thyroid or cricoid cartilage, or the large blood vessels of one side. However extensive wounds in the neck involving the large blood vessels of both sides and reaching the spine though rare, are seen in suicidal cases.

In June, 1915 a Hindu male aged 22 committed suicide by cutting his throat with a razor. On inspection an incised wound  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " by 2" was found across the front of the neck above the hyoid bone cutting all the structures down to the spine.

In a criminal case of reference before the Patna High Court where one Sheocharan Das<sup>2</sup> was accused of murdering two young boys by inflicting wounds on their throats and then having attempted suicide by cutting his own throat the Honourable Judge held that all the three boys had attempted suicide successfully and one unsuccessfully and acquitted the accused of the charge of murder but convicted him of the offence under section 303 I P C. The injuries on these three boys were as follows —

**First boy** Two incised wounds  $5'' \times 2''$  on the right side of the neck cutting the trachea, larynx, oesophagus and the right cornu of the hyoid bone grazing upto the vertebra and cutting the intervening muscles and the external carotid artery.

**Second boy** Two incised wounds on the neck, one of these  $1'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$  skin deep and the other  $5'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$  muscle deep on the right side of the neck cutting the larynx and trachea laterally and the platysma and the muscles of the right side of the neck. The external carotid artery was also divided and the vertebra was grazed.

**Third boy** Three incised wounds on the neck of these two were superficial and the third was  $5'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$  on the front of the neck cutting the larynx and oesophagus and fracturing the right cornu of the hyoid bone.

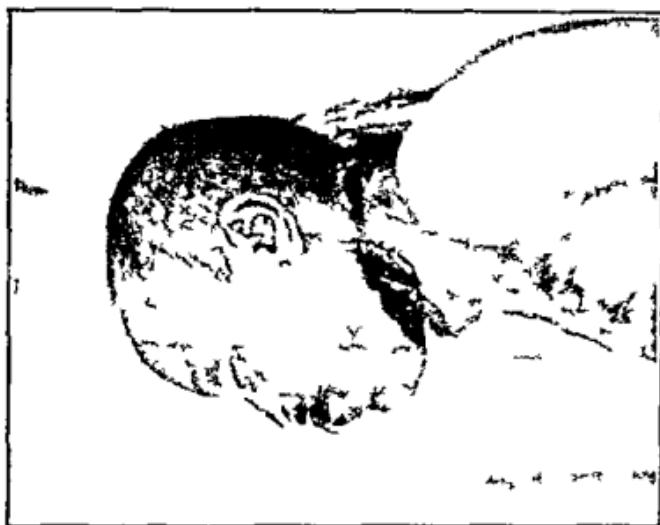


Fig. 02—Soleil cut off front

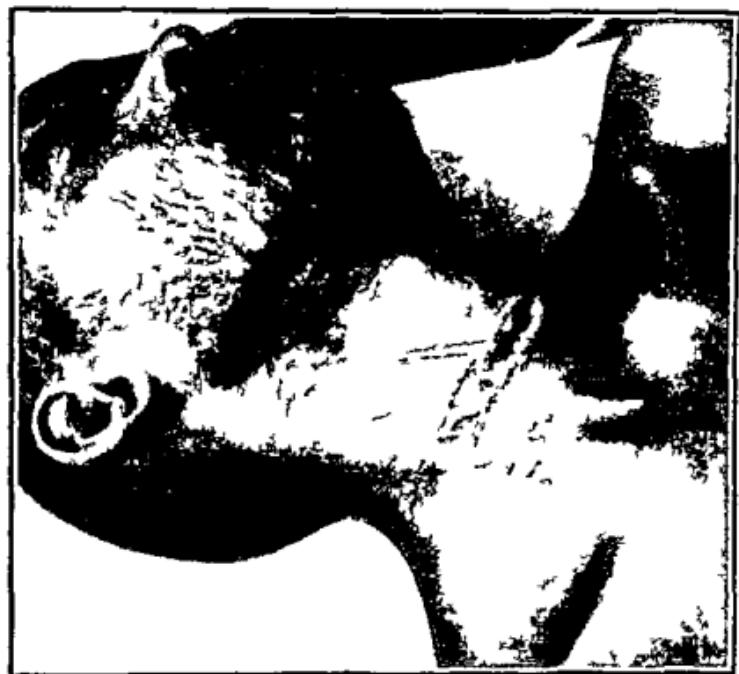


Fig. 03—Soleil left off front

Suicidal wounds of the chest are usually on the left side, and directed downwards and inwards, unless the person happens to be left-handed. Homicidal wounds of the chest are usually distributed over a wider area and are more horizontal and most of them may be deadly owing to the vital organs being injured. They may be directed from below upwards which is rarely seen in suicidal wounds.

Suicidal wounds on the arms are usually directed from above downwards, and those on the lower limbs from below upwards.



*Fig. 95.—Self inflicted incised wound across the back of the neck.  
(Same case as on p. 238)*

Self inflicted wounds simulating homicidal wounds are usually produced to support a false charge of assault against an opponent to augment the seriousness of the injuries which one has already received during a quarrel to prove self defence in an accusation of assault or murder or to substantiate a charge of violence and robbery in a case where one has appropriated money or valuables placed in one's charge. Such wounds are commonly on the front of the body but may be on those parts of the back which can be easily reached by the hand. They are several superficial cuts or scratches made with a knife, razor or some pointed instrument. They are often parallel with straight regular margins. I have seen several cases of fabricated wounds but the following are characteristic—

2 In May 1919 a Mahomedan male of Police-Station Saadatganj District Lucknow received three simple bruises on the right forearm right shoulder and left cheek bone during a quarrel. He went home inflicted some injuries on his body and lodged a complaint against his opponent at the police station. On examination I found the following injuries which from their position and appearance did not leave any doubt of their being self inflicted —

(a) A superficial cut half an inch by quarter of an inch tapering into a linear tail three inches long obliquely along the middle of the front of the left forearm directed from below upwards and from without inwards.

(b) Three superficial incised wounds varying from three quarters to two inches long and from one-eighth to one fourth inch broad obliquely along the right side of the chest directed from above downwards and outwards.

(c) Two vertical linear cuts each half an inch long, on the left side of the chest above the left nipple.

(d) Three horizontal superficial cuts varying from half an inch to two inches by one-eighth to one fourth inch and parallel to each other below the right nipple. They all ended in linear tails of varying lengths and were directed from left to right.

(e) Two vertical superficial incised wounds each measuring one inch by one fourth inch along the upper part of the right thigh on its inner side. One of these was directed from below upwards and from within outwards and the other from above downwards and from without inwards.

3 One Ramavtar of Police Station Mohanlalganj complained that he was assaulted by a man with a *gar dasa* (chooper) on the 12th May 1927 and received a wound on the back of the neck. On examination I found a transverse incised wound 3" by  $\frac{1}{4}$ " (in its widest part) by  $\frac{1}{16}$ " across the back of the neck in its lower part commencing from " to the left of the spinal column and directed towards the right side ending into a linear superficial transverse scratch  $\frac{1}{16}$ " long. I gave my opinion that it appeared more like a self inflicted wound than a homicidal wound, and the accused was discharged by the Sessions Judge.

4 On the 15th November 1928 I examined Must Rukmani who complained that she was struck with a *gandasa*. She had a superficial cut with a dry scab  $\frac{1}{2}$ " by  $\frac{1}{10}$ " across the back of the right forearm 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " below the right elbow ending into a linear superficial cut 1" long and directed from within outwards. There were three more linear superficial cuts varying from  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 1" long across the back of the same forearm below the first cut.

5 On or about the 26th January 1929 one Swami Dini killed a Mahomedan male by inflicting several injuries on his body with a heavy cutting weapon and then caused cuts on some parts of his own body to bring forward a plea that in self defence he killed the Mahomedan as the latter wanted to take his life. On examination I found several linear cuts and scratches on his forehead right temple sides of the front of the neck and back of the left hand. Most of these were almost parallel and some were crossing one another.

6 On the 28th December 1930 I examined a sweeper who complained that he was struck with a razor by his opponent. He had several superficial cuts varying from 1" to 4" by  $\frac{1}{8}$ " to  $\frac{1}{4}$ ", obliquely across the back of his right forearm in its upper half and directed from within outwards. I gave my opinion that the cuts appeared to be self inflicted.

3 The Condition of the Locality and Surroundings of the wounded Person — The finding of a body in a room with the door and windows locked on the inside points to suicide. If only the door is locked the windows should be carefully examined for the presence of bloody finger marks or other evidence that some one has escaped through them. The finding of a farewell letter or evidence of a design is strongly presumptive of suicide. A disordered state of the clothing and a disarranged condition of the furniture in a room indicate a struggle having taken place and are therefore, greatly in favour of homicide. It should however be remembered that cases are on record where lunatics upset and damaged the furniture owing to the maniacal frenzy before they committed suicide.

Foot prints in blood or dirt on the floor or verandah of the room in which a body is found should be carefully examined and compared with those of the victim or those of the suspected person in order to determine if it is a case of suicide or homicide. Blood stained finger marks on the furniture or on the corpse will indicate homicide if they do not correspond with the finger marks of the victim. These foot prints and finger prints should be photographed so that they might be used for identifying the assassin in the future.

A body found at the foot of a precipice or on a railway line points to suicide or accident but it may have been placed there to conceal the act of homicide. In that case a careful search should be made for the presence of marks of dragging the body on the ground marks of blood stains and foot prints on the ground and in the vicinity.

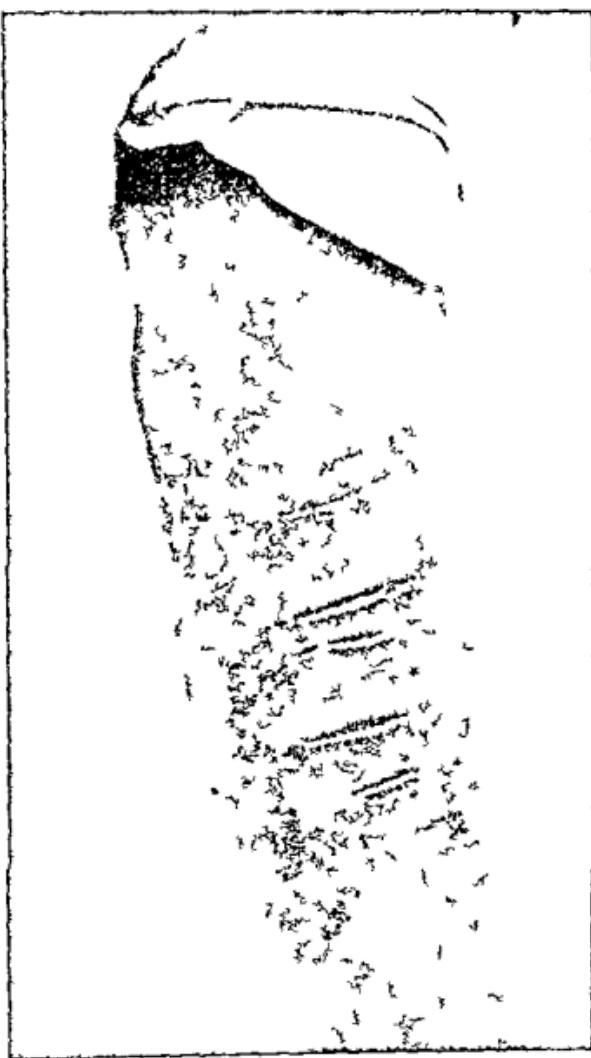


Fig. 96.—Self inflicted wounds on forearm (Same case as Fig. 93).

A weapon firmly grasped in the hand of the deceased person is strongly suggestive of suicide. In such a case blood is generally found on the outside of the hand and fingers or between the fingers but not on the palm and the palmar aspect of the fingers. There may be blood stains on the wrist. Portions of hair fragments of clothing or some other foreign material firmly grasped in the hand of the corpse is indicative of homicide.

Suicide is generally suspected if a weapon is found lying near the body. It should be examined for the presence of blood stains, and it should be determined whether the wounds could have been caused by the weapon, for, it is quite possible that the weapon found may not be that with which the injuries were inflicted. It is also possible that the weapon may be quite clean if it was wiped with a piece of cloth or towel, which would very likely, be found lying in the vicinity.

The absence of a weapon in the vicinity of the body is suggestive of homicide, but not necessarily, for a suicide may conceal the weapon or throw it away after inflicting a fatal injury on himself. F H G Shore<sup>1</sup> reports the case of a suicide, where a sergeant inflicted two cuts on the left side of the neck which joined into one large gash above his larynx and extended to the right side. He had divided both internal jugular veins and both superior thyroid arteries. The oesophagus, prevertebral muscles and the discs between the fourth and fifth cervical vertebrae were all injured. After inflicting all these injuries he put away his razor into its case and that into its usual place in his kit bag. I saw a case where an old man threw away his knife into a well after cutting his throat, and then jumped into it.

All the articles found on or near the body and likely to be of any value in detecting the crime should be carefully examined and then sent to the Superintendent of Police or Magistrate in sealed packets.

## CHAPTER XII

### REGIONAL INJURIES

#### HEAD

**Scalp**—Injuries of the scalp are either accidental or homicidal. Rarely, cases are reported in which suicidal injuries have been produced on the scalp by means of a heavy weapon. A man,<sup>1</sup> aged 28 years who had been arrested for a particularly cold blooded murder, took out a nail from the wall of his cell and committed suicide by driving it into his skull. A 50 year old woman who was suffering from insomnia and climacteric disturbances, committed suicide by striking blows on the crown of her head with a hatchet.<sup>2</sup>

In India, most scalp injuries are homicidal, and are generally produced by a blunt weapon, e.g., a *lathi*, a stone or a wooden pestle (*musal*) and occasionally by a cutting instrument, such as a *gandasa*, a *khurpi* an axe or a sword. The



Fig. 97.—Murder. Wound made with axe seen sticking into the head  
(From a photograph lent kindly by the Superintendent of Police, Ahmedabad)

injuries are consequently contusions and lacerated wounds as well as incised and punctured wounds. The swelling and inflammation are not usually very much as the scalp is a dense tissue. It must be remembered that an oblique blow generally causes a large wound and a direct blow, a small wound. These wounds may be simple or complicated with fractures of the skull. While examining them it is always advisable to find out if there is any fracture.

In the case of a contusion the effusion of blood is, sometimes, so great that it forms a haematoma (cephal haematoma) which may readily be mistaken for

<sup>1</sup> Brit. Med. Jour. Aug. 13 1932 p 321

<sup>2</sup> Munek, Willj. Deut. Zeit f. Ges. Gerichtl. Med. Bd 27, Hft 5 s 308, Jan 1937, Med Leg und Crimol. Rev., Vol I, Part II April, 1937, p 233

In a depressed fracture owing to the sensation of crepitus which it imparts to the fingers on palpating it. The diagnosis is not easy in such cases. In a haematoma there is pitting on pressure and there may be a pulsation if any large artery is involved. Its edge is raised above the surface of the skull and, if subcutaneous, is moveable on its surface, while in a depressed fracture the edge is at or about the level of the rest of the skull and is sharper, more irregular, and less even than in a haematoma.

Wounds of the scalp usually heal rapidly, though in rare cases fatal results may follow from the supervention of cellulitis or erysipelas, or suppuration may set in, and travel into the brain through the blood vessels or through necrosis of bone resulting from cellulitis, or through an unnoticed fissured fracture. Thus, cases have occurred in which scalp wounds have apparently healed, and yet death has occurred from septic meningitis or brain abscess after a few days or weeks.

The following are a few of the cases brought to my notice —

1. In 1912 a Hindu male aged 15 years went walking to the Thomason Hospital at Agra three or four days after receiving a lacerated wound on the head. He was admitted to the surgical ward where he died after four days. At the necropsy the cause of death was found to be septic meningitis due to a fissure in the right temporal bone.

2. A Hindu male 22 years old received seven lacerated wounds on the head on the 24th May 1919. Four days afterwards he was admitted to the Police Hospital at Lucknow, from where he was discharged at his own request as the wounds had almost healed with the exception of two which were infected with pus. On the 18th June he got an attack of paralysis and was, therefore, removed to a dispensary at Malihabad where he died on the 28th June. On examination of the body necrosis of the left parietal bone in an area of one inch by three-quarters of an inch and a fissure in the right parietal and temporal bones were found. There was a collection of pus between the dura mater and the skull under the fissured fracture. That portion of the dura mater was almost blackened and pus was seen on the upper surface of the brain, especially on the right side.

3. A woman 70 years old was injured on the head by dacoits on the 12th March, 1921, and on the 22nd March she succumbed to the injuries. On post mortem examination on the following day a lacerated wound two inches by three-quarters of an inch covered with pus, was found along the left side of the crown of the head one inch and a half above the forehead exposing the bone which was denuded of its periosteum. The skull bones were intact. The membranes of the brain were congested and covered with a deposit of lymph. Pus had collected in an area of one inch square on the left upper surface of the brain under the wound.

4. On the 22nd June, 1924, a Hindu male of Police Station Malihabad District Lucknow, 42 years old, was admitted into the King George's Hospital Lucknow for the injuries inflicted on his head with a blunt weapon and died on the 14th July 1924 at 6.30 p.m. Post mortem examination on the next day revealed a comminuted fracture of the left frontal bone and a fracture of the right anterior and middle fossae of the base of the skull. The brain substance had sloughed away in an area of  $3'' \times 3''$  on the under surface of the frontal lobe on the left side. There was pus underneath the slough in an area of  $2'' \times 2'' \times \frac{1}{2}$ .

5. On August 20 1932 a Hindu male aged 38 was struck on the head with a heavy cutting weapon while he was asleep and he sustained a linear fracture of the right temporal bone with an incised wound on the right side of the head. He was quite conscious and able to answer questions rationally till August 31 when he developed the signs of cerebral irritation which deepened into coma and died on September 9. Post mortem examination revealed an abscess of the middle and posterior portions of the right hemisphere of the brain in addition to the fracture of the skull bone.

6. A Hindu male 50 years old, sustained a lacerated wound  $2\frac{1}{2}''$  by  $\frac{1}{2}$ , across the crown of the head to the right of the middle line and  $2''$  above the forehead as a result of a blow from a blunt weapon on the 19th November 1932. He was almost unconscious and was suffering from cerebral irritation and partial paralysis of the right upper limb. On the 2nd November he regained consciousness and was able to speak although not rationally. He died from pneumonia on the 28th November. At the autopsy I found a fissured fracture of the right parietal and right temporal bones with an effusion of clotted blood over the membranes which were congested. There was a contusion  $1''$  by  $1''$ , with softening over the right temporo sphenoidal lobe. The left lung was pneumonic.

**Skull** — Fractures of the skull are, sometimes, caused without any contusion or wound on the scalp, though there may be an extravasation of blood on its under surface.

Driving free *lathi* sticks the skull is sometimes smashed into several pieces as if it was a coconut shell. Thus in a case where a man 35 years old was struck with *lathi* blows there was a comminuted fracture of the frontal, left parietal and temporal bones and of the occipital bone. The base of the skull was fractured in the left anterior middle and posterior or fossa. In another case where a woman 40 years old was murdered with *lathi* blows there were comminuted fractures of the left temporal, parietal and frontal bones and a simple fracture of the right temporal bone. There was also separation of the right parietal and temporal sutures with comminuted fractures of the middle and posterior fossa of the base of the skull.



*Fig. 98.—Fractured fracture. This skull bone was removed with other bones from a blind well.*

The varieties of the fractures of the skull that are usually met with are fissure, partial (outer or inner table though the inner table is more commonly fractured), stellate or radiating, depressed, elevated, punctured and comminuted. Sometimes the sutures are separated with or without the fracture. The temporal bone and the orbital plate of the frontal bone are easily fractured. In old age the bones become thin, brittle and are more fragile.

**Vault**—Fracture of the vault occurs at the place of contact by direct violence or at its opposite side by *contre coup* (counter side) when the head is not supported. An extensive fracture running parallel to the two points of contact (*bursting fracture*) will occur if mechanical force is applied on one side of the head when it is pressed on the other side against a hard substance such as a wall while the individual is standing or against the hard ground or floor when he is in a lying posture. In such cases the fracture may extend transversely even to the base of the skull.

*Fig. 99.—Localized depressed fracture of skull bone caused by a nail.*

always easily diagnosed. In such cases it is best to rely on the general symptoms resulting from injury to the meningeal vessels, cerebral sinuses and brain.

If not associated with an external wound fracture of the vault is not

Fractures of the vault, though dangerous do not always end in death. I have seen cases in which recovery occurred after the vault of the skull was fractured.

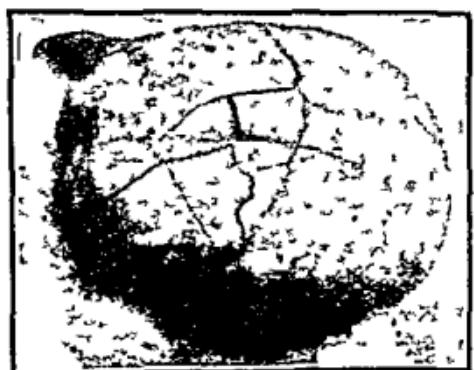


Fig. 100—Depressed comminuted fracture of skull caused by a blunt weapon

The fractures were situated on the left temporal, frontal, right and left parietal and occipital bones, the fracture on the occipital bone being 5" long and 1½" gaping. All these fractures communicated with the surface of the brain and in all cases the cerebral meninges were exposed. After three days she was taken to hospital where the severed muscles and the torn scalp seemed sloughing and a general septic state prevailed. The patient did live and attended the court three months later.

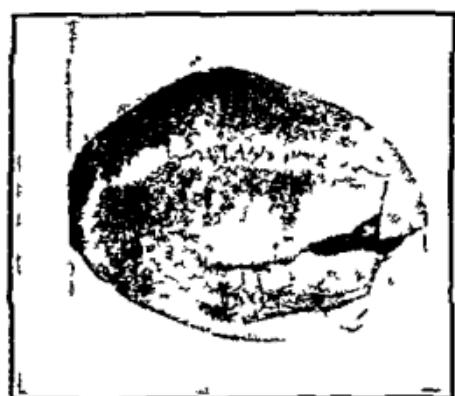


Fig. 101—Fractures of skull caused by a banya (cutting &enpo)

A boy ten years old was hit on the head with a *bathi* and sustained a lacerated wound 3" by 1" along the right side of the crown of the head with a fissured fracture of the right parietal and occipital bones and partial paralysis of the left upper limb. After nine days he was admitted into the King George's Hospital Icknield and was discharged cured after three weeks. Dawson<sup>1</sup> relates the case of a girl about 8 years old who was knocked down by a motor lorry and sustained fractures of the parietal, temporal and frontal bones with a fracture extending into the base of the skull. At the operation it was found that the dura mater was torn through which the brain matter was escaping. The patient recovered in a month's time. Ticeborne<sup>2</sup> also relates the case of a woman who was brutally assaulted by her husband and who received five wounds on the head with complete compound fractures of the vault of the skull.

**The Base of the Skull—**  
Fracture of the base of the skull is generally caused by a blow or fall upon the vertex as the head is pressed on the other side of the spinal column. It may be caused by a direct blow from the point of an umbrella or stick thrust through the roof of the orbit or up the nose through the ethmoid plate by a violent blow on the chin or by a gunshot wound through the roof of the mouth. It may also result from extension of a fracture of the vault, or may be caused indirectly by a heavy fall upon the feet or nates.

The symptoms observed in fractures of the base are—

- (1) Signs of concussion or compression of the brain
- (2) Effusion of blood in the subconjunctival tissue, or in the sub-occipital and mastoid regions

<sup>1</sup> *Ind. Med. Ga.* Feb. 1926 p. 65  
<sup>2</sup> *Lancet*, Sept. 22 1924 p. 590

(3) Bleeding, or discharge of cerebro spinal fluid from the nose, mouth, or one or both ears

(4) Lesions of the nerves issuing from the base of the skull giving rise to paralysis or loss of sensation of the parts supplied by them

The result is not always fatal. Sometimes, recovery takes place though headache, dizziness, or other nervous derangements may persist for a long time

**Brain**—Injuries to the brain may occur even without any fracture of the skull, and may result in immediate or remote consequences

**Contusion and Laceration of the Brain**—A fall or a blow on the head may produce a contusion and laceration of the brain on the same side or on the opposite side by *contre coup*. It is not necessary that there should always be a fracture of the skull. These injuries may also be caused by penetrating or gunshot wounds.

The symptoms depend upon the extent of the injury to the brain. If laceration is slight or superficial, the signs of cerebral irritation are present. In severe lacerations there may be symptoms of concussion, which may be followed by those of compression.

**Concussion of the Brain**—This is popularly known as "stunning", and may be produced by direct violence on the vertex by a violent fall upon the feet or rates from a height, or by an unexpected fall on the ground, when pushed forcibly by a running cart or even by a bicycle.

**Symptoms**—The symptoms depend upon the nature of the injury. Thus the patient may become confused and giddy with or without falling if there is slight injury, and recovers in a short time.

With severe injury the patient falls down and becomes unconscious, though he can often be partially roused by shouting. The muscles are relaxed and flaccid, but there is no paralysis. The sphincters are relaxed with involuntary passage of urine and faeces. The face is pale and the pupils are equal and usually contracted reacting to light but, in more severe cases, are dilated and insensible to light. The skin is cold and clammy with subnormal temperature. The pulse is rapid, weak, small and hardly perceptible. The respirations are slow, irregular and sighing. Death occurs rapidly from syncope, or recovery follows, with the setting in of nausea or vomiting. The skin becomes hot and dry, the pulse is full and strong and the respirations are increased in rate. After apparent recovery in some cases death may result after some days from inflammation or compression of the brain.

In severe cases there is often complete loss of memory of the accident and even of the events occurring before and after it extending over a period of from a fortnight to a month or more. An old man narrated the incident and mentioned the names of his assailants soon after he received four lacerated wounds on the head, five incised wounds on the face and twenty nine bruises and abrasions on various parts of the body on the morning of July 1, 1932, but in the afternoon of the next day he completely forgot the assault, and vividly described the accident which had occurred to him about seven years ago.

**Post mortem Appearances**—In most cases there may be nothing more than slight congestion of the brain with minute capillary haemorrhages in its substance. In some cases there may be a contusion or laceration of the brain substance with an extravasation of blood on its surface.

On the 30th November, 1921, a Pasi 60 years old received three small lacerated wounds on the head from a blunt weapon and died on the 10th December, 1921. Post mortem exa-

munication revealed a contusion on the left side of the brain with a deposit of lymph on the membranes. The ventricles were full of a dirty reddish fluid.



*Fig. 102.—Laceration of brain*

surface of the brain which was lacerated in an area of  $2'' \times 2''$  along the frontal lobe. There was no fracture of any skull bones and no external injury except a few abrasions across the upper part of the forehead.

On August 17 193<sup>o</sup> a Mahomedan male child 8 or 9 years old died from a motor car accident. At the post mortem examination on the following day I found congestion of the membranes and effusion of clotted blood over the surface of the brain which was lacerated in an area of  $1''$  by  $\frac{1}{2}''$  by  $\frac{1}{2}''$  along the upper surface of the left temporo-sphenoidal lobe. There was no fracture of the skull bones but there were abrasions externally over the face head and chest.

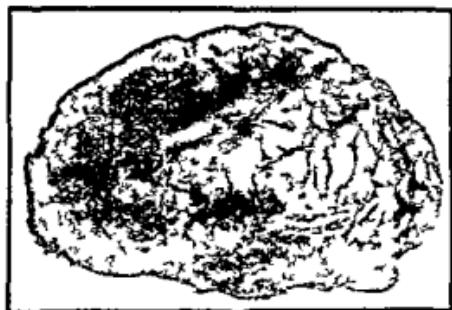
In February 194<sup>o</sup> a woman aged about 70 years was knocked down by a motor car and she died on the fourth day. At the post mortem examination Dr Sahay of Patna found a lacerated wound  $1'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$  on the left eyebrow and a few small abrasions on the other parts of the body. The skull bones were intact but a circular blood clot  $1\frac{1}{2}''$  in diameter was found compressing the left frontal lobe which was lacerated.

**Compression of the Brain**—This may result from a depressed fracture of a skull bone pressing on the brain or from intra cranial hemorrhage. It may also result from the pressure of inflammatory exudation or pus on the brain tissue.

**Symptoms**—These may come on immediately, or may be delayed for some hours or days after receiving the injury. The symptoms are those of coma.

There is complete loss of consciousness.

The patient cannot be roused by shouting or even by shaking. The face is flushed and the pupils are dilated and insensible to light, but they may be contracted or unequal if there is a small degree of compression over a limited area of the brain. The temperature of the body is normal or sub-normal but may be above normal. The pulse is full and slow but becomes rapid and irregular towards death. Breathing is slow, laboured and stertorous with the lips and cheeks being puffed in and out. There is paralysis of the muscles and extre-



*Fig. 103.—Effusion of blood upon the surface of brain*

mities according to the area of the brain involved. Retention of urine occurs from paralysis of the bladder. Faeces pass involuntarily.

Dr Syam reports a case in which a man 38 years old was struck on the head with a stick at about 2 a.m. on the 8th April 19<sup>th</sup> and died on the 21st April. At the post mortem examination a lacerated wound  $1'' \times \frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ , with a contusion  $2'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$  round it was found on the left side of the head. There was no fracture of the skull. On removing the skull cap the whole of the left hemisphere of the cerebrum was found compressed by a blood clot under the dura mater and the left temporo-sphenoidal lobe was lacerated to the extent of one-and-a half inches—*Ind Med Gaz May 1933 p 214*.

The body of a Mahomedan male 25 years old was brought to me with a history that it was found near a railway line. Post mortem examination revealed an effusion of blood on the upper

owing to relaxation of the sphincter ani, although marked constipation is usually present. Sometimes, convulsions precede death.

In some cases partial recovery may occur owing to the arrest of blood in an injured artery of the brain by the formation of a clot, but death may take place later when the clot is disturbed and fresh haemorrhage takes place owing to the heart being excited by exercise or indulgence in alcohol.

Permanent recovery may occur when the compressing factor, such as a depressed piece of a fractured cranial bone, is removed by trephining. In such cases, however, remote effects, e.g., headache, loss of memory, epilepsy, paralysis, or insanity, may supervene from permanent damage to the brain tissue.

**Post-mortem Appearances** —Effusion of blood between the skull and the dura mater, upon the surface, or in the substance, of the brain, or at the base of the skull. This effusion is usually due to fracture of the skull but it may be due to rupture of the middle meningeal artery or of the venous sinuses without any fracture. The brain and its meninges are also found congested. An injury to the brain, such as a contusion or laceration, may, sometimes, be found.



Fig. 104.—Effusion of blood upon the dura mater from the middle meningeal artery torn across by a projecting piece of the fractured parietal bone caused by a *lathi* blow over the head. The accused in this case was convicted under section 325 I.P.C. (From a photograph lent kindly by Dr C. B. Sahay.)

On the morning of the 3rd November, 1920, a Hindu male, 27 years old, was attacked in his shop by another man who gave him a slap on the face and dashed his head against a wall. He soon became unconscious and died at 5 p.m. on the same day. On examination of the body at 11.40 a.m. on the next day the left middle meningeal artery was found ruptured with an effusion of blood with a few clots between the membranes and the surface of the brain. There were only two small abrasions on the head.

On the night of the 11th October, 1927, a Hindu woman, about 20 years old, was struck with a *lathi* on the head and died soon after. At the post mortem examination [held on the next

morning I found a laceration 2" by 2", along the under surface of the scalp over the left crown of the head and 4" above the left ear. The skull bones were intact but there was an effusion of blood on the surface of the brain due to rupture of the left middle meningeal artery.

**Medico-Legal Questions** —The questions that are usually raised in court are—

1 Whether the effusion of blood found at the post mortem examination was due to mechanical violence, disease, or excitement during a quarrel

2 How old the effusion was

1 When due to violence, the effusion of blood is almost always extradural from rupture of the venous sinuses or the middle meningeal artery as a result of fracture of the skull but it may be subdural and in the substance of the brain, especially when it is lacerated. The haemorrhage is usually found under the point injured or directly opposite to this. It is not necessary that there should always be external signs of injury in such cases, for the blood vessels in or on the brain may be ruptured by a blow on the head without causing any injury to the bone. It should be noted that a disease, known as prihymenigitis hemorrhagica interna, may cause subdural haemorrhage, but this condition can easily be ascertained on post mortem examination.

When due to disease, the effusion of blood generally occurs in individuals over forty years of age, and is ordinarily produced by the diseased condition of the arteries such as arterio sclerosis, atheroma, or aneurysm. There may also be evidence of chronic heart or kidney diseases, or of syphilis. Sometimes, there may be a history of scurvy, purpura or hemophilia. Again, pathological hemorrhage occurs most frequently in the internal capsule due to rupture of the lenticulo striate and optic arteries known as Charcot's 'arteries of cerebral hemorrhage'.

It must be borne in mind that a slight injury on the head may cause cerebral hemorrhage in a person previously predisposed to it from age or disease, and that the head may be injured during a fall from cerebral hemorrhage caused by disease.

It is possible for the diseased cerebral arteries to rupture from mere excitement caused by alcohol or struggle, but it is rare in the young and healthy, unless such excitement is associated with extreme congestion of the cerebral vessels. Spontaneous rupture is however, contra indicated if there is any evidence of violence, such as a bruise or a wound on the scalp or a fracture of the skull.

2 It is difficult to give the exact date of an effusion of blood, but an approximate idea may be formed from its colour and consistence as to whether it is recent or old. The colour of a recent effusion is red which changes to chocolate or brown after some days and turns to an ochre colour generally in from twelve to twenty-five days. The consistence of the coagula becomes firmer and more or less laminated with the progress of time, and the compressed lymph may be between the laminae or around the coagula. Owing to the blood clot resting upon the surface of the brain a depression equal to its size and shape is formed on the brain substance. Wilfred Trotter quotes a remarkable case where an area of the brain that had been bruised by the glancing contact of a bullet with the skull no less than 3 years earlier showed a bruise that appeared as fresh as if it had been inflicted within a few weeks.

### FACI

Wounds of the face heal, as a rule, rapidly owing to its great vascularity, but they are grievous if they are severe and cause permanent disfigurement or deformity.

**Face Bones**—The nasal bones are often fractured by a blow with a fist or a blunt weapon such as a *lathi*. When caused by considerable force they may involve the fracture of the ethmoid bone and its cribriform plate forming part of the base of the skull and may cause death by meningitis. Fractures of the superior maxillary malar bones and the mandible (inferior jaw) are produced by a blow with a blunt weapon such as a heavy stone. Sometimes in addition to the fractures of these bones the whole face is reduced to a pulpy condition when struck with a heavy stone slab.

A young Mahomedan woman was beaten to death by her husband with a heavy brick. The face was pulverized owing to the bones having been fractured into several pieces. The right eyeball was dislocated and the brain substance was exposed.

**Eyes**—Injury to the eye e.g. a lacerated wound produced by a blunt weapon or by throwing a brickbat may damage the tissues so severely as to necessitate the enucleation of the eyeball. A blow on the eye with a blunt weapon may cause a permanent injury to the cornea iris or lens haemorrhage into the vitreous or



Fig. 109.—Nose cut off with a knife

a detachment or rupture of the retina and even traumatic cataract. The injury may prove fatal from the inflammation of the orbital tissues extending into the brain and the consequent formation of pus. Similarly, a penetrating wound of the orbit may prove fatal by setting up meningitis through penetration of the thin orbital plates. Neuralgia and temporary or permanent amaurosis may result from paralysis of the upper eyelid, when there is a wound of the eyebrow.

The eyes may be gouged out with the fingers but in this connection it should be remembered that birds of prey generally attack first the eyes of a dead body, when exposed in a field or jungle.

Dr A. V. Vergese<sup>1</sup> Medical Officer of Palgi at reports a remarkable case of gouging out of a right eyeball. In an altercation that arose over a pack of playing cards on the 28th April 1924 two brothers attacked one Gopal Krishna Menon aged about 77 years. One held the victim tight above the waist keeping the extended arms in the hold while the other got behind fixed the victim's head with his left arm, thrust his right index finger in and pulled out the right eye. On examination the right eyeball was found pulled out of its socket breaking the optic nerve and tearing asunder the muscles. It landed out on a few shreds of the external portion of the conjunctiva and the rectus muscle. The socket was filled with blood clots.

It is said that insane persons sometimes gouge out their own eyes by enucleating them with their fingers.

A Sadhu (ascetic) known by the name of Shambhu Bholi Baba and residing in a cottage on the banks of the river Narbudda near Jubbulpore gouged out both his eyes. On being asked by his disciples as to why he tormented himself in this fashion and deprived himself of his eyesight the Sadhu replied that since the eyes were the cause of all sorts of mental and physical sins he did not think it wise to keep such sinful things with him.<sup>2</sup>

Goodhart and Savitsky<sup>3</sup> report a case of self mutilation in chronic encephalitis in a girl aged 16 years of Russian Jewish parentage consisting of avulsion of the eyeballs and extraction of teeth all but seven of which she pulled out in the course of two years.

**Nose**—In India the nose is technically considered a symbol of honour and reputation. Hence during a quarrel it receives the first attention of an opponent. The nose is also cut off or bitten off through enmity, vengeance and sexual jealousy, the victim being usually a female and occasionally a male. Wounds of the nose are grievous if they leave permanent disfigurement or deformity. A blow on the



Fig. 100.—Nose bitten off with teeth

head sometimes causes bleeding from the nose due to partial detachment of its mucous membrane without any injury to the nose. An extensive lacerated wound of the head may lead to loss of the sense of smell and a penetrating wound of the nose caused by thrusting a sharp pointed instrument up the nostril may result in death by injuring the brain through the cribriform plate of the ethmoid bone though no sign of any external injury is visible.

The left nostril or the septum of a female is liable to be injured by pulling out the nose ring worn by her.

<sup>1</sup> Madras Med Jour Med & Legal Jour Vol 41 No 6 Nov Dec 1924 p 164

<sup>2</sup> Bombay Sentinel A. "6 1933"

<sup>3</sup> Amer Jour Med Science May 1933 Brit Med Jour Epitome Sep 23 1933 p 49

**Ears.**—A blow over the ear may produce rupture of the tympanum leading to temporary or permanent deafness. A police constable complained that he was slapped over his left ear by a station master on May 9, 1933. On examination of his ear on the next day the tympanic membrane was found ruptured and the surrounding surface was congested. If a blow over the external ear is very severe, it may also injure the labyrinth. During a quarrel the ears may be bitten off or cut off, and their lobes may be torn by pulling out the earrings either with the intention of causing hurt or committing theft. The injuries are grievous, if they produce permanent disfigurement.

**Lips.**—Injuries to the lips are caused by a blow with a fist, a shoe, or a blunt weapon, or by teeth bite. Sometimes, a half of the upper lip along with a portion of the moustache is cut off, the motive being sexual jealousy. Such injuries are grievous, if they cause permanent disfigurement.



Fig. 107.—Nose cut off with a razor.  
Revenge taken for adultery.

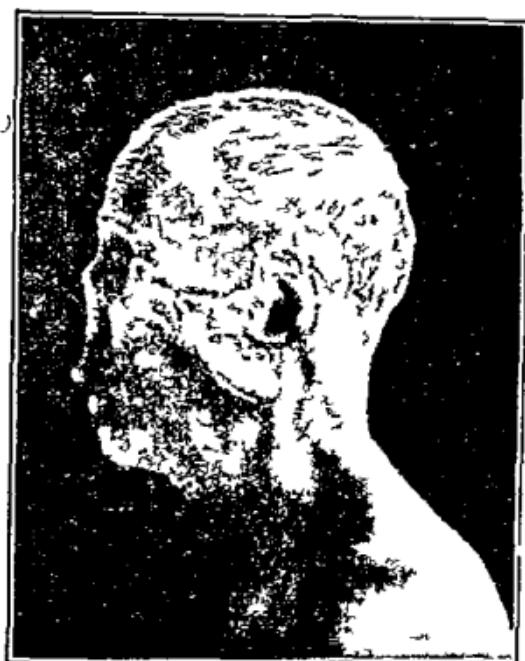


Fig. 108.—Nose and ears of a man cut off by dacoits: Front view. (Dr. Manglik's case).

**Teeth.**—The teeth are dislocated or fractured either by a fall or by a blow with a blunt weapon, such as a fist, a shoe, the butt end of a *lathi*, etc. When their dislocation or fracture is caused by mechanical violence, contusions or lacerations are, in all probability, found on the lips or on the gums or sockets. In India, false reports about the loss of a tooth are often made with a view to charging the accused with an offence of grievous hurt, especially when an assaulted person happens to be old, and has already lost some teeth or has got some shaky teeth. It is, therefore, necessary that the following points should be taken into

consideration when reporting on a person who alleges to have his tooth knocked out —

- 1 The condition of the neighbouring and other teeth as to whether they are firm shakv or diseased
- 2 The number of the teeth present in each jaw
- 3 The condition of the socket of the missing tooth as to whether there is any stump left if a tooth is fractured whether there is any bleeding and whether there is any laceration
- 4 The condition of the lips and gums as regards the presence of injury



*Fig. 109.—Nose and ears of a man cut off by dacoits. Side view (Dr. Mansfield's case).*

5 If a tooth is sent with the injured person it should be examined to ascertain if it corresponds to the missing tooth. Its fangs should be especially examined to find out if fracture or dislocation has occurred. After examination the tooth should be returned in a sealed packet to the police constable accompanying the injured person.

#### NECK

Wounds of the neck are mostly incised. In India they are more often homicidal than suicidal and very rarely accidental. They are supposed to be instantly fatal if the large blood vessels of the neck are cut but this is not always so as some cases have been recorded in which persons ran a certain distance after the carotid arteries as well as the internal jugular vein had been cut. Wounds of the larynx trachea and oesophagus are not necessarily fatal if the large blood vessels are not injured. They may however cause death by suffocation due

to the flow of blood into the airpassages though most of it is coughed up. They may also cause death by subsequent oedema or inflammation blocking the airpassages or by septic pneumonia. A woman, 17 or 18 years old received an incised wound across the upper part of the front of the neck, involving the larynx and oesophagus. The wound healed resulting in stenosis of both. Both tracheotomy and gastrostomy were later performed, but she died of broncho pneumonia three months after the wound was inflicted on her neck. G D Scott<sup>1</sup> reports the case of a man, at 47, who was successfully operated for a cut throat involving the complete severance of both the trachea and the oesophagus caused by glass from the windshield in an automobile wreck.

In the case of a wound of the larynx speech is possible, if the wound is above the vocal cords, even if it is gaping. But in a wound of the larynx below the vocal cords and in that of the trachea no speech is possible. In such a case one may be able to speak in a whisper, if the wound is not gaping sufficiently to allow air to pass into the mouth. Prof Harvey Littlejohn<sup>2</sup> describes the case of a woman, aged 45, who after making a transverse incision 2½" long in the front of the neck cutting the trachea completely through 2" below the vocal cords was found sensible, and said that she had torn the tumour out of her neck because it was choking her, and that she wanted to die. On the bed was a small tumour which was encapsulated and consisted of the right lobe of the thyroid gland hypertrophied, and of fibrous consistency. She was removed to hospital but was dead on arrival. At the post mortem examination the upper end of the divided trachea projected from the wound, along with the oesophagus. The protruding oesophagus measured 6½".

Wounds of the sympathetic and pneumogastric nerves may be fatal and those of the recurrent laryngeal nerves cause aphonia. A forcible blow on the front of the neck may cause unconsciousness or even death by a reflex inhibitory action or by fracture of the larynx usually involving the thyroid and cricoid cartilages, and consequent suffocation from haemorrhage or oedema of the larynx.

A man was brought to me on the third day of his receiving a blow over Adam's apple. On examination a swelling was found over the right side of the thyroid cartilage and the laryngoscopic examination revealed the presence of submucous haemorrhage in the larynx on the right side involving the right vocal cord and ventricular band as also the epiglottis.

## SPINE AND SPINAL CORD

Wounds and injuries affecting the spine and the spinal cord are generally accidental, are occasionally homicidal and are rarely suicidal.

**Fractures of the Spine**—These are produced by (1) direct violence, e.g., a blow on the back from a heavy weapon or a fall from a height on the back over some hard projecting substance, or by collision with a motor car or some other heavy vehicle, and (2) indirectly by forcible bending of the body or by a fall on buttocks or feet. Fractures of the cervical vertebrae may in certain cases be produced by a sudden forcible twisting of the neck, as during wrestling. They may also be caused by a very slight twist especially if a person happens to be suffering from Pott's disease.

In January, 1912 a Hindu male about 20 years old took a somersault in wrestling and died immediately. On examination dislocation of the fifth cervical vertebra was found. There was no external injury nor was there any disease of the vertebrae. A similar case occurred in August 1912 where a Mahomedan male 20 years old died from fracture dislocation of the third cervical vertebra caused by a sudden powerful muscular contraction of the neck during wrestling.

These fractures are generally associated with dislocations except in injuries of a minor degree, such as fractures of the spinous processes, laminae etc. Owing

<sup>1</sup> Jour Amer Med Assoc, March 3 1928 p 689

<sup>2</sup> Frensic Medicine, 1925 p 196

to the displacement of the parts they cause compression, laceration or crushing of the cord, which produces paralysis of the body below the seat of injury. In such cases hemorrhage occurs in the substance of the cord, or around it, between or outside its membranes. These cases are very rare. In the Agra District during twelve years out of about one thousand medico legal autopsies death was found to be due to the fracture of the spine in only five cases.



*Fig. 110.—Cervica verterebræ showing a cut by a gandara (chopper)*

Spinal injuries are, as a rule, immediately fatal, owing to impalement of the phrenic nerves if fracture occurs above the fourth cervical vertebra, though death may be delayed a few hours even after fracture of the odontoid process of the axis with forward displacement of the atlas. Death usually occurs within twenty four hours, if the three lower cervical vertebrae are injured. In rare cases death may not occur for some months, but the trunk and the limbs will be paralysed, if the spinal cord is compressed by displacement of the fractured portions.

A boy, 10 years old, regularly attended school and took part in games for five weeks dislocating his neck. He merely complained of stiff neck and it was only when he made a sudden movement with his neck that the cervical cord became compressed, and he died immediately—*W G A Robertson, Practitioner, Aug., 1923, p. 121*.

A Mahomedan male, aged 60 years who was knocked down by a motor car on September 17, 1932 sustained a dislocation of the third cervical vertebra from the fourth cervical vertebra with a transverse fracture of the body of the latter, suffered from loss of sensation and paralysis of all the limbs and died on November 20 1932.

When the dorsal vertebrae are injured the patient becomes bedridden on account of paralysis of the lower limbs. He also suffers from paralysis of the bladder and rectum, and is always in danger of getting bed sores and septic infection of the bladder and kidneys, which generally hasten death. Thus death may occur after two or three weeks, if the upper dorsal vertebrae have been injured, while life may be prolonged for years with partial paralysis of the limbs, if the lower dorsal or the lumbar vertebrae have been fractured.



Fig. 111.—Cervical vertebra showing fracture of the 5th Cervical vertebra

**Concussion of the Spine**—This condition may occur without any evidence of an external injury to the spinal column. It may follow a severe blow on the back, or a jar, or a fall from a height. This is the most common form of injury met with in railway collisions, and is then known as "railway spine".

The symptoms may develop immediately or may be delayed for some weeks. The patient becomes restless, excitable and emotional and generally suffers from nerve prostration or neurasthenia. He complains of pain and tenderness over the spine and weakness in the limbs. Hence he is unable to walk. He also complains of amnesia and derangement of the special senses. These symptoms are exaggerated very much by any kind of mental excitement, e.g., during the time of medical examination. Most of the symptoms being subjective it is difficult for a medical practitioner to determine whether the patient is feigning or not. It has often happened that the symptoms have abated immediately after a civil suit for damages, brought by the patient against his employer or a railway company, has been decided in court.

Being well protected by anatomical structures, incised or punctured wounds of the spinal cord are rare except between the first and third cervical vertebrae where they are more exposed owing to the narrowness of the laminae. A punctured wound caused in this region even by a small needle proves almost instantaneously fatal as it injures the medulla and the upper part of the cord which contain the

respiratory and other vital centres. The process of killing in this manner is called *stabbing* and the wound caused is so very small, that it may be overlooked altogether if the weapon is thrust obliquely.

### CHEST

Injuries of the chest are mostly accidental, occasionally homicidal, and rarely suicidal.

**Traumatic Asphyxia**—This results from severe compression of the chest and abdomen sufficient to prevent respiration for an appreciable length of time, as when an individual is crushed in a dense crowd or under a heavy object, or caught between the two buffers of a railway carriage. In such cases the face and neck are deeply cyanosed, accompanied by ecchymoses of the skin and conjunctiva. This discolouration is brought about by mechanical overdistension of the smaller veins and capillaries with stasis of deoxygenated blood. It extends to the root of the neck, and rarely passes down beyond the level of the clavicles owing to the absence of competent valves in the jugular and facial veins. The discolouration may disappear in ten to fourteen days without passing through the colour changes of a bruise, if it is not associated with severe injuries. Coullie<sup>1</sup> describes the case of an epileptic young man, who suffered from traumatic asphyxia caused by the unyielding collar band of his shirt compressing the jugular veins, together with the partial asphyxia, high blood pressure, and fixation of the chest caused by the epileptic fit.

**Wall**—Contusions and abrasions of the chest wall may be caused by a blunt weapon, fall or crush under a heavy weight as in vehicular accidents. These may be accompanied by fractures of the ribs or sternum, or associated with grave visceral injury. Even when not accompanied by such injuries severe blows on the chest wall may produce concussion of the chest causing considerable shock followed by death.

Simple contusions and abrasions of the chest wall may be followed by pleurisy or pneumonia.

Wounds of the chest wall are not dangerous, unless the cavity is penetrated and a vital organ is injured. In non penetrating wounds there may be free hemorrhage from the divided mammary and thoracic arteries.

**Ribs**—Fracture of the ribs results from direct violence as by blows or stabs, and from indirect violence as in compression of the chest or very rarely from muscular contraction during violent coughing. When due to direct violence it is more dangerous as the splinters are driven inwards and are likely to injure the underlying pleura lungs heart large vessels liver, or diaphragm while, in indirect violence fracture occurs at the most convex parts of the ribs near their angles, and the fragments are driven outwards. The ribs that are most frequently fractured are the middle ones viz. the fourth fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth as they are most prominent and fixed at both ends. The upper ribs are not usually fractured unless very great force is used, when the lesions of the viscera as a rule, occur. The lower ribs often escape on account of their great mobility. Owing to diminished elasticity and increased brittleness fracture of the ribs takes place more easily in the old than in the young and healthy.

Symmetrical fractures of the ribs on both sides are often met with, when a person sits on the chest and compresses it considerably by means of the knees or elbows by trampling under feet, or by means of two bamboos a process known as *bans dala*. They may also occur in accidents as in a fall from a height, or when run over by a heavy bullock cart or motor car or when caught between railway

buffers. In such cases the ribs are often fractured in front near the costal cartilages, where the compressing force is applied, and near the angles at the back, the force travelling along the ribs. These are not always accompanied by external injuries or ecchymoses of blood in the soft tissues over the ribs.

**Sternum**—Fracture of the sternum is rare. It is ordinarily due to direct violence, and usually occurs transversely either between the manubrium and gladiolus or a little below this level. If depressed, it becomes serious, as it is liable to damage the viscera behind it.

**Lungs**—Wounds of the lungs may be immediately fatal from profuse haemorrhage, or from suffocation due to respiratory embarrassment on account of the presence of blood in the pleural cavity or in the air passages, or may result in death subsequently from septic pneumonia. They may be produced by penetrating wounds of the chest caused by a cutting or stabbing instrument, by the sharp fragments of a fractured rib, or by a projectile from a firearm. The haemorrhage is recognized by the escape of bright red and frothy blood from the mouth, and from an external wound if present.

Contusions or lacerations of the lungs may be produced by blows from a blunt weapon or by compression of the chest ~~even without fracturing the ribs or showing marks of external injury~~. These may cause instantaneous death or may result in pleurisy, traumatic pneumonia or hemothorax.

In June 1919, a girl 3 years old, was run over by an *etka* and died immediately. At the autopsy there was no external mark of injury to the chest nor were the ribs fractured, but the left lung was found lacerated.

In February, 1922 a Mahomedan girl, 15 years old received a kick on the chest from her husband, and died within an hour. On examination no external injury was visible, but there was a laceration of the lower lobe of the left lung which was fibroid from disease.

The body of a Hindu female was found lying near the railway line near Alambagh on or about the 11th November, 1923. Post mortem examination showed a bruise, 8" x 1", obliquely across the left side of the chest 3" below the left collar bone, but no fracture of any ribs. The right lung was lacerated in front 1" below the apex and a contusion 2" x 2" was found on the base of the left lung. These appeared to have been caused by compression of the chest.

A Hindu male, 25 to 30 years old, was crushed under a machine in a workshop on January 3, 1929 and died on the next day. Post mortem examination did not show any marks of external violence or fracture of the ribs. The chest cavity contained blood and the right lung had four contusions on its anterior aspect while the left lung showed a contusion of its root and a tear, 2½" long, over its lower lobe. There was also dislocation of the fourth cervical vertebra.

A boy, 8 years old was knocked down by a heavy cart and was supposed to have been run over, but there was not the slightest trace of abrasion or bruising of the chest nor behind the ribs and sternum. The upper lobe of the right lung however, had been completely cut off from its root, and it floated freely in a pleura filled with blood.

**Heart**—Wounds of the heart are produced by a cutting or stabbing instrument, a bullet or a sharp end of a fractured rib or sternum. These wounds are commonly instantly fatal from shock and haemorrhage except in a few cases, where the individual has been able to walk some distance, and has performed some other voluntary acts after receiving the injury. Strissman<sup>1</sup> reports a case where a man was stabbed in the left fourth intercostal space with a knife which, penetrating the thorax, caused a wound, 1" wide, in the left ventricle. He lived for four days, and on the day following the receipt of the wound he lifted heavy weights. Coats<sup>2</sup> reports the case of a girl, ten years old, who survived nine days after receiving a penetrating wound in the right auricle through the fourth costal cartilage on the right side of the chest as the result of a fall on an iron railing. Magnus C Peterson<sup>3</sup> reports the case of a man, aged 26, who survived eighteen months after a safety

1 J B Cleland Med Jour Austral, Sep 9 1914 Vol 31 p 278

2 Lehrb der ger Medizin 1893, Dironmann, Lorenz Med and Toxic, Ed 3, p 232.

3 Glasg Med Jour, 1891 Ibid p 232

4 Jour Amer Med Assoc, May 11, 1929, p 1599

pin was thrust in his heart with a view to committing suicide. The pointed end of the brass pin was protruding into the pericardial sac from the left atrium on the surface of which it formed a shallow depression. The pin which was about 12 cm in length and 1.2 mm in diameter, penetrated the left atrium and curved over on the right side of the vertebral column in a slightly downward direction. On the other hand, some cases have been successfully treated by surgical operation E. V. Freese<sup>1</sup> describes a case of recovery from a stab wound through both ventricles of the heart. A coloured man was stabbed at about 8 p.m. on the 2nd September, 1920, and was taken to the Grant Hospital in half an hour. He was unconscious the respirations were feeble and very shallow, and the pulse was not perceptible, either in the radial or carotid artery. The pupils were dilated, and the skin was bathed in cold perspiration. On examination a wound,  $\frac{1}{2}$ " long was revealed in the fourth intercostal space 2" to the left of the sternum. On opening the chest the pericardium was filled by a clot which produced almost a complete tamponade. When the clot was scooped out, the heart began at once to beat violently, spouting a stream of blood on the anæsthetist and over the field. Recovery occurred after the wounds were sutured. S. S. Sen<sup>2</sup> describes the case of a young Mahomedan male, who was stabbed in a street and was at once brought to the General Hospital, Rangoon. On opening the chest the pericardium was found to be cut, and a large amount of blood clot was removed from the pericardial sac. It was then found that the weapon had also penetrated the left ventricle, where a large blood clot had fortunately prevented the escape of serious quantities of blood. This clot was removed and the heart muscle wound sutured with fine catgut, the pericardium was also closed, and the wound in the skin sutured in layers. The patient was treated on the usual lines for shock, and he made an uneventful recovery.

It is possible that foreign bodies, such as bullets, shrapnel, or fragments of shells, may remain embedded in the myocardium for months or years without the production of symptoms. In such cases it is probable that the original injury was relatively slight that the missile, by acting as a plug effectively checked any severe haemorrhage. Gilchrist<sup>3</sup> describes two cases in which missiles were found embedded in the muscle of the left ventricle of the heart by X-ray examination thirteen years after wounding. Both men were in good health and fit for active work.

Danger to life depends upon the nature of the wound. If it is small and passes obliquely through the wall so as to act as a valve like flap or if a weapon happens to plug the orifice life may be prolonged for some hours, days or even months. On account of their thinner muscular walls, wounds of the auricles are more dangerous than those of the ventricles. The right ventricle is more likely to be wounded, as it exposes its widest area on the front of the chest.

On September 22, 1919 the body of a Hindu male, 26 years old, was brought to the King George's Medical College Mortuary. On examination an arrow was found sticking in the left side of the chest, causing a penetrating wound  $1'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$  obliquely across the fourth intercostal space 1" below and internal to the left nipple and through the wound a small portion of the lung was protruding. On opening the chest the arrow was found to have lacerated the left lung and penetrated the right ventricle, having pierced through the pericardium and the left ventricle above the apex of the heart.

At the post mortem examination on the body of one Chitao aged 45 to 50 years on January 28, 1934, thirty six hours after death I found among other injuries an incised wound,  $1'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ , across the chest wall in the left second intercostal space and to the left of the middle line. On opening the chest the blunt end of an arrow head was seen projecting out of the wound  $1'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ , through the upper portion of the left lung behind the external wound. On further examination the sharp blade of the arrow head was found to have traversed through the peri-

1. *Jour Amer Med Assoc*, Feb 19 1921, p. 320.

2. *Ind Med Gazette*, Sept 1931, p. 508.

3. *Brit Med Jour*, April 20, 1929, p. 723.

cardium left pulmonary artery, and left auricle and had penetrated into the substance of the left lung below its root

Contusion of the heart with or without any visible evidence of external injury or fracture of any bone of the thorax is, sometimes, caused by a blow from a blunt weapon on the chest or by compression of the thorax. Such an injury may cause sudden death from ventricular fibrillation or may cause persistent myocardial weakness, angina pectoris, auricular fibrillation or valvular rupture<sup>1</sup>

Rupture of the heart is usually caused by a blunt weapon, by a carriage wheel running over the chest or by a fall over a hard projecting surface. In such cases the heart is usually ruptured on its right side and towards its base and the ribs and the skin over them are damaged. But in rare instances rupture of the heart may occur without leaving any external mark of violence or causing fracture of the ribs.

Surgeon Major Gibbons<sup>2</sup> reports a case where a cooly aged about 30 years, died in three hours and ten minutes from rupture of the heart over the apex caused by a blow with a bamboo stick. The rupture was  $\frac{4}{5}$ " long and irregular in shape and communicated with the right ventricle. Externally there was an elliptical abrasion  $2\frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{2}{3}''$  over the left fourth and fifth ribs below and inside the left nipple but no fracture. Ingle<sup>3</sup> also describes the case of a motor car accident in which a young motor car driver sustained two tears admitting the tip of the index finger over the posterior aspect of the right ventricle. There was a contusion  $3\frac{1}{2}''$  by  $3''$ , over the front of the chest, but there was no fracture of the ribs or vertebrae.

The following cases are given from my notes —

1 An old Hindu widow was run over by a cart on the 2nd July, 1922 at Lucknow. Post mortem examination showed an irregular rupture of the right ventricle of the heart without any fracture of the ribs, or external injury on the left side of the chest. The second third and fourth ribs were, however, fractured on the right side.

2 A male child  $1\frac{1}{2}$  years old, was run over by a tonga on the 7th October 1922 and died immediately. Autopsy revealed a contusion of the pericardium and the right chamber of the heart and lacerations of both lungs but no external injury on the chest or fracture of the ribs.

3 A Hindu male child, aged 8 years, was run over by a bicycle wheel on the 19th October, 1927, and died immediately. On examination a bruise,  $7'' \times 4''$ , was found obliquely across the right side of the chest and a contusion  $1'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ , with a rupture,  $\frac{4}{5}'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ , was seen across the front of the right auricle of the heart.

The heart may also rupture spontaneously from sudden exertion if it has already been diseased. Patients are, as a rule, elderly, and the rupture in such cases occurs mostly in the left ventricle at its apex, though it may occur in the right ventricle or in the auricles. According to Nuzum and Hagen<sup>4</sup> spontaneous rupture of the heart frequently follows obstruction of a coronary artery. Coronary thrombosis invariably results in an infarction of that portion of the heart wall supplied by the obstructed vessel. Pulvertaft<sup>5</sup> reports the following case where rupture occurred in the right ventricle in a young female of 19 years of age, in whom there was no evidence of cardiac or vascular disease —

The female had committed suicide in a fit of temper by putting her head in a gas oven. The usual signs of poisoning by carbon monoxide were present, in particular Tardieu's spots were prominent on the diaphragm and the visceral layer of the pericardium. On opening the pericardium about 12 ounces of uncoagulated blood were found. A tear  $\frac{1}{2}$ " long was found on the anterior aspect of the right ventricle about  $1''$  from the apex and  $\frac{1}{2}''$  lateral to the interventricular septum. The coronary arteries were normal. There was no chronic endocarditis or myocarditis.

I quote below three cases of spontaneous rupture of the heart from my case book —

1 In Agra a Hindu hawker of about 70 years went to a prostitute's house to purchase empty bottles, and after ascending a staircase sat down on a charpoy and asl ed for a glass of water,

1 Hugh Barber, Brit Med Jour, Oct 19, 1910 Vol II, p 520

2 Ind Med Gaz, Dec 1897, p 413

3 Ind Med Gazette Aug 1934 p 150

4 Amer Jour of Med Sciences Philadelphia, Feb, 1920 p 185

5 Lancet Aug 6, 1932 p 280

but he expired before it was brought to him. At the autopsy I found that death was due to rupture of the left ventricle owing to thinning of the heart muscle as a result of chronic ulceration.

2 A Hindu woman aged 60 died all of a sudden. Upon examination the left ventricle was found ruptured, the muscle being thin with a deposit of fat. There were calcareous ulcerations in the heart.

3 A Hindu male 60 to 70 years old was found dead in a third class compartment of a railway carriage on the thirteenth December 1933 and his body was removed to the Medical College Mortuary Lucknow. Post mortem examination showed that there was no external mark of violence on any part of the body. The pericardium contained liquid and clotted blood. The heart was found contracted and empty. The right auricle was lacerated, the tear being  $1'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$  along its posterior surface towards the lower part. The opening caused by the tear was covered with a blood clot. The wall of the right auricle was quite thin. The valves of the left chamber were thickened and the aorta was dilated and had ulceromatous ulcers. The lungs were bulky and congested. They exuded frothy serum from cut surfaces. The bronchial tubes were dilated.

In all the cases of rupture of the heart that came under my observation death occurred immediately except in the case of a Hindu female about 50 years old, who died within two to three hours after she was run over by a motor car on the 4th October 1928. At the post mortem examination I found that all the ribs except the twelfth were fractured and the right ventricle of the heart was lacerated in front, the laceration being  $1'' \times 1/6''$ . Both lungs were also lacerated. Leslie Pearce Gould<sup>1</sup> describes the case of a chief boatswain aged 47, who fell a distance of twenty feet and sustained an injury to the heart. He died within about six hours. During the interval he was quite conscious and rational, and answered questions intelligently. Examination showed fracture of the first segment of the gladiolus of the sternum which was running obliquely downwards from right to left. A very small tear was found in the anterior wall of the right ventricle close to the semilunar valves large enough to admit a lead pencil into the cavity of the ventricle. Corn<sup>2</sup> records a similar case which survived six days. O'Neill<sup>3</sup> records the case of a boy who died after five days. He had a slit 3 mm long at the auriculo-ventricular valve. Howat<sup>4</sup> mentions a case of delayed traumatic rupture of the heart described to him by his colleague Dr J Donaldson, as occurring in his practice. A bricklayer, aged 68 unusually deep chested was working beside a large iron pipe close to which were the rails on which bogey trucks ran. On the approach of a truck he stood with his back pressed close against the pipe in order that the truck might clear him. The truck squeezed the front of his chest, scraping the skin but causing no further apparent local injury. He was in bed for two weeks and resumed work after three weeks. After three days' resumption of work he felt unable to continue, his chief complaint being pain in the chest. He was confined to bed again for two weeks during which his pulse rate rose gradually from 30 to 60. He appeared to be progressing favourably when he suddenly died. Post mortem examination revealed no injury of any part of the chest wall except the scraping of the skin. The pericardium was intact and full of blood. No disease of the heart substance was found. The left ventricle alone was injured. Its wall was bruised in five places three in front and two behind. The largest bruise the size of a shilling and extending through the greater part of the wall's thickness, was found near the apex. Here the ventricle wall was ruptured.

Gunewardene<sup>5</sup> reports the case of a boy, aged 9, who survived ten days after sustaining injury to the heart owing to his chest having been pressed against a wall by the back of a double bullock cart. No external mark of injury or fracture

<sup>1</sup> Lancet Oct 13 1917 p 367

<sup>2</sup> Bulletin de l' Acad Royale Belge pour les Med Series 1911, p 562

<sup>3</sup> Jour Amer Med Assoc 1914 Vol I VII p 697

<sup>4</sup> Lancet June 19 1929 p 1313

<sup>5</sup> Brit Med Jour Nov 24 1934 p 942

of the ribs was evident at the time of the accident. He felt quite well the following morning, and was, therefore, allowed to go to school where he took part in the usual games. On the tenth day, while playing at school, he complained of pre cordial pain and fell down dead. Autopsy revealed a haemopericardium. On removal of the clot rupture of the anterior surface of the left ventricle was seen. The slit was blackish grey, roughly circular, and about 1" by  $\frac{3}{4}$ " in diameter. The rupture was probably due to the contusion of the heart wall at the time of the accident and yielding of the muscle so damaged.

The heart may be torn asunder from its vascular attachments by a crushing force which compresses the chest violently and drags the organ downward. Khosla<sup>1</sup> reports a case in which a woman, about 60 years old, died soon after she was run over by a military truck. On post mortem examination the upper five ribs from the second to the seventh were fractured along the nipple line on both the sides. The body of the sternum was fractured transversely. The pleural cavities were full of fluid blood. The heart was found lying free in the left pleural cavity. It was detached completely from its vascular attachments. A rent, about three inches long, was noted on the left side of the pericardium parallel to the vertebral column.

**Blood Vessels.**—Wounds of the aorta or the pulmonary artery are rapidly fatal. Wounds of the smaller arteries may prove fatal on account of profuse bleeding. Wounds of the large veins especially of the neck, chest, axilla or groin, may result in death from the air entering the blood and consequently passing into the right side of the heart.

Rupture of the aorta may be traumatic or spontaneous. When due to trauma the rupture is often localized just above the valves, and is more frequently transverse than longitudinal.

A thin man aged 45, died immediately after he was hit with a *lathi* over the left side of the chest. The aorta which was almost completely calcified was found ruptured at the junction of the transverse and descending parts. There was no injury to the chest or to the ribs.

In vehicular accidents the aorta may be ruptured by intense compression of the chest without any signs of external injury to the chest wall and without fracture of the ribs.

Cleland<sup>2</sup> reports a case in which a young airman while walking with a companion with his back to the oncoming traffic was struck from behind by a taxi cab dragged a short way and then thrown to the road. At the post mortem examination there was no external injury to the chest and the ribs were not fractured but the aorta and pulmonary artery were torn across as though cut by a knife. There was also a large tear through the base of the heart and left auricle with rupture of the pericardium behind the heart. Just above the point of severance in the aorta there was another partial tear.

Spontaneous rupture may occur from local diseases of the aorta or even when there is little or no change in the aorta, especially in those cases where the aorta has only two valves or there is stenosis of the aortic isthmus.

A case<sup>3</sup> is recorded of a healthy man aged 18 in whom two large ruptures were found in the aortic arch with a dissecting aneurism and profuse hemorrhage in the left pleural cavity. The whole of the aortic arch showed areas of necrosis which were most marked at the site of the rupture. The ruptures had occurred with an interval of a month in each—the last which proved fatal took place when the patient was asleep in bed. There was a history of high blood pressure for a year but there was no evidence of syphilis or other inflammations.

**Diaphragm**—Wounds of the diaphragm are liable to be produced by penetrating wounds of the chest or of the abdomen. They are not rapidly fatal unless the important organs in contact with it are also wounded. In non fatal cases dia phragmatic hernia may subsequently occur after the wound has healed and a cicatrix has formed.

1 Ind Med Ga. Sep 1948 p 419  
 2 Med Jour Austral Sep 9 1944 Vol 31 p 278  
 3 Brit Med Jour, Aug 13 1932 Ep, p 29

Rupture of the diaphragm may occur from a blow from a blunt weapon or violent kick or a fall on the abdomen when the stomach and intestines are full. Rupture may also take place, when the trunk is compressed under a wheel of a heavy bullock cart motor car or railway carriage. It is the central tendon that is ruptured most frequently, and death generally occurs from shock.

### ABDOMEN

**The abdominal Parietes**—Injuries of the abdominal parietes may be contusions, abrasions and non penetrating or penetrating wounds.

Contusions of the abdominal parietes are produced by a blunt weapon a kick a carriage wheel passing over the abdomen or by a fall. It is not necessary that they should show *any external mark of injury* on the skin. Sometimes an effusion of blood may be seen in the tissues or muscles under the spot where violence was used, but it must be borne in mind that an effusion of blood in the muscles may occur spontaneously as a result of disease without any external violence.

Abrasions on the abdominal parietes are generally caused by vehicular accidents or by falls from a height.

Contusions and abrasions of the abdominal parietes are, as a rule, simple unless accompanied by lesions of the visceral organs when they prove fatal from shock hemorrhage, or from peritonitis. In some cases peritonitis may occur without evident injury to any of the abdominal organs. Besides it has already been mentioned that a blow on the epigastric region (pit of the stomach) may cause death by its inhibitory action on the heart through the reflex action on the solar plexus. Post mortem examination would reveal nothing except the signs of shock to account for such a sudden death.

closet. The stomach in both cases was quite healthy.<sup>1</sup> Penetrating or stabbing wounds of the stomach are generally fatal, and very often involve the adjoining viscera, such as the liver or the spleen.

On the 23rd October 1921, a Hindu male was wounded in the stomach and he died on the 26th October. A penetrating wound passed through the stomach into the right lobe of the liver.—*Oudh J. C. Court Cr. App., Reg. No. 2, 1921*

**Intestines**—Rupture of the intestines occurs frequently from violent blows, kicks, falls, crushes or compressions. In many cases no mark of injury on the abdominal wall is visible though in addition to the rupture a great deal of contusion and laceration of the intestines may be present. Like the stomach the intestines may rupture spontaneously from chronic ulceration or from very slight force if they are diseased or distended. Moir<sup>2</sup> describes a case where a patient sustained a rupture of the small intestine  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the ileo caecal valve when he attempted to reduce an inguinal hernia by using considerable force.

When caused by injury, rupture may take place at the point of impact or in some cases, at a distance from it. In the former case the margins of the rupture are clean cut, and in the latter they are usually ragged and irregular. Rupture usually occurs at the commencement of the jejunum and in the lower three feet of the ileum, but very rarely in the large intestine. However it must be remembered that rupture of the large intestine at the junction of the sigmoid with the rectum may occur from straining at stool without the presence of chronic ulceration or any other disease.

Death occurs immediately from shock or subsequently from peritonitis owing to the expulsion of the contents into the peritoneal cavity. In three out of ten cases of mechanical violence to the small intestine that came under my observation, death occurred from peritonitis on the third, fourth and sixth day respectively after the rupture. In one case the intestine was diseased and it was the chronic ulcer that had given way.

If a rupture is very small the mucous membrane becomes everted and closes the little opening and thus prevents the escape of the intestinal contents. The power of locomotion or other muscular exertion may be preserved after these injuries.

**Rectum**—Fatal injuries of the rectum are, sometimes, produced by the forcible thrusting of a blunt weapon through the anus, a method of torture, which is occasionally resorted to in India for adultery and theft.

Roy Chowdhury reported to me a case in which he examined the body of one Bhogala aged 11 years and he found that a bamboo 12 inches long had been thrust through the anus into the abdominal cavity, where it produced a tear of the transverse colon and then entered the ileal cavity tearing through the diaphragm. A case<sup>3</sup> is reported where the husband of a woman inserted a chopstick into the rectum of a man 30 years old who was found in bed with his wife. The chopstick remained in the lower bowel for fifty days, and then penetrated the ascending colon making two perforations and causing peritonitis. The chop stick was removed by operation and the two perforations were repaired. The patient recovered.

Severe injuries of the rectum may also occur from the self insertion through the anus of a foreign body, such as a bamboo piece, a bottle, etc., owing to perverted sexual practice, from falling accidentally on an iron railing or any projecting point or from sitting forcibly upon a piece of broken bottle or broken chair.

Pillai<sup>4</sup> describes the case of a Burmese male who sustained a penetrating wound of the anus by falling from a paddy heap 14 feet high on to a forked stick used for supporting a country cart. The wound involved the anus and surrounding skin. Two loops of the small intestine, each about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet long with a piece of omentum about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet long were protruding through the wound and lying loose over the perineum. The gut was lacerated, gangrenous and offensive.

<sup>1</sup> Taylor Price and Pract of Med Juris Vol 1, Ed 1 p 284

<sup>2</sup> Brit Med Jour Oct 8 1921, p 563

<sup>3</sup> Paul Teng Western Jour Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynaecology Oct, 1917, Medical Press, Dec 17, 1917 p 545

<sup>4</sup> Ind Med Gaz, Sep, 1933 p 510

On examination by the fingers a gaping wound was felt on the right side of the rectum extending into the abdominal cavity. The abdomen was tympanic and tender. Recovery took place after an operation. James also describes a case in which a farmer 18 years old while working in the hay fields jumped backwards from a wagon and impaled himself up on the upright handle of a pitchfork stuck in the ground. About 1½ inches of the handle after perforating his trousers entered his rectum producing intraperitoneal rupture of the rectum. About 15 inches of the ileum had a mottled purplish appearance suggesting minute sub-peritoneal hemorrhages and two hay seeds were found lying on the anterior surface of the stomach. The patient was cured after an operation.

It must be remembered that a column of air under pressure rushing from the nozzle of a compressed air hose which does not touch the body may enter the bowel through the anus and cause fatal injury. In such cases the sigmoid is usually injured the anus and rectum escaping.

Block and Weissman<sup>3</sup> cite a case where a man, aged 45, received the following injuries when one of his fellow workers, as a practical joke, placed the nozzle of the air hose about an inch from his rectum.—

An irregular perforation with a diameter of about 25 mm of the intestine slightly above the junction of the sigmoid with the rectum on the left side together with a laceration of the mesosigmoid about 20 mm long. Fecal matter escaped into the peritoneal cavity through this opening. The patient recovered after the necessary operation.

An apprentice rivetter after unscrewing his hammer from his compressed air pipe blew air at a boy aged 15 as a joke. Another apprentice had his arm on his shoulder, but could not say whether he was bending or not. The boy said "Oh" and collapsed. The jury was satisfied that the boy died by a blast of compressed air entering the anus from a distance of 6". The air pressure in the nozzle of the pipe used was one hundred pounds to the square inch.\*

**Pancreas**—Wounds of the pancreas are extremely rare. They may occur from direct violence applied to the epigastrium or from penetrating wounds of the abdomen. They are usually accompanied by injuries of the other abdominal organs. But when the stomach is empty, the pancreas alone may be ruptured by being pressed against the spinal column by the object struck. Moquet and Constantini<sup>4</sup> describe a case of complete rupture of the pancreas in a bicycle accident. The shock was intense, and the youth died on the twenty-fourth day. In a case in which a young man was run over by a tonga and died on the eighth day I found a contusion of the pancreas towards its tail. There were also contusions of the bases of the lungs and of the front of the transverse colon. The left kidney was ruptured in about its middle, lacerating its substance with the capsule intact on its posterior surface. There were three small abrasions externally on the chest, but no injury on the abdominal wall.

Gray and Hodgson<sup>5</sup> report the case of a man aged 20, who while playing football was charged by another player and fell to the ground with his opponent on top of him. The latter's knee hit him on the abdomen. Within fifteen minutes of the accident he suffered from shock and died in forty hours. Post mortem examination revealed the presence of a tear of the pancreas anterior to the vertebral column. There was no tear of any other organ or no bruise of the abdominal wall. On the other hand Brown and Barlow<sup>6</sup> describe a case of complete division of the pancreas, followed by recovery through an operation from an automobile accident without serious injury.

**Liver**—Owing to its size, its fixed position and its friable consistency, the liver is frequently wounded by a stab in the abdomen, or is often ruptured by

1 Lancet Feb 11, 1939, p 576

2 Jour Amer Med Assoc March 22, 1926, p 1597

3 Jour Amer Med Assoc, Dec 8, 1928, p 1816

4 Revue de Chirurgie, Paris, 61, 1923, p 21; Jour Amer Med Assoc., Aug 11, 1923,

p 510

5 Brit Med Jour Feb 14, 1931, p 264

6 Jour Amer Med Assoc May 28, 1932, p 1882

a blow kick, crush or fall or even by a sudden contraction of the abdominal muscles. It may also be lacerated by the fractured ends of a rib perforating the diaphragm. There may or may not be signs of external injury. Fifteen cases of rupture of the liver came to my notice during a period extending over eight years. Out of these external marks of injury were visible in three only. One of these cases was very remarkable. A young Mahomedan male of twenty two years was run over by a motor car and died within an hour. At the post mortem examination which I held on the day after the death I found no trace of external or internal bruising of the abdominal wall but the liver was crushed and the right lobe was almost pulverized.

Ruptures usually involve the right lobe and occur in the anterior surface and the inferior border. They are ordinarily directed antero posteriorly or obliquely rarely transversely and are generally one or two inches deep but rarely pass through the entire substance of the organ. The liver is lacerated more easily if it is enlarged and fatty.

In rupture of the liver death occurs immediately from shock and hemorrhage especially if the portal vein or vena cava is injured or it may occur within forty eight hours. Sometimes life may be prolonged for days if the liver substance alone is injured. A case occurred in Agra in which a man survived five days after the liver was ruptured. In a case reported by Wilks death occurred on the tenth day after the rupture of the liver.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes recovery occurs after slight wounds or lacerations. It is also possible that rupture may lead to the formation of liver abscess through septic infection. From his observations Bauer<sup>2</sup>



Fig. 112.—Rupture of Liver

thinks that an abscess may occur from eleven days to one year after the central rupture of the liver is the result of compression. In rare cases it may occur even four and ten years later. He describes a case in which a man fell into a hole and fractured his right fifth rib. For months he complained of local pain and pain on breathing and held himself so bent that he was ordered a corset. A year later he was suddenly taken ill with rigors and high fever and died two weeks later. At the necropsy a liver abscess was found.

**Gall bladder**—Wounds and ruptures of the gall bladder may result from penetrating wounds or from a blow kick, or compression with the knee but on account of the small size of the gall bladder and the deep situation of the hepatic veins these injuries are rare.

In January 1919 a case occurred in which the upper surface of the gall bladder was lacerated by an *elka* passing over the body.

The gall bladder may rupture spontaneously when distended with gall stones. Braithwaite<sup>3</sup> records such a case in which a circular perforation about a third of an inch in diameter occurred on the posterior surface of the fundus of the gall-bladder. Death occurs from peritonitis owing to the effusion of blood and bile into the peritoneal cavity.

**Spleen**—On account of its situation rupture of a normal spleen is very rare unless caused by considerable compressing force such as the passing of a carriage

1 *Med Chir Rev* 1836 p 296

2 *Brit Med Jour* March 12 1901 *Epitome* p 43

3 *Brit Med Jour* Dec 12 1908 p 1746

or motor car over the body, or by a crush in a railway accident or by a fall from a very great height in such cases it is usually associated with injuries to other solid organs and to the ribs overlying the spleen. A normal spleen may sometimes be ruptured by the broken ends of a rib which may be fractured by a severe kick or by a blow from a blunt weapon.

A young Malomedan male died after receiving a kick from a horse. On post mortem examination on the 21st February 1906 fourteen hours after death there was no external injury, but the left ninth rib was fractured, the fractured ends projecting inwards. The spleen which was normal was lacerated and divided almost into two parts across the middle of its outer surface with triradiate tears on its inner surface. The left kidney was also lacerated in two places on its outer surface.

An enlarged spleen becomes softened and brittle. Hence it is liable to rupture from a fall or from violence of a very slight degree. In such cases the abdominal wall may not show any external mark of injury. During a period of eight years, I met with thirty six cases of rupture of the spleen as a result of falls and blows. Of these cases six showed marks of bruising on the abdominal wall over the splenic region and in one the left ninth and tenth ribs were fractured. Rupture usually takes place in its concave or inner surface and causes death rapidly from haemorrhage owing to its great vascularity. There may be frequently more than one rupture from a single blow and its substance may rupture leaving the thickened capsule intact. In such a case death may be delayed for some days as the capsule limits the rupture or prevents excessive bleeding and the small quantity of blood which has already effused under the capsule runs into a clot and presses on the rupture and prevents further bleeding. But with sudden muscular exertion or excitement the clot is disturbed further bleeding occurs and death takes place immediately. Thus an old *punja* coolie in the Agra Fort who had his spleen ruptured by a kick on the left side of the abdomen appeared to be all right for three days and died on the fourth day when he went to his village in a jolting *charabati*. Crawford<sup>1</sup> records a case in which a Mahomedan boy, aged fifteen years survived for seventeen days after the spleen and left kidney were ruptured and three bones of the skull were fractured. Chevers<sup>2</sup> mentions the case of a soldier who died on the eighteenth day after receiving a blow which ruptured the enlarged spleen.

Rupture of an enlarged spleen from very slight violence is a common occurrence in districts where malaria and kala azar are prevailing and every medical jurist is familiar with such cases. Sometimes,

the enlargement is so great that its length is more than fourteen inches and its breadth more than eight inches while the weight is often more than four pounds. Of all the enlarged spleens that were seen ruptured in the Agra District between 1909 and 1910 (the years of a high malarial incidence) the smallest spleen measured 6" x 5" x 2" and weighed nine ounces, while the largest measured 13" x 7" x 2½" and weighed four pounds and eight ounces.

An enlarged spleen may, sometimes, rupture spontaneously from the contraction of the abdominal muscles during the act of sneezing, coughing, vomiting or straining and some cases of this nature have been recorded (see cases below). Rare cases have also been reported in which it is claimed that a perfectly healthy normal spleen has ruptured spontaneously.



Fig 113.—Ruptured spleen

<sup>1</sup> Ind Med Ga June 1902 p 219  
<sup>2</sup> Med Juris Fd III p 461

It is difficult to believe that a normal spleen can rupture suddenly without apparent cause. It is, however, possible that occasionally, in certain individuals and at certain phases, a healthy normal spleen may rupture from minimal trauma. If the capsule is intact in such a case, the symptoms may be delayed for hours or days and when eventually the patient collapses he has forgotten the original and causative injury so that the spleen appears to have ruptured spontaneously.

Patey<sup>1</sup> reports the case of an apparently spontaneous rupture of a healthy normal spleen in a healthy muscular man, aged 50 who suddenly and without apparent cause experienced one evening acute pain in the epigastrum, which within a few minutes became so severe that he had to stop work. After two days he was removed to hospital where an abdominal operation was performed, and a rupture was found under the capsule on the outer convex surface of the perfectly normal spleen communicating with a similar rupture on its concave side round the posterior border. At the time he denied having received any injury but shortly after his discharge from the hospital he mentioned that at 10.30 a.m. on the day of the onset of his illness he was leaning over a ledge in order to open his shop window, when he slipped and fell on to his left side against the edge of the ledge. He had only slight discomfort and thinking nothing of the injury dismissed it from his mind until the repeated questionings recalled the incident. Undoubtedly this forgotten trauma was the primary cause of the ruptured spleen.

Another case<sup>2</sup> is also recorded in which a married woman aged 34 had received a blow on the left side in the small of the back just below the ribs about a fortnight ago and the blow brought her to the knees and she spent a sleepless night with the pain which also persisted through the next day. After that however, she felt quite all right, and indeed went on foot to the skating rink with a friend and had no further trouble until June 23, 1930 when on waking up in the morning she did not feel very well and was seized with very severe pain in the gastric region and died after a few hours. Post mortem examination revealed a transverse tear, 2" long on the convex surface of the normal spleen which weighed 4½ ounces and measured 4½" x 3½".

Wounds of the spleen are rare, but may be caused by a stabbing or cutting instrument. In his reported cases Crawford<sup>3</sup> found one case of wound to every fifty cases of rupture.

In March 1924 a Hindu male 30 years old resident of Police Station Mohanlalganj, District Lucknow, died from the effects of a stabbing wound in the left side of the chest caused with a spear. At the post mortem examination I found an incised wound 1½" x ¾" obliquely along the left post axillary line in the interspace between the eighth and ninth ribs piercing the diaphragm and penetrating the external surface of the spleen to an extent of ¾" x ½" three inches above its inferior border.

The body of a Hindu male, aged 40 said to have died of wounds was examined by me on the 29th May, 1929 thirty six hours after death. In addition to several wounds on the body there was an incised wound 1½" x ¾", obliquely along the back over the left eleventh rib 4" to the left of the spine and penetrating the abdominal cavity by cutting through the rib. There was an incised wound, 1" x ¾" x ½", along the outer surface of the spleen in its lower part and near its anterior border.

A slight wound may cause death from shock by profuse haemorrhage from the spleen. Thus, a case occurred to Dr J. N. B. Wise, in which death occurred from puncture of the enlarged spleen made with a needle, apparently by *nisi* of treatment.<sup>4</sup>

**Cases of Spontaneous Rupture of the Spleen—I.** On the evening of the 9th February, 1904, a Nepalese employed as a hawk driver in a Government Yak Corps lay down to sleep in a tent after he had finished his work. At about 7.20 p.m. he called to his brother who was a driver in the corps and said that he had pain in his side. The Havaldar and the man's brother went to the tent when they found him in great distress and complaining of intense pain near his heart. The Havaldar at once called a British Officer who came to the tent and looked at the man who still complained of the pain and weakness but made no accusation of anybody having struck him nor could he in any way account for the pain. He grew rapidly weaker and died a few minutes before eight—about half an hour after the pain commenced. On post mortem examination the body was found to be well developed and powerful and the age of the deceased appeared to be between twenty five and thirty years. There was no external mark of injury. On opening

<sup>1</sup> Brit Med Jour., May 18, 1929 p. 893. See also A. H. Druitt Lancet Nov 1 1917, p. 652.

<sup>2</sup> Dawson Walker Lancet, March 7, 1931, p. 523. Vide also L. E. Jones, Brit. Med. Jour., Oct 28, 1914, p. 561.

<sup>3</sup> Ind. Med. Gaz., June, 1902 p. 220.

<sup>4</sup> Ind. Med. Gaz., June, 1902, p. 220.

the peritoneal cavity a large quantity of blood gushed out. The peritoneum was found perfectly healthy and no adhesions were found in any part of the abdomen. A large rupture was found in the spleen extending through the anterior angle of the fulum. The organ was enlarged to double its normal size and was very soft. The other abdominal organs were quite healthy.—*Dary's Ind. Med. Ga.*, June 1904 p 218

2 A Hindu male aged about 20 was admitted into the Calcutta Medical College Hospital on the 30th April 1903 with a history of abdominal pain of ten hours' duration. There was constipation but no vomiting. The abdomen was generally tender the tenderness being most marked in the left iliac region, it was slightly distended. On the 1st May the abdomen was more distended the distension being more marked in the epigastric region the tenderness was greater and free fluid was present in the abdominal cavity. He complained of much thirst. Colotomy was performed but no obstruction was present. He died at 9 a.m. on the 3rd May. At the post mortem examination the spleen was found slightly if at all enlarged and its substance was largely occupied by a blood clot on the outer surface towards the lower end of the organ was a small rupture of the substance which had caused hemorrhage beneath the capsule with the formation of a cyst like cavity containing serous fluid this had burst into the peritoneum setting up peritonitis. A portion of the omentum was adherent to the ruptured cyst like cavity. There was no free blood in the abdominal cavity. The other organs were normal there being nothing to suggest that an impact had occurred in the spleen.—*Ocen Thurston Ind. Med. Gaz.*, Oct., 1904 p 370

3 A Hindu Male aged about 15 years and residing in Hardoi who was addicted to drinking alcohol to excess and smoking charas fell down unconscious in a lane while walking on the afternoon of the 13th August 1906 and died immediately. At the post mortem examination I did not notice any external mark of injury over the abdomen on the part corresponding to the region of the spleen but the abdominal cavity was full of blood and the spleen was ruptured. The spleen was so soft friable and pulpyaceous that not an inch of the solid substance could be taken out entire. It was lying in a thickened capsule which showed as if it was a bag containing the pulpyaceous mass. The rupture was spontaneous probably due to contraction of extraordinary muscles brought to head in a fall for there was no history of the deceased having received a blow, or having been hit against a hard substance in the splenic region during the fall.—*Ind. Med. Gaz.*, Oct. 1906 p 423

4 The following is a case of spontaneous rupture of the spleen during an attack of malaria—

A male patient 22 years old was admitted into hospital for fever. Two days afterwards at about midday he felt nauseated and began to have a mild rigor. At about 2 p.m. 10 grains of quinine were administered orally as his blood smear was examined with positive result. At about 2.30 p.m. he became pale and uneasy and his pulse rate was 120 per minute. By 3 p.m. the patient appeared to be entering a state of profound shock and the intravenous administration of serum was commenced and a small intravenous dose of quinine was given. Blood transfusion was substituted as soon as possible for the administration of serum. By 4 p.m. the patient was completely collapsed and was pulseless and comatose. He died at 8.30 p.m. Post mortem examination revealed the presence of pints of serum with blood clots. The spleen measured 12" x 6" x 4" and weighed about 4 pounds. In its posterior inferior surface was a rupture

is violently flexed forwards at the lumbar region. Rupture may prove rapidly fatal from collapse or haemorrhage or more slowly from peritonitis or suppuration caused by extravasation of urine. Slight rupture may result in recovery.

F. W. Riches<sup>1</sup> reports the case of a man aged 34 years who lived for eleven days after rupture of the right kidney sustained by him when a lorry knocked one of the handles of his wheelbarrow violently into his sides. Fowler Ward<sup>2</sup> cites even a case of recovery from a ruptured kidney without an operation.

**Bladder**—Rupture of the bladder may be produced generally at the posterior and upper surface by blows, crushes or kicks on the hypogastrium especially when it is distended with urine. Sometimes very slight violence may rupture the bladder without any external sign of injury. Rupture may also occur from a fall from fracture of the pubic bone, or from a sharp weapon penetrating through the vagina or rectum.

In June 1923 a woman 25 years old was run over by a tonga and died in a few hours. On examination there was no external mark of injury but on opening the abdomen in oblique transverse ecchymosis in an area of three inches by two inches was seen in the substance of the muscle in the left iliac region. The pelvic cavity contained blood. The bladder was found lacerated to an extent of two inches in the upper surface and was covered on the inside with clotted blood.

On the 11th November 1923 a woman was run over by a bullock cart and died immediately. There was no external mark of injury to the abdominal wall but there was an extravasation of blood in the muscles of the abdomen across its lower part above the pubes with rupture of the bladder in its upper part and fracture of the pubic and iliac bones.

Spontaneous rupture of the normal bladder is rare almost impossible though it may occur in its base from over distension when it is diseased or ulcerated or when there is an obstruction in the urethra from stricture enlarged prostate and tumour. Similarly, it is liable to rupture in females during parturition owing to the pressure of the child's head if the bladder is over distended. Persons who are habituated to excessive indulgence in alcohol or opium are apt to go about with a distended bladder owing to the depressed effect on the nerve centres. In such a condition slight pressure or an accidental fall on the lower part of the abdomen may be sufficient to rupture the bladder.

The symptoms of rupture of the bladder are pain, tenderness in the abdomen, rigidity of the abdominal muscles, inability to pass urine and the presence of blood in the urine. In some cases the symptoms may be delayed for eight hours or more. The patient may be able to walk for some time after receiving the injury.

Death may occur suddenly from shock but usually occurs in three to seven days from peritonitis due to the extravasation of urine into the peritoneal cavity or from suppuration and sloughing due to urine being extravasated into the cellular tissue if the bladder is ruptured at its extraperitoneal portion. Taylor<sup>2</sup> cites a case in which death did not take place until the fifteenth day.

**Uterus**—The non gravid uterus is not ordinarily injured unless involved in the injuries of the pelvic organs but the gravid uterus is likely to be ruptured by a blow, kick or trampling on the abdominal wall or by the passage of a sharp instrument per vaginam to procure abortion. Death may result from haemorrhage, peritonitis or septicaemia. The pregnant organ may also be ruptured during injudicious obstetrical operations or spontaneously during parturition especially in obstructed labour.

Partial or complete separation of the placenta caused by a blow on the abdomen during pregnancy may cause fatal haemorrhage.

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings of the Royal Society of Med. Feb. 1931, p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> Prince and Clark, *J. Legal Juris.* Vol. I, Pt. V, p. 384.

**Urethra**—The male urethra may be ruptured by a kick in the perineum by a fall astride some projecting substance such as a fence or beam, or by a fractured piece of the pubic bone. The seat of rupture is usually in front of, or behind, the triangular ligament, just where the urethra passes under the pubic arch. Death may occur from extravasation of urine, but rupture may heal without any serious effects if a tear is a slight one, and if immediate surgical treatment is undertaken.

The female urethra may be ruptured by an act of rape. I saw a girl of eight years, whose anterior urethral wall was lacerated to an extent of  $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}$  by an act of rape committed by a grown up man. Schepetinsky<sup>1</sup> also reports the case of a woman 23 years old, who had been raped by an intoxicated man. Her urethra was abnormally wide and there was a bleeding rupture 3 or 4 cm long, in the posterior wall and she was suffering from gonorrhoea.

**Penis**—Wounds of the penis and its total extirpation if not fatal by shock and hemorrhage are not dangerous. Cutting off the penis with a knife or razor is one of the usual modes of punishment for adultery in India. In order to avenge himself on one Raghubar Daval who had committed adultery with his wife one Murli of Kheri District amputated his penis at its root placed it in his mouth and then killed him.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes, the victim is first killed, and then his genital organ is cut off.

Mutilation of the penis and even castration are occasionally self inflicted by lunatics or by individuals who want to be eunuchs or wish to dedicate their lives to a goddess viz *Bahucharaji* in the Gujarat Province. On September 17, 1932, I saw one Hijra called Pancham alias Hailchi aged 28 years who had cut off his penis and scrotum with the testicles by one sweep of a knife, causing an incised wound  $4'' \times 4''$ , below the pubes and directed from above downwards. When he was brought to hospital the wound was covered with curd and a piece of a dirty rag. He was discharged cured after ten days.

Superficial incised wounds of the penis are, sometimes produced to fabricate a false charge of assault.

Rupture of the penis, as also its dislocation into the scrotum, may be produced by a squeeze or crush.

Bondi reports the case of a man aged 64 years whose penis was pulled off by an energetic young woman with whom he had attempted sexual intercourse. The case was brought into court and each party gave a different version as to how the thing actually occurred. The woman's story was that the man tried to seduce her and that in self-defence she pulled forcibly at the penis, which came off in the struggle. From certain experiments made at the cadaver with a view to elucidating the question it was found that the nature of the injuries sustained in the case was exactly similar to that which was produced when the penis was forcibly avulsed and the amount of force required to tear off the penis in a flaccid state was far in excess of that which any ordinary person would be likely to possess. But when the penis was erect the resistance was very much reduced so that a comparatively moderate amount of force quite within the possibility of a woman of average strength was quite sufficient to completely avulse the penis.—*La Clin Med Am 1, N 18 Bri Med Jour Aug 18 1900 Epitome p 26*

**Testicles**—Contusion of the testicles results from blows, kicks and squeezes and is accompanied by severe pain of a sickening character which may produce a fatal shock. The squeezing of a testicle is a common practice of assault in India, and sometimes the squeezing is so very forcible that the testicle is protruded out of the scrotum. It may also be accidentally protruded through a lacerated wound of the scrotum caused in jumping over a barbed wire. In his annual report for

<sup>1</sup> Zentralblatt for Gynakologie Leipzig Oct 4 1930 p 2530, *Jour Amer Med Assoc*, Jan 10 1931 p 155.

<sup>2</sup> *Cheif Court of Oudh Crim Appeal No 164 of 1928*

the year 1941 the Chemical Analyser, Bombay, reports a case in which a man was murdered by avulsion of the left testicle caused by a lacerated wound on the side of the scrotum exposing the spermatic cord.

**Vulva.**—Injuries to the vulva may be caused homicidally by a blow or kick in front, or from behind when a female is bending forward. They may also be caused accidentally when a female forcibly sits on the broken chamber pot while urinating or falls on a projecting sharp substance.

Owing to the underlying pubic bone wounds of the vulva caused by a blunt weapon may look like incised wounds, but minute and careful examination of the wounds will reveal the difference. These wounds may prove fatal from excessive haemorrhage.

Case.—A woman aged 36 years, while in a stooping posture received a kick from her husband in the lower part of the abdomen. She died within an hour from loss of three to four pounds of blood. On inspection there was no injury to the vagina or uterus. A wound about an inch long and three-quarters of an inch deep was found at the edge of the vulva extending from the pubes along the ramus of that bone. The left crus clitoridis was crushed throughout its length so as to exhibit its cavernous structure. From this the fatal bleeding had proceeded.—*Taylor, Prince and Pratt of Med Juris, Vol I, Ed IV, p 449*

**Vagina**—The vagina may be lacerated by the introduction of an abortion stick for procuring criminal abortion or by the forcible thrusting of a foreign body such as a blunt weapon, as a form of torture or punishment. Lacerations caused by thrusting a foreign body into the vagina are, sometimes, multiple involving the pelvic organs and cause death. The following two cases are illustrative—

1 A dhol stick had been forcibly thrust by Saktu, accused through the vagina of a girl, 1½ years old, so that its upper part had been bored over for four inches. The stick had perforated the vagina, torn the bladder and displaced the uterus which was almost lying loose. It had passed into the abdominal cavity as far as the stomach. The abdominal portion of the stick was fifteen inches long. The peritoneal cavity contained about two ounces of clotted blood and the omentum was torn and congested. The upper part of the rectum was perforated and the uterine ligaments were torn.<sup>1</sup>

2 A woman was killed by a latte being thrust into her vagina which lacerating the orifice and tearing the posterior fornix entered the peritoneum making an opening 2"×2". The surrounding structures were blue and congested.<sup>2</sup>

The vaginal walls may be lacerated during parturition, and the laceration may extend into the bladder or rectum.

The vagina may be injured by violent sexual intercourse especially by a strong healthy adult with a small girl or even with a grown up female, whether single or married, and fatal results may follow from profuse haemorrhage or from pelvic cellulitis.

I saw a case in Agra where a girl of thirteen years died from septic cellulitis caused by a lacerated wound in the posterior wall of the vagina the result of sexual intercourse by her husband who was a strong young man. J. Alfred Gaynor<sup>3</sup> records the case of a married woman 28 years old who immediately after the first attempt at coitus had a severe vaginal haemorrhage losing about three pints. On examination a dense central adhesion was found between the anterior and posterior vaginal wall leaving two small lateral apertures. This was situated about midway between the hymen and the vault of the vagina. A deep tear in the vaginal wall about 1½ inches long extended from the lateral aperture on the right side towards the hymen. Lask<sup>4</sup> also reports an interesting case in which a woman aged 37 years, sustained a perforation of the posterior fornix and pouch of Douglas during sexual intercourse with a man 30 years old.

The usual practice of punishment for adultery in India is to brand the vulva with a heated solid substance or to introduce powdered chillies, a bruised marking nut (*Bhilasa*) or a rag soaked in Madar juice into the vaginal cavity.

1 *K. I. v. Saktu Oudh Jud. Com. Court Crimin. Appeal Reg. 128 of 1922*

2 *K. I. v. Patey Singh and Sarup Singh Allah High Court Crimin. Appeal No. 97 of 1931*

3 *Brit. Med. Jour. Dec 10 1927 p. 1080*

4 *Brit. Med. Jour. April 24 1948, p. 786, see also Diddle, Western Jour. of Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, July 1948*

## MUSCLES

Contusions and sprains of the muscles may occur from a blow or from a fall. They are generally simple in nature but an abscess may form in the contused part of the muscle, or paralysis and subsequent atrophy of the muscles may occur if the nerve supplying these muscles is damaged. Similarly, a person may become lame from a sprain of the gastrocnemius and soleus owing to their contraction.

Laceration and crushing of the muscles due to a heavy cart or a railway or machinery accident may necessitate the amputation of a limb or may cause death indirectly from gangrene or tetanus.

Sometimes it so happens that owing to its elasticity, the skin especially of the chest and abdomen remains intact, but the underlying muscles are torn by kicks blunt weapons or street accidents causing protrusion of a portion of a viscera behind the skin.

In a carriage accident a boy aged 11 years sustained injuries in his chest by the front end of a pole of an *ekka* hitting him on the right side. On examination there was no mark of external injury on the chest but a portion of the lung was found protruding through the torn muscles in the fourth intercostal space of the right side of the chest.

A woman aged 60 years was struck in the abdomen by a bullock with his head and died 3 days later. At the autopsy the abdominal wall was found intact without any external mark of injury but a piece of the omentum was found protruding behind the skin through a tear  $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$  of the abdominal muscles on the right side in the upper part. There was also a tear in the small intestine towards its lower part on the right side.

## BONES

Contusion of a bone and of its periosteum due to a blow or a fall is a simple injury and in ordinary circumstances subsides in a few days, though acute infective periostitis or necrosis may occur in the case of debilitated, syphilitic or rheumatic people.

Fractures of bones may occur from blows falls or muscular contraction. A case occurred in which a healthy man fractured his humerus by muscular exertion in throwing a cricket ball.

Fractures are not ordinarily dangerous unless they are compound when death may occur from loss of blood if a big vessel is wounded by the split end of a fractured bone or from embolism septicaemia gangrene or tetanus.

In children and young persons the bones are tough and elastic hence a green stick or partial fracture occurs more frequently while in old people the bones being brittle owing to the increase of their inorganic constituents are easily fractured even with very slight violence. The bones are more fragile in certain diseases, such as syphilis arthritis osteomalacia rickets sarcoma cancer, scurvy and those nervous diseases which produce trophic changes.

There is a peculiar brittle condition of the bones, called *fragilitas ossium* in which fracture may occur from a trivial trauma or a slight exertion such as a misstep in walking or moving around in bed. This condition is hereditary and found in persons apparently in good health. It is also found in people suffering from locomotor ataxia syringomyelia and general paralysis of the insane and in workers in phosphorus.

In criminal cases the defendant often admits the fracture of a bone, but raises the plea that it was due to an accident and not to direct violence. A fracture caused by direct violence can be judged from its position and the presence of a bruise or wound of the skin or subjacent tissues accompanying the fracture. It should, however, be noted that in some cases no bruise or wound is associated with

a fracture. But such a fracture is generally transverse and sometimes comminuted. When due to an accident such as a fall fracture occurs at the weakest part of the bone is usually spiral or oblique and is generally not accompanied by a bruise or wound.

**Distinction between Ante-mortem and Post-mortem Fractures—** Fractures caused during life show the signs of effusion of blood, laceration of muscles pouring out of lymph and formation of callus but these signs are absent in fractures produced after death. However it is difficult to distinguish if a fracture is caused immediately after death when the body is still warm though the effusion of blood about the torn muscles and fractured ends will be very little. Besides it should be remembered that with ordinary force it is not possible to fracture a bone after death as it loses its tonicity and elasticity.

### DISLOCATIONS

Dislocations are caused by falls, blows or muscular action. They are not common in old people and in those persons whose bones have become brittle as well as in children in whom the separation of epiphysis is more common. They are not dangerous unless they are between the vertebrae or are compound when death may result from secondary complications.

Dislocations may occur spontaneously when the joints are diseased. It is easy to diagnose a dislocation before it is reduced. Owing to swelling, ecchymosis and limitation in the movement of a joint it may be easy to find it out even after it is reduced. But it is quite difficult to do so after these effects have passed off, unless there is paralysis or muscular atrophy due to the involvement of a nerve as in the dislocation of a shoulder joint.

After death they may be recognized by the effusion and coagulation of blood, and by the laceration of the soft tissues in the vicinity of the joint. Old dislocations may be ascertained by scar tissue in and about the capsule.

Medical Jurisprudence

## CHAPTER XIII

### IMPOTENCE AND STERILITY

**Definition.**—Impotence is defined as physical incapacity of accomplishing the sexual act, and is applied to the male more than to the female, as the latter is a passive agent in the act of copulation. While sterility means inability for procreation of children, and is referable more to the female than to the male.

It should be remembered that an impotent individual need not necessarily be sterile, nor a sterile individual impotent, though both conditions may, sometimes, be combined in the same individual.

#### QUESTIONS RELATING TO IMPOTENCE AND STERILITY

*Impotence and sterility in either man or woman may form the basis of medico-legal investigation both in civil and criminal cases. The civil court may call on the medical jurist to determine this point in suits of adoption, contested paternity, nullity of marriage and divorce. The criminal court may have to decide this question with the aid of the medical jurist in accusations of alleged adultery, rape and unnatural offences, in which the accused pleads impotence as an excuse in defence, and in cases where an injured individual asserts that he has become impotent from wounds or injuries received by him, especially if they happen to have been inflicted on the head, neck or loins.*

When asked by the court to examine a particular male as to whether he is capable of sexual intercourse, the medical jurist must give an opinion in the negative form, and must answer that from the examination he finds nothing to suggest that the male examined is not capable of sexual intercourse if he happens to be a healthy, normal individual. Casper<sup>1</sup> states that "the possession of virility and procreative power neither requires to be, nor can be, proved to exist by any physician, but is rather, like every other normal function, to be supposed to exist within the usual limits of age." It is, therefore, necessary for the medical jurist to ascertain by an examination of the individual in a case of disputed potency, if there is any abnormal condition which is likely to interfere with the normal function of copulation.

Under the law of England, marriage is a contract which may be declared "null and void" if it can be proved that either party was, at the time of contracting marriage, impotent, i.e., incapable of fulfilling the rights of consummation of marriage. But this incapacity must be permanent and incurable by an operation, even if the individual is willing to submit to it. The requirement of impotence subsequent to marriage, or sterility alone, is not a sufficient ground to grant a decree of divorce. The marriage cannot be set aside if it was contracted with full knowledge with an impotent person or with one who, from advanced age, might be inferred to be incapable of sexual intercourse.

#### CAUSES OF IMPOTENCE AND STERILITY IN THE MALE

The causes of impotence and sterility in the male are—

1. Age.
2. Malformations
3. Local Diseases
4. General Diseases.
5. Psychical Influences

1. *Forens. Med., Eng. Transl., Ed. III, Vol. III, p. 241.*

**1. Age**—Impotence is generally observed at the extremes of age. Boys are considered to be sexually potent at the age of puberty which usually occurs at the fifteenth or sixteenth year. Sexual intercourse is, however, possible at about the thirteenth or fourteenth year, as the power of coitus commences earlier and ceases later than the power of procreation. The changes which occur in a boy at puberty are the development of the genital organs, the ability to secrete semen, the growth of hair on the pubes, axillæ and chin, and the increase in size of the larynx leading to the deepening of the pitch of the voice. When examining an individual for sexual capacity the medical jurist should depend more on physical development than on age alone.

Rarely, sexual development may occur at a very early age. Ram Chandra Roy<sup>1</sup> reports the case of precocious development of a boy, aged about 22 months whose penis and testicles were highly developed simulating those of an adult and the pubic region was covered with long and dark hair. He possessed a very shrill voice, and his brother, 4 years old, was terribly afraid of him on account of his rough behaviour. A case<sup>2</sup> is recorded in which a boy, aged four years and a half, attempted sexual intercourse with his sister, aged two years. Another case<sup>3</sup> is recorded in which a boy, 13 years old, impregnated a young woman. Gemmell<sup>4</sup> reports a case in which a boy, aged 14 years, impregnated a girl 12 years and 11 months old, after a single coitus and the girl at the age of 13 years and 8 months gave birth to a baby weighing 6½ pounds.

Sexual development may be delayed till late in life. Curling<sup>5</sup> quotes the case of a man, whose sexual organs at the age of twenty-six were like those of a child of eight years. At twenty-eight his organs assumed their normal development. He married and became the father of a family.

As age advances the power of sexual intercourse and procreation diminishes, but no limit can be assigned at which this power ceases, as men of eighty years and over have been known to have begotten children. Casper relates a case in which spermatozoa were found in a man ninety-six years old,<sup>6</sup> and that he himself had observed them in a man of sixty-nine.<sup>7</sup> In October, 1924, I referred a case to Dr Mukarji where he found spermatozoa in a man of about ninety years of age. Seymour and others report a case in which a man aged 91, had a child by his wife, aged 27 years. His seminal fluid contained motile spermatozoa of normal conformation and of average size.<sup>8</sup>

**2. Malformations**—The absence or non-development of the penis renders a man impotent, but the man is not sterile if semen can be deposited into the vagina with the partially developed penis. The penis adherent to the scrotum cannot be a plea for divorce if it can be remedied by a surgical operation. The presence of double penis, although a rare occurrence, may cause difficulty in sexual intercourse but coition is nevertheless, possible in some cases.

A case<sup>9</sup> is recorded in which a man aged 26 years had two penes lying side by side. The right penis was attached at the normal site in the midline, had a foreskin and was normal in all respects, except for a slight hypospadias while the second or accessory organ was attached 5 cm to the left of the other, was smaller and had no urethra or foreskin. There was a small meatus from which a slight mucous discharge came out on sexual excitement.

<sup>1</sup> *Inq. Med. Gaz.* Feb. 1916, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Lond. Med. Gaz.* April 1872.

<sup>3</sup> *Brit. Med. Jour.* April 23, 1887. *Lancet*, Vol. II, 1910, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> *Brit. Med. Jour.* May 7, 1927, p. 802.

<sup>5</sup> *On Sterility in Man.* Collis Barry, *Leg. Med.* Vol. II Ed. II p. 42.

<sup>6</sup> *Forens. Med., Eng. Transl.*, Vol. III, p. 292.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 258.

<sup>8</sup> *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.* Nov. 2, 1935, p. 1423.

<sup>9</sup> *Seth and Peacock, Urolog. and Cut. Rev.*, Sep., 1932, p. 590.

Hypospadias, a congenital deformity of the penis, which is characterized by the urethral orifice being situated on the under surface, does not, as a rule, produce incapacity for sexual intercourse, unless it is associated with a marked deformity of the penis which may interfere with its intromission into the vagina. Sterility in such a case depends upon the position of the urethral orifice, and it is assumed if the urethral orifice is so placed as to prevent the deposition of semen within the labia of the vulva. Spermatozoa, if deposited within the labia, can certainly travel upwards into the vaginal canal owing to their mobile power.

Epispadias, a deformity in which the urethra opens on the dorsum of the penis, is extremely rare, and is often associated with the rudimentary and stunted penis and extroversion of the bladder rendering sexual intercourse impossible.

The congenital absence of the testicles produces sterility and impotence, but it is possible for a man to impregnate a woman after double castration if semen had already been present in the vesiculae seminalis before the operation, he becomes permanently sterile after this stock of semen has been exhausted.

Sir Astley Cooper<sup>1</sup> knew a man in whom both the testicles had been extirpated for twenty nine years. During the first year, this man, when satisfying his sexual desire, had regular seminal emissions. Subsequently he had erections, though but rarely, and satisfied his sexual desire without any ejaculations, after two years the erections were more seldom and less perfect.

Monorchids, i.e., those who have one testicle only are physiologically quite potent, whereas cryptorchids, i.e., those who have undescended testicles, are usually, but not invariably, impotent and sterile. Some may be quite potent and fertile. A case<sup>2</sup> is recorded in which a cryptorchid who was married at the age of eighteen years had five children born to him, till he was thirty four years old.

**3 Local Diseases** A large hydrocele or scrotal hernia, elephantiasis, phimosis, paraphimosis and adherent prepuce may cause temporary impotence by mechanical obstruction to coitus as these conditions can be remedied by proper surgical treatment. Marked diseases of the penis or of the testicles, such as syphilis, cancer and tuberculosis, may lead to impotence or sterility or both. Inflammatory affections of the testicles, epididymis, prostatic gland and seminal vesicles of gonorrhœal origin are the frequent causes of impotence and sterility. The ejaculatory ducts may be obliterated by chronic gonorrhœa, so that the seminal discharge may be prevented from flowing into the urethra. Atrophy of the testicles occurring after mumps may produce impotence or sterility. An operation of lithotomy, sometimes, causes sterility from injury to the ejaculatory ducts.

**4 General Diseases** Endocrine disturbances may produce sexual infantilism, rendering an individual impotent. Certain general diseases, such as diabetes, pulmonary tuberculosis, chronic nephritis, etc., which occasion extreme debility may produce impotence, temporary or permanent, through the weakness to which they give rise, though the genital organs are apparently quite normal. It is difficult to say which of the nervous and mental diseases weaken the sexual power. Inflammation of the brain and its meninges generally produces more or less paralysis of the genital organs. It is said that hemiplegia, paraplegia and locomotor ataxy produce impotence, but this is not always the case. Guy<sup>3</sup> mentions two cases where men, within two to three weeks of a well marked attack of hemiplegia, had fruitful sexual intercourse with their wives. Cushing<sup>4</sup> quotes the case of a man who, during paraplegic condition lasting for eight years, held

<sup>1</sup> *Observations on the Structure and Diseases of the Testicle*, London, 1830, Casper, Forensic Med., Engl Transl Vol III p 256

<sup>2</sup> Taylor, *Princ and Pract of Med Juris*, Vol II, Ed A, p 16

<sup>3</sup> *Forensic Med*, Ed I pp 49-50

<sup>4</sup> *Diseases of the Testes*, Ed IV, p 113

intercourse with his wife and begot two children. In the case of *Bagot v. Bagot* tried in the Irish Probate Court in 1878 Dr Radcliffe gave evidence of his having seen cases of locomotor ataxy where sexual capacity and fruitfulness were retained<sup>1</sup>.

(V) Some forms of mental disease, especially general paralysis of the insane increase the sexual power in the beginning though at a later advanced stage totally abolish the sexual instinct. Blows on the head or spine may produce temporary or permanent impotence by affecting the brain and spinal cord. A condition of temporary azoospermia (complete absence of spermatozoa in semen) unattended with any loss of sexual power is observed in individuals, who attend in the X Ray department without proper protection.<sup>2</sup> The excessive and continued use of some drugs such as alcohol, opium, cannabis indica tobacco cocaine and bromides may render a man impotent.

5 **Psychical Influences** —A temporary absence of desire for sexual intercourse may result from fear, timidity, aversion, hypochondriasis, excessive passion and sexual over indulgence. Sometimes an individual may be impotent with one particular woman, but not with another. It should be noted that in a divorce suit the question to be decided is the incapacity of the husband to sexual intercourse with his married partner, his capacity for intercourse with other women is of no consequence in deciding the case.

Lord Birkenhead the Lord Chancellor granted a divorce to a woman who instituted a suit for nullity of marriage after ten years of married life on the ground that the husband was unable to consummate the marriage. It followed that although physically normal he had always been incapable of consummating this particular union with this particular woman (*impotency quoad hanc*).<sup>3</sup>

In an appeal from a divorce suit of *Ibrahim v. Musammat Altafan* heard before Mr Justice Kanhaiya Lal at the High Court of Allahabad in 1923 it was contended that no consummation of marriage had taken place although the parties had been married for years. Medical evidence proved beyond doubt that the husband had no malformation or defect in the male organ and that he was normally capable of performing the sexual act. The woman was also medically examined and certified to be a virgin who had had no sexual intercourse with any man. This was a case of a man who might be impotent *quoad his wife* but the learned Judge allowed him one year more to prove his potency with his wife.

In the divorce suit<sup>4</sup> of *R R Saranya v. Kusum Madgavkar* before the High Court of Bombay the Hon. Mr. Justice Coyajee passed a decree for nullity of marriage on the ground that the husband was impotent as regards his wife although he was generally potent.

#### CAUSES OF IMPOTENCE AND STERILITY IN THE FEMALE

The causes which prevent sexual intercourse and conception in the female are the same as those of impotence and sterility in the male, i.e.,

- 1 Age
- 2 Malformations
- 3 Local Diseases
- 4 General Diseases
- 5 Psychical Influences

1 **Age** —Puberty in the female usually commences at the thirteenth or fourteenth year in India. It is generally believed that puberty commences at an earlier age in the tropics than in the temperate regions but I do not think that there is any difference in the age of puberty and Professor Crew<sup>5</sup> expressed the same opinion at a meeting of the Social Hygiene Congress in London. From observations made in 179 cases amongst Indian women representing many different castes and races Miss Curyel<sup>6</sup> has come to the conclusion that the average age of the onset of puberty (catamenia) in an Indian girl is 13.63 years.

<sup>1</sup> Guy Forensic Med Ed II p 49

<sup>2</sup> Jour Amer Med Assoc, July 23 1921 p 297

<sup>3</sup> Times of India April 19 1948

<sup>4</sup> Lancet Sep 21 1920 p 610

<sup>5</sup> Int Jour of Med Research Oct 1920 p 306

The signs of puberty in a girl are the development of the external and internal genitals the appearance of menstruation the growth of hair on the pubes and axilla, and the development of the breasts. There is a change in her tastes and the girl no longer looks like a child but is more bashful and retiring. Luxurious living and early stimulation of the mental faculties tend to bring on menstruation at an earlier age while feeble health and poor diet tend to retard it.

In exceptional cases menstruation may appear very early or late in life. A female child from a few days after her birth menstruated at regular intervals of twenty three or twenty four days until she died at the age of four years. At the autopsy the sexual organs were found as much developed as those in a girl at the age of puberty and the breasts were also as much developed as in a woman of twenty years.<sup>1</sup> Arnold Gesell<sup>2</sup> reports the case of a girl who began to menstruate at the age of three years and seven months. Powell<sup>3</sup> describes the case of a child aged four years who used to have a discharge of blood from the vagina every six or eight weeks. The labia were large and the breasts as large as the halves of a moderate sized orange. C. Worster Drought<sup>4</sup> reports the case of a girl aged 3 years who began to menstruate at the age of 2½ years and continued to menstruate regularly for 12 months the period lasting each time for three days. Menstruation stopped for 18 months and then reappeared. Since then it has been more or less regular. The breasts were noticed to be prominent at birth but there was a sudden increase in size at the onset of menstruation. Pubic hair appeared at the age of 4 years and six months. P. M. Sen Gupta<sup>5</sup> also records the case of a girl who began to menstruate at the age of 3½ years. At first the flow came on every month then the intermenstrual periods lengthened to about two months and the last interval was over six months. At the age of 5 years she was quite intelligent, her breasts were considerably developed and there was slight growth of pubic and axillary hair.

Cases of delayed menstruation have also occurred. I have known a family where girls did not menstruate till they were eighteen years old. Powell<sup>6</sup> has known women of twenty years who had not menstruated. A married woman did not menstruate till she was thirty years old and did not bear children.<sup>7</sup> In one case menstruation appeared for the first time at the age of forty seven.<sup>8</sup>

It is generally assumed that the power of fecundity commences with the first flow of menstruation and lasts till the menopause which occurs on an average at the forty fifth year of age although it may occur in a few cases at an earlier age or as late as the fiftieth year.<sup>9</sup> For obvious reasons such a view is not tenable in the case of babies and small girls who menstruate prematurely. Cases have however occurred where girls became pregnant at a very early age. A Mayo median unmarried girl<sup>10</sup> 6 years and 8 months old who had never menstruated was delivered of a full term female child by Caesarian section in the Zenana Hospital at Delhi. She was able to nurse her child. Dodd<sup>11</sup> records the case of a girl who began to menstruate at the age of one year became pregnant at eight years.

<sup>1</sup> Whistmore. North Jour of Med. J 1845 p 70 Taylor Prince and Pract of Med. Juris Ed X Vol II p 11

<sup>2</sup> Jour Amer Med Assoc March 1<sup>st</sup> 1908 p 840

<sup>3</sup> Ind Med Gaz June 1909 p 233

<sup>4</sup> Proceedings of the Royal Soc of Med Engg 1931 p 1338

<sup>5</sup> Ind Med Gaz June 1937 p 308

<sup>6</sup> Ind Med Gaz June 1909 p 233

<sup>7</sup> Camps Med Cal Vol 3<sup>rd</sup> p 409

<sup>8</sup> Con ps Ibid Taylor Prince and Pract of Med Juris Ed X Vol II p 12

<sup>9</sup> According to Miss Curjel the average duration of menstrual life (reproductive) among Indian women is 3<sup>rd</sup> 14 years and it does not appear to differ materially from Europe races — Ind Jour of Med Research Oct 1900 p 566

<sup>10</sup> Jour Ind Med Assoc Engg 1931 p 535 Keane Brit Med Jour Sept 23 1933

<sup>11</sup> Lancet 1881

and ten months and was subsequently delivered of a living child which weighed seven pounds Chevers<sup>1</sup> quotes Dr Chukerbutty who knew a girl who became a mother at the age of ten years F D H<sup>2</sup> reports a case where the operation of Cæsarian section had to be performed on a little girl both at the birth of her twin babies when she was ten years old and at the birth of her living child before she was eleven years of age Curtis<sup>3</sup> mentions the case of a girl who became pregnant by a boy, aged 15 years twenty four days before she reached the age of ten years and was delivered of a healthy child at ten years and eight months In his *Essays on Midwifery* Robertson quotes the case of a factory girl who became pregnant, when she was eleven years old On the contrary, cases are on record where women have become pregnant long after the menopause An authentic case is cited in which a woman was delivered of her last child at the age of fifty years and seven months<sup>4</sup>

**2 Malformations** Congenital malformations such as the total occlusion of the vagina adhesion of the labia and the tough imperforate hymen are barriers to coitus, and consequently lead to sterility but these malformations are such as can be remedied by surgical interference (The congenital absence of the vagina will ordinarily render a female completely and permanently impotent and sterile Cases have however, been reported where an artificial vagina had been formed by operation Hodgson<sup>5</sup> records a case in which he formed an artificial vagina in a married woman 32 years old who had no vagina from her birth Coitus was subsequently carried out satisfactorily Hannan<sup>6</sup> also reports the case of a perfectly developed woman aged 24 years who had normal genitalia and normal secondary sex characteristics The hymen was normal but no vagina could be found and there was no evidence of either the uterus or the ovaries on rectal examination The vagina appeared to be replaced by a mass of fibrous tissue The labia were divided from above downwards and made into a vagina about 2 inches long

(III) The conical cervix and the absence of the uterus ovaries or Fallopian tubes produce sterility though allowing the gratification of sexual intercourse

**3 Local Diseases** —The female merely plays a passive role in the act of coitus hence the local diseases of the genital organs do not ordinarily prevent sexual intercourse provided the vagina is normal but they may produce sterility Thus, the inflammatory affections of gonorrhœal infection involving the cervix uterus, ovaries and Fallopian tubes, often produce sterility Removal of both the ovaries owing to pathological conditions may not render a woman sterile if a healthy portion of an ovary is left intact (Displacements and tumours of the uterus may be considered as causes of sterility but not in all cases Owing to the painful and spasmodic contraction of the constrictor muscle of the vagina at the time of coitus vaginismus may lead to temporary impotence Further, rectovaginal fistula ruptured perineum disorders of menstruation leucorrhœa and acid discharges from the vagina may contribute towards sterility

**4 General Diseases** —General diseases and a bodily deformity in women are not barriers to sexual intercourse or conception if the generative organs and menstruation are normal Thus a woman suffering from paraplegia can become pregnant

**5 Psychical Influences** —Hatred fear passion neurotic temperament etc may produce a hysterical fit on an attempt at copulation and may thus render a woman temporarily impotent especially if she happens to be a virgin It is possible for a woman to be sterile or impotent with a particular man and quite the opposite with another

<sup>1</sup> Med Jour 1 171

<sup>2</sup> Trans of Inst March 15 1916

<sup>3</sup> Boston Med and Surg Jour 1863

<sup>4</sup> John H Giberton Brit Med Jour March 1<sup>st</sup> 1917 p 378

<sup>5</sup> Brit Med Jour May 13 1933 p 82

<sup>6</sup> Medical Press April 2 1917 p 70

## CHAPTER XIV

### VIRGINITY, PREGNANCY AND DELIVERY

### VIRGINITY

The questions as to whether a woman is a virgin (*virgo intacta*) arises in cases of nullity of marriage, divorce, defamation and rape

#### SIGNS OF VIRGINITY

The signs of virginity in a healthy woman are seen in the genitals and breasts

**Genitals**—The labia majora are firm, elastic and well rounded, and lie in close contact with each other so as to cover completely the labia minora or nymphæ and clitoris. The labia minora are soft, small and rose coloured, and the clitoris is small. The vestibule is narrow. The posterior commissure and the fourchette are intact and crescent shaped. They are rarely destroyed by sexual intercourse but are not infrequently lacerated in the attempts at sexual intercourse on children. The vagina is narrow and tight with rugose walls, but the rugosity of the vagina cannot be considered as a diagnostic proof of virginity, as it is only removed by the first birth and not merely by sexual intercourse, besides, in some cases it may be absent even in a virgin.



Fig. 114.—Semilunar or crescentic hymen  
(From Peterson, Haines and Webster's  
Legal Medicine and Toxicology  
Ed II, Vol I)

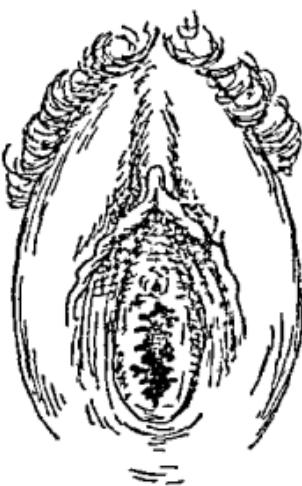


Fig. 115.—Imbricate hymen  
(From Peterson, Haines and Webster's  
Legal Medicine and Toxicology  
Ed II, Vol I)

The hymen is the most reliable sign of virginity. It is a thin fold of mucous membrane situated at the orifice of the vagina. It is generally annular with a central opening which may be round or elongated. It is usually semilunar or crescentic with the opening anteriorly. Its free margin is, sometimes, imbricated having numerous notches which may be mistaken for artificial tears, but these natural notches are usually symmetrical, occur anteriorly and, as a rule, do not extend to the vaginal wall. The mucous membrane over the notches is also intact. On the other hand, tears caused by sexual intercourse or by introduction of any

foreign body are usually situated posteriorly at one or both sides or in the median line and usually extend to the point of attachment of the hymen at the edge of the vagina.

The hymen is sometimes divided by a bridge of tissue into two equal or unequal openings and is then known as a septate hymen. It is occasionally cribriform, presenting numerous minute openings. It may form a complete septum across the lower end of the vagina, when it is called an imperforate hymen. Nasiruddin<sup>1</sup> cites the case of a Mahomedan girl of 18 years who had an imperforate hymen. McIlroy and Ward<sup>2</sup> report the case of three sisters in one family who had an imperforate hymen. It is said that the hymen may be congenitally absent but no authentic case has so far been recorded.

The hymen is situated more deeply in children than in nubile girls, and so it more often escapes injury in attempted rape on children.

Normally the hymen is ruptured by the first act of coitus, though it may persist even after frequent acts of coitus if it happens to be loose, folded and elastic or thick, tough and fleshy. Cases have been recorded in which the hymen had to be incised at the time of delivery, while even prostitutes have been known to possess an intact hymen.



Fig. 116.—Circular hymen present in natural nubiles.

(From Peterson Haines and Webster's Legal Medicine and Toxicology, Ed II Vol I)

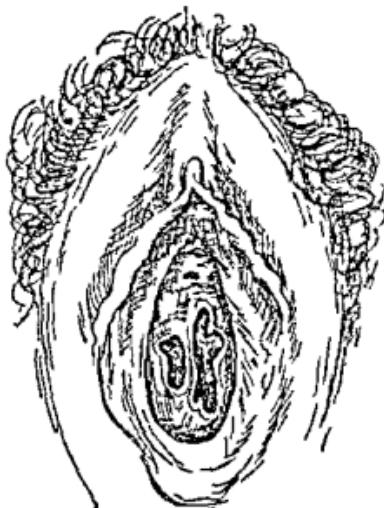


Fig. 117.—Septate hymen presenting unequal openings.

(From Peterson Haines and Webster's Legal Medicine and Toxicology, Ed II Vol I)

**Cases of Persistent Hymen after Coitus.**—1 A girl often led the out patient department at the Broca Hospital in Paris for treatment of what was to all appearances an insidious leucorrhoea. On examination the girl was found to be suffering from gonorrhoea and admitted that she had infected several of her customers, she being a clandestine prostitute of the purlieus of the Sorbonne. She had been in the town for over a year and had entertained as many as five men in a single afternoon on a sordid day. The hymen was however present whose orifice was barely two millimetres in diameter. It was elastic and admitted the passage of a large rectal bougie returning to its obturator-like condition when this was withdrawn.—Sutherland. *Int Med Ca*. June 1900, p 215.

<sup>1</sup> *Int Med G*: May 1926, p 272.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings of the Royal Soc of Med* March 1930, p 633.

2 In October, 1900, an unmarried Mahomedan female of twenty eloped from her father's house with a young Mahomedan male. She stayed with him for about a week and during this time she admitted to having had sexual intercourse with the man. On examination I found a superficial laceration  $\frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ , along each side of the labia minora. The vaginal canal was dilated but the hymen was intact, it being thick and fleshy.

Besides the act of coitus, the hymen may be ruptured by—

1 An accident, e.g., a fall astride on a projecting substance, fence, or while playing at see saw.

A child 7 years old while standing on an iron fence, fell striking the perineum against a knob on the top of a post. The perineum was lacerated as also the vaginal wall as far as the cervix. The sphincter ani and the rectum were also lacerated. Haemorrhage was very slight.—*Amer Jour of Obst* 1888 Vol 21, p 974

The plea that is usually brought forth by the defence pleader in a case of alleged rape in mofussil courts is that the hymen was ruptured by an accidental fall on the sharp and obliquely cut remnant of a stem of an *Arhar* plant projecting two or three inches above the ground in a field. I have known it lacerating the sole of the foot having penetrated through a shoe, but rupture of the hymen alone in this manner is highly improbable. Again, forcible separation of the thighs will not rupture the hymen, especially in children, unless the perineum is ruptured. Owing to the situation of the hymen, its rupture is not possible by riding, jumping, dancing, etc.

(1)



Fig. 118.—Hymen presenting two lateral lacerations.

(From Peterson Haines and Webster's  
Legal Medicine and Toxicology,  
Ed II, Vol 1)



Fig. 119.—Circular hymen torn in several places.

(From Peterson Haines and Webster's  
Legal Medicine and Toxicology,  
Ed II, Vol 1)

2 Masturbation especially if practised with some large foreign body. But the hymen is not destroyed in most cases, as the manipulation in little girls is generally limited to parts anterior to the hymen. In such cases the nymphæ are elongated and the clitoris is enlarged by the continued practice of masturbation. The vaginal orifice may be dilated, and the edge of the hymen may show at the most a scratch produced by the finger nail. The hymen is however liable to be ruptured by forcible introduction of a stick or finger constituting indecent assault on small girls. The hymen as also the other parts of the genitalia of a child may,

(2)

sometimes, be lacerated by the parents for the purpose of substantiating a false charge of rape made against an individual with a view to taking revenge on him or extorting money from him. I saw a girl, six years old, in whom the posterior part of the hymen, the posterior wall of the vagina and the posterior commissure were lacerated by a thumb forcibly introduced into the vagina.

### 3 Introduction of instruments by medical practitioners during examination or a surgical operation

4 A foreign body, such as a sola pith, introduced purposely with a view to rendering very young girls fit for sexual intercourse (*apie tuis*). This is sometimes, resorted to by prostitutes.

Clevers mentions on the authority of Dr S C Mackenzie that the bawds who train up girls to prostitution insert a piece of sola pith as large as the vagina will contain and then make the unfortunate sit in water, a dilating action similar to that of a sponge tent is the consequence. They gradually increase the size of the plug — *Med Jurs Fd III p 68*.

Casper relates the case of a mother who in order to fit her daughter aged ten years for having painless intercourse with men dilated the vagina by introducing two fingers at first and then four fingers and lastly stuffed a longish stone into it. The vagina was wider than is usual in children at that age and there were several lacerations on both sides of the hymen — *Torens Med Eng Transl, Vol III p 318*.

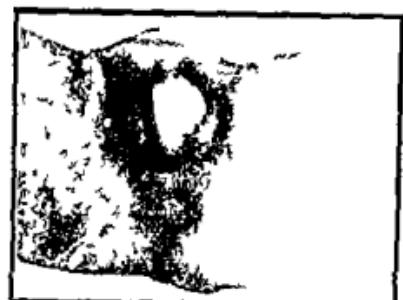


Fig 120—Intact hymen in a pregnant woman—it had to be ruptured during labour. (From a photograph lent kindly by Dr G B Salay)

**Breasts**—These are firm, elastic and hemispherical, with a small undeveloped nipple surrounded by an areola, which is pink in fair women and dark brown in dark women. The breasts become large and flabby by frequent handling and sexual intercourse, as well as by masturbation, but are not affected by a single act of coitus.

## PREGNANCY

In courts of law the question of pregnancy may be disputed under the following circumstances —

(1) When a woman advances pregnancy as a plea to avoid attendance in court as a witness in an important trial. It must be mentioned that a pregnant woman will be excused attendance in court only if a physician certifies to the fact that delivery is imminent or that there is fear of the occurrence of serious complications if she were forced to attend court.

(2) When a condemned woman pleads pregnancy as a bar to hard labour or execution. Under section 382 of the Indian Criminal Procedure Code, the High Court is the only judicial court which can postpone the execution of a sentence of death confirmed by it, or commute it to transportation for life, after it is satisfied from the Civil Surgeon's certificate that the woman is pregnant.

The usual certificate required from the Civil Surgeon in such a case is as to whether the woman is 'quick with child' or not. In England by the Sentence of Death (Expectant Mothers) Act, 1931, sentence to penal servitude instead of sentence of death is to be passed on a woman condemned of an offence punishable with death if she is found to be pregnant. The trial jury, without being re sworn, will have to determine the question of pregnancy from the evidence adduced before it either on the part of the woman or on the part of the Crown.

(3) When a woman feigns pregnancy soon after her husband's death so as to defraud the rightful heir by producing a supposititious heir to an estate, the law as it now may apply to the court to order an inquiry into the allegation.

(4) When a woman, who has filed a suit in court for breach of promise of marriage or for seduction, claims to be pregnant.

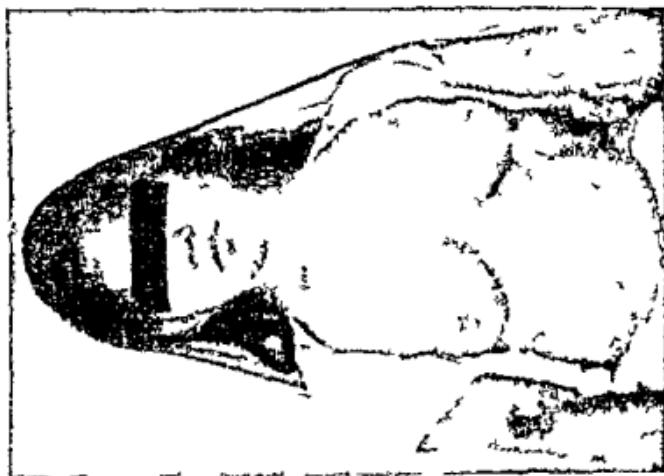


Fig. 122.—The slightly pendulous breasts of a recently married woman  
(From a photograph by Dr G. B. Sahay)

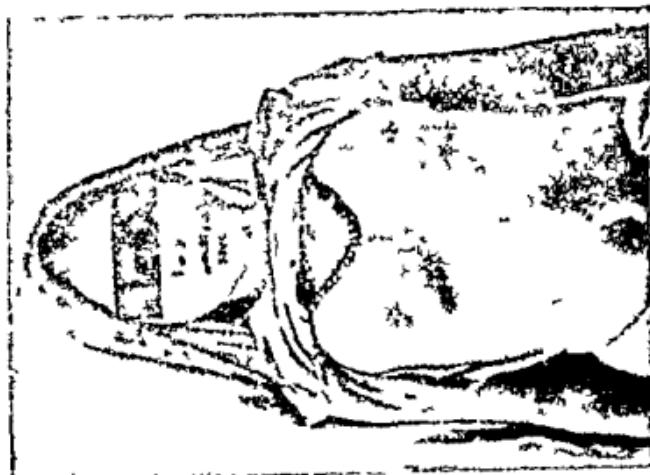


Fig. 121.—The typical breasts of a virgin  
(From a photograph kindly by Dr G. H. Saha.)

- (5) When a woman blackmails a gentleman, and accuses him that she is pregnant by him
- (6) When a widow, or an unmarried woman or a married woman living separate from her husband, has been defamed or libelled to be pregnant
- (7) When a woman alleges that she is pregnant in order to secure greater compensation from some person or persons, through whose culpable neglect her husband has died
- (8) When pregnancy is alleged to have been a motive for suicide or murder of an unmarried woman or a widow. In such a case the dead body has to be examined for the proof of pregnancy.

## (1) *In Case of Fetal & Abortion* SIGNS OF PREGNANCY

The signs of pregnancy in the living may be classified as *subjective* and *objective* signs

### SUBJETIVE SIGNS

- 1 Cessation of menses
- 2 Morning sickness
- 3 Sympathetic disturbances
- 4 Quickening

1 **Cessation of Menses** — This is the first sign of pregnancy, but it cannot be relied on as menses may be suspended in certain diseases such as anaemia, phthisis, cancer and nervous excitement. Unmarried women without being pregnant may miss their menstrual periods for some time after illicit intercourse simply from fear and nervousness. In married women an intense desire for pregnancy may stop menstruation for some time. Pregnancy may occur in a woman who has never menstruated. It has already been mentioned that pregnancy has occurred in some cases even after the climacteric period. It may also occur in a woman during the amenorrhoea of lactation. When a woman suckles her child she does not usually menstruate for the first six months after delivery, but it is quite possible for her to be unpregnant during this period. Digby<sup>1</sup> relates the case of a woman who was delivered of a healthy full term female child on February 3, 1929. The child was breast fed and the mother never menstruated. She was again delivered of another fully developed female child on December 1, 1929.

From his investigations Bonnar<sup>2</sup> has fixed the 14th day after delivery as the earliest at which a fresh impregnation may take place. Conception however, took place on the fourth day after delivery in the following case recorded by Brasseur<sup>3</sup> —

A woman 22 years old was delivered of her child on July 4, 1892. On July 8 she practised coitus and was again delivered of a healthy child on March 19, 1893. Calculating from the date of coitus, the second pregnancy lasted two hundred and forty three days. Ovulation must have existed in the woman on the fourth day after the delivery and it was necessarily quite independent of menstruation.

In rare cases menstruation may occur for two or three periods after conception.

Lastly, a woman may practise deception on the medical jurist by denying the stoppage of the monthly course and imitating the catamenia by blood if she wants to conceal pregnancy. Similarly she may conceal menstruation if she feigns pregnancy.

<sup>1</sup> Brit Med Jour April 11, 1931 p 652

<sup>2</sup> A Critical Inquiry regarding superstition with cases 1863 Guy and Ferrier Forens Med Jd 11, p 176

<sup>3</sup> New York Med Record Ind Med Ga April 1894 p 153

**2 Morning Sickness**—Nausea or vomiting usually as a sign of pregnancy most frequently occurs soon after the woman rises from bed in the morning. It commences about the beginning of the second month and lasts generally till the end of the fourth month. It may however, commence soon after conception. It is not a reliable sign as it may occur in gastric troubles or chronic alcoholism irrespective of pregnancy.

**3 Sympathetic Disturbances**—Salivation, perverted appetite in the form of longing, or cravings for very strange and even disgusting articles of food and irritable temper are a few of the conditions which are caused reflexly by pregnancy.

**4 Quickening**—The first perception of the foetal movements felt by the mother is known as 'quickening'. It is attributed to the uterus coming into contact with the abdominal wall and occurs at any time between fourteen and eighteen weeks. When quickening is felt the woman is said to be "quick with child". The sensation of quickening may be simulated by flatulence and peristaltic movements of the intestines especially in a nervous or hysterical woman who is anxious to have children although she is not pregnant.

None of the above signs are reliable, and the medical jurist should never venture an opinion on these signs alone.

#### OBJECTIVE SIGNS

These are—

- 1 Manumity changes
- 2 Pigmentation of the skin
- 3 Changes in the vagina
- 4 Changes in the cervix uteri
- 5 Softening and compressibility of the lower segment of the uterus
- 6 Enlargement of the abdomen
- 7 Intermittent uterine contractions
- 8 Foetal movements
- 9 Uterine souffle
- 10 Foetal heart sounds
- 11 Ballottement
- 12 X Ray examination

After the sixth month silvery lines or striae similar to the linea albicans of the abdomen are seen especially in primiparae on account of the stretching of the skin.

All these changes may occur from various uterine and ovarian diseases. Sometimes they also occur independently of pregnancy when women have reason to expect it shortly after marriage or after illicit intercourse.

Rarely pregnancy may occur without any changes in the breasts or the breasts may even diminish in size after the middle of pregnancy.

These changes are also of very little diagnostic value after the first pregnancy as the areole retain their colour permanently and the secretion of milk from the breasts is more or less permanent.

**2 Pigmentation of the Skin** — This is well marked in dark women. The abdomen axilla and pubes become darker due to the deposit of pigment and a special dark band (linea nigra) is observed extending from the ensiform cartilage to the pubes.

**3 Changes in the Vagina** <sup>After the fourth week</sup> — After the fourth week of pregnancy the normal pinkish colour of the mucous membrane of the vagina and vulva changes to violet, deepening to blue, as a result of venous obstruction owing to pressure of the gravid uterus. This is known as Jacquemier's sign as it was first described by him. This sign may, however, be found just before as well as immediately after menstruation.

( The anterior wall of the vagina is found flattened. This results from backward traction by the upward tilted cervix and has been described by Dr Barnes as a sign of pregnancy.

( When introduced into the vagina the fingers may feel the pulsation of the vaginal arteries consequent on the high arterial tension of the pelvis.

**4 Changes in the Cervix Uteri** — From the very first month of pregnancy the cervix which is normally as hard as the tip of the nose begins to soften from below upwards and is felt as soft as the lips. By the fourth month this softening can be very well felt by the fingers introduced into the vagina. This is a diagnostic sign of pregnancy, and is known as Goodell's sign, though certain morbid conditions, such as acute metritis, hematometra etc., may produce softening of the cervix.

As softening continues and involves the whole neck of the uterus there is an apparent shortening of the cervix towards the last months of pregnancy. The orifice instead of being transverse becomes circular and admits the point of the finger more readily, and to a greater depth.

**5 Softening and Compressibility of the Lower Segment of the Uterus** — This is known as Hegar's sign and is elicited by bimanual examination. It is regarded as a valuable sign of early pregnancy from the second to the fifth month, but it may be found in solitary uterine myomata. C J Gauss<sup>1</sup> published in 1920 a modification of Hegar's sign. The cervix presents in the first and second months of pregnancy an abnormal motility. It may easily be pushed to either side without entailing a corresponding movement of the uterus. This phenomenon is comparatively rare outside of pregnancy.

**6 Enlargement of the Abdomen** — The abdomen begins to enlarge gradually after the third month. Up to the first three months the gravid uterus remains in the cavity of the pelvis and about the fourth month rises just above the symphysis pubis and comes into contact with the abdominal wall. At the end of the fifth month it is midway between the symphysis and the umbilicus (navel).

<sup>1</sup> *Zentralblatt für Gynäkologie* Leipzig April 3 1920 p 875, *Jour Amer Med Assoc.*, June 5 1920 p 1810

At the end of the sixth month it reaches the level of the umbilicus and at the end of the seventh month it is midway between the umbilicus and the ensiform cartilage. At the end of the eighth month and in the early part of the ninth month it reaches the ensiform cartilage or epigastrium. During the last two months the uterus is on account of its weight does not rise higher, but sinks deeper into the pelvis and tends to fall forward.

The enlargement of the abdomen may occur in ascites, ovarian cysts, ovarian and uterine tumours and phantom tumours.

**7 Intermittent Uterine Contractions**—Throughout pregnancy the uterus is subject to alternate contractions and relaxations but before the third month it is difficult to observe them except by a very careful bimanual examination. After the fourth month the uterus can be easily felt as alternately constricting and relaxing by palpating the abdomen. The period of contraction and relaxation is variable each contraction lasting from one to five minutes and each relaxation from five to twenty minutes. This phenomenon is known as Braxton Hicks sign and is considered as a valuable proof of pregnancy. It is present even when the foetus is dead or degenerated. It may sometimes be present in cystic distension of the uterus, in large soft uterine myomata or in large intra-uterine polyposidal growths.

**8 Foetal Movements**—Foetal movements are felt and seen through the abdomen after the sixth month. They may be felt on bimanual examination through the vagina at the commencement of the third or fourth month and may be heard on auscultating the abdomen about the middle of the fourth month. The foetal parts may also be palpated through the abdominal wall. This is a

pregnancy. In such a case it is always a safe plan to wait till the definite signs develop or to perform a biological test devised by Aschheim and Zondek in 1928 for detecting pregnancy in its early stage. This test is popularly known as the Aschheim Zondek test, and is based on the fact that in a pregnant woman an abnormal amount of the anterior pituitary like hormone of the chorionic villi is excreted in the urine, and that shortly after the puerperium this excessive excretion of the anterior pituitary like hormone stops. The presence of this hormone can be demonstrated by significant developmental changes in the sex organs of sexually immature female white mice, when small amounts of a pregnant woman's urine are injected subcutaneously. The ovaries are enlarged. The corpora lutea are formed and haemorrhagic spots occur into the follicles. There are often swelling and hyperæmia of the uterus. The technique for performing the test is as follows—

Five sexually immature female white mice, three to four weeks old and weighing from six to eight grammes, are inoculated twice daily for three days with the catheterized morning urine of the suspected case of pregnancy in quantities of 0.2 c.c., 0.25 c.c., 0.3 c.c., 0.35 c.c. and 0.4 c.c., respectively. One hundred hours after the commencement of the test the mice are killed and the ovaries are inspected with a hand lens or with the naked eye. A positive reaction is characterized by the presence of corpora lutea and haemorrhages into the follicles of the enlarged ovaries.

If the urine is turbid, it should be filtered and its reaction made slightly acid if it is not already so. One drop of tricresol to each 30 c.c. of urine should be added if the specimen is not to be used at once or if it has to be sent by post.<sup>1</sup>

The Friedman modification of this test can be carried out by injecting 7 to 10 c.c. of the suspected morning urine into the marginal ear vein of a virgin female rabbit, 12 to 14 weeks old, and weighing not less than 4 pounds. Twenty-four to thirty hours later a positive reaction will be indicated by the presence of corpora lutea and corpora haemorrhagica in the hypertrophied ovaries of the rabbit. There will also be marked injection of the uterus and oviduct.

The *Xenopus* test<sup>2</sup> may be used when a rapid diagnosis of early pregnancy is to be made. One c.c.m. of prepared urine from the suspected case is injected into the lymph sac of a female toad (*Xenopus laevis*), and extrusion of ova occurs within six to fifteen hours, if pregnancy is present.

The Aschheim Zondek test gives a positive reaction in 98 to 100 per cent of the cases of pregnancy. It is positive as early as ten to fourteen days after conception and two days after the first missed menstrual period. It remains positive throughout pregnancy and for a period of about seven days after the termination of pregnancy or after the death of the foetus. It also gives a positive reaction in ectopic gestation, hydatidiform mole, chorion epithelioma, and certain cases of malignant disease.

**Signs of Pregnancy in the Dead**—In addition to some of the objective signs mentioned above, the diagnostic signs of pregnancy which are found in the dead body at the post mortem examination are—

- 1 The presence of an ovum or foetus
- 2 Uterine changes
- 3 The corpus luteum

**1 The Presence of an Ovum or Foetus**—The presence of an impregnated ovum, foetus or placenta in the uterus after death is positive proof of pregnancy. In place of the ovum certain abnormal products of conception, such as sanguineous and vesicular moles, may, sometimes, be present. These moles develop so rapidly

<sup>1</sup> Dharmandra Ind Jour Med Res, July 1931, p 239

<sup>2</sup> Edward R. Elliott Brit Med Jour, Dec 17, 1928 p 1253, F. A. F. Clegg, Brit Med Jour, April 15 1930 p 706

that the uterus is usually larger than at the corresponding period of normal pregnancy, but more frequently it is not enlarged beyond its size at the fifth or sixth month of gestation.

**2 Uterine Changes**—As a result of pregnancy the uterus is thickened, and increases in size, both in its length and width. The length increases from one and a half inches to twelve inches, and the width from one and a half to about nine inches. Its weight at the full term of pregnancy is twenty-eight ounces or more.

The nulliparous uterus weighs about an ounce, and that of the woman who has borne children weighs about an ounce and a half. The uterus also increases very much in its capacity, being five hundred or more cubic inches at its full development. The marks of the attachment of the placenta are also noticed.

**3 The Corpus Luteum**—The corpus luteum is a cicatrix formed in the ovary after the escape of oil from the bursting of a Graafian follicle at the menstrual period. This corpus luteum develops in size for the first five or six days after the rupture of the follicle, remains quiescent for a few days more and then undergoes rapid absorption. In the event of pregnancy the corpus luteum continues to develop, and attains the largest size about the fourth month, forming a firm projection on the surface of the ovary. It then undergoes a slow retrogressive change, although it is usually well marked at the time of delivery, and may be evident for one or two months after.

The corpus luteum used to be regarded as a positive sign of pregnancy, but it has now no forensic value, inasmuch as it is seen as a result of over-congestion, as in fibroid tumours and other pathological conditions. It has also been found in the ovaries of women who were neither pregnant nor menstruating. Moreover, pregnancy has occurred without the formation of a corpus luteum.

### DELIVERY

The cases in which the medical jurist is required to ascertain whether a woman has been delivered or not, are those of abortion, infanticide, concealment of birth, feigned delivery, legitimacy, and libel actions.

### SIGNS OF DELIVERY

These signs are discussed under the following four headings—

- I Signs of recent delivery in the living
- II Signs of recent delivery in the dead
- III Signs of remote delivery in the living
- IV Signs of remote delivery in the dead

### I SIGNS OF RECENT DELIVERY IN THE LIVING

The signs of recent delivery at full term are—

**1 Appearance of General Indisposition**—For the first two or three days after delivery the woman wears a languished look, with the sunken eyes having a dusky pigmentation about the lower eyelids, and has a slight increase in the pulse and temperature. These signs may be absent in strong women, or may be found in any other illness or at the time of the monthly course. The intermittent contractions of the uterus are usually present for the first four or five days. These are termed after pains when they are vigorous and painful.

**2 Breasts**—The breasts are full, firm, knotty and enlarged, and contain colostrum or milk. The areole are dark and the nipples turgid.

**3 Abdomen**—The abdomen is slightly full, but more often lax and flabby. The skin is wrinkled and shows the linea albicans, which are pinkish in the beginning but subsequently become white in colour.

**4 Uterus**—Just after delivery the uterus relaxes and may be felt as a flabby mass extending to the umbilicus a few hours after delivery. It then diminishes in size, and is felt like a hard cricket ball for about two or three days.

in the lower part of the abdomen above the symphysis pubis but its fundus can be felt just above or behind the symphysis pubis up to the fourteenth day

**5 Vagina**—The labia are tender, swollen and bruised or lacerated. The vagina is smooth, relaxed and dilated and may show recent tears. The fourchette is usually ruptured, and the perineum is, sometimes, lacerated.

**6 Cervix**.—*The cervix is soft and patulous, and its edges are torn or lacerated transversely.* The internal os begins to close during the first twenty-four hours. The external os is soft and patent, admitting two fingers for a few days. It admits with difficulty one finger at the end of a week, and closes in two weeks.

**7 Lochia**.—The lochia is a discharge from the uterus and vagina, lasting for the first two or three weeks after delivery. It has a peculiar, sour, disagreeable odour. During the first three or four days the discharge is bright red (*lochia rubra*) consisting of pure blood mixed with large clots. It becomes serous and pale in colour (*lochia scrosa*) during the next four days. About the ninth day the colour becomes yellowish grey or slightly greenish (*lochia alba* or *green water*), and gradually diminishes in quantity, till it disappears altogether from the second to the third week.

From the above signs taken collectively it will scarcely be difficult to diagnose a case of recent delivery for the first fourteen days after parturition. These signs are more characteristic of a full term delivery than of a premature one. They are likely to disappear within a week or ten days or even at an earlier date in a strong and vigorous woman, especially if she happens to be a multipar.

## II SIGNS OF RECENT DELIVERY IN THE DEAD

The diagnosis of recent delivery in the dead hardly presents any difficulty. In addition to the signs described above, the uterus is found flabby and nine to twelve inches long, containing large clots of blood and its inner surface is lined by the decidua if necropsy is held on the body of a woman who has died soon after delivery. The uterus, in course of time, becomes more and more contracted. In the first two or three days after a full term delivery it is about seven inches long and four inches broad. At the end of a week it is between five or six inches long and about an inch thick. At the end of a fortnight it hardly exceeds five inches in length, and returns to the normal size in about six weeks. Soon after delivery the uterus weighs about twenty-eight ounces, twelve ounces at the end of a week or ten days and about one and a half ounces by the end of a month.

The site of the placental attachment is of a dark colour. The openings of its vessels are well marked, and recognizable for two or three months.

The ovaries and the Fallopian tubes are usually congested, but may become normal in a few days. A large corpus luteum is usually found in one of the ovaries.

## III SIGNS OF REMOTE DELIVERY IN THE LIVING

**1 Abdomen**.—The abdominal wall is relaxed and marked with white silvery streaks called the linea albicantes, which result from overdistension. These lines also occur from ascites, ovarian tumours etc.

**2 Breasts**.—These are soft and pendulous marked with linea albicantes. The areole are dark. The nipples are prominent and larger than usual unless the woman has not suckled her child.

**3 Vagina**.—The labia are more or less separated from each other. The vagina is somewhat capacious its rugae are absent and its walls are relaxed especially in a multiparous woman. The fourchette and posterior commissure are destroyed, and the perineum may be found ruptured. The hymen is absent or may be seen as separate nodules in the form of carunculae myrtiformes.

**4 Cervix**.—The cervix is left transversely with ragged and irregular margins. The os is wider.



*Fig. 123.—The pendulous breasts with prominent and large nipples of a woman who has had five children  
(From a photograph lent kindly by Dr. G. B. Saha.)*

Most of the above signs may possibly be simulated by the passage of a large fibroid tumour per vaginam. Again, most of these signs may disappear in a woman who had had only one delivery short of the full term several years ago, and it is possible for the vagina and uterus to regain normal appearances as observed in a nulliparous woman. In exceptional cases no trace of a previous delivery may be found even on women who have borne several children.

Montgomery<sup>1</sup> reports a case in which he examined a lady who had borne five children and nursed three of them. He found that her breasts were small, but neither flaccid nor pendulous; the nipple short with not the least shade of brown colour in the areola, which exhibited only the delicate rose colour so often observed in that part of the virgin breast; there were neither lines nor spots of any kind on the abdomen; the os uteri was small and natural; the vagina contracted and the fourchette perfectly entire. This lady used to be delivered at the eighth month of her pregnancy.

#### IV SIGNS OF REMOTE DELIVERY IN THE DEAD

In the dead body of a woman who has borne children, the uterus is larger, thicker and heavier than the nulliparous uterus. The walls are concave from inside forming a wider and rounded cavity, while the walls of a nulliparous uterus are convex on the inner aspect and form a cavity which is smaller in capacity and triangular in shape. The top of its fundus, as seen from the front or from the back, is convex and on a higher level than the line of the broad ligaments. The cervix is irregular in form and shortened, and its edges show cicatrices on account of previous tears and lacerations caused during delivery. The external os is enlarged, irregular and patulous so as to admit the tip of the finger, and the internal os is not so well defined as in the virgin or nulliparous woman. It must be remembered that the uterus undergoes atrophy in old age.

<sup>1</sup> Cyclop Pract Med, Vol II, p 504

## CHAPTER XV

### LEGITIMACY

According to the law of England, a child born during lawful marriage (wedlock) or within a competent time after the dissolution of such marriage or after the death of the husband is presumed to be a legitimate child of the husband, unless it is proved that the husband was impotent, or that the husband and the wife had no sexual access to each other at a time when conception could have taken place. Under section 112 of the Indian Evidence Act (vide Appendix II) there is a presumption in favour of legitimacy of a child born during the continuance of a valid marriage between his mother and any man or within two hundred and eighty days after its dissolution the mother remaining unmarried, and the presumption can only be rebutted if it is shown by competent evidence that the parties to the marriage had no access<sup>1</sup> to each other at any time when the child could have been begotten. In England the presumption of legitimacy may be rebutted by proof of the impotence or sterility of the husband, but there is nothing specific on this point in Indian law.

An illegitimate or bastard child is one which is born out of wedlock or not within a competent time after the cessation of the relationship of man and wife or born within wedlock when procreation by the husband is not possible. By the law of Scotland and by the Legitimacy Act of England amended in 1926 an illegitimate child becomes legitimate by the subsequent marriage of the parents, and inherits the property of its father.

The question of legitimacy may arise in the following cases —

1. **Inheritance** — A legitimate child born during lawful wedlock can inherit the property of its father. According to the law of England a monster which has not the shape of mankind, is incapable of inheriting but there is nothing specific on this point in Indian Law.

A monster generally does not live after it is born but double monsters of the varieties of the Siamese twins may live to adult age. They are united mostly in the umbilical region or at the pelvis, and have some organs common to both.

2. **Tenancy by Courtesy of England**. — If a man marries a woman who owns estates, and has by her a child born alive he shall for his lifetime become the tenant of the estates by the *Courtesy of England* after the death of his wife but the child should be born during lawful wedlock. Thus the husband cannot have any interest in the estates if the child was delivered alive by Caesarian section after the mother's death, though such a child is regarded as a legitimate child. If she has had no child born alive her estates pass to her next heir at law at her death.

The law of tenancy by courtesy is not tenable in India, for section 20 of the India Succession Act (XXXIX of 1925) as amended upto 1932 enacts that no person shall by marriage acquire any interest in the property of the person whom he or she marries or become incapable of doing any act in respect of his or her own property which he or she could have done if unmarried but this section is not made applicable to a marriage contracted before the first day of January, 1866, nor shall it affect any marriage between the parties, one or both of whom professed at the time of such marriage the Hindu, Muhammadan, Buddhist, Sikh or Jain religion.

It may also be mentioned that by the Administration of Estates Act 1925, the old law as to inheritance and succession to property in England (for instance,

<sup>1</sup> Access means no more than opportunity of sexual intercourse. It does not mean actual intercourse (Vide *Vagir & High Court Revision No 50 of Maina v Deoraj Sonaji Kumbi Cr. Law Jour., Sep 1932 p 71*)

heirship and tenancy by the courtesy) was abolished and replaced by a simple code for the devolution of property upon the death of a person intestate.

**3. Affiliation Cases.**—These are the cases which are brought before a court for fixing the paternity of an illegitimate child upon a certain individual, as he is bound, under section 488 of the Indian Criminal Procedure Code, to support his illegitimate child which is unable to maintain itself irrespective of age.<sup>1</sup> A Magistrate of the first class may make a monthly allowance of any sum not exceeding fifty rupees on the whole for the maintenance of such child. In determining the amount of maintenance, luxury is not to be taken into consideration but only the necessities of life, viz., food, clothing and lodging.



Fig. 124.—Monster : Front view showing the relation of the hands to the body.  
(From a photograph lent kindly by Dr. H. S. Mehta).

1. *Notes, 44 Criminal Law Jour.*, 1942, p. 28.

**4 Supposititious Children**—A supposititious child means a fictitious child. A woman may substitute a living male child for a dead child or a living female child born of her, or may feign pregnancy as well as delivery and subsequently produce a living child as her own when she wants to extort money or to divert succession to property. Such cases occur when succession to large estates is involved or when money is to be extorted by blackmail.

In 1922 a case occurred at Ahmedabad where a young widow abducted with the help of a nurse from the Victoria Jubilee Hospital a newly born child which she passed off as her own alleging that it had been born after her husband's death (*post mortem child*) and pretended delivery while in fact she had none. In October 1923 a Bhatia widow<sup>1</sup> of Bon bay was sentenced to one year's simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 2,000 for having tried with the help of two accomplices to conceal the fact of her giving birth to female twins soon after her husband's death by substituting a male child and claiming a share in the property of her husband. The two accomplices were also sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

### MEDICO LEGAL POINTS

The medico legal points that have to be investigated in these cases are—

- 1 The average duration of pregnancy
- 2 The maximum period of pregnancy
- 3 The minimum period of pregnancy and the viability of a child
- 4 Superfecundation
- 5 Superovulation
- 6 Paternity

**1 The Average Duration of Pregnancy**—By the average duration of pregnancy is meant the period that ordinarily elapses between conception and delivery. The circumstances taken into consideration in estimating this period are the date of conception from a single coitus and the arrest of menstruation. But neither of these is reliable; a single coitus does not fix the date of conception but merely the date of insemination. Modern observers agree that spermatozoa retain their activity in the vagina for two to three days at the most, and are capable of surviving in the cervical canal, uterine cavity and Fallopian tube for four to five days or slightly longer even though it is on record that living spermatozoa were found in the female genital tract seventeen<sup>2</sup> and twenty-three<sup>3</sup> days after insemination. However conception usually occurs two to three days after coitus, as spermatozoa are capable of retaining their power of fertilization for about that period. They lose their power of fertilization long before their motility disappears.

The exact time of conception during the intermenstrual period is not known. It is generally assumed that ovulation occurs about fourteen days before the commencement of the ensuing menstrual period and the ovum (egg cell) probably perishes in a day or two after it is shed unless fertilized. Hence fertilization may occur, if a spermatozoon is ready to unite with the egg cell in the Fallopian tube about this period.

From the above points it is quite clear that the actual duration of pregnancy in the female is not known, however, the average period calculated from experience is two hundred and eighty days or forty weeks or ten lunar months. This is equivalent to ten times the normal intermenstrual period which is usually twenty-eight days. It has been observed that in women whose intermenstrual period is

<sup>1</sup> Lead r Oct 20 1923

<sup>2</sup> Bossi Glietta degli Ospitali April 8 1891 Taylor Prince as I Proc of Med Scis, Ed IV Vol II p 10

<sup>3</sup> D Irsen Centrablatt fur Gynak 180 T B Eden Trans of Med Leg Soc Vol XII 1922-23 p 150

shorter than the usual time pregnancy has terminated at the eighth or ninth lunar month or even earlier the child having attained full development. Sidney II Waddy<sup>1</sup> describes a case in which a woman aged 30 years gave birth to a full time daughter after gestation of 210 days—ten times three weeks—which was her normal intermenstrual period. The child cried lustily at birth had a good crop of hair was well coated with vernix caseosa measured twenty inches in length and weighed seven pounds. The finger and toe nails were fully developed and the child suckled vigorously on being put to the breast.

**2. The Maximum Period of Pregnancy**—Sometimes cases of disputed legitimacy arise in which it is necessary to determine how long gestation may be prolonged. In India, England and the United States of America the law does not lay down any fixed limit of gestation. Each case is decided on its own merits. J. K. Mohanty<sup>2</sup> of Angul of the district of Cuttack, reports the case of a Hindu woman aged 36 years who was delivered of a male child after a period of gestation of 315 days reckoned from the first day of her last menstrual period and nearly 300 days calculated from the probable day of ovulation or fertilization. The child was 22 inches long and weighed 9 pounds 6 ounces. The centres of ossification were visible in the upper epiphyses of the tibia and humerus in addition to that in the lower epiphysis of the femur. Dr. Phillips<sup>3</sup> reports the case of a young unmarried girl in whom gestation lasted 324 days after the cessation of her last menstruation and 311 days after the date of coitus. A case<sup>4</sup> is also recorded where a healthy male child was delivered on the 315th day after the last date of intercourse. The husband had been killed on the same day and compensation was claimed for the child. As there was no reason for doubting the chastity of the mother the court entered judgment for the child thus recognizing the possibility of a pregnancy of 320 days dating from the first day of the last menstrual period. In the divorce case<sup>5</sup> of *Gashill v. Gashill* the Lord Chancellor accepted 331 days as a period of protracted gestation. During the trial Eden said in his evidence that in cases of such prolonged pregnancy the child would be much above the average weight and dimensions at the time of birth. He cited six cases accepted as authentic in which the calculated period of gestation lay between 331 and 336 days and the weights of the children varied from 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  to 13 $\frac{1}{2}$  pounds.<sup>6</sup> But in this particular case the child was not weighed or measured. Four more cases of abnormally long periods of gestation have been reported. In one case pregnancy

and parturition, there was medical evidence that the head of the foetus was engaged for 68 days before delivery.<sup>1</sup>

**3 The Minimum Period of Pregnancy and the Viability of a Child—** In a case of disputed legitimacy, when a child is born within a short time after marriage, or within a short time of the husband and wife living together after some years' separation an important question that is raised is whether it is possible for a fully developed child to be born before the termination of the usual period of gestation. This question can be answered by determining the intra uterine age of the foetus from its length weight and other characteristics and in most of these cases it will be found that the foetus is not full term and yet it is capable of living. The question therefore, resolves itself into another, i.e., what is the shortest period of gestation at which a viable child can be born?

Children born at or after two hundred and ten days or seven calendar months of uterine life are viable, i.e., are born alive and are capable of being reared. Hubbard<sup>2</sup> records a case where an infant born at the beginning of the seventh month of pregnancy weighed only 15 ounces, and at the age of six weeks was in good health and weighed 32½ ounces. It was fed on breast milk from a bottle with one feed daily directly from the breast. Children born after six calendar months or one hundred and eighty days of uterine life may be viable and capable of continuing an independent life apart from their mothers. Houlihan<sup>3</sup> reports the case of a primipara, who was delivered of a premature living male infant on July 21, 1932, after 6½ months of gestation. At birth the infant was 14 inches long and weighed 23½ ounces. At the end of 12 weeks it weighed 90½ ounces. Cases have also been reported, where infants born after still shorter periods of intra uterine life have survived and grown up. Dr Outrepont<sup>4</sup> of Bamberg records a case where a young woman was delivered of a viable child at one hundred and seventy five days (twenty five weeks) after her last menstruation. In the case<sup>5</sup> of Clark v. Clark the President of the Divorce Court held that a child born after 17½ days of intra uterine life was able to live and was a legitimate child. At birth the child weighed 2½ pounds. In rare cases children born in the fifth calendar month or even as early as the fourth month may survive for a short time, but they can never be conceived as having reached the period of viability. Richard H. Hunter<sup>6</sup> describes the case of a foetus of 5 months of intra uterine life who lived for 18 hours after birth. It was 30 cm long and weighed 512 grammes. Rodman<sup>7</sup> reports a case where a woman who had already borne five children was delivered of a living male infant after her period of gestation which was either under nineteen weeks (one hundred and thirty three days). The infant lived a year and nine months.

**4 Superfecundation—** By superfecundation is meant the fertilization of two ova of the same period of ovulation by two separate acts of coitus committed at short intervals. This occurrence in human beings is proved by the fact that the same woman has sometimes, given birth to twins possessing physical peculiarities from which it was inferred that they were the children of fathers of different races. Thus Dr Mosley<sup>8</sup> mentions the case of a Negro woman who brought forth two children at a birth both of a size one a Negro the other a Mulatto. She stated that she suffered the embraces of a white man directly after her black husband had quitted her. It does not, however, seem impossible that coitus between a

<sup>1</sup> *Jour Amer Med Assoc Feb 1 1917 Vol 113 p 347*

<sup>2</sup> *Brit Med Jour Vol II 1928 pp 8-8 and 1076*

<sup>3</sup> *Practitioner May 1911 p 608*

<sup>4</sup> *Cuy and Ferrier's Foreign Med Ed VI p 130*

<sup>5</sup> *Lancet March 11 1939 p 593*

<sup>6</sup> *Brit Med Jour May 2<sup>d</sup> 1913 p 919*

<sup>7</sup> *Cuy and Ferrier's Foreign Med Ed VI p 131*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid p 132*

negress and a white man may result in a twin birth, one infant being white and the other black.

5 Superfœtation --By superfœtation is meant the impregnation of an ovum belonging to a subsequent period of ovulation after the ovum discharged from a previous ovulation has been developing for a month or more. The occurrence of superfœtation is possible, though rare, inasmuch as ovulation may take place especially during the first three or four months of gestation until the decidua vera comes into apposition with the decidua reflexa and the decidual cavity is obliterated. Its occurrence in a bipartite or double uterus is certainly probable. The result of superfœtation would be the birth at the same time of two foetuses showing different stages of development, or the birth of two fully developed foetuses at different periods varying from one to three months.

## CHAPTER XVI

### SEXUAL OFFENCES

Under the heading "sexual offences" may be described rape and unnatural offences including certain abnormal sexual perversions

#### RAPE

**Definition**—Rape is defined as the unlawful and carnal knowledge by a man of his wife under the age of thirteen years or of any other woman under the age of fourteen years<sup>1</sup> or above that age against her will without her consent with her consent, when her consent has been obtained by putting her in fear of death or of hurt, or with her consent, when the man knows that he is not her husband, and that her consent is given because she believes that he is another person to whom she is or believes herself to be lawfully married. Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code refers to the offence of rape for which the accused shall be punished under section 376 with transportation for life or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine, unless the woman raped is his own wife and is not under twelve years of age, in which case he shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years or with fine or with both (*Vide Appendix IV*)

To constitute the offence of rape it is not necessary that there should be complete penetration of the penis with emission of semen and rupture of the hymen. Partial penetration of the penis within the *labiæ majora* of the vulva or pudendum with or without emission of semen, or even in attempt at penetration is quite sufficient for the purposes of the law. It is therefore quite possible to commit legally the offence of rape without producing any injury to the genitals or leaving any seminal stains. In such a case the medical officer should mention the negative facts in his report but should not give his opinion that no rape had been committed. Eye-witnesses or other circumstantial evidence will be required to prove the offence of rape. Where rape cannot be proved, the case may be dealt with as a less serious offence of indecent assault on a female committed with intent or knowledge to outrage her modesty. It is punishable under section 354 of the Indian Penal Code by imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years or by fine or by both (*Vide Appendix IV*). What constitutes an outrage on female modesty is not defined anywhere. This will differ according to the country and race to which the woman belongs. To place hands on the shoulder of a woman will be an outrage on the modesty of a Hindu or a Mahomedan woman but not a European.<sup>2</sup> Where a teacher took indecent liberties with a female student it was held that he was guilty of assault though she did not resist.<sup>3</sup> Making a female patient strip naked under the pretence that the accused a medical man could not otherwise judge of her illness was held to be an assault.<sup>4</sup>

The ingredients which are essential for proving a charge of rape are the accomplishment of the act with force, resistance and absence of consent if the

<sup>1</sup> On or about the 11th February 1949 a bill was introduced in the Indian Dominion Parliament to amend the Indian Penal Code by raising the ages to 12 and 18 years respectively.

<sup>2</sup> George Evans (1909) *Crim. Appeal for Revision No. 38 of 1909* *d. c. h. l. on 14th April 1909* Per Jenkins C J and Aston J (Unrep. Bom.) *Ratan Lal and Talaore The Law of Crimes* Ed VII p. 861

<sup>3</sup> John Niel of (1807) *R. 128 and R.J. 130* *Mc Cacaran (1852) 6 Cal 64 Ratan Lal & Talaore The Law of Crm. Ed VII p. 861*

<sup>4</sup> Peter Jonnishi (1821) *1 Mood Cr. C. 19 Ratan Lal and Talaore The Law of Crimes Ed VII p. 861*

woman happens to be of or above the age of consent, viz., 14 years. It is necessary to prove that the resistance offered by the woman was upto her utmost capability, and that every means, such as shouting, crying, biting, beating etc had been tried to prevent the successful commission of the act. The act is regarded as rape, if it is accomplished after the woman has yielded from fear, duress or complete exhaustion.

**Consent**—According to the law of India a woman of and above the age of fourteen years<sup>1</sup> is capable of giving consent to an act of sexual intercourse but the consent must be free and voluntary and given while she is in full possession of her faculties. It should also have been obtained prior to the act. It is no defence that the consent was given after the sexual connection.<sup>2</sup> It is also no excuse that the woman was a prostitute, for like any other woman she is entitled to the protection of the law and may not be forced.

The consent of the woman is invalid if it is obtained by threat of physical injury or of death or by misrepresentation of facts, or if it is obtained from the woman who from unsoundness of mind or intoxication is unable to understand the nature and consequences of the act to which she gives her consent.<sup>3</sup>

The only exception specified in section 373 I P C is that a husband cannot be charged with rape against his own wife of, and above the age of thirteen years even though the act be committed against her will or without her consent, as she cannot retract the consent which she is supposed to have given at the time of marriage. But a husband has no right to enjoy his wife's person without regard to question of safety to her.<sup>4</sup> A husband can however be guilty of abetment if he assists another man to commit rape on his wife. This was held in the notorious

but he may be convicted of an indecent assault under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885. The law of India does not presume any such limit of age under which a boy is considered physically incapable of committing rape. In a charge of rape brought against a boy the court decides the question of his potency from evidence in the case and is guided by sections 82 and 83 of the Indian Penal Code in awarding punishment. A case is recorded by Chevers in which a boy of ten years was convicted of rape on a girl three years old.<sup>2</sup> A case occurred at Poona in July 1923 where a Chamar boy aged ten years was charged with the offence against a European girl aged seven years. The Cantonment Magistrate found the accused guilty and sentenced him to two years rigorous imprisonment ordering that the accused be sent to the Dharmur Juvenile Jail.

Old men are known to have committed rape on small girls. A man of 60 years beckoned to a girl of seven or eight years and took her into a small room where he committed rape. She cried but he threatened to kill her with a knife in case she disclosed the secret. He also communicated to her the venereal disease from which he was suffering. He was sentenced to four years imprisonment by the Magistrate of Amritsar.<sup>3</sup>

**Age of the Victim** — No age is safe from rape. Chevers<sup>4</sup> records a case where a wretch was sentenced at Delhi to twenty years imprisonment for rape committed on a woman of seventy years. However it is comparatively easy for lusty brutes to commit rape on children as they are ignorant of the world and are unable to offer resistance. In India as in other countries rape on children is common owing to the superstitious belief that gonorrhœa and syphilis are cured by sexual intercourse with a virgin. The younger a girl the greater is the probability of her being a virgin. To these must be added the cause of retaliation on the part of parents on account of previous enmity as a motive for rape on children. A case came under my observation at Agra where a man committed rape on a girl of eight years the daughter of his mistress with whom he had had a quarrel. He infected the girl with syphilis. A case<sup>5</sup> occurred in Banda District where an old man of nearly 55 years of age ravished a girl of 14 years by way of revenge because he harboured a grudge against the girl's father and uncle as they treated him as an outcast and refused to dine with him.

The following table gives the age at which rape was committed in one hundred and thirty four cases examined by me at Lucknow —

From 2 to 4 years old	3
From 5 to 9 years old	49
From 10 to 14 years old	68
From 15 to 20 years old	22
30 years old	1

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### EXAMINATION OF THE VICTIM

The female on whom rape is alleged to have been committed should be allowed to give her own account of the act without any questions being put to her. She should never be examined without her written consent taken in the presence of a witness if she is of and over twelve years of age and is capable of understanding the nature and the implication of the examination or without the written consent of her parent or guardian if she is a child under twelve years of age or a feeble minded person (vide see 50 I.P.C. Appendix IV). The examination of a female without her consent is regarded in law as an assault. It must be remem-

<sup>1</sup> *Med. Juris* Id III p 674

<sup>2</sup> *Lender Jure* 97 10 J

<sup>3</sup> *Med. Juris* Id III p 678

<sup>4</sup> *Leafer April 10 1930*

bered that the Police or Court has no power of compelling a woman to submit the private parts of her person to the examination of a medical practitioner, male or female. In a case<sup>1</sup> where Gopal and two others were prosecuted for abduction of one Nandkuvar, the Sessions Judge of Ahmedabad held that force cannot be used by the Magistrate or his subordinate in the medical examination of the girl.

An attempt at undressing the woman should never be made, but she should be requested to undress herself. The exact time of the examination, and the date and month of the year should be mentioned, and then the examination proper should be commenced in the following order —

**1 Clothes** — If the clothes are the same as those worn at the time of the occurrence of rape, they should be carefully examined for the presence of blood or seminal stains, and whether these are on the front or on the back of the garments. Usually seminal stains are on the front of the clothes and those of the blood are on the back, but no arbitrary rule can be laid down. It should also be noted, if the clothes have been torn or soiled with mud. If there are any marks of suspicious stains the clothes should be preserved with a view to forwarding them to the Chemical Examiner.

**2 Marks of Violence on the Body** — The body, especially the face, chest, limbs and back, should be examined for marks of violence, such as scratches and bruises, as a result of struggle. If present, they should be carefully described as regards their appearance, extent, situation and probable duration. Such marks are more likely to be found on the bodies of grown up women who are able to resist, than on the bodies of children who are incapable of offering any resistance. To substantiate false charges, marks of violence are, sometimes self inflicted. I saw a young woman of twenty years alleged to have been raped by a man. She had several marks simulating scratches made with a *lankar* on the forearms and the chest, which could be wiped off by rubbing them with a piece of wet cotton wool.

In addition to these marks the female may experience difficulty in walking and pain in micturition or defaecation.

**3 The Genitals** — To examine the genitals for the evidence of rape the female should be kept in the lithotomy or knee-chest position in good light, and the thighs should be well separated. In children the separation of the thighs is very painful, and it may, therefore, be necessary to apply cocaine solution to the parts, or to administer an anaesthetic.

During the examination the following points may be noted —

**1** In grown up females, if the pubic hairs are found matted due to the presence of semen, they should be cut-off with a pair of scissors and examined for the presence of spermatozoa, if possible, or they should be preserved to be forwarded to the Chemical Examiner.

**2** Recently effused or dried blood may be found upon the genital organs or in the neighbourhood, and in recent cases there may be bleeding from the vagina, which is usually very slight, unless there is some injury to the vagina itself. It should not be forgotten that the bleeding may be due to menstruation, which is possible to be induced by sexual intercourse, or the genitals and clothes may be intentionally soiled with blood to substantiate a false accusation. In his annual report for the year 1922, the Chemical Analyst of Bombay reports a case in which the *sari* worn by a woman alleged to have been raped was found to contain blood stains of an avian origin. The Chemical Examiner, Bengal, also describes a case of alleged rape in his annual report for the year 1935 in which the cloth of the victim was covered with several stains of the blood of a ruminant animal with that of a bird (probably a fowl).

**3** Bruising and laceration of the external genitals may be present with redness, swelling and inflammation.

1. *Times of India*, October 2, 1924.

In nubile virgins the hymen, as a result of complete sexual intercourse, is usually lacerated, having one or more radiate tears, the edges of which are red, swollen and painful, and bleed on touching, if examined within a day or two after the deed. These tears heal within five or six days, and after eight to ten days become shrunken and look like small granular tags of tissue. Frequent sexual intercourse and parturition completely destroy the hymen which is represented by several small granular tags of tissue, called carunculae hymenalis or myrtiformes.

In cases where the hymen is intact and not lacerated, it is necessary to note the distensibility of the vaginal orifice. The possibility of sexual intercourse having taken place without rupturing the hymen may be inferred, if the vaginal orifice is big enough to admit easily the passage of two fingers. In virgins under fourteen years of age the vaginal orifice is so small that it will hardly allow the passage of the little finger through the hymen.

The fourchette and posterior commissure are not usually injured in cases of rape, but they may be torn, if the violence used is very great indeed. The amount of injury to the hymen and genital canal depends upon the degree of disproportion between the genital organs of both parties and the violence used on the female.

In small children the hymen, being situated high up in the canal, is not usually ruptured, but may become red and congested along with the inflammation and bruising of the labia majora; if considerable violence is used, there is often laceration of the fourchette and perineum.

In grown up married women accustomed to sexual intercourse, marks of violence, such as bruises, scratches, etc., may be found on the external genitals, perineum, abdomen, chest, back, limbs, neck and face.

5 The mucous secretion of the vagina should be obtained by introducing a glass rod or pipette, an ink pipette used for filling a stylographic pen will do very well. The secretion should then be examined for the presence of spermatozoa, which is a positive sign of rape in the case of children and grown up virgins. In grown up married women it does not necessarily indicate rape, but it proves the occurrence of a previous sexual intercourse.

6 Signs of Infection of Gonorrhœa or Syphilis.—A muco-purulent or purulent discharge of a greenish yellow colour from the vagina and soiling the linen may be due to gonorrhœal infection or may arise from local irritative causes, such as uncleanness, masturbation, threadworms, leucorrhœa or protozoal infection, such as Trichomonas vaginalis, and from diseases which enfeeble the general state of health. It is therefore, very essential that a thin film from the discharge should be put on two or three glass slides, stained by Gram's method and examined under the high power of a microscope for the presence of gonococci (causative agents of gonorrhœa) which are kidney or bean shaped intracellular, Gram negative diplococci before a definite opinion is given. In the case of a negative result a decisive opinion must not be given unless the films from the discharge are examined on at least three successive occasions with intervals of one week, for in the later stages of the disease the gonococci may be found only with great difficulty or may not be found at all. In the case of adult females suffering especially from subacute and chronic gonorrhœa it is advisable to examine the discharge from the cervical canal, as large varieties of microorganisms other than gonococci are generally found in the vaginal canal, and these are apt to confuse an inexperienced medical practitioner, although they are not morphologically similar to gonococci. A non-pathogenic Gram negative diplococcus which closely resembles the gonococcus is also frequently found in the genitals of female adults. It should, however, be remembered that these microorganisms are generally absent in the genitals of female children.

Owing to its peculiar situation and nearness to the vagina the urethral canal in the female is likely to be infected early with gonorrhœa hence the microscopic examination of the urethral discharge will sometimes help the diagnosis.

In a purulent discharge from the male urethra the presence of kidney or bean shaped intracellular Gram negative diplococci in pairs with their concave borders facing one another is ordinarily taken as sufficient for the purpose of practical diagnosis. The Micrococcus catarrhalis which closely resembles the Gonococcus in morphology and staining reactions may occur in the urethra and cause confusion in the diagnosis. Hence in a doubtful case it is necessary to resort to cultures on suitable media. The Micrococcus catarrhalis grows readily on ordinary media where it forms large white dry colonies with irregular edges and elevated centres. Whereas the Gonococcus does not grow on ordinary media but grows readily on chocolate blood agar where it forms minute gravish and translucent colonies.

The Meningoococcus (Micrococcus meningitidis intracellularis) is also a Gram negative diplococcus and morphologically resembles the Gonococcus but it is usually present in the cerebro spinal fluid and in the nasal discharge but is not found ordinarily in the urethral discharge or in the urine. It grows on Loeser's blood serum where it forms colonies which are round colourless or hazy flat shining and viscid looking.

The existence of a venereal disease in the female is not positive evidence of sexual connection. Gonorrhœal infection of the genital tract particularly in young girls and infants may be conveyed through infected hands or other articles. Outbreaks of gonorrhœa in children in schools, boarding houses or hospitals have often been traced to the common use of the infected sponges, towels, birth tubs etc. Syphilis may also be transmitted by means other than sexual intercourse e.g., kissing. In all such cases it is absolutely necessary to examine the accused for the presence of either of these diseases for the finding of gonorrhœa or syphilis in both parties is strong corroborative evidence of sexual intercourse.

The period of incubation of gonorrhœa varies usually from two to eight days, although it may be as short as twenty four hours and as long as two weeks. I have seen a few cases in which gonorrhœa appeared within twenty four hours after the infection. The period of incubation of syphilis varies from two to eight weeks after inoculation the average period being twenty five days. If the accused is suffering from a venereal disease and if the story of rape is true the accuser (victim) is likely to suffer from the same disease within its period of incubation. But it must be borne in mind that the infection is not always communicated by sexual intercourse with one suffering from a venereal disease. In cases of rape on children and virgins however there is a greater probability of inoculation as the delicate mucous membrane of their genitals is very susceptible to infections and the hymen and other parts are usually abraded or lacerated.

#### ACCIDENTS FOLLOWING RAPE

Convulsions, epileptic fits and mental derangements have been known to follow rape. Death may occur as a result of rape from shock due to fright and mental emotion or from syncope due to excessive bleeding from severe injuries to the genitals and perineum especially among children. These injuries if not immediately fatal may produce sloughing and cause death from septic infection after several days or weeks. In some cases death has resulted at the time of the perpetration of the offence from suffocation caused by covering the mouth and nostrils with the hand or by thrusting a piece of cloth down the throat to prevent the female from crying for help. It is therefore necessary to examine the mouth for the presence of a foreign body when the body of a female who is alleged to have died from rape is brought for post mortem examination. Sometimes, a female is first raped, and then murdered to destroy the only reliable witness to the offence.

Rarely, rape has been committed on a dead body (Necrophilia). In such a case it would be difficult to obtain physical evidence, if the crime was not detected at the time of its perpetration. In the case of a virgin's body it might be possible to find tears in the hymen, vagina and fourchette, and scratches perhaps on the vulva. The presence of semen or spermatozoa about the genitals would furnish corroborative evidence, but the possibility of a sexual connection before death, especially in the case of a married woman should not be lost sight of.

### ✓ EXAMINATION OF THE ACCUSED

Before examining the accused his written consent should be taken after it is explained to him that the result of the medical examination may go against him. While writing the report the following points should be carefully noted —

- 1 The exact time of the examination with the date and month of the year
- 2 The age development of the genital organs and physical powers of the accused as compared with those of the victim (accuser)
- 3 The presence of tears on the clothes or loss of any portion or buttons from them indicating the evidence of a struggle
- 4 The presence of mud blood or seminal stains on the clothes or on the body. The presence of blood stains is an important piece of evidence especially if the alleged victim be a child or virgin who has sustained some injury giving rise to haemorrhage. The absence of stains does not negative the charge of rape as, although there may have been considerable loss of blood from the genitals of the victim stains would not necessarily be found on the body or clothes of the ravisher, especially if he had had an opportunity of washing after the act. It is, therefore, necessary that the police should never allow the accused to go to the bath room alone under any pretext until the medical examination has been finished, if he is arrested soon after the crime.
- 5 The presence of the marks of a struggle, such as bruises, scratches and teeth bites on the body especially on the face, hands, thighs and genitals
- 6 The clotting of pubic hairs due to the emission of semen
- 7 The presence of hairs similar to those of the female alleged to have been raped. For instance the hair of the head may be found on the body of the accused, or the pubic hair of the victim may be found on or about the prepuce
- 8 In addition to scratches or lacerations on the penis caused by the finger nails of the victim during a struggle, an abrasion or a laceration may be discovered on the prepuce or glans penis, but more often on the frenum, due to the forcible introduction of the organ into the narrow vagina of a virgin, especially of a child, but it is not necessary that there should always be marks of injuries on the penis in such cases. I have seen cases in which there was no injury to the penis of the accused although there were lacerations of the hymen, posterior commissure, perineum and even the vaginal walls of the complainant (victim).
- 9 If the accused is not circumcised the existence of smegma round the corona glandis is proof against penetration since it is rubbed off during the act of sexual intercourse. The smegma accumulates if no bath is taken for twenty-four hours.

- 10 The presence of a gonorrhœal discharge or of a syphilitic chancre. In such cases the female (victim) should be examined for the existence of either of these venereal diseases with due regard to their incubation periods.

11. Lastly, the locality where the offence is alleged to have been committed should be examined, as it may reveal valuable clues in the shape of blood stains, pieces of torn clothing, marks of the body on the ground or the crushed and trampled condition of the grass in the vicinity.

### MEDICO-LEGAL QUESTIONS

The following are the controversial questions which are likely to arise in a court of law in cases relating to rape —

1. Can a healthy adult female be violated against her will? — Under ordinary circumstances it is not possible for a single man to hold sexual intercourse with a healthy adult female in full possession of her senses against her will unless she is taken unawares thrown accidentally on the ground and placed in such a position as to render her completely helpless, or unless she swoons away from fright or exhaustion after long resistance. The act may be accomplished if more than one man are concerned in the crime, or if the woman is too feeble to resist. In giving a definite opinion, it is necessary to take into consideration the relative strength of the parties and the community to which particularly the woman belongs. It is obvious that a woman belonging to a labouring class who is accustomed to hard and rough work will be able to offer a good deal of resistance and to deal blows on her assailant and will thus, succeed in frustrating his attempts at violation. On the contrary, a woman belonging to a middle or rich class of an educated family and not habituated to go about alone by herself will not be able to resist for long and will soon faint or will be rendered powerless from fright or exhaustion. It must be remembered that in the majority of rape cases on adult women the accusation is made with the object of blackmail or the act is committed with the consent of the woman but when discovered by a third party, she does not scruple to accuse her partner of rape in order to save her own reputation. If a complaint in such a case is made a day or two after the incident the case is probably one of concoction. It is also necessary to note the previous character of the woman and her relations with the accused.

2. Can a woman be violated during natural sleep? — It is impossible for complete sexual intercourse to be accomplished on a nubile virgin during her natural sleep without her knowledge as the pain caused by the first act of coitus would certainly awaken her from sleep. It is however, possible, though indeed rare, for partial penetration within the terms of the law to occur in a virgin without awakening her from sleep. It is also possible though highly improbable for a woman to allow coitus during profound sleep without her being conscious of it, if the genital parts are large and accustomed to the intromission of the penis. Guy<sup>1</sup> mentions the case of a poor woman who complained of her sleep being so heavy that she was with difficulty roused and by way of illustration stated that her husband had assured her that he had frequently had connection with her during sleep.

3. Can a woman be raped during unconsciousness? — There is no doubt that rape can be committed on a woman without her being aware of the act during syncope, coma or mesmeric or hypnotic trance, or during unconsciousness produced by the administration of narcotic and intoxicating or anesthetic drugs. In connection with anesthesia it must be remembered that it is impossible to anesthetize against his or her will a person who is awake. It is also impossible to anesthetize a sleeping person without disturbance so as to substitute artificial sleep for natural sleep. Again a woman especially of an excitable and emotional temperament, during the stage of anesthesia gets a dream or hallucination that she has been raped, and insists on the belief after the effects of anesthesia have passed off so that she brings an accusation of violation against her medical

attendant As a precautionary measure against such an emergency, the medical practitioner should never administer an anaesthetic to a female without the presence of another person, preferably her near relation

4 Can a woman become pregnant from an act of rape?—A woman can certainly become pregnant from an act of rape, even if she was quite unconscious during the act. Formerly there was an erroneous belief that impregnation would not occur if the intercourse was not voluntary and followed by a pleasurable feeling and that it would not follow the first act of coitus. But this belief is absolutely wrong, as it has been proved physiologically and experimentally that conception will occur in a healthy woman if the living spermatozoa can be deposited into the vaginal canal even by a glass syringe and if one of them can meet in the Fallopian tube an ovum ready to be fertilized

#### ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

**Rape committed by Misrepresentation of Facts**—1 A girl of 14 years consulted a physician for suppressed menstruation. He had connection with her stating that it was a part of the treatment. She did not resist being ignorant of the act owing to her youth. The physician was convicted of rape.—*R v Carr 4 Cox D C 223*

2 An epileptic girl 10 years old consulted a quack doctor for her ailment. He told her that there were some internal adhesions which must be broken down by a surgical operation. The mother who was present gave consent to the operation not understanding its motive and allowed the doctor to take her daughter to a private room. Here she submitted to sexual intercourse believing it to be a part of the treatment.—*R v Flattery L R Queen's Bench Div 410*

3 One Must Ram a *bairagi* falsely personated himself as Basorey the husband of one Mt Khunia who had left his home some twelve years ago and whose whereabouts were not known to any of his relatives since then. The *bairagi* deceitfully made Mt Khunia believe that he was her real husband and had returned from a long journey extending over a period of twelve years. He lived with her for some time but his imposture was found out when he was persuaded to visit Lalu, the brother of the woman's real husband who was a police *chaubidaar*. He was subsequently charged with having committed rape on Mt Khunia by falsely personating himself as her husband and was sentenced by the Additional Sessions Judge at Banda under section 376 Indian Penal Code to four years rigorous imprisonment and fifteen stripes.—*Leader, Jan 20 1928, p 6*

4 By the representation that she was submitting to a spiritual obligation for the good of her soul a shoemaker 48 years old persuaded a young woman of 25 years and of weak intellect to yield to sexual intercourse. He was sentenced to five years penal servitude for this grave offence.—*News of the World December 1, 1928*

**Injury to the Genitals of Nubile Virgins during Coitus**—1 A woman 23 years old got laceration of the posterior vaginal fornix during coitus in a sitting posture. The vagina was torn from the back of the cervix uteri for one inch and a half, and an artery being opened the wound bled freely. The peritoneum was not injured.—*Loof, Ann de Gynec et d' Obstet, March 1898, Glaster, Med Juris and Toxic Id 1, p 532*

2 A newly married woman felt a sharp pain during the first act of coitus. This was immediately followed by copious bleeding owing to a tear in the vagina which commencing at its orifice extended upwards to the left of the median line to Douglas' pouch and then crossing it passed to the right side of the vagina.—*Mylott Brit Med Jour Vol II 1899 p 760*

**Rape on Children**—Rape was committed on an infant of seven months. There were bruising and bleeding of the vulva. The hymen was intact. The vagina was not lacerated. Seminal stains were found on the person of the child.—*R v Harris Bristol Lent Assizes 1873*

The following six cases are picked up at random from my note book. —

✓ On the 25th June 1920 a girl 6 years old was raped by a male. On examining her on the 28th June the hymen, posterior commissure and perineum were found lacerated. The accused was also examined at the same time. He had a laceration of the frenum of his penis.

2 A girl 10 years old alleged to have been raped was examined on the 30th September 1920. The hymen and perineum were lacerated. The accused who was examined at the same time had no mark of injury on his genital organ.

✓ A girl 8 years old was examined on the 22nd February 1921 as it was reported that she had been raped by a young man. The hymen was found intact. There was a laceration of the scrotal skin with redness of the right labium minus.

4 On the 28th April 1920 I examined a girl 5 years old who was alleged to have been raped on the previous day by a boy, 16 years old. The labia majora were swollen and stained

with blood. The left labium minus was red and there was a laceration along the whole length of the right labium minus, this laceration was continuous downwards with a laceration of the posterior commissure. The hymen was red and congested. The boy had redness and swelling over the lower part of the urethral opening and had an abrasion,  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " by  $1\frac{1}{6}$ ", on the inner side of the prepuce (foreskin) near the coronal glandis on the right side of the dorsum of the penis.

5 Musammat Sukhi, aged 12 years, was examined by me on November 20, 1932 twenty-four hours after she had been raped by a male, aged 30 years. Her labia minora were red and inflamed her hymen was torn on the sides and on the posterior part, and the posterior wall of the vagina as also the posterior commissure were lacerated, each to an extent of  $\frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ . The accused had no mark of injury to his genital organ.

6 On December 31, 1932 a girl, 12 years old, of P S Alambagh, was brought to me with a police report that rape had been committed upon her by her husband. She had almost circular marks of teeth bites over her cheeks, breasts and the back of the right forearm and bruises over the front of both the thighs. The labia majora and minora were red and swollen. The hymen was lacerated in the posterior part and the posterior wall of the vagina was lacerated to an extent of  $\frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ .

**False Charge of Rape on a Child**—One Mt Thikurdevi aged 8 years, was brought to me as her father complained that rape had been committed on her. There was no mark of injury to the private parts. The hymen was intact. There was slight redness of the labia minora, which was probably due to irritation from dirt present on the vulva.

**Rape with Gonorrhoeal Infection**—1 In July, 1920, one Ghulam Husein was charged with having committed rape on Chhidami a Brahmin girl of five years. On examination there were no marks of injury to the genitals of the girl. Her hymen was intact. The labia minora were red and inflamed. There was a purulent discharge from the vaginal orifice which was found to be gonorrhoeal. The accused was found to be suffering from gonorrhoea. He was convicted and sentenced.

2 In February, 1923 Jhuman a Mahomedan cook, was charged with having committed rape on Ruth Violet a Christian girl of six years. The accused was found suffering from gleet which on examination, showed a few gonococci. On examining the girl the vulva, especially the lower part, was found red and swollen and covered with a thick purulent discharge emanating from the vaginal orifice. On microscopic examination the discharge showed a large number of gonococci. The labia minora were red, inflamed and painful to touch. The hymen was intact. The accused was found guilty, and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment.

3 In May, 1924, one Din Mohammad was charged with having committed rape on one Mt Kalpi aged about 9 or 10 years. On examination of the girl I found that the hymen was intact, but the labia majora were swollen and the labia minora were red, tender and excretoriated. There was a thick whitish purulent discharge from the vaginal canal which on microscopic examination was found to be due to gonorrhoea. The accused was also examined by me and was found to have a chronic gonorrhoeal discharge from the urethra.

4 In December 1932 one Mt Jagdevi 8 years old, was brought to the King George's Hospital with a police report that she was alleged to have been raped about 2 days ago. On examination there were no marks of injury to her private parts but there was a whitish discharge in the vaginal canal, it showed the presence of spermatozoa and gonococci under the microscope. The accused was a boy of 18 years who had a urethral discharge, which also showed, under the microscope, a few gonococci as a result of chronic gonorrhoea.

In the June issue of the *Indian Medical Gazette* 1902 page 281, Powell relates the following cases in which infection was not communicated by illicit intercourse with a person suffering from the venereal disease —

1 Four men had connection with the same prostitute who had a copious gonorrhoeal discharge. Only one became infected.

2 Seven troopers had connection with a woman who had gonorrhoea. Only two were infected.

3 A woman was suffering from mucous patches of the vulva. A gentleman who had been keeping her for six months, was greatly alarmed when he discovered her condition. But he never developed any sore or symptoms of disease.

**Presence of Smegma as Negativating Rape**—1 In July, 1921, Mt Ramdevi aged 15 years, made a report at the police-station of Malihabad in the district of Lucknow that three young men i.e., Paalu Dehlvi and Jodha had committed rape on her. They were arrested and sent immediately to me for examination. None of them had any mark of injury on their genitals or anywhere else on their bodies. The first two had smegma on the glans penis covered by the foreskin, this proved that they could not have had sexual intercourse at least during the last twenty four hours. The girl was also examined and found to have been used to sexual intercourse, inasmuch as her hymen had old lacerations. She had no mark of injury to her private parts or to any other part of her body. The men were released.

2 On the 23rd February, 1927 a man complained at the police station of Mandiaon in the district of Lucknow that one Dhani had committed rape on his daughter. He was immediately arrested and sent to me for medical examination. I found a uniform layer of smegma covering the glans penis and gave an opinion that he could not have had sexual intercourse during the last twenty four hours. The man was released.

**Death following Rape—1** In the case of *Queen Empress v. Harsree Mohan Mynhee* the accused, a fully developed adult man was charged with causing the death of his wife a girl of 11 years and three months. According to medical evidence, the death was caused by haemorrhage from a laceration in the upper part of the vagina to the right of the neck of the uterus, measuring one inch and a half long and one inch broad. The rupture was caused by the prisoner having sexual intercourse with the girl who had not attained puberty. The court held that in such a case where the girl is a wife and above the age of ten years (age of consent at that time) and when therefore the law of rape does not apply, it by no means follows that the law regards the wife as a thing made over to be the absolute property of her husband or as a person outside the protection of the criminal law. The prisoner was convicted under section 338 of the Indian Penal Code of the offence of having caused grievous hurt by an act so rashly and negligently done as to endanger life.—*Ind Law Reports Calcutta Vol. VI III, 1890, p. 49*

2 Johir Sheikh, a well built Mahomedan about 35 years old had forcible connection with his girl wife aged about ten years, rupturing her genitals, which caused her death from haemorrhage in about twenty four hours. There was blood about the genitals and a clot of blood protruded from the vagina which on extraction was found to have completely filled the cavity. The hymen was torn the fourchette ruptured and the anterior part of the perineum lacerated for a distance of half to three quarters of an inch in length extending forwards from this the mucous membrane of the posterior vaginal wall was torn for a short distance. On the right lateral wall of the vagina there was a laceration one inch long below near the vaginal orifice it was about quarter of an inch broad and tapered to a point above near the uterus. On the left lateral wall in a corresponding situation there was a laceration one inch long by one fourth inch broad somewhat spherical in shape. These lacerations extended through the mucous lining, and partly, but not completely through the muscular tissues. There was an effusion of blood in these situations beneath the serous coat which was however, uninjured. The vagina was dilated, it had been distended by the blood clot. The husband was prosecuted and convicted under section 376, I P C.—*Calvert, Ind Med Gaz June, 1893, p. 221*

**Murder after Rape—1** In January, 1923 Mt Idia aged 18 years of the Meerut District had been raped first, and then done to death by throttling in a sugar-cane field. Medical evidence showed that her hymen was ruptured and there was bleeding from the vagina. The girl's pyjama and kurti were torn. A number of scratches were found on the accused's person apparently caused by finger nails. This indicated that the girl was ravished after a desperate struggle in which great violence was used. The accused was a tall man of very powerful physique, and 25 years old. The Chemical Examiner, U P, detected blood and seminal stains on the dress of the accused.—*All High Cr. Cr. App No 423 of 1923*

2 On the 19th July, 1927 one Mt Matri Pasi a girl of 13 or 14 years of age went to Thakurainganj to give some clothing to her dhoobi. Her way lay across a nala. When she got to this nala on her way back she was seized by one Sukhlal Teli who had been cutting grass there, and was violated by him. When Sukhlal released her she said that she would inform her cousin about his conduct. Thereupon he seized her and cut her repeatedly with his khurpi till she died.—*K E v. Sukhlal Oudh Chief Court Crim App No 462 of 1927*

3 On the 16th February, 1931 one Thanna Lodha of Afzalpur, District Etah, was convicted of the offence of murdering one Musammat Iatora a dhoobi girl 14 years old by throttling after he had committed rape on her. As a result of rape there was a slight bruise mark on the posterior part of the vaginal orifice at the site of the old lacerated hymen. The accused was examined soon after the occurrence when it was noticed that he had an abrasion of the size of a moon on the groove behind the glans penis  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to the left of the frenum, and an abrasion, 1" long on the inner side of the left forearm 2" above the wrist.—*Allahabad High Court Crim Appeal No 381 of 1931*

4 A case occurred in Peropore (Bikerganj) in which a man with his daughter and another man with his wife son and daughter were proceeding in a boat. All of a sudden the first man took out his dagger, threatened the other man with it not to raise any alarm and committed rape on his wife. He then murdered the woman by striking her with the dagger on her throat and abdomen and jumped into the river with the dead body.—*Bengal Chemical Examiner's Annual Report, 1939, p. 15*

**Rape on a Dead Body**—In the case of *King Emperor v. Bharat Singh Lodha* aged 18 years, the accused admitted in his confession before a Magistrate that he committed sexual intercourse with one Musammat Ramdevi aged 18 with her consent, but after the act she began to upbraid him in a loud voice that she would be dishonoured if she conceived and that she would defame him when she went back to the village.earing that she would certainly go to the village and defame him he was very much enraged threw her down on the ground and killed her by giving three cuts with a khurpi on her neck. He had had sexual intercourse again with the

**Rape During Natural Sleep**—A maid servant became pregnant and denied being conscious of any act of sexual intercourse. Suspicion fell upon an ostler in the establishment, who acknowledged his belief that he had impregnated her having found her in deep sleep (due to fatigue after long continued exertion and loss of sleep for two or three nights in succession). He stated that he had connection with her, and as far as he knew, without her knowledge as she evinced no consciousness of the act at the time, nor recollection of it subsequently.—*Ogston, Med Juris*, p 121, *Collis Barry, Leg Med*, Vol II, Ed II, p 97.

**Rape During Unconsciousness**—A girl, 22 years old had for years laboured under hysterical epileptic convulsions followed by a state of unconsciousness lasting from one to six or seven hours. One evening a labourer found her lying on a sofa in this condition. He was aware of her liability to these attacks and after being convinced of her perfect unconsciousness by tickling her nose with a straw and passing a burning lamp beneath her nose, he drew her from the sofa on to a stool and violated her, a companion looking on from the adjoining room. Speedily awaking the girl felt pain and dampness about her genitals and saw the labourer standing before her with his breeches unbuttoned so that she had no doubt that she had been violated. The accused did not deny having had connection with the girl, but denied her unconsciousness and asserted that she was compliant. The accused was convicted by the jury Court and sentenced to three years' penal servitude.—*Casper, Forensic Med*, Vol III (Eng Transl), p 307.

**Rape During Mesmerism**—A girl, aged 18, visited a therapeutic magnetizer daily for some days. One and a half months afterwards she found herself pregnant and lodged a complaint against the magnetizer. Medical evidence proved that her pregnancy dated back to the time of her visit and that it was possible to hold sexual intercourse with a young woman during magnetic sleep without making her conscious of the act.—*Gazette Medicale de Paris, Elm Monthly Jour*, Dec, 1860, p 566.

**Rape During Anesthesia**—A dentist was convicted of the offence of rape upon a woman to whom he had administered ether by inhalation. The prosecutrix was not perfectly unconscious, but she was rendered wholly unable to offer any resistance.—*Med Gaz* Vol 40, p 865.

2 A young woman brought a charge of rape against a dentist. She stated that under ether given her for the extraction of a tooth, she felt the accused entering her person, but was unable to cry out or resist. After this she again inhaled the ether for the extraction of the tooth and finally left making an appointment for another day. In the evening she related the incident of alleged rape to her friends. The defendant was tried and convicted. The woman was never examined by a medical man.—*Reese, Med Juris and Toxic* 1891 p 559.

**False Accusation of Rape During Anesthesia**—A married lady, to whom a dentist administered chloroform, afterwards accused him of violating her whilst under the influence of the anesthetic. Her husband who was present during the time she was unconscious testified that his wife was under the strongest impression that she had been violated.—*Bironmann, Forensic Med and Toxic*, Ed I, p 80.

### UNNATURAL OFFENCES

Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code treats of offences relating to carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal (*Vide Appendix IV*). Penetration is sufficient to constitute the carnal intercourse necessary to the offences which are punishable with transportation for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and also with fine. These offences may be classified as sodomy, tribadism and bestiality.

### SODOMY

This is also called buggery, and means anal intercourse between man and man or between man and woman. It is termed pederasty, when the passive agent is a young boy (catamite). In order that the offence of sodomy be made punishable under section 377, I P C, it is necessary that penetration, however little, should be proved strictly. Similarly an attempt to commit this offence is punishable under section 511, I P C, only when an attempt was made to thrust the male organ into the anus of the passive agent. A mere preparation for the operation should not necessarily be construed as an attempt.<sup>1</sup>

*Buccal Coitus* or *Coitus per os* (the sin of Gomorrah) falls within the provision of, and is punishable, under section 377, I P C. In a case<sup>2</sup> in which one Khanu

1 Sind J C's Court, Crimin Appeal No 122 of 1934, 36 Cr Law Jour 1935 p 718

2 Sind Judicial Commissioner's Court, Crim App No 15 of 1924, 26 Criminal Law Jour, July, 1925, p 945

Both active and passive agents are guilty of the offence in the eye of the law, if the act has been committed with consent. However, according to English law if one of the parties is under fourteen years of age he is not held responsible for the offence. In the law of India there is no such fixed limit but sections 82 and 83 of the Indian Penal Code, which deal with age in relation to responsibility for offences in general are also applicable to this offence.

For the investigation of this offence the examination of both passive and active agents is necessary as in the case of rape. It must also be necessary to inquire if the active agent had obtained the consent of the passive agent for this purpose by means of physical force or fraud or if the active agent by reason of age or disease, was physically unfit to commit the offence. A grown up passive agent may persuade a young boy to act as an active agent to practise the vice on him but such instances are very rare indeed. I have seen only one case in which a passive agent of 40 to 50 years of age was prosecuted for having persuaded a boy of 16 years to commit unnatural connection with him.

In false accusations I have often heard a story that the accused was sleeping in the same bed with the victim and he committed the unnatural offence on the latter while he was asleep. It should be borne in mind that it is not possible for an adult male to accomplish the act on a boy during sleep without awaking him or on another healthy male against his will.

### EXAMINATION OF THE PASSIVE AGENT

As in rape, consent must be obtained before commencing the medical examination. The following signs may be discovered if the boy (passive agent) is not accustomed to sodomy —

1. Abrasions on the skin near the anus with pain in walking and on defecation as well as during examination. These injuries are extensive and well defined in cases where there is great disproportion in size between the anal orifice of the victim and the virile member of the accused. Hence lesions will be most marked in children, while they may be almost absent in adults when there is no resistance to the anal coitus. These injuries if slight heal very rapidly in two or three days. In most of the cases brought before me I have seen superficial abrasions varying from  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 1"  $\times \frac{1}{2}$ " to  $\frac{1}{4}$ ", external to the sphincter ani. In some cases there may be bruising of the parts round about the anus, and the abrasions may extend into the anus beyond its sphincter.

2. Owing to the strong contraction of the sphincter ani, the penis rarely penetrates beyond an inch and consequently the laceration produced on the mucous membrane within the anus with more or less effusion of blood is usually triangular in nature having its base at the anus and the sides extending horizontally inwards into the rectum. I have found lacerations internal to the sphincter ani in several cases but a typical triangular wound only in a few cases. These signs may not be perceptible in cases where the active agent has introduced his penis slowly and carefully without using force into the anus of the passive agent who is a consenting party.

3. Blood may be found around the anus on the perineum or thighs and also on the clothes.

4. Semen may be found in or at the anus on the perineum or on the garments of the boy too young to have seminal emissions.

In its annual report for the year 1927 the Chemical Examiner of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh reports a case in charge under section 277 of the Indian Penal Code from Allahabad in which spermatozoa were detected on the trousers of a boy aged 2 years.



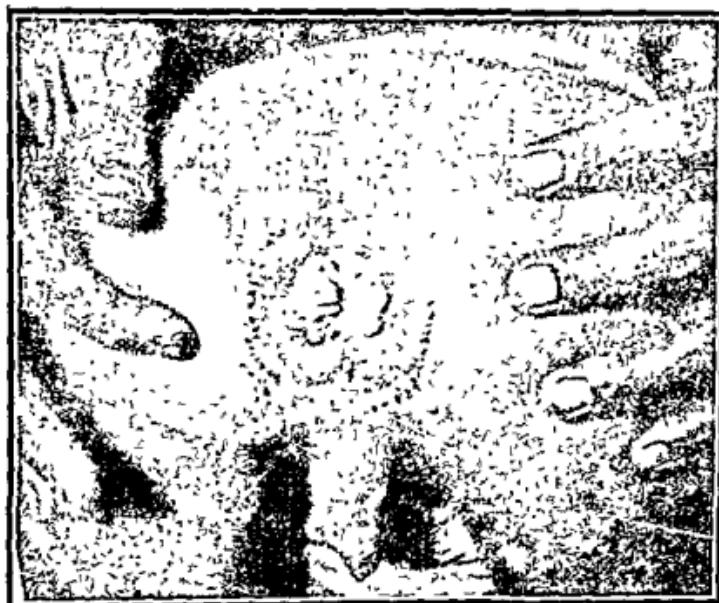
2. A funnel-shaped depression of the buttocks towards the anus. But this may be absent in strong healthy persons who are habituated to the act as passive agents, while it may be natural in thin individuals or old women.

A Brahmin, aged about 40, who, according to his own statement, had been a pathic for at least twenty years, had a typical Hunterian chancre, situated one inch in front of the anus, which he admitted to have contracted from one of his friends. The genitals were well formed and there was no deformation of the anal region, no infundibulum or loss of rugae, and the tone of the sphincter was normal.—*Sutherland, Ind. Med. Gaz., June, 1902, p. 245.*

3. The dilated and patulous condition of the anus with disappearance of its radial folds and the prolapse of the rectal mucosa. In a dead body the anal orifice dilates from the relaxation of the sphincter and the protrusion of the rectum occurs from decomposition.

4. Cicatrices of old lacerations in the rectum near the anus.

5. The presence of a gonorrhœal discharge, chancre or condyloma. The active agent may be infected by the passive agent, who is already afflicted with gonorrhœa or syphilis.



*Fig. 128.—Case of a habitual passive agent. The anus shows condylomata with a sinuous purulent discharge.*

On the 8th August, 1921, I examined a boy of Police-Station Chowk, who was accused as a passive agent in a case of unnatural offence under section 377, I.P.C. He had an abrasion in the right posterior aspect of the anus, the sphincter of which was easily dilatable. There was some purulent discharge which was found to be gonorrhœal by the pathologist to the King George's Hospital.

In July, 1922, I examined a Hindu *Hijrah*, about 45 years old, who had received a superficial cut along the left side of the head above the right temple. On enquiry he admitted that a young man whom he had allowed to stay with him for the night, inflicted the cut on his head. I examined him, and found a condylomatous growth round about his anus.

## EXAMINATION OF THE ACTIVE AGENT

No conclusive signs are evident unless the man is examined soon after the commission of the crime. In that case there may be an abrasion on the prepuce glans penis or frenum and stains of fecal matter may be found on the penis or on the loin cloth or trousers. The peculiar odour of fecal matter persists for some time after the organ or the cloth is cleaned by wiping unless washed thoroughly with water. The presence of blood and seminal stains is only corroborative evidence but not positive. There may be marks of violence on the body if the passive agent is a grown up boy and if the crime is perpetrated without his consent.

If the active agent is suffering from gonorrhoea or syphilis the passive agent should be examined for the evidence of either of these diseases.

In males who are habitual sodomites the penis is sometimes elongated and constricted at some distance from the glans with the twisted urethra probably owing to the constricting pressure exerted by the sphincter ani. These peculiarities may however be due to defective development. I have seen only one case in which a teacher who was charged with having committed an unnatural offence on his pupil of about ten years was found to have the body of his penis constricted in about its middle. He was proved to be a habitual active agent.

## TRIBADISM

This form of mental aberration which is known as Lesbian love or Lesbianism is practised by one woman on another and consists in friction of the external genital organs by mutual bodily contact for the gratification of the sexual desire. It is said that in some instances an unduly developed clitoris is used as an instrument of passion while in other cases some artificial contrivance is employed. Aristotle<sup>1</sup> mentions the use of an artificial penis or phallus by Milesian females. This sort of sexual inversion is found among some women though such cases have been rarely brought before a court of law. In a case<sup>2</sup> where a husband petitioned for divorce on the ground of his wife's cruelty the Judge held that a wife's unnatural relations with other women coupled with neglect of her husband and home which so preyed upon the husband's health that it broke down constituted a course of conduct which not only injured the health but gave rise to reasonable apprehension of future injury therefore the husband was entitled to a decree.

Homosexual women are generally mental degenerates and have very often natural antipathy and indifference towards individuals of the opposite sex. On the other hand they are so morbidly jealous of the women with whom they are in inverted love that they are sometimes incited to commit even murder.

## BESTIALITY

This means sexual intercourse by a human being with a lower animal and is punishable under section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. Sexual intercourse usually takes place through the vagina but it may take place through the anus or any other orifice fit to receive the male genital organ. In one case<sup>3</sup> sexual intercourse per nose with a bullock was regarded as a case of bestiality within the terms of section 377 I P C. The lower animals that are selected for this purpose are cows mares she-asses goats bitches and even hens.

Cases of bestiality though rare do occur among young and vigorous villagers who go out to graze cattle in fields far away from the gaze of the human eye.

<sup>1</sup> Casper Forens c Med Eng Transl Vol III p 332  
<sup>2</sup> Gardner v Gardner (1947) All E R 630 Medico-Legal Jour Vol 24 Part II 1947

<sup>3</sup> Khandekar (1973) 33 P L R 73 73 Cr & Law Jour 193 p 1006 Ratanlal and Thakur Law of Crimes 7th Ed VII p 917

Owing to loneliness and proximity of the animals they are excited to commit this abominable crime. Some of these men have mental abnormalities. The crime of bestiality is also seen in some ignorant men who have a superstitious belief that they are cured of gonorrhœa by committing sexual intercourse with a she-ass.

In cases of bestiality the perpetrators of the crime are caught red handed. Medical evidence, therefore, is not required to prove the offence. But, as false accusations by village *chaukidars* and others are not uncommon in India it is necessary that both the accused and the animal alleged to have been used for the purpose should be examined by a medical officer. The only important signs confirming the commission of the crime are the presence of human spermatozoa in the vaginal or anal canal of the animal, and the presence of the animal hairs especially of its external genitals on the person or the clothing of the accused together with some suspicious stains of the dung or blood, or abrasions on his generative organ. In addition there may be the marks of injuries on the person of the accused caused by kicks teeth or claws of the animal. Sometimes lacerations on the anus or external genitals of the passive animal with an effusion of blood may be found. The presence of gonorrhœal discharge in the vagina of an animal especially a she-ass, is a positive sign of bestiality, as gonorrhœa does not occur naturally in such animals.

Among half a dozen cases of bestiality reported to me in Agra during a period of eleven years, I could give a definite opinion only in one case from identifying by microscopic examination the hairs of the passive animal found under the prepuce, on the thighs and on the loin cloth (*dhoti*) of the accused.

A Mahomedan male 23 years old was caught committing an unnatural offence on a she-ass at 3 p.m. on the 29th October 1927. He was medically examined in the King George's Hospital Lucknow at 12 noon on the next day. He had no signs of injury to his penis but the smear taken of the urethral discharge was found to contain pus cells with very few gram negative diplococci. The smears of the material taken from the vagina of the she-ass showed very few pus cells and a few human spermatozoa. The animal had no mark of violence on or about her genitals.

## ABNORMAL SEXUAL PERVERSIONS

The varieties of sexual perversion which require description are sadism, masochism, fetishism and exhibitionism.

**Sadism**—This is a form of sexual perversion in which the infliction of pain and torture act as sexual stimulants. It may be practised by either sex, but it is seen more commonly in males. In order to be relieved sexually the sadist brands his sexual partner, bites her severely, flogs her with a whip, beats her with a stick, inflicts cuts on her with a knife, or ill treats her in many other cruel ways. In extreme cases the sadist may gratify his sexual desire by murdering a female, usually a child, without violating her, even though very serious injuries caused by the hand may be found on the genitals. Such a murder is known as *lust murder*. Dr U S Gupta reported to me a case of lust murder in which the victim was a girl, aged 7 years. She was murdered by fatal incised wounds on the neck. At the same time incised wounds were inflicted on the lower part of the abdomen the symphysis pubis was cut off and the external genitals had been removed and thrown away. It must be borne in mind that every murder committed during a sexual act is not a lust murder. It may have been caused through anger, jealousy, revenge or any other motive. Rarely, a sadist is impelled to the most repulsive act of violating the body soon after murdering a female, or he cuts open the body, tears out the genitals or other organs and devours the flesh to obtain sexual pleasure. This appalling aberration of a sexual pervert is called *necrophagia*. Fortunately such a case has not been reported in India.

**Masochism.**—This is the opposite of sadism. In this form sexual gratification is sought from the desire to be beaten, tormented or humiliated by one's sexual partner. It is generally found in males, but it may occur in females who may invite their lovers to subjugate them by inflicting injuries on their persons. The masochist experiences pleasure and voluptuousness culminating even in onanism when he writes anonymous obscene letters or when he allows himself to be abused, insulted, kicked or ill treated by a woman.

**Fetichism**—This form of sexual perversion is found in males only. The fetichist experiences sexual excitement leading to orgasm from some part of the body of a woman or some article belonging to her, e.g., shoe, body linen or wearing apparel. He usually comes in conflict with the law, as he often exposes his perversion as soon as he sees the object of his fetich. In his annual report for the year 1938, the Chemical Examiner of Bengal describes the case of a young servant of a European lady who on the pretext of cleaning and arranging her dressing room would enter it every morning after she left it, and would use her pyjama for exciting his sexual appetite until he would discharge and wet it with semen. He was at last found out and dismissed from service.

**Exhibitionism**—This act consists of the indecent exposure of the genital organs in public mostly by males to women, girls or children of either sex. It is often accompanied by lewd gestures and even masturbation may be indulged in. In some cases the act is impulsive and spontaneous while in other cases it is premeditated and the male organ is exposed even in an erectile position.

Exhibitionism is a criminal act. It is included in an obscene act, and is punishable under section 294 of the Indian Penal Code (*Vide Appendix IV*).

A majority of the exhibitionists are psychopathic and suffer from alcoholism, epilepsy, senile dementia, general paralysis of the insane or some other abnormal mental condition. It is, therefore, advisable to order a thorough mental investigation before punishment is inflicted on them.

Eomism—wear the cloths of opposite sex

## CHAPTER XVII

### MISCARRIAGE

**Definition**—Legally, miscarriage means the premature expulsion of the product of conception, an ovum or a foetus, from the uterus, at any period of pregnancy before the full term is reached. Medically, three distinct terms viz., *abortion*, *miscarriage* and *premature labour*, are used to denote the expulsion of a foetus at different stages of gestation. Thus the term, *abortion*, is used only when an ovum is expelled within the first three months of pregnancy, before the placenta is formed. *Miscarriage* is used when a foetus is expelled from the fourth to the seventh month of gestation before it is viable, while *premature labour* is the delivery of a viable child possibly capable of being reared, before it has become fully mature.

### CLASSIFICATION OF MISCARRIAGE

*Miscarriage* may be classified as *natural* and *artificial*, the latter being subdivided into *justifiable* and *criminal*.

### NATURAL MISCARRIAGE

It must be remembered that miscarriages are naturally common among pregnant women, the proportion being one miscarriage to every five full term deliveries. Miscarriages are most frequent within the first four months of pregnancy owing to the slight attachment of the ovum to the uterine wall. Within the first few weeks the ovum being very minute is cast off without being recognized or miscarriage being suspected. Very many cases, in which the woman goes one or two weeks over her time and then has what is supposed to be merely a more than usually profuse period, are probably instances of such early miscarriages.

**Causes**—The causes of natural miscarriage are classified as those which are directly referable to the mother, and those which affect the foetus.

**A Causes referable to the Mother**—**1** Poisons circulating in the blood, such as small pox, plague, influenza, malaria, syphilis, streptococcal infection, lead, copper, and mercury. Among these syphilis is one of the most frequent causes of miscarriage, and is likely to act in successive pregnancies. It causes the death of the foetus.

Streptococcal infection of a chronic nature is supposed to be the cause of cases of repeated abortion, where no other cause can be detected. Curtis<sup>1</sup> has isolated the streptococcus as the direct cause of abortion in several cases reported by him. He isolated the streptococci from the urine of a mother whose child was born dead from the placenta and also from the heart's blood of the still born child.

**2** Diseases affecting the circulation of the blood, such as anaemia due to excessive lactation or vomiting, jaundice, chronic Bright's disease, and heart and lung diseases.

**3** Those acting through the nervous system, e.g., sudden shock, fear, joy, sorrow, chorea gravidarum and reflex action from irritation of the bladder, rectum, or mammae.

**4** Local conditions, such as inflammations, chronic displacements and fibroid tumours of the uterus, old peritoneal adhesions, and excessive sexual cohabitation by inducing local hyperaemia.

<sup>1</sup> Peterson Haines and Webster, *Leg Med and Toxic*, *Ld II*, Vol I, p 979

5 Physical causes which separate the ovum. For instance, a blow or a fall or some other accident even of a trivial nature. Miscarriage from such causes usually occurs among women who are predisposed to it.

B Causes affecting the Foetus —1 *Death of the Fetus*—Death of the fetus occurring from a faulty development syphilis and other diseases leads to secondary changes, and ultimately produces the uterine contractions which end in its expulsion.

2 Diseases of decidua, and inflammation and fatty degeneration of the placenta

### ARTIFICIAL MISCARRIAGE

1 Justifiable Miscarriage.—This is also known as therapeutic miscarriage, the induction of which is justifiable only when caused in good faith to save the life of the woman<sup>1</sup> if it is materially endangered by the continuance of pregnancy, but not to save the family honour or for any other ethical reason. It is much better to defer the operation till the child has attained viability, if it is possible, so that the mother and the child may be saved. If miscarriage has to be induced before the child has become viable, the physician should never undertake the operation without a preliminary consultation with another medical practitioner, preferably one holding superior qualifications, or an obstetrician specialist, nor without the written consent of the woman and her husband or her guardian. If the consent is verbal, it should be duly attested.

A suggestion has been made that the procuring of abortion should be regarded as justifiable, if the mother's health is likely to be permanently damaged by the continuation of pregnancy. Lord Riddell<sup>2</sup> thinks that the induction of miscarriage is not only justifiable but a duty when the continuation of pregnancy indicates grave danger to the mother's health whether the result is likely to be permanent or not. Some physicians also think that therapeutic abortion is necessary and should be classed as justifiable when performed for eugenic consideration, e.g., in cases of epilepsy, mental disease, abuse of intoxicating drugs and conception after rape, but as the law in India stands at present, an abortion performed for such purposes is regarded as illegal, unless the continuance of pregnancy endangered the woman's life.

Dr Aleck Bourne performed an abortion on a girl of about 15 years who became pregnant after she had been assaulted by some soldiers and raped under so revolting a set of circumstances as could be imagined. He thought that the girl would in all probability if she had gone to full term, have suffered from grave and lasting nervous damage which would have expressed itself in psychoneurotic and physical illness, perhaps for the whole of her life. He did not consult any of his colleagues as in such cases he was accustomed to act as "the second opinion" himself. He was charged with unlawfully using an instrument with intent to cause miscarriage, and the case turned on the interpretation for the first time of the word "unlawfully". The trial took place on the 18th and 19th July, 1938 at the Old Bailey before Mr Justice Macnaghten. The Judge, in summing up said "that no line can be drawn between danger to life and danger to health, that no doctor knows whether life is in danger until the patient is dead, and that if on reasonable grounds based on adequate knowledge after consultation with colleagues a doctor forms an opinion that the probable consequences of the continuance of pregnancy would make the woman a physical wreck, then he is not only entitled, but it is his duty, to perform an abortion. To preserve a woman's life is not merely to save her from death, it is also to save her from illness which would destroy so much of her life that it would hardly be worth living." The jury returned the unanimous verdict of not guilty and the judge acquitted Dr Bourne.<sup>3</sup>

**Indications.**—The indications for producing justifiable miscarriage are—

1 Obstruction to the passage of a fetus owing to the contracted and deformed pelvis or the presence of a tumour

1 Sections 312 and 315 I P C Appendix IV

2 Brit Med Jour, Jan 29, 1927, p 188

3 Brit Med Jour, July 30, 1938, p 225

- 2 Contraction of the soft parts and vagina due to cicatrices
- 3 Incarceration of the retroflexed uterus
- 4 Uterine hemorrhage, hydramnios, and an ovarian or fibroid tumour
- 5 Eclampsia, albuminuria, and chorea
- 6 Severe vomiting, pernicious anaemia and diseases of the heart and lungs
- 7 Threatened or incipient insanity
- 8 Chronic plthisis

**2 Criminal Miscarriage**—In India, criminal miscarriage is resorted to mostly by widows who are prevented from remarriage by rigid social custom and in a few instances by unmarried women to get rid of the product of conception from illicit intercourse. It is, sometimes, practised by married women, especially of the educated middle class, to avoid additions to their families. The struggle for existence being ever on the increase, there is every possibility of it being more common among women of this class, though the increasing spread of the knowledge of contraceptive methods is bound to have a modifying influence.

Criminal miscarriage is generally induced during the earlier months of pregnancy, but occasionally between the fourth and fifth months of pregnancy, when the woman is certain of her condition. Rarely women, believing themselves to be pregnant, make efforts to produce abortion and suffer from consequent ill effect, although pregnancy may be absent. Cases which recover after criminal miscarriage are rarely detected. A case comes for investigation before a court of law only when the woman dies as a result of criminal miscarriage or when some enemy of her family secretly communicates the information to the police. It is difficult to gauge the extent of criminal miscarriage, as reliable statistics cannot naturally be available, inasmuch as such miscarriages are performed in secret by women on themselves and by abortionists who practise this nefarious trade.

**Legal Bearing**—Sections 312, 313, 314, 315 and 316 of the Indian Penal Code (*vide Appendix IV*) refer to the offences of criminal miscarriage and punishments awarded for these offences. To constitute the offence under section 312 it is necessary that the woman should be pregnant and that miscarriage should be caused with her consent inasmuch as the person procuring the miscarriage and the woman who causes herself to miscarry are both liable to punishment, unless such miscarriage was caused in good faith for the purpose of saving the life of the woman. It is also necessary to prove whether the woman was 'with child' or "quick with child" for, in the latter case, the offence is liable to enhanced punishment. If the means used, however, do not succeed, the offence is merely an attempt punishable under section 511. A higher punishment is awarded under section 313, if miscarriage is caused without the woman's consent, whether she was "quick with child" or not. Under this section the person who causes miscarriage is alone punished, as the woman is not an accessory to the guilt. If a pregnant woman dies from an act intended to cause miscarriage, the offender is prosecuted under section 314, even though he did not know or intend that his act was likely to cause her death. The punishment to be awarded in such a case varies according as the act was done with or without the woman's consent.

A person commits an offence under section 315, if he causes the death of a child before or after its birth by any act intended to prevent the child from being born alive or to cause it to die after its birth, unless the act is done in good faith for the purpose of saving the life of the mother. Section 316 deals with offences against children *in utero* where pregnancy has advanced beyond the stage of quickening and where death is caused after the quickening and before the birth of the child. A person would be guilty of culpable homicide, if he caused the death

of a pregnant woman by an act which he knew that it was likely to cause her death If his act injured the woman and did not cause her death but caused the death of her unborn quick child he would be guilty of the offence defined under this section

The law of England on criminal miscarriage is set down in sections 58 and 59 of the Offences against the Person Act 1861 (*Vide Appendix IV*) It differs from that of India in certain respects The woman's consent is immaterial and does not in any way affect the crime It is also immaterial whether the woman is pregnant or not unless she is accused of doing an act with intent to procure her own miscarriage The success or failure to produce miscarriage does not matter A mere attempt is what constitutes the offence Further a man is guilty of wilful murder if the woman dies as a result of his act to procure miscarriage even though he did not intend to cause death But the most important difference is the fact that the law in India recognizes miscarriage as legal when it is induced in good faith for saving the life of the mother whereas the law in England does not definitely state that therapeutic miscarriage is lawful although the words 'shall unlawfully administer' and 'shall unlawfully use any instrument' used in sections 58 and 59 connote that there are circumstances in which the administration of any poison or other noxious thing or the use of any instrument may be lawful This defect has been remedied to a certain extent by the Infant Life (Preservation) Act passed in the year 1929 which legalizes the procuring of miscarriage under certain conditions namely for preserving the life of the mother especially when the child is capable of being born alive It is however doubtful if miscarriage performed for therapeutic purposes before the child is viable is lawful according to the English statutes

#### MEANS TO INDUCE CRIMINAL MISCARRIAGE

The means adopted to induce criminal miscarriage are—

A The internal use of drugs

B Mechanical violence

**A The Internal Use of Drugs**—There are practically no drugs which when administered by the mouth act on the healthy uterus and expel its contents unless they are given in very large doses so as to have deleterious effects on the woman herself

The drugs that are generally administered for this purpose may be classified

15—

- 1 Those acting directly on the uterus.
- 2 Those acting reflexly through the genito-urinary channel
- 3 Those acting reflexly through the gastro intestinal canal
- 4 Those having poisonous effects on the system generally

**I Those acting directly on the Uterus.**—These are ecbolics and emenagogues Ecbolics increase the uterine contractions the chief of these are ergot quinine and cotton root bark Ergot is the most commonly used drug for procuring criminal miscarriage It acts as a true ecbolic and produces powerful uterine contractions but acts better if administered when the uterus is contracting It however frequently fails during the earlier months of pregnancy Quinine produces contractions of the uterus acting directly on the muscular fibres and is commonly used as an abortifacient amongst certain classes The cotton root bark or gossypium is supposed to resemble ergot in its action

Emmenagogues promote the menstrual flow but do not act as abortifacients unless administered in large and frequently repeated doses The chief of these

most frequently used criminally, is sennin in the form of oil of sennin or a decoction or infusion of its leaves. Its abortifacient action is doubtful. It often causes death from gastro intestinal irritation. Borax is also frequently used, but it is very doubtful in its action.

2 Those acting reflexly through the Genito-urinary Channel—These are diuretics in large doses, but they are very mild, and generally fail in their action.

3 Those acting reflexly through the Gastro-Intestinal Canal—These are emetics and purgatives given in large doses. The emetic that is chiefly used is tartar emetic, and the purgatives that are commonly used for this purpose are croton oil, gamboge, colocynth, elaterium and aloes. The last drug acts also directly on the uterine muscle fibres, and produces powerful contractions.

4 Those having poisonous effects on the System generally—These are animal, vegetable and metallic irritant poisons. Among the metallic poisons lead is the only drug which requires special mention. It is used in the form of pills made from diachylon paste consisting of lead oxide and olive oil. In England, these pills are largely used by women, especially of the working class, to procure abortion. In an outlying part of Nottingham they were sold as Mrs Seagrave's pills, which, on analysis, were found to consist of 50 to 70 per cent of diachylon and aloes with an outer coating of boric acid. Mrs Seagrave alias Wardle was arrested for selling "noxious things" with intent to procure abortion and sentenced to eighteen months' hard labour.<sup>1</sup>

Diachylon acts successfully in producing abortion, but at the same time produces the symptoms of chronic lead poisoning. If abortion does not occur from the use of these pills, and if pregnancy is carried to full term, it often happens that the child dies shortly after birth.

The drugs that are chiefly used in India for the purpose of procuring criminal miscarriage are the seeds and the unripe fruit of Carica papaya (*Papita* or *Papayya*), the unripe fruit of pine apple, the seeds of Daucus carota (*Gajar ka bij*), the milky juice of Calotropis gigantea (*Madar, Al*), the bark of Plumbago rosea (*Lal Chutra*), Randia dumetorum (*Main phal*), Cuscuta reflexa (*Ghagar bel*), Celastrus paniculata (*Malkangani*), Anethum graveolens (*So.ca*), Cucumis trigonus (*Karit*), Momordica charantia (*Karela*), Moringa pterygosperma (*Shayna, Saragvea*), Caryophyllus aromaticus (*Lat ang*), Myristica fragrans (*Jayphal*), Crocus sativus (*Zafran, Kesar*), Trigonella foenum gracum (*Methi*), Cantharides, sal ammonia, and copper, arsenic and mercury salts.<sup>2</sup>

#### B. Mechanical Violence—This may be general or local.

*General*—General violence acts directly on the uterus or indirectly by promoting congestion of the pelvic organs or haemorrhage between the uterus and the membranes. The following methods are usually employed—

1 Severe pressure on the abdomen by kneading blows, kicks jumping and tight lacing.

2 Violent exercise, such as riding on horseback, cycling, jumping from a height, jolting caused in driving on rough roads, long walks running up and down stairs and carrying or lifting heavy weights.

3 Cupping, usually by placing a lighted wick on the hypogastric region and turning a brass mug (*lota*) mouth downwards over it. Friction is then made upon the mug, while it is firmly adherent, and probably a partial separation of the

<sup>1</sup> Brit Med Jour Aug 11, 1906 p 334

<sup>2</sup> Chevers Med Juris, 1d III, pp 712 to 720

placenta or possibly very severe injury to the uterine parietes is the result. This mode of procuring abortion is generally employed at advanced terms of pregnancy.<sup>1</sup>

4 Application of leeches to the pudenda perineum and the inner surface of the thighs

5 Very hot and cold hip baths alternately

Massage of the uterus through the abdominal wall is likely to result in miscarriage, but other kinds of violence, however severe they may be, do not often produce the desired effect. On the other hand the slightest violence, such as the slipping of a foot, the fright of a cat or a dog or even the sudden hearing of a noise may cause miscarriage especially in a woman who is predisposed to abort.

A woman<sup>2</sup> who was three months pregnant was awokened by the noise of a collision of a motor car with the wall of her house and aborted the next day. She and her husband sued the motorist for damages. The doctor who attended the woman was clearly of opinion that the shock resulting from hearing a noise was enough to cause a miscarriage. The jury found a verdict for the plaintiffs. The husband recovered what he had paid on his wife's behalf and the wife was awarded £1<sup>10</sup>.

Occasionally women are murdered to avoid further worry and disgrace.

On the 14th January 1911 the body of a Hindu female about 30 years old was brought to the Agra Medical School Mortuary with a police report that she was found in a well in the jurisdiction of the Aharan Police-Station. At the post mortem examination a big gaping incised wound was found across the back of the neck cutting the third cervical vertebra and a twig of an arhar plant, about 3" long with some stuff applied to one end was found lying in the os uteri. It appeared that an attempt was first made to procure abortion but she was then murdered and thrown into the well.

*Local*—The commonest method of procuring miscarriage is to rupture the membranes by the introduction of an instrument such as a uterine sound catheter, douche cannula, knitting needle, hair pin, glass rod etc. into the cavity of the uterus. Owing to the rupture of the membranes the liquor amni flows away and miscarriage frequently occurs from a few hours to two or three days, but occasionally may not occur for days or weeks. It is possible for a woman to pass a sound or other instrument into her own uterus but it is difficult and fraught with danger.

An unscrupulous woman who wishes to abort will visit a medical practitioner either in his consulting room or in the outpatients' department of a hospital and will get him to pass a sound by making a false statement that she suffers from displacement of the uterus and that on previous occasions it had been replaced with the aid of a uterine sound. In such a case the medical practitioner should never pass a uterine sound, unless he is quite satisfied that his patient is not pregnant.

It is the usual practice of some abortionists to pass a sound into the uterus and then to direct the woman to go to her medical attendant as soon as pain and hemorrhage have started in the hope that the medical attendant will treat her as a case of genuine abortion and will be held responsible for the occurrence of any untoward accident. The medical practitioner must always be on his guard in treating a case of threatened abortion and in a doubtful case must consult another practitioner.

In India the so called *Dhais* or abortionists who mostly practise this immoral and unlawful trade introduce into the vagina or the os of the uterus a thin wooden or bamboo stick, from five to eight inches long which is commonly known as 'the abortion stick.' This stick is wrapped round at one end with cotton wool or a piece of rag soaked with the juice of a marking nut, *madar* or euphorbium or with a paste made of arsenious oxide, arsenic sulphide, and red lead. Instead

1 Prof T. W. Wilson quoted by Chevers Med Juris Ed III p 20

2 Lancet Dec 31, 1932 p 145

of this stick, a twig of some irritant plant such as *Calotropis gigantea* (*Madar*), *Nerium odoratum* (*Kaner*) *Plumbago rosea* (*Tal Chitra*) or *Plumbago zeylanica* (*Chitra*), is also used. The twig is frequently anointed with *Asafoetida* (*Hing*) before its introduction.

In some cases instead of an "abortion stick" irritating juice is directly applied to the os, or a rag, in the form of a tampon, saturated with the irritating juice or paste, is introduced into the vagina.

The other methods are injections of soapy or hot fluids, or irritating lotions such as corrosive sublimate and Condy's fluid into the vagina or into the uterus. Electricity has been lately used to induce abortion especially in the United States. The negative pole is applied to the cervix in the posterior vaginal cul de sac and the positive pole is placed over the sacrum or lumbar vertebra. When the electric current is passed, the uterus contracts and may expel its contents. This kind of crime is difficult to be detected unless there is a burn or mechanical injury.

#### ACCIDENTS FROM CRIMINAL MISCARRIAGE

When miscarriage has been caused by rupturing the membranes by the introduction of an "abortion stick", excoriations, lacerations or perforations are usually produced in the upper part of the vagina or in the uterine walls. Death may occur immediately from shock and haemorrhage from these injuries or subsequently from septic pelvic peritonitis or septicemia or even from tetanus.

In the case of death occurring from haemorrhage the defence may raise a plea that the haemorrhage was due to menstruation and not the result of criminal miscarriage. The uterus and the pelvic organs are most probably found congested if death took place during a menstrual flow, but they are pale and anaemic, if haemorrhage occurred as a result of criminal abortion.

If death does not occur, the subinvolution of the uterus may result with concomitant symptoms of displacements, menorrhagia, leucorrhœa, etc.

When the act has been accomplished by injecting some fluid into the vagina or uterus, death may take place from shock due to the sudden distension of the uterus or from the sudden entrance of the air or fluid into the uterine sinuses. Death may also occur from subsequent septic peritonitis or septicemia, or metritis may occur leading to the adhesions of the ovaries, Fallopian tubes and uterus. Rupture of the uterus may sometimes occur from the forcible injection of a fluid into its cavity.

A healthy young woman<sup>1</sup> aged 21 years died from shock occasioned by unlawful injection of a fluid made up of soap and water for the sole purpose of procuring abortion.

Richter<sup>2</sup> describes the case of a woman aged 28 years found dead in the kitchen of her dwelling. Near her lay a syringe and a vessel containing soapy water. The clothing was not bloody or torn. She, supposing herself to be three months pregnant had tried to bring about abortion by injecting soapy water. At the autopsy the pericardium was found distended and tympanitic. In the pericardium there was dark fluid blood containing air. There was also foamy blood in the right heart and in both ovarian arteries bubbles of air were found. There was also blood in the uterus and embryo 6 cm long and at the site of the attachment of the embryo fluid blood containing air. He describes another case of a similar nature in which a woman died after injecting a solution of boracic acid with a view to procuring abortion. At the post mortem examination there were bubbles of air in the uterus and in the ovum, and blood containing air in the veins of the pelvis and lower abdomen.

A case<sup>3</sup> is also recorded in which a woman 34 years old died of air embolism soon after douching. Autopsy revealed the presence of a fetus of three months gestation in intact membranes. The right ovary showed a large corpus luteum of pregnancy. There was no sign of injury to the cervix. Fine froth was present in the trachea and the lungs were oedematous. The right side of the heart was dilated and the auricle and ventricle were filled with frothy

<sup>1</sup> Lancet Feb 4 1928 p 255

<sup>2</sup> Peterson Hayes and Webster Leg Med and Toxic Id II Vol I p 96

<sup>3</sup> G Forbes Brit Med Jour Oct 21, 1944 Vol II p 50

blood which was also found in the pulmonary artery. The brain was congested. The woman was not aware of her pregnancy, as she used to menstruate every month. There was a history of menstruation for three months during her previous pregnancy.

When drugs have been used to produce miscarriage, death may result from their poisonous effects, as most of the reputed abortifacients are irritant poisons. If death does not occur, the woman may show signs of chronic gastro intestinal disturbances, nervous prostration and chronic ill health.

#### EVIDENCE OF MISCARRIAGE

The evidence of miscarriage can be determined by examining the woman alleged to have miscarried and the material alleged to have been expelled from the uterus.

**Examination of the Woman —(a) During Life** —The signs of recent delivery are found. These will depend upon the stage to which pregnancy has advanced, and the time that has elapsed since miscarriage at the time of the examination. In the earlier months of pregnancy the signs are likely to disappear very soon after miscarriage, and the woman should if possible, be medically examined within a very few days after its occurrence. If septic infection has occurred at the time of miscarriage, the signs would persist for a longer time.

The usual sign in such cases is a bloody discharge from the vagina, which is relaxed and dilated. On examining the vaginal canal with a speculum, excoriations, lacerations or wounds of the mucous membrane of the vagina may be discovered. The os and cervix are pitifulous, with or without fissures, tears or lacerations. The uterus may be found enlarged by bimanual examination or by passing a uterine sound. The enlarged breast and other signs of pregnancy are the valuable points for diagnosis.

**(b) After Death** —In addition to the signs of pregnancy and the lesions caused by general violence, the vaginal canal should be carefully examined for the presence of punctures or lacerations, and the marks of inflammation and corrosion on its mucous membrane. The uterus and its appendages with the vagina attached should then be carefully dissected out, and laid on the table for minute inspection. The condition of the os and cervix should be examined as to the presence or absence of fissures, lacerations or the existence of a foreign body. The uterus should then be cut open, and its increased size, the attachment of the placenta and the presence of blood clots or of the product of conception should be noted. The ovaries should be examined for the existence of a corpus luteum. The alimentary and urinary organs should also be examined for evidence of irritant poisoning.



Fig. 120.—Uterus showing twins of about 3 months

is the least suspicion of a drug having been used locally or internally.

**Post-mortem Delivery.**—The medical man should bear in mind the possibility of expulsion of a foetus by the pressure of putrefactive gases generated in the abdominal cavity some days after the mother's death.

In all cases of criminal miscarriage the uterus and its appendages with any foreign matter found in the genital canal as well as the stomach, etc., should always be preserved for chemical analysis, if there

On March 18 1920 a Hindu widow 40 years old finding that she had become pregnant jumped into a well to conceal her shame. Four days later, the body was recovered from the well with a fetus. At the post mortem examination held by me on the 23rd March the body was found to be decomposed. The face was bloated and the hairs of the head had become loosened and were coming off. The abdomen was distended and the skin was peeling off at several places. The uterus was inverted and protruding from the vagina. The fetus was a male of five months of intra uterine life with the placenta and cord (ten inches long) intact, and attached to the umbilicus.

Brown<sup>1</sup> reports the case of a pregnant woman who had been dead about 60 hours before her body was found. There were signs of putrefaction in the skin and general emphysema. The vagina was not gaping. During the removal of the body from the hut, in eight months' fetus weighing 5 pounds was spontaneously expelled. The inverted uterus prolapsed showing the placenta still attached. There was no tear of the perineum. The uterus was normal. The fetus showed slight peeling of the epidermis but otherwise no signs of putrefaction.

R. Nagendran<sup>2</sup> reports the case of a widow, 35 years old, who died of drowning in a tank. At the end of three days the body floated to the surface and was removed by the police for investigation and examination. Post mortem examination was held twelve hours after the inquest. The body was decomposed. Protruding through the vagina and hanging down was a fetus with the umbilical cord 13 inches long. The entrance to the vagina was plugged by the placenta. On further examination it was found that the uterus had prolapsed and completely everted lying in the vaginal canal with the placenta still adherent to the fundus.

**The material alleged to have been expelled from the Uterus**—When a substance alleged to have been expelled from the uterus as a product of conception is sent to the medical man for his opinion, he should thoroughly wash it in water to determine if it is a fetus or merely a blood clot, a shred of the dysmenorrhoeal membrane, a polypus, or a fibroid tumour. In a doubtful case a small portion of the suspicious material should be cut off, mounted on a slide in water or glycerin and examined under the low power of a microscope. I have often examined blood clots wrapped up in pieces of cloth alleged to be foetuses and brought by women, who reported to the police that they had miscarried as the result of an assault or a kick on the hypogastrium. In one case a woman complained that owing to the injuries inflicted on her abdomen during a quarrel she aborted, and brought for my examination a piece of cloth containing blood clots and a tissue alleged to be a fetus of three months' pregnancy. On microscopic examination the tissue was found to be a piece of tumour. There was also no injury to the abdomen. In order to aggravate the offence women generally complain of miscarriage having occurred from an assault, when they are having their menses at the time of the struggle or when the menstrual flow has followed it.

In the early months of pregnancy if the embryo is not found, the presence of chorionic villi found under the low power of a microscope will decide the fact of miscarriage. It should be remembered that during the first three months of pregnancy the fetus is expelled with its membranes *en masse* but after this period the fetus is born first and then after a time the placenta is detached and expelled, a portion of which may remain adherent to the uterus. If the placenta is sent along with the fetus it should be examined to ascertain if it is entire or torn at any place, and if there are any degenerative changes on its surface.

If it is a fetus it is necessary to determine its probable intra uterine age, its viability and the presence or absence of wounds or injuries inflicted on the body.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOETUS AT DIFFERENT PERIODS OF GESTATION

**First Month (Fourth Week)**—At the end of the first month the ovum is greyish in colour, about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " in diameter and is roughly equal to a pigeon's egg in size. Its weight is about 40 grains. The embryo is about  $\frac{1}{2}$ d inch long and is attached to chorion with a very short cord. The umbilical vesicle is present. It has two extremities the head being a thick swelling and the tail slender and well marked. Two dark spots indicate the eyes the mouth is represented by a cleft.

<sup>1</sup> South African Med Assoc Jour Cape Town Feb 13, 1928 p 61 Jour Inter Med Assoc April 21 1928 p 1336

<sup>2</sup> Ind Med Gazette October, 1932 p 571

and the limbs by the bud like processes. Being very small and minute, it can hardly be detected in abortions when surrounded by blood clots.

**Second Month (Eighth Week.)**—At the end of the second month the ovum is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches long about the size of a hen's egg, and weighs two to five drachms. The embryo measures  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in length. The mouth and nose are separated; the umbilical vesicle has disappeared and the generative organs are apparent but the sex is indistinct. The anus appears as a dark spot. The cord is longer and the placenta has commenced to form. The centres of ossification have begun in the mandible (lower jaw), clavicle, ribs and bodies of the vertebrae.

**Third Month (Twelfth Week)**—At the end of the third month the fetus is 3 to 4 inches long and weighs about one ounce. The placenta is developed and chorionic villi have atrophied. The cord is much longer, and has a spiral twist. The head is more rounded and separated from the body by the formation of the neck. The eyes and the mouth are closed. The nails in the form of thin membranes appear on the fingers and toes. The sex is still indistinguishable. The heart is divided into two chambers and the alimentary canal is situated within the abdominal cavity.

**Fourth Month (Sixteenth Week)**—Towards the end of the fourth month the fetus is 4 to 6 inches in length and is 2 to 4 ounces in weight. The sex can be differentiated. The skin is rosy and firmer. Down begins to be formed on the body. The head is one fourth of the length of the body. The convolutions of the brain are commencing to develop. The membrane pupillaris is visible. The skull bones are partly ossified, but the sutures and fontanelles are very wide apart. The gall bladder is forming and meconium is found in the duodenum. The umbilicus is situated near the pubes. The centres of ossification are present in the lower segments of the sacrum and the ossicles of the ears have ossified.

**Fifth Month (Twentieth Week)**—The fetus of the fifth month is 7 to 10 inches long and weighs about eight ounces. Light hair is seen covering the head which is about  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of the length of the fetus. Lanugo is quite distinct on the body. The nails are distinctly marked, but are very soft. The germs of the permanent teeth begin to appear in the jaw. The position of the umbilicus recedes upward. The centres of ossification are present in the os pubis, os calcis, and ischium. Yellowish bile stained fluid is found in the small intestine, and meconium of a yellowish green colour at the commencement of the large intestine.

✓ the ends of the fingers but reach only the tips of the toes. The cartilages have formed in the nose and ears. The umbilicus is situated in the central part between the pubes and the ensiform cartilage. The testicles are contained in the scrotum. The labia majora cover the nymphæ and clitoris. The rectum contains dark brownish green or nearly black meconium which is voided within a few hours after live birth. The centre of ossification is found in the lower epiphysis of the femur and measures from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 4 lines in diameter. The centre of ossification may also be found in the cuboid and in the upper end of the tibia.

## DISTINCTION BETWEEN NATURAL AND CRIMINAL MISCARRIAGE

When miscarriage is proved to have taken place, the defence cannot deny it but may raise a point that it was induced spontaneously and not criminally. In such a case it is not always easy for the medical man to give a definite opinion simply from examining the woman or the contents of the uterus. Natural miscarriage occurs generally in women who are weak, irritable and unhealthy and when the embryo or the foetal membranes are diseased. The medical man is therefore justified in pronouncing it as criminal miscarriage if he finds lacerations in the vagina and on the cervix, or marks of violence on the abdomen of a healthy woman, or wounds on the foetus or membranes, otherwise free from disease. The occurrence of septicaemia is highly suggestive, but not conclusive of criminal miscarriage. Septic peritonitis or metritis occurs more frequently in criminal than in natural miscarriage but it may occur in the latter, if proper antiseptic precautions are not taken in its after treatment, whereas it may not occur in criminal miscarriage, if proper attention is paid to asepsis while inducing it.

The question whether the marks of injuries on the vagina and the cervix were due to criminal interference or due to traumatism by the passage of the foetus during spontaneous miscarriage can be determined by noting their site, extent and appearance, and the physical development of the foetus. It may be mentioned that in a miscarriage of two to three months' pregnancy the foetus is usually expelled without lacerating the cervical tissue. //

## CHAPTER XVIII

### INFANTICIDE

**Definition**—Infanticide means the unlawful destruction of a newly born child and is regarded as murder in law. It is punishable under section 302 I.P.C. by death or transportation for life and also fine. In a case in which one Sunderbu a Hindu widow aged 22 years was accused of infanticide the Honourable Judges of the Bombay High Court pointed out that the law should be changed so that infanticide be regarded distinct from ordinary murder especially when an infant was killed by the mother while she was still under the effect of child birth so that the balance of her mind was disturbed. It should be brought on a line with other civilized countries such as England France Germany and Italy. The punishment provided should be imprisonment for a few years<sup>1</sup>. By the Infanticide Act of England 1922 a woman who kills her newly born child under certain circumstances is guilty of the felony of infanticide and is punishable as for man slaughter. The Act used the term newly born child but did not definitely lay down the period up to which the child might be legally considered 'newly born'. To rectify this defect Parliament repealed this Act in 1938 and passed another Infanticide Act the chief provisions of which are as follows—

1 A child shall be deemed to have recently been born if it had been born within twelve months before its death.

2 Where a woman by any wilful act or omission causes the death of her child being a child under the age of twelve months but at the time of the act or omission the balance of her mind was disturbed by reason of her not having fully recovered from the effect of giving birth to the child or by reason of the effect of lactation consequent on the birth of the child then notwithstanding that the circumstances were such that but for this Act the offence would have amounted to murder she shall be guilty of felony to wit of infanticide and may for such offence be dealt with and punished as if she had been guilty of the offence of manslaughter of the child.

This Act is intended to apply only to the mother. Any other person assisting in the destruction of a child born alive may be charged with murder.

The legal bearing on infanticide is the same as in culpable homicide except that the law presumes that a child was born dead. Hence in a trial for infanticide the prosecution is required to prove that the child was born alive and that it died from criminal violence inflicted after its birth.

Owing to certain social customs prevailing in the different communities of India infanticide especially of female children was formerly very common but with the spread of education and restrictive action by Government it is now rare except in cases of illegitimate children born of widows who are not allowed to remarry.

The crime of infanticide is generally committed at the time of or within a few minutes or hours after the birth of the child. In such cases the medical officer is required to examine the woman—the alleged mother of the child—and the dead body of the child. He has to examine the woman to determine if she has been recently delivered of a full term child. With reference to the child he is called upon to solve the following questions raised by the police when the body is sent for post mortem examination—

- I Was the child still born or dead born?
- II Was the child born alive?

<sup>1</sup> See also Lahore High Court Cr. App. No. 719 of 1937 *Mt. Talan v. A. E.* 39 Cr. L. R. 1938 p. 18

- III If born alive, how long did the child survive the birth?  
 IV What was the cause of death?

### I WAS THE CHILD STILL BORN OR DEAD BORN?

To avoid confusion, a distinction must be drawn between the terms *still born* and *dead-born*. Under the Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1926, of England and Wales, a still born child is defined as one which "has issued forth from its mother after the twenty eighth week of pregnancy and which did not at any time after being completely expelled from its mother, breathe or show any other signs of life." Still births occur more frequently among illegitimate and immature male children than among legitimate, mature and female children and more often in primiparous than in multiparous. A dead born child is one which has died *in utero* and may show one of the following signs after it is completely born —

1 Signs of maceration, which is the most usual change following the death of the foetus *in utero*. This occurs when the dead child remains for some time in the uterus surrounded with liquor amnii, but with the exclusion of air. Hence, if a child died *in utero* twenty four hours before it was born, the child may not show the signs of maceration, and in such a case it will be difficult to state whether the child died before or during birth.

The body of a macerated foetus is soft, flaccid and flattened and emits a sweetish, disagreeable smell, which is quite different from that of putrefaction. The skin assumes a red or purple tint, but never green as in putrefaction. Large blebs resembling pemphigus and containing a red serous or sero-sanguineous fluid are raised and the epidermis is easily peeled off leaving moist and greasy patches. The tissues are generally oedematous and a turbid reddish fluid collects in the serous cavities. The sutures of the cranial bones are separated and hence the skull bones are freely movable over each other. The brain substance is converted into a greyish red, pulpy mass. All the viscera become infiltrated and lose their anatomical features, but the lungs and uterus remain unaffected for a long time. The umbilical cord is red, smooth, softened and lacerable. If the membranes are ruptured after the death of the foetus, air gains admission into liquor amnii, and the foetus undergoes putrefaction instead of maceration.

2 Signs of mummification, by which the foetus is dried up and shrivelled. Such a condition results when the death of a foetus occurs from a deficient supply of blood, when liquor amnii is scanty and when no air has entered the uterus.

**1 The Shape of the Chest**—The chest is flat before respiration is established, but it expands and becomes arched or rounded after full respiration.

**2 The Position of the Diaphragm**—The abdomen should be opened before the thorax, and the position of the diaphragm should be noted by passing a finger up into its concave arch, the highest point of which is found at the level of the fourth or fifth rib, if respiration has not taken place, but the arch becomes flattened and depressed, descends to the level of the sixth or seventh rib after respiration has been completely established. The position of the diaphragm may, however, be affected by pressure of the gases of decomposition developed within the thorax or abdominal cavity.



Fig. 130.—Unrespired lungs of a still born full term infant

**3 The Changes in the Lungs**—These are considered with reference to their (a) volume, (b) consistence, (c) colour, and (d) weight.

(a) *Volume*—Before respiration has taken place the lungs are small with sharp margins, lie in the back part of the chest on either side of the vertebral column and are hardly seen on opening the chest as the cavity is filled up by the heart and thymus. After complete respiration the lungs increase enormously in volume, have rounded margins and occupy the cavity covering more or less the thymus and heart.

(b) *Consistence*—Before respiration the lungs are dense firm non-crepitant and liver like. After respiration, they are spongy, elastic and crepitant.

(d) Weight.—As regards the weight of the lungs two tests are applied viz the static test obtained by taking the absolute weight of the lungs, and the hydrostatic test which depends on their specific gravity.



large vessels and to place them in a glass jar or vessel about twelve inches high and eight to ten inches in diameter, filled with tap water or preferably with distilled water, and to note whether they float or sink. The lungs are then separated from the heart and thymus by tying a ligature on the bronchi, and dividing them above it, when each lung individually is placed into the vessel to note its buoyancy. Each lung is then cut into twelve to twenty pieces which are again to be tested as regards their floatation. If these pieces float they are each squeezed between the thumb and index finger under the surface of water to see if any bubbles of air are given off, and if they still persist to float, or they are taken out of water wrapped in a piece of cloth and placed on the floor between two pieces of card board, when firm and equable pressure is applied by putting a heavy weight or by standing on the upper card board without any jerky movement. The pieces are once more placed in water, and if they continue to float after the application of this pressure the medical jurist is justified in affirming that respiration has been established. If the lungs sink separately, or if they float, but the pieces sink after pressure, it means that respiration has not taken place. If some of the pieces float while others sink it shows feeble respiration owing to the partial penetration of air.

*Objections*—The two following objections have been raised against the hydrostatic test but, on close scrutiny, neither of them diminishes the value of the test—

- 1 The expanded lungs may sink from disease or from atelectasis
- 2 The unexpanded lungs may float from the presence of putrefactive gases or from artificial inflation

1 *The expanded lungs may sink from—*

(a) *Disease*—This may be acute oedema or consolidation of the lungs from pneumonia or congenital syphilis. In such cases the pathological conditions characteristic of the disease will be easily detected either by the naked eye or by microscopic examination, and it is not likely that both the lungs will be similarly affected. There will certainly be some portions of the expanded lungs which will escape the disease and consequently float in water. In cases of infanticide it is always necessary to examine the lungs for the evidence of disease to exclude the possibility of their sinking in water due to this cause.

(b) *Atelectasis*—Cases of atelectasis, i.e., non expansion of the lungs in children born alive and surviving for a few hours though rare have occurred but there is no other test by which this condition can be determined, and so the test does not lose its value in its general application. Three explanations<sup>1</sup> for the non expansion of the lungs have been given as mentioned below—

1 Owing to the feeble respiration air may not reach the alveoli, but the iteration of blood may take place through the lining membrane of the trachea and bronchi.

2 The air which entered the lungs may have been entirely absorbed by the blood after respiration stopped, if circulation continued. It is a fact that the heart of a newly born infant may continue pulsating for half an hour or more after the stoppage of respiration, or when the infant is in a state of asphyxia.

3 If the respiratory movements are very feeble it is quite possible for more air than what was taken during every act of inspiration, to be expelled from the lungs during expiration owing to the recoil of the lung tissue. Thus, the lungs may be emptied of all air, and may subsequently return to the foetal condition.

<sup>1</sup> Dixemann *Forsens Med and Toxic*, Bd 11, p. 116

- 4 The marbled or mottled appearance of the lungs
- 5 Bloody froth exuding from the cut surface of the lungs on slight pressure
- 6 The lungs responding to the hydrostatic test

*When is the Hydrostatic Test not necessary?*—The medical officer need not perform the hydrostatic test if he finds that—

- 1 The foetus is born at less than 180 days of intra uterine life when it cannot be viable
- 2 The foetus is a monster which owing to congenital malformations is incapable of living a separate existence
- 3 The foetus shows signs of intra uterine maceration
- 4 The umbilical cord has separated and the umbilicus has cicatrized
- 5 The stomach on dissection contains coagulated or half coagulated milk as a result of the active digestive function

**4 Changes in the Stomach and Intestines**—During the process of respiration air is first swallowed in the stomach and then gradually extends down the intestines owing to peristaltic movements. Hence when the stomach and intestines are removed from the body after tying double ligatures at each end of the stomach at the end of the duodenum and also at some lower parts of the intestines they will float when placed in water. They are then separated and tested separately for floating capacity. If respiration has not taken place, the stomach and intestines, being airless will sink in water. This is known as *Breslau's second life test*. It is a corroborative test rather than a conclusive one. The practicability of this test is useful especially when air has been prevented from entering the lungs by foreign bodies or by occlusion of the bronchi. When breathing is impeded or imperfect, air enters and fills the stomach and intestines with a larger quantity than when breathing has completely and speedily taken place. The test is useless when the body has undergone decomposition or when there has been an attempt at artificial inflation of the lungs.

On careful dissection under water so as not to allow its contents to escape the stomach shows the presence of mucus with air bubbles and saliva, if respiration has been established whereas it will show the presence of only a glairy mucus if respiration has not taken place. The presence of blood meconium and liquor amni in the stomach indicates that the child was alive at or shortly before its birth and had swallowed these during the act of respiration. The presence of milk or farinaceous food in the stomach is very strong evidence that the child was not only born alive but had lived for some time after birth. Any substance found in the stomach should be identified by microscopic examination. The absence of meconium from the bowels is not absolute proof of live birth as it may be voided in breech presentation even if the child is still born. Under ordinary circumstances meconium is passed immediately, or within twenty four hours after birth ✓

It may be necessary to recognize the stains of meconium on the clothing. They are brownish green and stain the fabric but do not penetrate deeply into its texture. When dissolved in water meconium forms a green solution which is acid in reaction and is not affected by boiling.

**5 Changes in the Kidneys and Bladder**—The deposit of uric acid in the form of brownish yellow crystalline streaks found in the pelvis of the kidneys has been regarded by some authorities as positive proof of live-birth but this sign is not reliable as the crystals have been found even in still born children.

The absence of urine in the bladder is not at all diagnostic of live-birth as urine may not be passed for some hours after birth, or it may be passed mechanically during labour, and the child may subsequently be born dead.

**6 Change in the middle Ear (Wredin's Test)**—Dr Wredin of Petrograd has observed that the gelatinous embryonic connective tissue, which fills the middle ear during foetal life disappears after birth and is replaced by air, if respiration has taken place. This is not a valuable sign, since the gelatinous mass may disappear during foetal life or may not disappear until two or three weeks after birth.

### III ✓ IF BORN ALIVE HOW LONG DID THE CHILD SURVIVE THE BIRTH?

It is not possible to determine the exact length of time that a child has lived after its birth but an approximate idea may be formed from carefully considering the following changes in the external and internal appearances of the body —

**1 Changes in the Skin**—The skin of a newly born infant is bright red and covered with vernix caseosa chiefly in the axilla, inguinal region and folds of the neck. The vernix is not easily removed, and persists for a day or two, but it is possible for a child to be born with little or no vernix. After birth the skin changes its colour and becomes darker on the second or third day. It then becomes brick red and finally yellow. It assumes its normal colour in about a week's time. The exfoliation of the skin chiefly on the abdomen occurs during the first three days after birth. The exfoliation has to be distinguished from the detachment of the cuticle due to intra uterine maceration.

**2 The Presence of Caput Succedaneum**—The caput succedaneum is a valuable sign when present. It is formed on the presenting head during delivery. According to Powell<sup>1</sup> it is a bruise of the scalp and, when incised contains an effusion of blood and not a serous fluid. Like ordinary bruises it undergoes the colour changes during absorption and lasts about seven days.

**3 Changes in the Umbilical Cord**—The changes in the umbilical cord begin to appear from the cut end to its base at the umbilicus soon after birth when it has been divided. Clotting occurs in the cut end after two hours. The portion of the cord attached to the child shrinks, and dries within twelve to twenty-four hours, and an inflammatory ring of redness forms at its base from thirty-six to forty-eight hours. This should not be confounded with a line of redness round the umbilicus at the time of birth. This line is merely red without any sign of a swelling or inflammation. By the second or third day it shrivels up mummifies and falls off on the fifth or sixth day leaving a slightly suppurating ulcer, which heals and cicatrizes within ten to twelve days. In rare cases the cord may drop off as early as the second day or as late as the tenth day. The mere mummification of the cord is not of any value as a sign of extra uterine life, as it occurs in the dead body of a newly born child if exposed to the air, but the separation of the cord with the formation of a cicatrix is a sure sign of survival of the child after birth.

The mummification of the cord does not occur, if the child is submerged in water immediately after birth. Similarly, a cord which has already dried and withered may become soft and supple, though tough, if the body is lying in water or wrapped in wet clothes.

**4 Changes in the Circulation**—These occur after birth. The umbilical vessels ductus venosus, ductus arteriosus and the foramen ovale, which were necessary to carry out the foetal circulation, are no longer required to perform their functions after the birth of the child and are therefore obliterated. Thus

<sup>1</sup> Lyon Med Juris., Ed IV p 406

the umbilical arteries begin to contract in about ten hours after birth and are completely closed by the third day. The umbilical vein and the ductus venosus are the next to contract. For the first three days the contraction is rather slow but complete obliteration occurs on the fourth or fifth day. The ductus arteriosus begins to contract first at the aortic end, is reduced to the size of a crowquill by the seventh day and usually closes completely by the tenth day. The closure of the foramen ovale generally occurs by the eighth or tenth day. Sometimes it remains patent up to the second year, while in a few cases it remains open throughout life giving rise to cyanosis, a condition known as *Morbus carunculus*. In rare cases the foramen ovale has been closed at birth.

#### IV. WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF DEATH?

The death of the child may occur from natural, accidental or criminal causes.

##### NATURAL CAUSES

**1 Immaturity**—If the child is prematurely born, it generally dies immediately after birth. In the case of the premature birth of a child the question may arise as to whether the birth was criminally induced or not, for under the Indian Penal Code, the criminal induction of premature labour is an offence, but not culpable homicide, though under English law, a person is guilty of murder if he does an act by which a child is born prematurely so that it is not capable of living and dies in consequence of its exposure to the external world.

**2 Debility**—The child may be of full term, and yet may die after birth from debility due to the want of general development. In such a case no disease is detected, but some portions of the lungs may be found in a state ofatelectasis from feeble respiration.

**3 Congenital Diseases**—These are syphilis and specific fevers such as small pox, plague, etc., attacking the mother, or diseases of the child's internal organs, viz., the lungs, heart and brain.

Syphilis is the usual cause of the death of the foetus. Specific fevers cause death from the toxæmic condition of the blood produced by the attack on the mother, or from the attack on the child itself. Of the diseases of the internal organs, hepatization and tubercle of the lungs are common. The heart affections are rare, while diseases of the brain may destroy life without leaving any traces behind.

**4 Haemorrhage**—This may occur from the umbilical cord, stomach, rectum or genitals.

**5 Malformations**—These are acephalous and anencephalous monsters or children born with congenital abnormalities of the blood vessels, heart or alimentary canal. It must be remembered that monstrosity or malformation is no justification for taking the life of an infant. Again it must be remembered that monsters do not necessarily die soon after birth.

**6 Disease of the Placenta**—Disease of the placenta or its accidental separation from the uterine wall may cause death of the foetus. This can be detected by examining the placenta or by examining the uterus, if the mother is dead and her body is available for post mortem examination.

**7 Spasm of the Larynx**—This may occur from mucus or meconium being aspirated into the larynx or from the enlargement of the thymus gland.

**8 Placenta Prævia or Abnormal Gestation**—Any of these conditions may cause the death of the foetus.

**9 Erythroblastosis Fœtalis**.—When an Rh negative woman is carrying an Rh positive foetus, anti-Rh agglutinins are formed in her serum owing to the

introduction of the Rh agglutinogen inherited by the foetus from the Rh positive father into her circulation through the placenta. On passing back into the foetal circulation through the placenta, these agglutinins cause haemolysis of the red blood corpuscles of the foetus in the uterus. Such a haemolytic process results in the group of conditions, known as (1) foetal hydrops with still birth, and (2) *icterus gravis neonatorum* and (3) anaemia of the new born, which generally cause the death of the foetus shortly after birth. It may be remarked that such cases are very rare in India.

#### ACCIDENTAL CAUSES

Accidents causing the death of the child may occur during or after birth.

**During Birth—1 Prolonged Labour.**—Prolonged labour may cause the death of a child by causing an extravasation of blood into the meninges or on the brain substance with or without fracture of the skull bones owing to severe compression of the head against the pelvis. In a case where there is fracture of the skull, it is usually a slight fissure of the parietal and frontal bones or a spoon shaped depression without any external injury on the scalp. The head will show marked *caput succedaneum* and moulding as a result of difficult labour. In this connection it should be borne in mind that the defective ossification of the cranial bones of a newly born child may be confounded with fractures which may lead to dangerous mistakes. Casper<sup>1</sup> states that defective or retarded ossification commonly occurs in the frontal and parietal bones and rarely in the occipital bone of mature as well as immature children. He describes their characteristic appearances in the following terms—"If the bone in question is held up to the light this is seen to shine through the opening, which is closed only by the periosteum. When the periosteal membrane is removed, the deficiency in the ossification is seen in the form of a round, or irregular opening, not often more than three lines in diameter, though frequently less, its edges are irregular and serrated, these edges are never depressed as is the case in fractures, and neither they nor the parts in their neighbourhood are ever observed to be ecchymosed." Sometimes, the child dies from exhaustion on account of prolonged and difficult labour.

**2 Pressure on, or Prolapse of, the Cord**—In such cases death occurs from asphyxia and, on post mortem examination blood, meconium liquor amni or *vernix caseosa* may be found in the bronchial tubes. These may be examined with a hand lens, or *vernix caseosa* may be stained with gentian and violet solution, and then examined under the low power of a microscope.

**3 Knots of the Cord or its Twisting round the Neck**—A child is sometimes strangled before birth by the knots or loops of the cord being tightened or the cord being coiled round its neck during delivery. A spasmotic contraction of the os uteri round the neck of the child may result in its death by suffocation.

**4 Injuries**—Heavy blows on the abdomen of a pregnant woman with blunt weapons, kicks or falls from a height may kill the foetus *in utero* by causing concussion of the brain with or without fracture of the skull bones or rupture of the blood vessels or internal organs. In such cases it is not necessary that there should be any external marks of injuries on the woman's abdomen. Sometimes, fractures of the long bones are caused by intra uterine injuries and are recognized by the formation of callus. Rarely, uterine contractions may be so powerful as to fracture the cranial bones of the foetus.

Cater records the case of a woman aged 32 who expected her first delivery about December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1901. A month before the anticipated event there was hemorrhage per vaginam following a "very bad dream, the patient leaving her bed during sleep. The child was then living and occupied the left dorso-anterior transverse position. The external os barely admitted the finger tip. The hemorrhage ceased within forty-eight hours. On the 6th December labour

<sup>1</sup> *Forens Med., Vol III, Eng Transl, pp 119, 120*

pains commenced at 11 a.m. At 5 p.m. the doctor on his arrival found that the child was born and lying on its back with both legs and thighs flexed, the feet resting against the mother's left buttock. The cord was almost black and without pulsation but there was no discolouration about the body. The eyes and tongue protruded the head presenting the appearance of craniotomy forceps having been employed. The frontal bone was fractured the fracture extending from above the left orbit to the right malar bone. The occipital bone was fractured into two unequal pieces. The child was full term and weighed 6½ lbs. There was no such pelvic deformity as to be responsible for the crushing of the child's head.<sup>1</sup>

**5 Death of the Mother.**—When the mother dies in the act of delivery, the question arises as to how long a child may live *in utero* after her death. The time depends upon the cause of the mother's death. If death occurs slowly from hemorrhage, there is very little chance of saving the child but it may be saved, if an attempt is made to extract it soon after the sudden death of the mother from some accident, if she was previously in good health. Rosin<sup>2</sup> reports a case in which he delivered a full time male child, weighing 7½ pounds by Cesarean section in a state of asphyxia livida a quarter of an hour after the mother's death. Twenty minutes' artificial respiration and alternate immersions in hot and cold baths revived the child, who cried lustily. Dixon Hughes<sup>3</sup> also reports a case in which a live child, weighing 9 pounds and 4 ounces was delivered by forceps 9 to 10 minutes after the sudden death of the mother.

**After Birth—1 Suffocation.**—A child may die from suffocation after birth, if it is born under a *caul*, i.e., with membranes over the head, thus covering the mouth and nostrils. The child may also die from suffocation if its face is pressed accidentally in the clothes or submerged accidentally in the discharges, such as blood, liquor amni or meconium.

**2 Precipitate Labour.**—In precipitate labour a child may be born without the mother's knowledge and may die from suffocation by falling accidentally into a privy pan containing faeces, or from drowning by falling into a chamber pot containing urine. If the woman is standing erect at the time, the child may be forcibly shot down from her genital canal, and may die from fracture of the skull caused by a fall on a hard floor. Ordinarily, a drop of thirty inches which is the average distance of the female genitals from the ground in the erect posture is sufficient to cause fracture of the skull bones, but a fall of eighteen inches may fracture them as well. In such a case one or both parietal bones may be fractured, and in some cases the fracture may radiate into the frontal, occipital or squamous portion of the temporal bone. Mud, sand or gravel may be found in the hair or injured scalp of the child, if the floor is covered with such material. The cord is either torn across, or the placenta is expelled with the child. Haemorrhage from the torn cord, as a rule, stops owing to the contraction of the muscular wall of the umbilical arteries, but it may, sometimes, be so profuse as to cause the death of the child.

Precipitate labour is possible in multiparae with large roomy pelvis, but is extremely rare in primiparae. Rensha<sup>4</sup> reports the case of a young primiparous woman who, telling her mother that she was feeling queer, stepped across the room and leaned on the mantel shelf, when without warning the child fell on the floor rupturing the cord, and almost immediately the placenta was expelled.

In connection with precipitate labour it will not be out of place to mention that the plea of unconscious delivery is, sometimes, raised in cases of infanticide, hence the medical jurist should bear in mind the possibility of such an event under

<sup>1</sup> Brit. Med. Jour. May 17, 1902 p 3207.

<sup>2</sup> Lancet April 16 1927, p 820 see also Joyce Morgan Lancet, Aug 3 1910 p 132.

<sup>3</sup> Med. Jour. Austral., Oct 2, 1943 Vol. 30 p 264 Med. Leg. and Criminol. Rev., Vol. XII Part III, 1911 p 170 see also Khalid Naji Lancet April 24 1918 p 634.

<sup>4</sup> Brit. Med. Jour. March 31 1905 p 777, see also A. Burn, Brit. Med. Jour., Jan. 21, 1926, p 120 and Alfred A. Masser, Brit. Med. Jour., Jan 28, 1928, p 103.

certain conditions. There is no doubt that unconscious delivery may take place when a woman is under the influence of a narcotic or intoxicating drug, or suffering from syncope, asphyxia, apoplexy, coma, delirium or eclamptic convulsions. Cases are also recorded, where women have been delivered unconsciously during profound sleep and hysterical fits. But these conditions should be such as to bring on deep lethargy and complete loss of sensation, or else the uterine pains of the expulsive stage of labour are likely to arouse the woman, especially if she happens to be a primipara. Chevers,<sup>1</sup> however, quotes a case of Dr. Wendell of Chicago in which a primipara was delivered of a child during sleep and woke up after delivery was completed. On the other hand, an easy and rapid delivery without any painful contractions is likely to occur in multiparous women who have roomy pelvis and soft relaxed parts, especially if the foetus is small.

### CRIMINAL CAUSES

These may be—

- A The acts of commission, e.g., the use of mechanical violence and poisoning
- B The acts of omission or neglect

#### A ACTS OF COMMISSION

**Mechanical Violence—1 Suffocation**—This is the commonest form of infanticide. A newly born infant is easily suffocated by pressing the face into some soft material, such as a pillow or bed cloth, or by closing the mouth and nostrils by a towel, handkerchief or some other cloth or by the hand. The mother may suffocate her child by intentionally overlying it, or by forcing mud, rag or cotton wool into its mouth and throat. In one case I found a piece of white, blood stained cloth, 13" long and 6" broad, stuffed into the throat and blocking the upper opening of the air passage. In another case a strip of a gunny bag 10" x 5", was found blocking the larynx. The mother may, sometimes, force her finger into the mouth of the child to prevent it from crying after birth and thus suffocate it to death. In such a case scratches or lacerations may be found about the mouth, tongue and throat. During the post mortem examination of the body of a newly born infant the mouth and throat should be examined for the presence of some foreign matter which, if detected, should be preserved and sent in a sealed packet to the Superintendent of Police. The nose, lips and angles of the mouth should also be examined for the presence of bruising or other injury.

It should be remembered that infants are sometimes suffocated to death by pressure on the chest. Thus, in a case of infanticide I found the right fourth, fifth and sixth ribs fractured and in another case the left third, fourth and fifth ribs and the right third, fourth, fifth and sixth ribs were fractured.

**2 Strangulation**—This is also a common form of child murder. During the act of strangulation far greater violence is used than necessary, and severe marks of abrasions and contusions with extravasation of blood in the soft tissues are usually found on the neck. In one case a thick rope was used to strangle a child, and an *izarband* (a tape of pyjama) was used as a ligature round the neck in another case. This child with the *izarband* twisted round its neck and wrapped in a pyjama was found in the lavatory of a third class compartment of a railway

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<sup>1</sup> Med Juris, Ed III, p 753

train at the Agra Fort Station. A newly born child is, sometimes, murdered by passing the umbilical cord as a ligature round the neck. In such a case the plea put up by the defence is that the child was strangled accidentally by the cord coiling round the neck during delivery. In an accidental case of this nature there is most probably a broad continuous groove, livid or red in colour, without any excoriation, and the death being due to the stoppage of circulation, the lungs are generally found in a fetal condition.

In October 1921, the body of a newly born infant was found lying in the grass farm at Naka Hindola. The umbilical cord was twisted round the neck and the knot was tightened by fixing a piece of *madar* root in its loop and across the windpipe. The cord was twenty five inches long with one end attached to the naval and the other end cut with a knife or a pair of scissors. On removing the cord a soft depression mark, one inch by a quarter of an inch was found encircling the neck over the windpipe. There was an extravasation of blood in the subcutaneous tissues under the ligature mark. The windpipe was congested. The lungs responded to the hydrostatic test and were congested.

Rarely, the natural folds of the skin in the neck of a fat child may resemble the cord marks caused by strangulation but in that case no marks of abrasions or any extravasation of blood will be visible on the neck.

In cases of throttling, in addition to the bruises from the pressure of the fingers and thumb and scratches from the finger nails found on the neck, rupture of the muscles and fracture of the laryngeal or tracheal cartilages may be detected as undue violence is used in throttling infants.

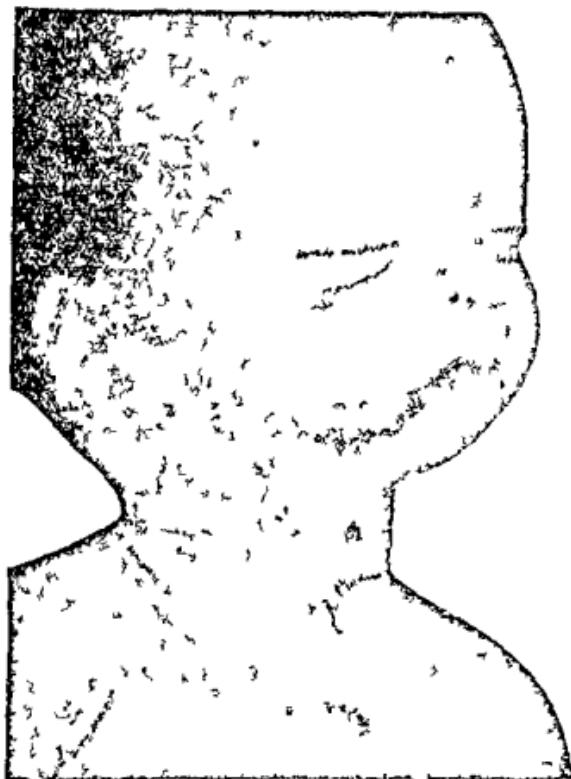


Fig. 132.—Infanticide Throttling. Note abrasions on neck and face  
(From a photograph lent kindly by Dr H. S. Mehta)

**3 Drowning**—This is a rare form of child murder. As recorded by Chevers' submersion of the child's face into a cauldron of warm milk (*Dudh pita Larna*) used to be a common method of infanticide in Benares and other neighbouring places. Now days the usual custom is first to kill an infant by suffocation, strangulation etc., and then to throw the body into a cesspool, well, tank or river with a view to concealing the crime.

The post mortem appearances would be similar to those found in adults if the child was drowned after respiration had been established. No signs would be evident if a woman was delivered in a bath and the child was drowned before respiration had taken place.

**4 Fracture of the Cranium**—Fracture of the cranial bones results from a fall, from a blow on the head with a blunt weapon, or from the head being firmly pressed under a leg of a bedstead (*charpoy*). Excessive violence being used in such cases, depressed and extensive fractures of the skull bones with contusions or lacerated wounds of the scalp are usually noticed.

A newly born child which was found lying dead on a railway line near Achmeda Station showed, on post mortem examination, fracture of the occipital bone with an extravasation of blood on the under surface of the scalp on its posterior aspect. It is presumed that the child was thrown out of a window of a railway carriage of a running train, as it was found soon after the train had passed.

A newly born female infant was discovered lying in a densely populated working class street in Leith which had been thrown from a window on the first floor, a height of fourteen feet and three inches. The infant was removed to the parish hospital where she died six hours later. At the necropsy no external marks of violence were found on the body but the scalp all over felt soft. In the left parietal region there was a non-discoloured swelling of the size of half a walnut. On reflecting the scalp a copious effusion of dark coloured coagulated blood was found in the areolar tissue over almost its entire extent. The left parietal bone showed a somewhat depressed stellate fracture radiating from a point situated about midway nearer its lower border. Of the three fissures one extended upwards to the sagittal suture for a distance of two inches a second reached forward to the frontal bone for one inch and the third ran towards the occiput for one and a half inches. There was considerable congestion of the brain substance.

*Carson & Reid Med. Four. May 18, 1897. p. 1182.*

the head in a breech presentation. It should however be remembered that the neck of a child is very short and is capable of considerable mobility.

**6 Wounds.**—A newly born child may be killed by penetrating wounds into the heart brain medulla or other internal organs caused by needles pins or scissors. No external wound will be visible if a needle or pin is thrust through the fontanelles through the inner canthus of the eye up the nostrils down the throat or up the rectum. Ogston<sup>2</sup> records several cases of infanticide by the employment of these methods. He also records the case of a child who had been suffering from convulsions and died accidentally. On dissection a pin was found sticking into the brain through the fontanelles.

Meixner<sup>3</sup> reports the case of an infant dying on the fourth day. The post mortem examination showed that a needle was lodged in the right upper hemisphere of the brain through the anterior fontanelle. There was a very minute discharge of blood. The mother an unmarried woman had inserted the needle to kill the child. She had also given the child poison which produced its death and the wound in the cranium was not the cause of the death.

A Ucke<sup>4</sup> reports an extra ordinary case of child murder. An illegitimate child 20 days old died in suspicious circumstances. It was found that the mother had ten days before the child's death passed four needles into the heart lungs and liver. Death resulted from sepsis with purulent inflammation of myocardium and bilateral pleurisy. At the post mortem examination the needles were found in the right heart and the liver and had left behind a deposit of iron in the tissues and as a result of the damage to the right heart congestion had been produced in the region of the vena cava which had led to a typical atrophy of the liver cells.

G B Sahay of Patna reported to me a case of infanticide in which a newly born female child was murdered by squeezing the abdomen. The post mortem examination revealed externally the presence of a small bruise on the abdomen and internally laceration of a coil of the small intestine and rupture of the liver and spleen.

**Poisoning.**—Poison is rarely used for the purpose of infanticide though sometimes crude opium is put on the tongue of a child or it is smeared on the nipple of the mother's breast which is then given to the child to suck. Other poisons such as arsenic madar datura and tobacco are also used for destroying newly born infants. In suspicious cases the stomach and other necessary viscera should be preserved for chemical analysis.

### B ACTS OF OMISSION OR NEGLECT

The law presumes that a woman who is about to be confined should take ordinary precautions to save her child after it is born. She is guilty of criminal negligence if she fails to do so. Thus the acts of omission or neglect constituting the crime under the law are—

1. Omission to take the necessary help of a midwife or a skilled physician so that proper arrangements may be made to save the child after its birth. A married woman or one who has borne children is presumed by law to know her duty towards her newly born child. As soon as she gets labour pains she must inform her friends of her condition and must send for medical aid. If she

<sup>1</sup> *Med Juris* p 267 *Collis Barry Leg Med Vol II Ed II 1p 1<sup>st</sup> 1<sup>st</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> *Faucy's part a of Legal Medicine* *Part I Ed 48 Supplement No 1 Peterson Haanes and Webster Leg Med and Toxic Ed II Vol I 1 1913*

<sup>3</sup> *Deutscher Zeitschrift für das gesetzliche Medizin* 1932 VI pp 506-512 *Medico-Legal and Crime Review April 1933 p 103*

of belief. This remark especially applies to a widow or an unmarried woman charged with infanticide who is bound to consult a close friend or a medical practitioner on seeing the altered condition of her body knowing fully well that she has exposed herself to the chances of pregnancy.

With reference to the second point it would be necessary for her to prove precipitate labour.

2 Failure to ligature the cord after it is cut may bleed the child to death. Fatal haemorrhage may also occur, if the cord is not tightly ligatured.

3 Omission to remove the child from the mother's discharges may result in suffocation. In the absence of a medical practitioner or any other attendant the question about the capacity of a woman after delivery may be raised. It is not easy to answer this question. Many women are known to have carried the child for a long distance soon after delivery while other women may get so much exhausted as not to be able to move at all. It depends much upon the strength of the woman and whether she is a primipara or a multipara. A weakly primiparous woman may faint away after delivery from mere exhaustion or may be incapable of attending to the child from mere ignorance. The question has to be decided on circumstantial evidence.

4 Omission to protect the child from cold or heat. Exposure of a newly born child to cold or heat may destroy its life without leaving any marks of violence suggestive of the cause of death except perhaps cerebral congestion.

At 8 a.m. on the 13th January 1934 a newly born male infant was found lying exposed on a grave in Shahjahan Lucknow. The infant was at once removed to the Queen Mary's Hospital where he was found very cold with subnormal temperature and died at about 3 p.m. At the post mortem examination held by me at 1 p.m. on the 15th January 1934 the body was found to be that of a full term male infant. There were no marks of external injury on the body. The brain was engorged and other viscera were congested.

5 Omission to supply the child with proper food according to its age. The starvation of a child constitutes slow death. The stomach and intestines must be examined for the presence of food. If the child is immature it is very difficult for the medical practitioner to say whether the death was due to natural causes owing to feebleness or was due to starvation. The case depends chiefly upon circumstantial evidence.

### THE ABANDONING OF INFANTS

When a newly born infant, after it is born alive is exposed in any place with the intention of abandoning it and death does not supervene the parent or person responsible for the care of such infant is guilty under section 317 I P C and may be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years or with fine or with both (see Appendix IV). The exposure need not be such as would put the child of tender years (under twelve years according to the section) in the immediate danger of health or life. The Madras High Court has held that it was not necessary that the exposure and abandonment must be under such circumstances as to endanger the life or the health of the child. The only ingredient required to complete the offence is an intention of wholly abandoning the child.<sup>1</sup> The offender may be tried for murder or culpable homicide, as the case may be, if the infant dies in consequence of the exposure (see Explanation to section 317, I P C Appendix IV).

### CONCEALMENT OF BIRTH

In a case where infanticide is not proved the mother is usually charged under section 318 I P C, with a lesser offence of concealment of birth by secretly

<sup>1</sup> *Boja Sankulamma* (1890) 1 W.Cir 331 *Ratnai and Thakore Law of Crimes* Ed. VIII, p 798

## CHAPTER XIX

### INSANITY AND ITS MEDICO LEGAL ASPECTS

**Definition** — It is not easy to give a succinct definition of insanity and a medical witness should never venture to do so in a court of law, even though pressed for it by counsel, inasmuch as the law requires of him to affirm whether a particular individual, by reason of unsoundness of mind is either incapable of looking after himself and managing his own affairs or is dangerous to himself or to others. It appears that the law givers have used the term " unsoundness of mind " (*non compos mentis*) in the Indian Penal Code with a view to avoiding the necessity of defining insanity. Unsoundness of mind covers a wider range and is synonymous with insanity, lunacy, madness, mental derangement, mental disorder and mental aberration or alienation. All these terms are used for the disordered state of the mind in which an individual loses the power of regulating his actions and conduct according to the rules of society in which he is moving.

In cases of insanity brought before courts the following terms are often used in giving evidence, hence the medical jurist should be well acquainted with the distinguishing points between them —

**I Delusion** — A delusion is a false or erroneous belief in something which is not a fact. It is not always a sign of insanity. A normal man may have a delusion but he corrects it by reasoning power by applying his past experience and by listening to the arguments of other people. A delusion in an insane person is a symptom of brain disease, is not in harmony with his education and surroundings, and cannot be corrected by any amount of logic, reasoning or argument. An insane person is guided by his own feelings and sensations and does not care to listen to any arguments.

Delusions may be of grandeur or exaltation of persecution or depression of reference of jealousy, of infidelity etc. Delusions of grandeur and delusions of persecution are often found together in the same person. For instance a man who imagines himself to be very rich may also imagine that his enemies are conspiring to ruin him financially.

Delusions are very important from a medico legal point of view as they often affect the conduct and actions of the sufferer, and may lead him to commit suicide, murder or some other crime. The judge and the lawyer attach great importance to the presence of delusions as a sign of insanity. It is therefore necessary that a medical man when called upon to examine the mental condition of a person should carefully make a note of any insane delusions he has been able to elicit during the examination. It must be remembered that the delusions may not be evident in the beginning of the disease or in a form of insanity which is not characterized by delusions. In some cases the patient successfully conceals them even though he be suffering from delusions.

**2 Hallucination** — A hallucination is an erroneous sense perception without any external object or stimulus to produce it. It is due to some abnormal excitation in the brain cells, and may affect any or all the special senses as also the cutaneous sensations. Hallucinations of sight and hearing are the most common. For instance a man may imagine rats and mice crawling into his bed when there are none or may suspect a tiger coming to devour him, when there is no tiger. He may also hear the voices of persons in his room when there is absolute silence.

Hallucinations occur in fevers and intoxications, as well as in insanity. They may be pleasant but more often they are unpleasant. A person suffering from unpleasant and disagreeable hallucinations should be classed as a dangerous lunatic.

and should be kept under proper restraint, for, owing to the delusions arising from these hallucinations, he may be incited to commit suicide or homicide.

**3 Illusion** —An illusion is a false interpretation by the senses of an external object or stimulus, which has a real existence. For instance, a man may imagine a string hanging in his room to be a snake, or may, in the dark, mistake the stem of a tree on the roadside for a ghost. A sane man may experience illusions but, by closer investigation and his judging power, he is capable of correcting the false impression. An insane person cannot do so. He believes the illusion to be a reality and bases his conduct on that assumption. An illusion by itself is not a sign of madness but, owing to madness, the patient lacks the power or resolution to examine his illusion. Illusions of sight, hearing and other senses may occur in cases of mental disease.

**4 Impulse** —This is "a sudden and irresistible force compelling a person to the conscious performance of some action without motive or forethought." Normally, when a man intends to do any act, he tries to realize its consequence and then decides whether he should accomplish it or not. If he finds that the consequences are unfavourable he can restrain himself and will not undertake that act. An insane man has no balance of mind to use the reasoning faculty, and commits the act as soon as the idea occurs to him. He has no power to control it, however bad the consequences may be. It is possible that he may repent of his action afterwards.

The clinical types of irresistible impulses which are generally noted are kleptomania (an irresistible desire to steal articles of little value), pyromania (an irresistible impulse to set fire to things), mutilomania (an irresistible impulse to maim animals), dipsomania (an irresistible desire for drink at periodical intervals) sexual impulses which include all acts of sexual perversions and suicidal and homicidal impulses. Such impulses are commonly met with in cases of imbecility, dementia, acute mania and epileptic insanity.

**6 Lucid Interval**—This is a period occurring in the course of mental disease during which there is complete cessation of the symptoms of insanity, so that the individual can judge his acts soundly and becomes legally liable for his deeds. In criminal cases it is however safer not to regard such an individual responsible for any offence for it is sometimes very difficult to judge whether he was suffering from some mental aberration at the time of committing the offence. Lucid intervals are commonly met with in melancholia and mania.

### CAUSES OF INSANITY

The causes of insanity are classified as **predisposing** and **exciting**

**Predisposing Causes**—The predisposing causes of insanity are—

- 1 Heredity
- 2 Marriages
- 3 Impaired vitality
- 4 Absence of moral training and good breeding

**1 Heredity**—This is the most frequent cause of insanity. The tendency to inherit insanity depends largely upon the condition of the parent at the time of procreation. It is inherited more through the mother than through the father and may show atavism as in other diseases. It is not necessary that the offspring of an insane person should show signs of insanity. It may only show some nervous disorders in the form of nervous excitement hysteria epilepsy etc. It is also true that the parent of a nervous temperament may have an insane child.

**2 Marriages**—Child marriages especially among Hindus are often conducive to insanity owing to the physical and nervous strain of premature sexual indulgence. Consanguineous marriages are apt to produce insanity as they contribute largely towards the perpetuation of bad hereditary influences.

**3 Impaired Vitality**—The various causes which tend to impair the general vitality of the individual and consequently to render him more susceptible to the bacterial infection may be classed as the predisposing causes of insanity. Thus mental worry grief physical strain unhygienic surroundings phthisis syphilis acute infectious fevers and the critical periods of life are all predisposing causes.

**4 Absence of moral Training and good Breeding**—These also tend to predispose to insanity. Persons who have not received proper moral training and who have not been properly brought up according to their social status in life are generally lacking in free will and self control and easily become victims of bad influences of undesirable associations during their life.

**Exciting Causes**—The exciting causes of insanity may be divided into physical and psychic.

**Physical Causes**—The physical causes leading to insanity may again be subdivided into two main groups viz. *non toxic* and *toxic*.

**Non toxic Causes**—Among people predisposed by heredity or a neurotic temperament the non toxic causes such as exhaustion resulting from severe physical or mental strain or serious illness or cerebral hemorrhage and injuries of the skull may affect the brain both pathologically and psychically and may induce mental disorder.

**Toxic Causes**—The toxic causes may be grouped under the following heads—

- 1 Toxic substances resulting from excessive formation or deficient elimination of morbid waste products owing to disordered metabolism
- 2 Toxines generated in the system by microbial infection.

3 Toxæmia produced by the excessive use of certain drugs such as cannabis indica, opium, morphine, cocaine, alcohol, etc

**Psychic Causes**—Intense emotional disturbances such as love hatred passion disappointment, etc., are the psychic causes, which are liable to cause mental derangements especially among those who are already predisposed to it

### INDICATIONS OF INSANITY

*The onset of insanity is usually gradual, but it may be sudden in some cases.* When the onset is gradual, the early physical symptoms of insanity are loss of appetite, constipation, dyspepsia and other digestive disturbances. Insomnia is almost a common symptom and in some cases there is a rise of temperature, these are then followed by mental disturbances. The relatives and friends of the patient notice a change in his conduct and behaviour. He is not the same man as he used to be. He is quite eccentric in his dress, manners, habits and in his dealings with other people. Speech becomes involved, and the face bears a blank or vacant expression. He is gloomy, morose, listless, apathetic and does not care for the social conventionalities. At times he is very excitable and irritable even by trifling worries, which he will not otherwise mind. These are followed by an alteration in his emotions. His affections for his wife and near relatives are changed into dislike and hatred. So far the intellect may not be impaired, and the patient may be quite capable of looking after himself and managing his business affairs. Later, his memory, however, fails him, and the power of self control is lost. The power of reasoning is interfered with, and the judgment becomes weak and faulty. At this stage the errors of perception of the special senses are evident in the form of hallucinations and delusions, which may lead the patient to perpetrate some crime or outrage.

In addition to these personal changes, the surroundings of the patient are often very characteristic. The house or room, in which he lives, is untidy and filthy, and the furniture is not often arranged in some fantastic fashion.

**Stigmata of Degeneration**—In addition to the above symptoms an insane person may exhibit physical peculiarities known as stigmata of degeneration. These are—

## CLASSIFICATION OF INSANITY

The various forms of insanity may, for medico legal purposes, be classified as—

- 1 Amentia
- 2 Dementia
- 3 Acute insanities
- 4 Insanity associated with nervous diseases

### I AMENTIA

Amentia is called "dementia naturalis" by lawyers, and results from arrested development of the brain before birth or in early childhood. It includes chiefly the types of insanity known as idiocy imbecility, feeble mindedness and cretinism.



*Fig. 134.—Case of Idiocy. He is listless and energetic with marked mental confusion and dirty in his habits*

*(Dr Benarsi Das's case)*

**Idiocy**—This is a congenital condition due to the defective development of the mental faculties. All grades of this condition exist from the helpless life of a mere vegetable organism to one which can be compared with the life of young children as far as mental development is concerned. An idiot is wanting in memory and will power, is devoid of emotions has no initiative of any kind is unable to fix attention on any subject and "is unable to guard himself against common physical dangers". He is usually quiet gentle and timid, though he can be easily irritated. He cannot express himself by articulate language but he may be able to make himself understood by certain signs, cries or sounds. In some cases he is able to recognize his relatives and learn with great difficulty. He is

from birth or from an early age mental defectiveness not amounting to imbecility yet so pronounced that they require care supervision and control for their own protection or for the protection of others or in the case of children that they by reason of such defectiveness appear to be permanently incapable of receiving proper benefit from instruction in ordinary schools Feeble minded individuals do not as a rule present bodily deformities and stigmata of degeneration and are often capable of making their own living although they lack in initiative and ability for any work of responsibility Such persons however develop vicious or criminal propensities especially of a sexual nature and are apt to commit assaults or even murders as they are incapable of restraining their impulses

Under the Mental Deficiency Act of 1927 moral defectives are defined as persons in whose case there exists mental defectiveness coupled with strongly vicious or criminal propensities and who require care supervision and control for the protection of others Mental defectiveness is a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind existing before the age of eighteen years whether arising from inherent causes or induced by disease or injury Moral defectives are usually endowed with an average degree of intellect but cannot control their immoral conduct instincts and emotions and cannot be made to understand that they are doing a wrong act They are dangerous to the community inasmuch as they are lacking in moral sense and have no regard for the rights or feelings of others Punishment has little or no deterrent effect on them

**Cretinism** — This is endemic and is prevalent in the hilly districts It is usually associated with goitre and other affections of the thyroid gland Development of the body is generally arrested The figure is squat and dwarfish with short thick limbs and clumsy movements The complexion is sallow the eyelids are swollen and the lips and tongue are thickened The skin is rough and pigmented Such children learn to speak very late and that too imperfectly Some of them are deaf and others blind

Mentally, cretins may look dull and stupid or may be perfect idiots Ordinarily they are slow in thought and incapable of acquiring knowledge but with some patience and perseverance they may be able to learn

## 2 DEMENTIA

This is a form of insanity which is produced by the degeneration of mental faculties after they have been fully developed Hence it is not congenital but may occur at any period of life

The symptoms appear all of a sudden in a previously sane individual or they may appear gradually When the attack is sudden the patient passes into a condition of stupor without any emotional feeling or without any depression or delusion and becomes an imbecile or idiot In a slow attack there is a gradual degeneration of the mental faculties He becomes listless and apathetic does not take any interest in his dress food family or business He cannot fix his attention on any subject Memory becomes feeble or is lost Judgment is impaired and his control over the emotional feelings is very much weakened As the disease progresses from bad to worse the common instincts of volition are abolished The patient becomes irritable incoherent and begins to laugh or cry without rhyme or reason He is mentally and morally depraved and is unmindful of ordinary decencies of life He sometimes resorts to masturbation in public

Very often the appetite is voracious but owing to impaired nutrition the patient becomes lean and thin

**Types of Dementia** — The following four types of dementia have been recognized — Dementia praecox (Primary dementia) secondary dementia senile dementia and organic dementia

**Dementia Praecox (Primary Dementia)**—This is a psychosis which usually occurs between fifteen and thirty years of age and is characterized by a progressive mental deterioration. It is a term used by some authorities to include the three conditions (1) Katatonia, (2) Hysteria and (3) Paranoia but this is not a scientifically correct term, as such conditions may appear in any age period and not only in youth.

The onset of the disease is slow and insidious. The early physical symptoms are loss of appetite, headache, vertigo, insomnia and emaciation. Epileptiform and hysterical attacks sometimes occur in the early stage of the disease. The mental symptoms are laziness, moodiness, irritability of temper, lack of normal interest in the surroundings and loss of moral control. Perception and orientation are preserved but memory, voluntary attention and power of reasoning and judgment are absent. Hallucinations and delusions accompanied by suicidal and homicidal tendencies are often observed even during the early period of the disease.



As dementia develops, the patient becomes listless and apathetic easily irritated and roused to passion but by a little coaxing he can be appeased very soon He is devoid of feelings and emotions He is quite impulsive in his actions without any regard to consequences He may be impelled to a suicidal or homicidal act especially when delusions and hallucinations the characteristic features of acute insanity persist even after the patient has passed into a state of dementia

**Senile Dementia** —This condition results from the gradual decay of the body as well as the brain during old age and depends upon the degenerative changes of the arteries It affects those people who have a hereditary taint of mental aberration and who have led a strenuous life

In this form the patient is forgetful unable to fix attention on any subject, is dirty in his habits and erratic in his tendencies He begins to suspect his own near and dear relatives and is often affected by hallucinations of sight and hearing and delusions of persecution He imagines that he has become poor and destitute He becomes melancholic and lastly becomes a perfect dement. Suicide is also common in such a condition Maniacal excitement is very rare though garrulity and continuous and aimless movements are sometimes seen

**Organic Dementia** —This condition is a result of some organic lesion of the brain The lesion may be a localized one as a new growth embolism cerebral abscess or haemorrhage or it may be diffused as chronic meningo encephalitis

The symptoms vary according to the site and extent of the lesion In a localized lesion the patient slowly becomes lethargic and somnolent He speaks and thinks slowly and with great difficulty His movements are slow and awkward He does not seem to take interest in life and has very few wants and desires In acute cases the patient suddenly becomes restless and delirious and suffers from visual and auditory hallucinations

In the case of a diffuse lesion of the brain the mental faculty is gradually diminished or abolished accompanied by loss of memory and difficult speech The patient is irritable and is apt to get violent attacks of mania Sometimes convulsions occur and exhaustion or syncope ends the scene

In all cases of organic lesions of the brain if death does not occur soon the patient becomes forgetful loses perceptive faculties and is incapable of fixing attention on present impressions He is hopelessly indecent in his behaviour He is unable to look after himself or manage his own business Finally the patient becomes bedridden and passes into a state of complete dementia

### 3 ACUTE INSANITIES

These are generally associated with some kind of toxemia Mania melancolia delusional insanity exhaustion psychoses catatonia and hebephrenia may be described under this heading The first two disorders have been grouped together by Kretschmer under the term *manic depressive insanity* but it is more convenient to describe them separately

**Mania** —This is a condition of exaltation affecting the emotions and the intellect and manifesting itself in increased mental and physical activity

For the convenience of description mania is subdivided into three forms simple mania or hypomania acute mania and chronic mania although these forms merely represent the different stages of the same disease varying in degrees of intensity and duration

**Simple Mania or Hypomania** —This is the mildest form of mania in which there is an exaggerated sense of self importance The symptoms manifested in this form result from the decreased inhibitions to the motor impulses The general demeanour and conduct of the patient are greatly altered although there is no real

change in personality. He is quick witted and entertaining in conversation, but owing to lack of unity in the course of ideas he rapidly wanders from one subject to another. He is full of schemes and ideas which are never thoroughly worked out. Later, the patient becomes restless, irritable and interfering. He is always busy doing one thing or another, but does not feel tired. He retains his memory and power of orientation but lacks in moral control, as evidenced by his excessive indulgence in alcohol and sexual passions. There is no evidence of hallucinations or delusions. The patient often recovers from this form of the disease.

**Acute Mania**—The attack of acute mania is usually gradual preceded by a prodromal stage lasting two or three weeks. During this period there may be constant headache, general malaise, restlessness, insomnia, inability to concentrate and loss of weight. The patient is irritable and begins to dislike his friends and relatives. Sometimes, the attack commences suddenly without any prodromal symptoms.



the saliva are increased and the hydrochloric acid of the gastric juice is also increased. The perspiration is profuse and has a mousy odour. During the period of lactation the mammary secretion is increased and may, sometimes lead to the formation of mammary abscesses.

At the commencement the urine is diminished in quantity but further in the course of the disease the quantity and the total solids of the urine are increased. In women menstruation is irregular and the discharge is generally profuse.

Sensibility to heat and pain is diminished but the sensations of touch, hearing and smell are as a rule very acute. The superficial reflexes are slightly exaggerated but the deep reflexes are usually diminished at first and may be increased later when the patient is at rest. Muscular movements are very peculiar as they take place in the large proximal joints. Thus while walking or running the maniacal patient moves the trunk freely from the hips and keeping the arms abducted waves them freely from the shoulders.

The temperature is generally normal or subnormal but sometimes it is raised to 100°F or 101°F when other febrile symptoms develop. The tongue is brown and furred and the teeth and lips are covered with sores. Constipation is very severe and complete insomnia is a marked symptom. The patient is unable to retain food even when given by the tube and rapidly loses flesh and weight. The pulse is frequent varying from 130 to 160 per minute and the respirations are 30 to 40 per minute. Such a condition has been spoken of as *acute delirious mania*.

The prominent mental symptoms are excitement, loss of self control, flight of ideas and great muscular activity. The patient is unable to fix his attention upon any one subject and develops incoherent speech. He is happy in his mood and has an exaggerated sense of well being and power. He is very emotional. He begins to laugh, sing or shout and then all of a sudden begins to weep or cry or gets angry. He gets violently excited and has a tendency to tear or destroy his clothes, bedding or furniture. He is fantastic in his dress and indecent in manners and talk, using obscene and profane language. He is dirty in his habits and may defile his body and room with urine and faeces.

Owing to the flight of ideas the patient drops letters, omits words, phrases or even sentences and is unable to keep up the chain of ordered reason when he is writing a letter or is engaged in conversation.

The memory is as a rule good but in severe forms of mental excitement there may be a certain clouding of consciousness with disorientation and great impulsiveness. At these times hallucinations of a visual and auditory nature are usually present and are often associated with delusions. The delusions are usually of a grandiose type in which the patient imagines that he possesses great wealth and power or that he is the ruler of an extensive empire. These may be followed by delusions of persecution when he may commit suicide or murder under the false belief of being persecuted or poisoned by others. It is therefore necessary that such a patient should be kept in restraint so that he may not hurt himself or others. Not infrequently he becomes much more violent if any attempt is made to keep him under restraint.

The chief peculiarity of this disease is that the patient can continue to be boisterous and violent for days and nights without experiencing any sense of fatigue.

The acute form of mania may last for days, weeks and months. It may rarely last for years. Sometimes the symptoms may subside followed by a period of quiescence called a *lucid interval*. The symptoms may again recur at a later period without any warning.

The acute symptoms of excitement often subside and are followed by a stage of exhaustion when the limbs are still and flaccid and the patient sinks into a state of stupor. This stage lasts one to three weeks after which recovery occurs. A few cases may pass into a state of chronic mania.

**Chronic Mania**—This resembles acute mania but the symptoms are less marked. It is characterized by incoherence, hallucinations and delusions with occasional attacks of acute excitement. Each of these attacks leaves the patient weak minded. The memory is slowly affected and the patient passes into a state of dementia from which recovery never occurs.



Fig. 138.—Case of Melancholia. Has a sad facial expression, is depressed and occasionally weeps without reason. Sleep is irregular, sleep does not reply to questions properly, and sometimes does not take food for a week. (Dr. Benarsi Das's case)

**Melancholia**—This form of insanity is characterized by difficulty of thought, general depression and inhibition of motor impulses. It affects women more than men especially in early and advanced life. It may be described under three headings, simple melancholia, acute melancholia and chronic melancholia.

**Simple Melancholia**—This is the mildest of the three forms of the disease and is spoken of as simple retardation. It is characterized by mental depression without hallucinations or delusions. It is associated with apprehension of evil, loss of appetite, constipation and sleeplessness especially towards early morning. The face has an anxious expression, the forehead is wrinkled and the eyes are dull. There is lack of interest in the surroundings with inability to attend to daily pursuit of life. Speech is slow and in whispers and answers are given in monosyllables with great difficulty. There is a fear that the natural affection of relatives is lost. There is also a tendency to commit suicide. The thought processes are retarded.

but there is no disorientation or clouding of consciousness, and memory and intellect are good.

**Acute Melancholia**—In this form the three chief symptoms of melancholia are well marked. The onset is usually gradual preceded by a prodromal stage lasting one to three weeks. During this stage there are complaints of persistent headache, insomnia, gastric disturbances and irritability of temper, which are likely to be confused with neurasthenia or hypochondriasis. According to Overbeck-Wright the chances of recovery and the avoidance of the acute attack of the disease are very great indeed, if this prodromal stage be recognized, and the patient be promptly put under proper treatment<sup>1</sup>.

The physical condition of acute melancholia is manifested by marked anorexia and progressive loss of weight. The tongue is dry and coated with a thick white or brown fur, and appetite is lost owing to the marked deficiency in the secretion of the gastric juices especially pepsin. The bowels are constipated owing to deficiency of the intestinal juices. The pupils are frequently dilated. The pulse is rapid, weak and irregular. The skin is dry owing to the diminution of perspiration. The hands and feet are blue and cold due to feeble circulation. The respirations are shallow, but normal in frequency. The temperature is usually subnormal, but is often slightly raised in the evenings. The urine is diminished in quantity and is passed at long intervals. It may even be passed only once in twenty-four hours. In males impotence is usually observed. In females menstruation is generally absent but reappears when recovery occurs or when the disease becomes chronic.

The superficial and deep reflexes are often found exaggerated. Muscular movements are slow and weak, the larger proximal joints are rigid and the powers of fine inco-ordination are impaired. Sensation is as a rule, normal though sensitivity to noise is a marked feature.

The mental symptoms generally appear along with the physical symptoms. Perception is normal, orientation is usually quite correct, and the memory and the intellectual faculties are well preserved but volitional attention is generally poor and defective. There is paralysis of emotional reaction. Good or bad news or even a joke does not affect the patient who feels gloomy and miserable, and experiences psychic pain. He has lost the social instinct. He sits apart, refuses to mix with his neighbours or to take part in out-door games or social festivities.

Hallucinations and delusions are usually present. Hallucinations are often of an auditory type in which the patient imagines that he hears voices accusing him of various misdeeds or threatening him of punishment. Delusions are generally of a hypochondriacal nature. The patient believes that he suffers from some incurable disease e.g. closure of the oesophagus, gangrene of the intestines or wasting of the brain, and that he will die a miserable death. Delusions may also be of the religious or persecuting character. The patient believes that he has committed the unpardonable sin against God, or that his food is being poisoned by some persons conspiring to kill him.

Suicidal tendencies are common though the patient may develop homicidal tendency, and may kill his wife and children to save them from the supposed utter ruin or may kill some person whom he believes to be giving him and his family all the imaginable trouble of the world.

Sometimes the patient is afraid of some impending disaster, and he is so much agitated or excited in his anxiety, that he keeps on moving incessantly, wringing his hands, rocking to and fro and bemoaning his piteous plight. Such a patient often resists being fed, dressed or washed. He is unmindful of personal cleanliness and passes urine and faeces in his garments.

<sup>1</sup> *Funacy in India* 1921 p. 218

On other occasions the patient passes as it were into a stuporous condition. He is pathetic and sits silent and motionless in the same fixed attitude for a long time. He has to be spoon or tube fed and his bladder and bowels have to be attended to.

Acute melancholia may alternate with an attack of mania with a lucid interval intervening between the two. This alternating form of the disease is known as circular insanity or *folie circulaire*.

An attack of acute melancholia on an average lasts from six to eight months and ends in recovery. If the attack is not followed by recovery within a year it usually passes into a chronic condition. Death may occur in the acute stage when the patient passes into a typhoid state.

**Chronic Melancholia**—This form results from the acute form and is characterized by some improvement in the physical signs but not in the mental symptoms. The patient becomes fat and increases in weight. His digestive powers also improve and the bowels open regularly. The patient however remains persistently depressed and suffers from hallucinations and delusions.

Ordinarily there is no recovery from the chronic form but Stoddart has seen cases of recovery. One of his female patients recovered after eighteen years duration, a male patient of his recovered from a previous attack of thirty-five years and another male patient recovered from a previous attack of seven years.<sup>1</sup>

**Delusional Insanity (Paranoia)**—This is a form of insanity which is characterized by fixed and systematized delusions as also by hallucinations of various characters. It is called partial insanity by lawyers and appeals to the legal mind inasmuch as they believe that a delusion must be present to constitute insanity. The medical man however thinks that a delusion is merely a symptom.

gases are blown into his room. Disturbances of general sensation give rise to hallucinations which are attributed to the effects of hypnotism, magnetism, electricity, wireless telegraphy, etc. The patient gets very irritated and excited owing to these painful and disagreeable hallucinations and delusions.

In almost all cases the delusions of an exalted type referring to grandeur, power and wealth are seen and the patient generally conducts himself in a haughty and overbearing manner. With the lapse of time the hallucinations of a grandiose character become less marked and the patient becomes listless, apathetic and passes into a condition of melancholic depression. At this stage the patient requires to be carefully watched lest he commit suicide.

During the chronic stage the patient usually retains his memory and self control. He talks sensibly, and does not show any sign of insanity until the conversation is directed to the particular type of delusion from which he is suffering. It is however always safe to keep such a patient under restraint for he is often a source of danger to himself as well as to others. There is no motive or fore thought for criminal offences but sometimes premeditation and elaborate arrangement precede a criminal assault.

**Exhaustion Psychoses**—These disorders result from fatigue and exhaustion of the nervous system at the late adult or senile period of life in men but at an earlier age in women owing to prolonged lactation especially in India.

**Symptoms—Physical**—The onset is as a rule slow and insidious. Insomnia is the first symptom which is generally a disturbing factor in nerve exhaustion or neurasthenia. Sleep is either absent or is unrefreshing, disturbed and accompanied by nightmare. Hearing becomes so acute that the slightest noise in a room even the tickling of a clock or palpitation of the heart is enough to startle the patient from sleep and to cause much annoyance. The other symptoms are loss of physical activity and vigour, dyspepsia, constipation, malnutrition, headache, giddiness, irritability, nervousness and anaemia. The pupils are widely dilated but the visual field is not diminished and there is no abnormality of optical conditions. Circulation is feeble, the extremities are therefore cold and edematous. Palpitation is a common symptom. The skin perspires readily. The temperature is generally subnormal. The superficial and deep reflexes are well marked and the muscles are in an irritable condition and react readily to the slightest external stimulus. The urine is normal.

**Mental**—Irritability and loss of self control are prominent mental symptoms. The power of attention is weakened and memory either wanders or is incoherent in its associations. The power of thinking is lost. Any attempt of thought fogs the brain. However if persevered in it leads to mental confusion and depression. The speech is hesitating but not incoherent. Sometimes the patient passes into a semi stuporous condition when he has a sad vacant look and sits listlessly in one position for a long time. He cannot be roused to answer questions.

Visual hallucinations very often occur and the patient is at times troubled by painful obsessions of fear. For instance, the patient is afraid of an empty space (*agoraphobia*) and cannot cross a street especially if it is open and unoccupied. Similarly, some patients have a dread of being shut up in a closed space or apartment (*claustrophobia*). Some of these obsessions are apt to be associated with visceral sensations of a more or less oppressive nature. Thus the patient may complain of an oppression at the chest, constriction of the heart or may have a disposition to pass water or motion<sup>1</sup>. These obsessions may also lead to impulsive actions which the patient is unable to control though he is conscious of their evil effects. He may later on develop delusions of persecution or poisoning and consequently may develop suicidal tendencies.

<sup>1</sup> *Illbrü System of Med* Vol III p 740

**Katatonia (Catatonia)**—This is a disease which is associated with adolescence and occurs among Europeans Anglo Indians and Indians. The conditions which tend to impair the vitality and lower the resistance to infective diseases render the person liable to this disease. Heredity also plays an important part. For convenience of description the disease may be divided into four stages

- 1 The prodromatous stage
- 2 The acute stage of onset
- 3 The stage of stupor
- 4 The stage of excitement

**1 The Prodromatous Stage.**—The onset is as a rule slow with gradual loss of energy and thinning of the body from malnutrition. The first mental symptoms are the development of hallucinations of an auditory nature followed by dreadful obsessions delusions and loss of self control

**2 The Acute Stage of Onset**—The physical symptoms of this stage are loss of appetite nausea and vomiting. The heart is irritable beating rapidly and irregularly. The arterial tension increases as the physical complaints become more acute. The skin is moist and greasy from frequent profuse sweats and is often affected by pustular eruptions. Sleeplessness is almost a constant symptom. The senses of taste and smell are commonly affected but not those of sight and hearing though hallucinations of a visual and auditory nature are often present in this stage. The sensations of touch pain and warmth are generally diminished. The pupils are sluggish and dilated. The visceral reflexes not being under control the patient as a rule passes urine and faeces involuntarily hence he has to be watched constantly. The superficial and deep reflexes are markedly increased. The voluntary muscles are usually rigid and stiff. This condition may last from

sometimes repeats the words spoken to him or imitates the tone of one whom he has heard speaking (*echolalia*) Hallucinations of sight and hearing develop and give rise to delusions of a varied nature The patient may suddenly be attacked by a maniacal fit, when he may have a suicidal or homicidal tendency During this period it is very essential to watch him closely

The duration of the stage is uncertain, it may be from a few weeks to a few years Recovery occurs in a very small number of cases

**4 The Stage of Excitement** —The stuporous condition is followed by the stage of excitement In many cases there is an apparent recovery lasting for two to three years and then there is a relapse Attacks of excitement generally come on in paroxysms During the periods of quiescence the patient appears to be sane The patient takes his food freely The general health improves and he gains in weight Rhythmic stereotyped movements of the hands and verberation may be present Confusion of thought is less marked though memory and attentiveness are weakened The patient becomes definitely weak minded and passes steadily into a state of dementia Hallucinations and delusions are present and generally affect the conduct of the patient who should always be carefully watched

**Hebephrenia** —This is a disease, which occurs usually in the early adolescent period of life and affects females more than males Owing to marked leucocytosis Dr Bruce<sup>1</sup> thinks that the disease is due to toxæmia brought on by some bacterial infection

**Symptoms** —The onset is so slow and insidious that the changes in character and temperament of the patient are not noticed for a very long time The characteristic feature of this disease is an arrest of physical development The patient is inactive lethargic and sits idle the whole day He shuns society avoids friends and, sometimes, wanders about aimlessly in streets He is untidy and careless of his dress He is very often cruel, mischievous and addicted to self abuse Obscene language and indecent actions are marked features of this disease The patient is full of emotions changing from time to time Once he may be mute and depressive, at another time he may become verbose irritable and excited This condition passes on steadily to dementia The power of concentration and attention is lost Memory is impaired Visual and auditory hallucinations may be present and may lead to obsessions impulsive acts and general restlessness

#### INSANITY ASSOCIATED WITH NERVOUS DISEASES

There are certain forms of insanity, which are associated with nervous diseases The chief of these are general paralysis of the insane and epileptic insanity, which will be described here

**General Paralysis of the Insane (Dementia Paralytica)** —This is a chronic progressive disease, which is characterized by physical and mental symptoms terminating in paralysis and dementia due to degeneration of the brain and central nervous system

It affects men more than women and occurs in the prime of life between thirty and forty five years of age, but it may occur in childhood or old age Heredity plays a very minor part in the causation of this disease Acquired or congenital syphilis is the chief factor causing this disease

**Symptoms** —In this disease there is always a prodromal stage lasting for months or years During this period forgetfulness, irritability, restlessness over friendliness, intemperance in drinks and deterioration of the moral senses, are

<sup>1</sup> Overbeck Wright Lunacy in India p 262

usually the first symptoms which attract the attention of the friends and relatives of the individual. At this stage the feelings of self-satisfaction and expansiveness are the characteristic features of the disease. These are followed by ideas of grandeur which assume the nature of delusions of an exalted kind. The patient believes that he is the most powerful and possesses enormous wealth. He squanders his money, undertakes business of a speculative nature or or lets the purchase of a large number of useless articles. At times he steals articles which are of no use to him, or, owing to perversion of the moral sense he may commit an indecent assault on a woman in public.

In place of excitability and a general sense of exhilaration gloom despondency loss of energy and mental hypochondriasis may be the first mental symptoms to announce the commencement of the disease.

The physical symptoms usually follow the mental symptoms but they may precede or accompany them. Sometimes the disease is ushered in by apoplectic or epileptic convulsive seizures or a temporary attack of aphasia lasting for a few hours or days.

The first physical symptoms that are generally observed are the tremors of the tongue and lips causing an embarrassed speech as if the patient were intoxicated. The tremors slowly involve the muscles of the face causing loss of expression at later the muscles of the hands so that the handwriting becomes shaky and illegible and the last letters of words are omitted. The finer and rhythmical movements of the fingers are also not properly executed. The pupils are frequently unequal and sometimes small and contracted. The deep reflexes are exaggerated. Headache and neuralgic pains are often complained of. Insomnia is frequently a constant symptom though drowsiness may be present in a few cases. Owing to the weakness and inco-ordination of the muscles of the larynx the voice becomes

and more frequent. Lastly, there is general impairment of the mental faculties with loss of memory and self control. At the same time hallucinations of sight and hearing occur, and are followed by delusions of a persecuting nature.

Epileptic insane persons are deprived of all moral sensibility, are given to the lowest forms of vice and sexual excesses and are sometimes dangerous to themselves as well as to others. In many long standing cases there is usually feeble mindedness leading to progressive dementia of the most degraded character.

True epileptic insanity is that which is associated with epileptic fits. This may occur before or after the fits, or may replace them, and is known as pre-epileptic insanity, post-epileptic insanity and masked or psychic insanity.

**I Pre-Epileptic Insanity**—This is very common and may replace the epileptic aura, lasting in some cases for hours or even days. It is characterized by violent fits of maniacal excitement or by depression, fussiness, suspiciousness and general malaise. Hallucinations of various kinds are experienced and, owing to delusions the patient may commit violent assaults, or may bring false charges against innocent persons. Sometimes, the patient may refuse to take any food.

**II Post-Epileptic Insanity**—In this condition stupor following the epileptic fit is replaced by automatic acts of which the patient has no recollections. The patient is confused fails to recognize his own relatives and wanders aimlessly about. He is terrified by visual and auditory hallucinations of a religious character and delusions of persecution, and consequently may commit crimes of a horrible nature, such as thefts, incendiarism, sexual assaults and brutal murders. Such crimes are motiveless and unpremeditated. The patient never attempts to conceal them at the time of perpetration but, on regaining consciousness, may try to conceal them out of fear.

In a murder trial at Lancashire Assizes on October 30, 1928 evidence was given by mental specialists who suggested that the accused had killed his wife in a condition of post-epileptic automatism. He fired shots at his wife and killed her outright. There was evidence that at the time his manner was calm and deliberate and he appeared to know perfectly well what he was doing. In 1922, he had suffered from petit mal and he was suffering from a condition of post-epileptic automatism in which a man might do things about which he seemed quite able to reason though entirely unconscious of what he had done. The jury found that the accused was guilty of the act charged but insane at the time.<sup>1</sup>

A case is recorded in which the accused murdered his mother and wounded his step-father in a fit of epilepsy without any apparent cause and then hid himself in a ravine. The medical evidence showed that the accused was subject to epileptic fits and he used to be completely unconscious during such time. It was therefore held that the evidence of this unprovoked attack upon his mother and step-father with whom he had no quarrel or trouble, and his hiding in the ravine were certainly consistent with the attack upon the deceased having taken place during or whilst recovering from an epileptic fit and that any other theory of the events was really untenable. It was found that the accused was guilty of the acts charged but not so as to be responsible in law for his actions. He was detained during His Majesty's pleasure.\*

In some cases violent gesticulations or fits of mania may develop after sleep usually following the epileptic seizures. This condition is quite transitory, lasting for a few hours. In a very small number of cases mental depression may follow the epileptic fits, and may be accompanied by delusions of persecution leading to suicidal or homicidal tendencies.

**III Masked or Psychic Epilepsy**—In this variety the epileptic seizure is replaced by the transitory loss of consciousness and maniacal excitement. It is interesting from a medico legal point of view, for a patient suffering from this condition is apt to commit a criminal offence without any consciousness or premeditation and without any subsequent remembrance of the act.

<sup>1</sup> *Lancet* Nov 10, 1928 p 990.

<sup>2</sup> *Rangoon H.C.Cr. Ipp No 1397 of 1930, AG v ANT BWE v. A. E., 38 Cr. Law Jour., 1937, p 667.*

Lastly it should be remembered that epilepsy in childhood may arrest the growth of the mental faculties and lead to idiocy and imbecility. Epileptic idiots are as a rule very impulsive and irritable and are apt to injure their playmates if not carefully watched.

### DIAGNOSIS OF INSANITY

Sometimes it is very difficult to form a correct diagnosis as to whether an individual is sane or not especially when he has no permanent delusion and when he is just on the border line between sanity and insanity. Under such circumstances it is always advisable to note carefully the following points before a definite opinion is given —

**1 Family History** — Insanity being mostly hereditary, it is very important to enquire into the mental condition of the patient's parents uncles, grand parents, brothers, sisters and other relatives as to whether any of them ever showed mental excitement or depression or mental weakness or suffered from nervous diseases such as chorea, epilepsy etc. It is also necessary to find out if any of them committed suicide or were attacked by cerebral affections, gout, rheumatism or syphilis.

**2 Personal History** — While listening to the history of the patient the medical man should always try to be sympathetic so as to win his confidence. The history should be as thorough and complete as possible noting all the characteristic details from childhood likely to give a clue to the disease. Question should be asked about his personal habits with reference to the excessive use of any intoxicating drug such as cannabis indica, alcohol, cocaine or opium, sexual excess, masturbation, any morbid propensity at the time of puberty, occupation, mental strain or shock, injury to the head or any brain disease and chorea, epilepsy, convulsions or any other nervous affections. It should be ascertained from his relatives and friends, if they noticed of late any change in his conduct and behaviour towards them, if he was cleanly in his habits or filthy and disgusting and if he was restless and passed sleepless nights or if he looked excitable or depressed at times. Lastly, it should be found out if this was the first attack or there has been any attack previous to it.

**3 Physical Examination** — The patient's manner of dressing and walking, as well as his bearing and gestures should be carefully noted when he comes to the physician. The presence of deformities and malformations in the head or body, as also the power of speech and articulation should be observed. The pulse and temperature should be taken as both might increase in insanity. The tongue should be examined to find out if it is foul or furred due to constipation. All the organs should be carefully examined. The skin would be dry, mottled and wrinkled and the hands and feet would be moist with sweat.

**4 Mental Condition** — The mental capacity should be found out by first testing his memory and then the power of his reasoning and sound judgment.

While testing the memory the patient should be asked to give the dates of common incidents that occurred in his family or to recite the names of his relatives or the days of the week or to answer such other simple questions. The questions put to him should not be too complex or difficult to be easily answered by an average man of his culture and education.

The power of his reasoning and sound judgment should be detected by discussing with him on various subjects. During discussion an attempt should be made to find out a delusion. An insane person tries to conceal his delusion; hence it may be necessary to watch him for days before his condition can be certified.

Lastly handwriting will show the mental confusion the misspelling the omission of letters or phrases and the muscular tremor if an educated insane person is asked to write

### FEIGNED INSANITY

There is always some motive for feigning insanity. For instance a criminal pretends insanity to escape punishment for his offence especially when he is placed on trial. In civil practice an individual feigns insanity to try and avoid the results of business transactions or deeds which he may have executed. Police men soldiers and sailors do so when they wish to leave the service and are not allowed to do so or when they know that they are likely to be punished very severely for some gross neglect of duty.

The detection of feigned insanity is one of the responsible duties of a medical officer. Ordinarily, it is easy to detect the fraud but, at times it becomes very difficult when the individual should be detained under observation before a definite opinion is given. It should be remembered that such a person cannot be kept under observation for more than ten days in the first instance but with the permission of the Magistrate he may be detained for further periods of ten days up to a maximum of thirty days<sup>1</sup>. During this period the medical officer has to watch him and make a careful note of all the symptoms exhibited by him and has also to visit him daily at unexpected hours without the knowledge of the patient.

The following are the distinguishing features between feigned and true insanity —

1 Feigned insanity always comes on suddenly and not without some motive. True insanity may rarely develop all of a sudden but in that case some predisposing or exciting cause will be evident, if a careful history of the case is taken.

2 In feigned insanity there is no peculiarity in the facial expression which is generally observed in the full developed forms of insanity.

3 In feigned insanity the individual tries to pass off as insane by putting forward incoherent maniacal symptoms especially when he knows that he is under observation. There is a total remission of all the symptoms when he thinks that he is alone and unobserved.

4 In feigned insanity the symptoms are not uniform indicating any particular type of insanity. Malingeringers usually mix up the symptoms of one or two distinct types of insanity. Such a condition may however exist in true insanity.

5 In feigned insanity violent exertion occasioned by imitating maniacal frenzy (which is generally imitated by impostors) will bring on exhaustion perspiration and sleep but a really insane person can stand such exertion for many days without sleep and fatigue.

6 A malingeringer is not as a rule dirty and filthy in his habits. He may smear his room with faeces and other filth if he has seen a true lunatic doing so. He will however, keep a clean space for sleeping and will spare his person.

7 The dry, harsh skin and lips the furrowed tongue constipation want of appetite and insomnia are very often physical manifestations of true insanity. These are as a rule absent in feigned insanity as they cannot possibly be imitated by a malingeringer.

<sup>1</sup> See 16 Act II, 191 (The Indian Lunacy Act 1912 as modified upto the 1st October 1931).

ment given in the certificate of the facts indicating insanity observed by himself at the time of the examination and the facts indicating insanity communicated to him by others

Every medical certificate made under the Indian Lunacy Act is a legal document giving evidence of the facts therein appearing and of the judgment therein stated to have been formed by the person certifying on such facts as if the matters therein appearing had been verified on oath<sup>1</sup>

To avoid legal action for wrongful certification the medical practitioner must be very careful in giving a certificate of lunacy for admission into a mental hospital as he is responsible for having an alleged lunatic sent to a mental hospital but his responsibility ceases on the latter's admission into the mental hospital. It must be remembered that a reception order required to be founded on a medical certificate shall not be made unless the person who signs the medical certificate or where two certificates are required each person who signs a certificate has personally examined the alleged lunatic in the case of an order upon petition not more than seven clear days before the date of the presentation of the petition and in all other cases not more than seven clear days before the date of the order.<sup>2</sup> The Magistrate may in his discretion extend this period within which the alleged lunatic must have been medically examined<sup>3</sup>

On receipt of the petition the Magistrate holds inquiry in private and personally examines the alleged lunatic unless for reasons recorded in writing he thinks it unnecessary or inexpedient to do so. If he is satisfied he forthwith issues a reception order (Appendix V Form 2). If he is not so satisfied he fixes a day for the consideration of the petition due notice being given to the petitioner and to any other person to whom in the opinion of the Magistrate notice should be given and he makes such further inquiries concerning the alleged lunatic as he thinks fit. In the meantime he may pass necessary orders for the safe custody of the alleged lunatic until the inquiry is concluded.

On considering the petition the Magistrate may grant a reception order which holds good for seven days or he may refuse the petition when he has to give the reasons in writing a copy of which has to be supplied to the petitioner

No reception order can be made under petition except in the case of a lunatic who is dangerous and unfit to be at large unless the Magistrate is satisfied that the person in charge of a mental hospital is willing to receive the lunatic and the petitioner or some other person engages in writing to the satisfaction of the Magistrate to pay the cost of maintenance of the lunatic (Section 11 The Indian Lunacy Act 1912 as modified up to the first October 1931)

**3 Reception Orders otherwise than on Petition**—When any European subject to the provisions of the Army Act or the Air Force Act has been declared a lunatic in accordance with the provisions of the military or air force regulations in force for the time being he may be admitted into a mental hospital which has been duly authorized for the purpose by the Governor General in Council on a reception order signed by an administrative medical officer if he thinks that the admission of the said lunatic into the mental hospital is necessary (Section 12 The Indian Lunacy Act 1912 as modified up to the 1st October 1931)

If an Indian soldier has been declared insane by a medical board he has to be discharged from the Army and handed over to his relatives. If the relatives be not at hand or if the Indian soldier by reason of insanity be dangerous to himself or to others, he should be handed over to the civil authorities for disposal as a civilian

<sup>1</sup> Sect on 18 (3)

<sup>2</sup> The Indian Lunacy Act 1912 Section 19 (1)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid Sect 11 B ( ) (d)

Under section 13 (1) of the Indian Lunacy Act, every officer in charge of a police station may arrest or cause to be arrested any person who he has reason to believe, is a wandering or dangerous lunatic within the limits of his station. Any person so arrested must be taken forthwith before a Magistrate. The Magistrate shall examine such person, and if he thinks that there are grounds for proceeding ~~in~~ further, shall order him to be examined by a medical officer (usually a civil surgeon), and may make such other inquiries as he thinks fit. If the Magistrate is satisfied that such person is a lunatic and a proper person to be detained, he may, on receipt of a certificate of lunacy from the medical officer, issue a reception order for the admission of such lunatic into a mental hospital. If any friend or relative desires that the lunatic be sent to a licensed mental hospital and engages in writing to the satisfaction of the Magistrate to pay the cost of maintenance of the lunatic in such mental hospital the Magistrate shall, if the person in charge of such mental hospital consents, pass a reception order for the admission of the lunatic into the licensed mental hospital. If any friend or relative of the lunatic enters into a bond with or without sureties for such sum of money as the Magistrate thinks fit, conditioned that such lunatic shall be properly taken care of, and shall be prevented from doing injury to himself or to others, the Magistrate instead of issuing a reception order, may, if he thinks fit, make him over to the care of such friend or relative (Section 14, The Indian Lunacy Act, 1912).

Under section 13 (2) of the Indian Lunacy Act, 1912, every officer in charge of a police station who has reason to believe that any person within the limits of his station is deemed to be a lunatic and is not under proper care and control or is cruelly treated or neglected by any relative or other person having the charge of him shall immediately report the fact to the Magistrate. It is enacted under section 15 (1) (2) and (3) that if it appears to the Magistrate, on the report of a police-officer or the information of any other person, that any person within the limits of his jurisdiction deemed to be a lunatic is not under proper care and control, or is cruelly treated or neglected by any relative or other person having the charge of him, the Magistrate may cause the alleged lunatic to be produced before him and summon such relative or other person as has or ought to have the charge of him. If such relative or other person is legally bound to maintain the alleged lunatic, the Magistrate may pass an order for such alleged lunatic being properly cared for and treated and, if such relative or other person wilfully neglects to comply with the said order, the Magistrate may sentence him to imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month. If there is no person legally bound to maintain the alleged lunatic, or if the Magistrate thinks fit to do so, he may, on being satisfied that the person deemed to be a lunatic is a lunatic and a proper person to be detained under care and treatment and on receipt of a necessary certificate from a medical officer, make a reception order for the admission of such

Lunacy Act (Act IV of 1912), on an order made by or under the authority of the High Court,

(b) in the case of a judicial inquisition under Chapter V of the said Act on an order made by the District Court

In such cases the High Court or the District Court, as the case may be shall on the application of the person in charge of the mental hospital, pass an order for the payment of the cost of maintenance of the lunatic in the mental hospital and may from time to time direct that any sum of money payable under such order shall be recovered from the estate of the lunatic or of any person legally bound to maintain him. If at any time the Court is satisfied that the lunatic has not sufficient property, and that the person legally bound to maintain such lunatic has no means to pay such cost the Court shall certify the same instead of passing the order for the payment of the cost (Section 26 The Indian Lunacy Act, 1912)

**5 Reception of Criminal Lunatics** —A criminal lunatic is to be admitted into a mental hospital on the order of the presiding officer of a Court in accordance with section 466 or 471 of the *Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898* (Appendix III) or according to section 30 of the *Prisoners Act of 1900* or according to section 103 A of the *Indian Army Act, 1911*<sup>1</sup> after the medical officer has certified to his lunacy

Sections 464 to 475 of the *Criminal Procedure Code, 1898* (Appendix III) deal with the criminal lunatics who may be divided into three classes as under —

1 Those who are unable to stand their trial by reason of being of unsound mind, and incapable of making their defence

2 Those who committed the crime, but were acquitted on the ground of being of unsound mind at the time of committing the crime

3 Those who contracted the disease after they were imprisoned in a jail

When any person is detained in a mental hospital under the provisions of section 466 or 471 of the *Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898* or under the provisions of section 103 A of the *Indian Army Act, 1911*,<sup>1</sup> the visitors of the mental hospital appointed by the Local Government or any two of them are authorized to visit him to ascertain the state of his mind, and they must visit him once at least in every six months so as to enable them to make a special report as to the state of his mind to the authority under whose order he is detained. When a criminal lunatic is detained in a jail, the Inspector General of Prisons is authorized to pay such visits and make such a report (Section 30, The Indian Lunacy Act, 1912)

**Discharge of Lunatics from a Mental Hospital** —The provision of the discharge of lunatics from a mental hospital is made in sections 31 to 34 of the *Indian Lunacy Act, 1912*. According to these sections three of the visitors of a mental hospital, of whom one must be a medical officer, may, by order in writing direct the discharge of any person detained in such mental hospital except criminal lunatics and European lunatics subject to the provisions of the *Army Act* or the *Air Force Act*. Notice of the discharge should be immediately communicated to the authority under whose orders the person was detained in the mental hospital

A lunatic detained in a mental hospital under a reception order, made on petition, shall be discharged if the person on whose petition the reception order was made so applies in writing to the person in charge of the mental hospital provided that no lunatic shall be discharged, if the officer in charge of the mental hospital certifies in writing that the lunatic is dangerous and unfit to be at large

A European subject to the provisions of the *Army Act* or the *Air Force Act* and detained in a mental hospital under the orders of a military administrative officer must be detained therein until he is discharged therefrom in accordance

<sup>1</sup> *The Indian Lunacy Amendment Act 1923 (Act No XXIII of 1923)*

with the military or air force regulations in force for the time being or until the officer making the order applies for his transfer to the military or air force authorities in view to his removal to England. Whenever it appears to the officer in charge of a mental hospital that the discharge of such a person is necessary either on account of his recovery or for any other purpose, such person must be brought before the visitors of the mental hospital and on the visitors recording their opinion that the discharge should be made the General or other Officer Commanding the division district brigade or force or other officer authorized to order the admission of such persons into a mental hospital shall forthwith direct him to be discharged and such discharge shall take place in accordance with the military or air force regulations in force for the time being.

When a dangerous and wandering lunatic, or a lunatic cruelly treated or not under proper care and control is detained in a mental hospital and any of his relatives or friends is desirous that he shall be delivered over to his care and custody, he may apply to the authority, under whose order the lunatic is detained and such authority if it thinks fit in consultation with the person in charge of the mental hospital and with the visitors or with one of them being a medical officer, may order the discharge of such lunatic from the mental hospital provided that the relative or friend making the application gives a sufficient undertaking that such lunatic shall be properly taken care of and shall be prevented from doing injury to himself or to others.

When a person is admitted into a mental hospital on a Magistrate's reception order, and is subsequently found on a judicial inquiry to be of sound mind and capable of managing himself and his affairs, the person in charge of the mental hospital must forthwith on the production of a certified copy of such finding discharge the alleged lunatic from the mental hospital.

**Escape and Recapture of Lunatics**—A lunatic escaping from a mental hospital may be re-taken by any police-officer or by the person in charge of the mental hospital or any officer or servant belonging thereto or any other person authorized in that behalf by the said person in charge and conveyed to and re-admitted into such mental hospital provided that in the case of a lunatic not being a criminal lunatic or a European lunatic subject to the provisions of the Arms Act or the Air Force Act the power to re take such escaped lunatic is exercisable only for a period of one month from the date of his escape (Section 36, Act IV 1912).

**Illegal Detention**—Section 93 of the Indian Lunacy Act of 1912 provides that any unauthorized person who receives or detains a lunatic or alleged lunatic in a mental hospital or for gain detains two or more lunatics in any place not being a mental hospital is punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years or with fine or with both.

### CIVIL RESPONSIBILITY

**Management of Property**—Chapters IV and V of the Indian Lunacy Act 1912 (Act IV of 1912) provide for the legal proceedings to be followed in cases concerning the protection of the person and property of a lunatic. Chapter IV is applicable to those liable to the jurisdiction of the High Courts of the Presidency towns of Calcutta Madras and Bombay, and lays down that on the application of any relative of an alleged lunatic, or of the Advocate General the Court may direct an inquiry whether the person alleged to be lunatic is of unsound mind and incapable of managing himself and his affairs the Court may also order inquiries concerning the nature of the property belonging to the alleged lunatic, the persons who are his relatives the time during which he has been of unsound mind or such other matters as seem proper The Court may require the alleged lunatic to attend at some convenient time and place for the

purpose of examination and may authorize any person or persons to have access to the alleged lunatic for the purpose of a personal examination and a report on his mental capacity and condition. But if the alleged lunatic is a female, who cannot appear in public, such order will be regulated by the law and practice for the examination of such persons in other civil cases.

When a medical practitioner is called upon to give his opinion, after the examination of the alleged lunatic in such cases, he should not simply mention that the individual is insane, but he should certify that insanity is of such a degree as to render him incapable of managing his own property. He must be very careful in giving his opinion, as an individual may be insane, and yet may be capable of looking after his own property. In a case of doubt it is always safer to give an opinion in favour of sanity rather than insanity.

If the alleged lunatic is not within the local limits of the jurisdiction of the High Court, and the inquiry cannot conveniently be made before the High Court may direct the inquiry to be made before the District Court within whose local jurisdiction the alleged lunatic may be.

When upon the inquiry it is found that the alleged lunatic is of unsound mind so as to be incapable of managing his affairs, but that he is capable of managing himself and is not dangerous to himself or to others, the Court issues an order for the appointment of a manager to look after his property, and by such order of appointment, or by any subsequent order, grant such powers to the manager for the management of the estate as may seem necessary and proper to the High Court, provided that he will not, without the previous permission of the Court, mortgage charge or transfer by sale, gift exchange or otherwise, any immovable property of the lunatic, or lease any such property for a term exceeding five years. The Court may, if it appears to be just or for the lunatic's benefit, order that any property, movable or immovable, of the lunatic and whether in possession, reversion, remainder, or contingency, be sold, charged, mortgaged, dealt with or otherwise disposed of as may seem most expedient for the purpose of raising money to be used for all or any of the following purposes —

- 1 the payment of the lunatic's debts or engagements,
- 2 the discharge of any incumbrance on his property,
- 3 the payment of any debt or expenditure incurred for the lunatic's maintenance or otherwise for his benefit,
- 4 the payment of or provision for the expenses of his future maintenance and the maintenance of such members of his family as are dependent on him for maintenance, including the expenses of his removal to Europe if necessary, and all expenses incidental thereto,
- 5 the payment of the costs for any judicial inquiry, and of any costs incurred by order or under the authority of the Court.

The manager of the lunatic's estate shall, in the name and on behalf of the lunatic, have the power to execute all such conveyances and instruments of transfer relative to any sale, mortgage or other disposition of his estate as the Court may order. If it is subsequently reported to the Court that the unsoundness of mind for which the control of the lunatic's estate was taken away from his hands has ceased, the Court may order a second inquiry, and on being satisfied that the lunacy has ceased will order all proceedings in the lunacy to cease or to be set aside on such terms and conditions as may seem fit.

Chapter V is applicable to persons not subject to the jurisdiction of any of the High Courts of the Presidency towns, and provides that the District Court within whose jurisdiction an alleged lunatic is residing may, upon an application made by any relative of the alleged lunatic or by any public curator appointed

under the Succession (Property Protection) Act 1841 or by the Government Pleader or by the District Collector on behalf of the Court of Wards direct an inquisition for the purpose of ascertaining whether such person is of unsound mind and incapable of managing himself and his affairs. If the alleged lunatic resides at a distance of more than fifty miles from the place where the District Court is held to which the application is made the said Court may issue a commission to any subordinate Court to conduct the inquisition. After the inquiry if it is satisfactorily proved that the alleged lunatic is of unsound mind and is incapable of managing his affairs the Court may appoint a manager of the estate of the lunatic and a guardian of his person on the same terms and conditions as are mentioned in Chapter IV. But the manager has to submit an inventory of the estate belonging to the lunatic within six months from the date of his appointment and has to furnish an annual account of the income and expenditure within three months of the close of the year of the era current in the district. If any relative of the lunatic or the Collector by petition to the Court impugns the accuracy of such inventory or account the Court may hold a summary inquiry into the matter or refer such petition to any subordinate Court or to the Collector if the manager was appointed by the Collector. The District Court has power to remove a manager for any sufficient cause and compel him to make over the property and to furnish accounts to any other person appointed in his place. The District Court may impose a fine not exceeding five hundred rupees on the manager if he wilfully neglects or refuses to deliver his accounts or any property in his hands within the time fixed by the Court. The District Court is also authorized as in Chapter IV to hold a second inquiry when it is reported that the lunacy has ceased.

**Contracts** — Under section 12 of the Indian Contract Act (Act IX of 1877) a contract is invalid if one of the parties at the time of making it was by reason of insanity incapable of understanding it and forming a rational judgment as to its effect upon his interests.

A lunatic however is responsible for the payment of necessaries purchased by him in accordance with his social position and status it being immaterial whether the vendor knew his condition or not but he is not responsible if the order is grossly extravagant and beyond his means or if the vendor has taken advantage of the fact of his insanity in selling those necessaries to him. Again a person who is usually of unsound mind but occasionally of sound mind may make a contract when he is of sound mind. While a person who is usually of sound mind but occasionally of unsound mind may not make a contract when he is of unsound mind.

In a case where a person becomes lunatic after he has contracted to sell or otherwise dispose of his estate or any part thereof the Court may direct the fulfilment of the contract if it appears to the Court that the contract is such as ought to be performed. The Court may also order the dissolution of the partnership of a firm if one of the partners is found to be a lunatic (See sections 51 and 52 Act IV of 1912).

Marriage being regarded as a contract by the Divorce Act 1869 may be declared null and void if it can be proved clearly and convincingly that one of the parties was by reason of unsoundness of mind at the time of the marriage unable to understand the nature and responsibilities of the contract of marriage. Unsoundness of mind developing subsequent to the marriage is no ground for divorce.

Mere weakness and imbecility of mind eccentricity and partial dementia are not in themselves sufficient to void the marriage contract but the mental defect or derangement must be such as prevents one party from comprehending the nature of the contract of marriage and from giving to it his or her free and intelligent consent.

In an appeal by Mr. Tithi alias Tereza<sup>1</sup> from the decision of Mr. Young giving a decree of nullity of marriage at the instance of a European called Alfred Robert Jones a resident of Bhim Tal in Naini Tal district who had prayed that his marriage with the appellant be declared null and void one of the grounds being that he had been deficient in mentality since his very childhood and had to be looked after by his relations throughout his life it was held that the marriage could not be declared as a nullity, as it was impossible to hold either that Mr. Jones was an idiot within the meaning of section 19 of the Divorce Act or that he was incapable of giving consent and did not voluntarily consent owing to force or fraud having been practised upon him after taking advantage of any imbecility of his mind According to his own statement he understood what he was doing and realized what marriage meant

**Evidence**—Under section 118 of the Indian Evidence Act (Appendix II) a lunatic is not competent to give evidence, if he is prevented by his lunacy from understanding the questions put to him and giving rational answers to them However, he is competent to give evidence, if an insane person is in the stage of a lucid interval, or if he is suffering from monomania, though it rests with the judge and jury to decide whether or not they should give credence to it

**Consent**—Section 90 of the Indian Penal Code provides that consent to certain acts is not valid, if such consent is given by a person who, “from unsoundness of mind or intoxication, is unable to understand the nature and consequences of that to which he gives his consent” The question of invalidity of consent may arise in cases of rape, causing death or grievous hurt, and abetment of suicide

Consent to sexual intercourse given by a woman of imbecile or unsound mind is of no avail, and the act amounts to rape

Exception 5 of section 300<sup>2</sup> of the Indian Penal Code provides that “culpable homicide is not murder when the person whose death is caused, being above the age of eighteen years, suffers death or takes the risk of death with his own consent” Whereas section 87<sup>2</sup> of the Indian Penal Code provides that “an act not intended and not known to be likely to cause death or grievous hurt is not an offence by reason of any harm which it may cause, or be intended by the doer to cause to any person, above eighteen years of age, who has given consent, whether express or implied, to suffer that harm, or by reason of any harm which it may be known by the doer to be likely to cause to any such person who has consented to take the risk of that harm”

Abetment of suicide under section 306<sup>3</sup> of the Indian Penal Code is punishable “with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and with fine,” while abetment of suicide of “a person under eighteen years of age, an insane person, a delirious person, an idiot, or a person in a state of intoxication” is punishable under section 305<sup>2</sup> of the Indian Penal Code “with death or transportation for life, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years, and with fine”

**Testamentary Capacity or Capacity to make a Valid Will**—A civil court may invalidate a will if it is proved that the testator, at the time of making his will was not of a “sound and disposing mind” and had not sufficient mental capacity to understand the nature and consequences of his act, and if it is satisfied that he disposed of his property in a way which he would not have done under normal conditions

If a medical practitioner has to examine a person as to his fitness to make a valid will, he should before testifying, make the testator enumerate the amount of his property, the names of his relatives and others to whom he has left his legacies, and should make him repeat the main provisions of the will, enquiring reasons for any disposal of property which seems unjust or out of the common, or for any legal heirs being omitted It should also find out if he knows the nature of the

1 Leader Nov 1 1933  
2 Vidi Appendix II

will and realizes its consequences and if he is not influenced by any insane delusion in disposing of his property.

If a medical practitioner has reason to suspect that he is under the influence of some person who prevents him from exercising his own discretion in making his will, it is better that he should see him alone and encourage him to speak out freely. It must be noted that a will is invalid, if it is executed under the undue influence of any other person.

Persons can make valid wills during lucid intervals. Persons affected by an insane delusion can make a valid will, if the delusion is not related in any way to the disposal of the property or to the persons affected by the will.

Wills made in a fit of drunkenness are considered valid unless the individual was so drunk as not to know the nature of what he was doing and unless they were repudiated in sober moments. Wills may be contested but cannot be declared invalid on the mere ground of the eccentricity, slovenliness, neglect of person and clothing and offensive and disgusting habits of the testator for these do not constitute unsoundness of mind.

In the case of *Katrak and another v. Khorsl edbai and others* before the High Court of Bombay the will of a Parsi priest<sup>1</sup> was contested on the following grounds —

1 That the deceased was suffering from a delusion that his brother and sister had been instrumental in causing his son's death with a view to inheriting his property. This delusion so operated on his mind that he had lost his testamentary capacity.

2 That the deceased was not in a sound mind as he moved about in dirty clothes kept food in cupboards for days and then ate the same in that condition took away sandalwood offered at the *aguary* (fire temple) and sold the same for his benefit and sold sacred water of the sea to non Zoroastrians and so on.

Dealing with the alleged delusion his Lordship said that the evidence led in the case did not justify this conclusion. Even if there was this delusion it did not prevent the deceased from making a valid will inasmuch as it had not influenced him in not considering the claims of his relatives. The other allegations only showed that the deceased was a miser and did not at all prove that he had lost his testamentary capacity or was of unsound mind.

Having regard to the life led by the deceased and the fact that he had ceased to live with his brother and sister for over thirty years his Lordship found nothing unusual in his leaving his whole fortune amassed by leading a very frugal life to the *aguary* to which he devoted his whole life. The evidence of the alleged delusion and unsoundness of mind was meagre, unsatisfactory and unreliable and did not justify his Lordship in coming to the conclusion that he was incapable of making a testamentary disposition. His habits of life might be eccentric, but the deceased was able to look after his affairs and showed clear headedness.

The will having been proved to have been properly executed by the deceased his Lordship granted probate thereof to the plaintiffs and dismissed the caveat making the defendants pay their own costs.

Wills made by persons *in extremis* are regarded as suspicious and may be set aside, for the mental condition in such cases is seldom normal.

Persons of extreme age and feeble health with defective memory and mental sluggishness are capable of making a will, unless their mind has become so impaired that they are incapable of understanding the business in which they are engaged when in the act of making their will.

Persons suffering from motor aphasia, agraphia, or any other nervous disease not affecting the brain may be able to make perfectly valid wills.

### CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

The plea of insanity is generally brought forward in charges of murder in order to escape capital punishment. If insanity is established the accused person is found "not guilty," and is ordered to be kept in a mental hospital, jail or other suitable place of safe custody.<sup>2</sup> An insane person is not punished for his

<sup>1</sup> Times of India Dec. 2 1936

<sup>2</sup> For procedure of trial of insane persons see secs. 464-5 Cr P C, Appendix III

crime, as he is devoid of free will, intelligence and knowledge of the act, but society must be protected against the attacks of an insane person.

The law presumes every individual at the age of discretion to be sane and to possess a sufficient degree of reason to be responsible for his criminal acts, unless the contrary is proved to the satisfaction of the court. In criminal cases where insanity is raised as a plea of irresponsibility, the burden of proving it lies on the defence. Insanity may be proved from facts alleged or proved by the prosecution or independently by the defence. When a person accused of murder is alleged to be insane, the presiding officer of the court generally asks the medical officer to keep the accused under observation and to certify whether he is insane or not. The medical officer takes the following points into consideration before deciding whether the murder was the result of insanity. —

1 *The Personal History of the Murderer* — The murderer may be eccentric, melancholic, degenerate, neurasthenic, etc.

2 *The Absence of Motive* — Not only does an insane person commit murder without any motive but he often kills his nearest and dearest relations, e.g., his wife and children. It must, however, be remembered that in cases of homicide by sane persons it may, at times, be difficult to trace a motive, though there may be one. On the other hand, insane persons are known to have committed murders with a motive, however trifling it may be. Again, a sane person may commit murder on a very trivial excuse. I know of a case in which a young Pasi murdered his sister in law with a gandasa (chopper) lying near on the mere ground that she asked him to take to drink urine in place of water.

to be kept in safe custody in the lunatic asylum at Bareilly. It came out in evidence that after committing the murders on the night of the 10th February, 1922, he made no attempt to run away or conceal himself. The medical evidence also proved that the accused was insane and had fixed delusions. He complained of the visit of a black man every night at 1 a.m., who stayed with him and beat him. He wore a garland of animal bones and had amulets of red cloth tied round his arm. He had a delusion of such an amulet being placed in his mouth rendering him invisible.

**3** In an appeal before the Lahore High Court where the accused had been sentenced to transportation for life under section 302, I P C, for having murdered a boy, named Tanchu by felling him on the ground and beating him on the head till he died. The plea of insanity was raised on behalf of the appellant, as he was certified insane and was admitted to the Punjab Mental Hospital from which he was discharged as cured after a certain period. He then stood his trial.<sup>1</sup> In this case the appellant knew that in killing the boy he was doing something wrong. This is shown clearly by the fact that after the murder he attempted to conceal its evidence by washing his hands in the sand and on the approach of witnesses he ran away. It is further shown by the fact that he concealed himself in his *kotha* in an attempt to prevent his arrest. It was therefore held that the Learned Sessions Judge of Hoshiarpur had come to the right conclusion that legal insanity had not been established. The appeal was dismissed.

**4 Multiple Murders** —A sane person usually murders only one person with whom he is at enmity or against whom he has a grievance, and does not shed more blood unnecessarily. On the other hand, an insane person may kill several persons, mostly his friends and relatives for whom he has great regard and affection. It is, however, possible for an insane person to have only one as his victim.

**5 Want of Preparedness or Pre arrangement** —An insane person does not make any pre arranged plan to kill anybody, but a sane person, as a rule, makes all the necessary preparations prior to committing a crime.

Overbeck Wright, however, cites the following exceptional case in which an insane person exhibited elaborate premeditation and contrivance in committing a murder<sup>2</sup> —

Bertha Peterson aged 45 daughter of the Rector of Biddenden, was indicted for the murder of John Whibley. The deceased, a shoemaker had been a teacher in the Sunday school of Biddenden and there had been rumours eighteen months before the murder of his having behaved indecently towards a little girl of eleven. The prisoner was much interested in the rumour as a disciple of Mr Stead, took a great interest in the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and appears to have allowed her attention to be absorbed by these subjects until she became even more crazy than the general run of the nasty minded apostles of purity. She purchased a revolver and practised with it. She wrote to the deceased expressing her regret for the mistaken attitude she had adopted towards him and asking him to meet her in the parish school room in the presence of witnesses and shake hands as a token of forgiveness. The meeting took place and then asking the deceased to take a good look at a picture on the wall she placed a revolver to the back of his head and shot him dead. Evidence was given of various eccentricities in the previous conduct of the prisoner, and Dr Davies, Superintendent of the Kent County Asylum and Dr Hoare Surgeon to the Maidstone Gaol, in which the prisoner had been detained pending her trial stated that in their opinion the prisoner was under the hallucination that she was ordered to shoot the man. The jury returned a verdict of 'Guilty but insane'.

**6 Want of Accomplices** —An insane person has no accomplice in the criminal act. Lunatics in mental hospitals never conspire to escape or kill the Superintendent or his assistant.

English Law of the criminal responsibility of the insane is based on the answers given by fourteen Judges in 1843 to the following hypothetical questions put to them by the House of Lords in connection with the celebrated case of McNaughten who, labouring under a delusion of persecution, shot Mr Drummond, the Private Secretary of Sir Robert Peel, at Charging Cross —

**Question 1** —"What is the law respecting alleged crimes committed by persons afflicted with insane delusions in respect of one or more particular subjects or persons as for instance where, at the time of the commission of the alleged crime, the accused knew he was acting contrary to law, but did the act complained of, with a view, under the influence of insane delusion

<sup>1</sup> Cr Appeal No 785 of 1938 *K E v Ghunrar Mal Ghania Lal*, 40 Cr Lare Jour Dec, 1939 p 907

<sup>2</sup> *Lunacy in India*, p 32

of redressing or revenging some supposed grievance or injury, or of producing some supposed public benefit?"

*Answer I*—"Assuming that your lordships' inquiries are confined to those persons who labour under such partial delusions only, and are not in other respects insane, we are of opinion that notwithstanding the accused did the act complained of with a view, under the influence of insane delusion, of redressing or revenging some supposed grievance or injury or of producing some public benefit) he is nevertheless punishable, according to the nature of the crime committed, if he knew at the time of committing such crime that he was acting contrary to law, by which expression we understand your lordships to mean the law of the land."

*Question II*—"What are the proper questions to be submitted to the jury when a person alleged to be afflicted with insane delusions respecting one or more particular subjects or persons is charged with the commission of a crime (murder, for example) and insanity is set up as a defence?"

*Question III*—"In what terms ought the question to be left to the jury as to the prisoner's state of mind at the time when the act was committed?"

*Answers II and III*—"As these two questions appear to us to be more conveniently answered together, we submit our opinion to be that the jury ought to be told in all cases that every man is presumed to be sane, and to possess a sufficient degree of reason to be responsible for his crimes until the contrary be proved to their satisfaction, that to establish a defence on the ground of insanity, it must be clearly proved that, at the time of committing the act, the accused was labouring under such a defect of reason, from disease of the mind, as not to know the nature and quality of the act he was doing or, if he did know it, that he did not know that he was doing what was wrong. The mode of putting the latter part of the question to the jury on these occasions has generally been, whether the accused at the time of doing the act knew the difference between right and wrong, which mode, though rarely, if ever, leading to any mistake with the jury, is not, we conceive, so accurate when put generally and in the abstract as when put with reference to the party's knowledge of right and wrong in respect to the very act with which he is charged. If the question were to put as to the knowledge of the accused, solely and exclusively with reference to the law of the land, it might tend to confound the jury by inducing them to believe that an actual knowledge of the law of the land was essential in order to lead to a conviction whereas the law is administered on the principle that every one must be taken conclusively to know it without proof that he does know it. If the accused was conscious that the act was one which he ought not to do, and if that act was at the same time contrary to the law of the land he is punishable. The usual course, therefore, has been to leave the question to the jury, whether the accused had a sufficient degree of reason to know that he was doing an act that was wrong and this course we think is correct, accompanied with such observations and corrections as the circumstances of each particular case may require."

*Question IV*—"If a person under an insane delusion as to existing facts commits an offence in consequence thereof, is he thereby excused?"

*Answer IV*—"The answer must of course depend upon the nature of the delusion. But making the same assumption as we did before, namely, that he labours under such partial delusion only, and is not in other respects insane, we think he must be considered in the same situation as to responsibility as if the facts with respect to which the delusions exist were real. For example, if, under the influence of his delusion he supposes another man to be in the act of attempting to take away his life, and he kills that man as he supposes, in self defence, he would be exempt from punishment. If his delusion was that the deceased had inflicted a serious injury to his character and fortune, and he killed him in revenge for such supposed injury, he would be liable to punishment."

*Question V*—"Can a medical man conversant with the disease of insanity who never saw the prisoner previously to the trial, but who was present during the whole trial and the examination of all the witnesses be asked his opinion as to the state of the prisoner's mind at the time of the commission of the alleged crime or his opinion whether the prisoner was conscious at the time of doing the act that he was acting contrary to law, or whether he was labouring under any, and what, delusions at the time?"

*Answer V*—"We think that the medical man in the circumstances supposed, cannot in strictness be asked his opinion in the terms above stated because each of those questions involves the determination of the truth of the facts deposed to which it is for the jury to decide, and the questions are not mere questions upon a matter of science, in which case such evidence is admissible. But where the facts are admitted or not disputed and the question becomes substantially one of science only, it may be convenient to allow the question to be put in the general form, although the same cannot be insisted on as a matter of right."

The crux of these answers is known as "the McNaughten rule" or "the legal test," which is as follows —

"That to establish a defence on the ground of insanity, it must be clearly proved that at the time of committing the act, the party accused was labouring

under such a defect of reason from disease of the mind as not to know the nature and quality of the act he was doing or if he did know it that he did not know he was doing what was wrong

This legal test has also been accepted in India as the law of criminal responsibility and is embodied in section 84 of the Indian Penal Code which runs as follows —

**Nothing is an offence which is done by a person who at the time of doing it is by reason of unsoundness of mind incapable of knowing the nature of the act or that he is doing what is either wrong or contrary to law**

In order to exempt a person from criminal responsibility under this section it must be proved that the unsoundness of mind existed at the time of committing the offence<sup>1</sup>. Subsequent insanity does not affect the crime though it affects the trial<sup>2</sup>. It may be necessary to enquire into the previous mental condition to prove the state of mind at the time of committing the offence. Further unsoundness of mind should be of such an extent as would render the sufferer incapable of knowing the nature and character of the act or would render him incapable of understanding that the act he was doing was morally wrong or was an offence against the law of his country. A person can thus be exonerated from criminal responsibility if his cognitive faculties have been affected by unsoundness of mind. Hence idiots, imbeciles and persons who are deprived of all understanding and memory are not responsible for criminal offences and do not present any difficulty in courts of law. Difficulty, however arises in those cases where persons labour under a partial delusion only and are otherwise quite sane. In such cases these individuals should be placed as regards criminal responsibility, in the same situation as if the facts with which the delusion existed were real<sup>3</sup>. For instance if in consequence of an insane delusion a person thinks another man to be a wild beast or a jar made of clay, and kills him he is exempted from criminal responsibility as he does not know the physical nature of the act. If he kills a child under an insane delusion that by doing so he is saving him from sin and sending him to heaven he knows the nature of the act that it will result in death but he is not capable of understanding that what he is doing is morally wrong. In a criminal case<sup>4</sup> Martin B cited before the jury as an instance of a delusion the case of a man who fancied himself to be a king dispensing justice to his subjects. If such a man were to kill another under the supposition that he was exercising his prerogative as a king and that he was called upon to execute the other as a criminal he would not be responsible. Again if a person kills another man under the influence of a delusion that he is attempting to take his life he would be exempt from punishment, inasmuch as he, by reason of insanity is incapable of knowing that his act is contrary to the law of his country. He is justified in killing that man in self defence if his delusion were true<sup>5</sup>. Similarly a person who kills another man under the belief arising from an insane delusion that the man had committed adultery with the prisoner's wife would be entitled to have his offence reduced under exception 1 of section 300 I P C as having been committed under grave provocation<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand if a person kills another man under the influence of an insane delusion that he had inflicted a serious injury to his character and fortune he is criminally responsible for his offence seeing that no one is entitled by law to kill a person in revenge for such injury even if his delusion were true<sup>6</sup>.

1 Cr I C sec 166 Appen I & III

2 Our Penal Law of India Ed II Vol I p 187

3 R v Townby 3 F and F 839

4 Mac Naughten's Case 1 Q & J R 130

5 Wayne Cr Law of Ind a Part II p 17.

6 Mac Naughten's Case Loc Cit

It was proved that the appellant committed the offence without any attempt at concealment of the crime. There was no accomplice with him and not only did he shoot one person, but he tried to kill two and there was also no premeditation in the commission of the offence. The medical evidence as to the mental condition of the accused given by the mental expert (Col Overbeck Wright) was that he was insane at the time of the commission of the offence and that he was suffering from hebephrenia.

One Geron Ali, accused, was a disciple of the Pir and called him father and the Pir's mother. The Pir said to him 'Take the heads of those who dissuade you and come to your doors'. At this time the Pir's mother said to him that he would go to heaven, if he offered a human head in sacrifice on that day which was an auspicious day being the first day of Ramzan. The accused cut off with a dao the heads of two persons including that of his own infant daughter and offered the same to the Pir and said 'Father, you asked me for one human head. I present you with two'. The evidence showed that he believed that he was doing a meritorious act which qualified him for heaven. It was held that the accused was incapable of knowing that what he was doing was either wrong or contrary to law by reason of unsoundness of mind at the time of the occurrence and he was, therefore, entitled to the protection of section 84, I.P.C. He killed those persons without any effort at concealment and he did not try to escape after doing this.<sup>1</sup>

**Loss of Control**—A person accused of crime in India is not entitled to exemption from criminal responsibility on the mere ground of loss of the power of self control at the time of perpetrating the offence, unless it is attributable to insanity satisfying the usual legal tests, viz., inability to distinguish right from wrong or to know the nature and consequences of the act. This view was taken into consideration by the learned Judges when they convicted Lakshman<sup>2</sup> who, being vexed with the cries of his two small children, had killed them. A similar view was also taken in the case of Venkata Sami<sup>3</sup> who had murdered his brother's child wife. The application of these legal tests in all such cases is not very sound, inasmuch as there is a form of insanity, known as impulsive insanity, which affects the will and emotions and not the cognitive faculties. The patient is able to realize the difference between right and wrong and the nature and consequences of the act, and yet he commits the crime being impelled by an irresistible or uncontrollable impulse induced by a diseased mind. Such a condition should be recognized in courts as a sufficient ground for exemption from criminal liability.

<sup>1</sup> Criminal responsibility should, however, not be extended to one who with no

cleaner of the car at night near Sitali Ghat. He was absconding and arrested on the fourth day of the occurrence. He was sentenced to transportation for life by the Sessions Judge of Chandwara for this double murder. On an appeal preferred by him the Judicial Commissioner in the course of his judgment observed that the case did not fall within section 84 of the Indian Penal Code because the mental faculties of Matin distinguishing right from wrong from a moral point of view were absolutely clear. The applicant fully believed that taking life of another was not only illegal but immoral. The appellant divided himself into two parts viz. Matin Ali and Rumi Dasi (free lance). According to him there resided in his physical body both good and evil spirits and in spite of his control the evil spirit forced him to kill innocent persons like himself to make the world better. Matin did not commit suicide as the world would have taken him as a coward. The present crimes were committed in a fit of impulsive insanity without any motive or premeditation nevertheless they did come under review of section 102 I.P.C. but necessitated indulgent consideration. Having regard to the fact that the appellant belonged to a respectable family and had received higher education the Judicial Commissioner directed that the case be laid before the local Government for such indulgent consideration as they may be pleased to show to the appellant under section 101 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

against the wall was acquitted of murder on the ground that he was in a fit of somnambulism at the time of committing the murder and was therefore unconscious of the nature of the act. In another case where Maggie Alexander was charged with having murdered her child with a razor the jury returned a verdict of ' guilty but insane ' as it was definitely proved in evidence that the accused was a somnambulist that she committed this act in a state of somnambulism and therefore did not know what she was doing that she did not appreciate the nature and quality of the act and that she did not know she was doing it at all because of this somnambulistic state from which she unquestionably suffered.

**Semisomnolence or Somnolentia**—This is half way between sleep and waking and is very often called sleep drunkenness. This condition is mostly allied to a mental condition occurring in some cases immediately after an epileptic fit. If a person is suddenly aroused from deep sleep he may unconsciously commit some horrible and illegal deed owing to his mind being in a state of confusion especially if he is having a dream or a nightmare at the time. He is not criminally responsible for such a deed.

A woman in Hungary attacked her daughter in the middle of the night with an axe inflicting serious injuries. At her trial she pleaded nightmare as a defence. She alleged that she had heard gossip that her daughter had been seen walking at night in remote places with a young man and had been filled with suspicion. On the night of the assault she dreamt of her daughter's disgrace and saw her arrested for an offence against public morals. Under the influence of the dream she gave way to an overpowering impulse to kill her. She had been brought to her senses only by the girl's screams. The Medical Advisory Board of Criminal Jurisdiction to which the court referred the matter advised that the woman had told the truth and was not responsible for the assault. She was accordingly acquitted.<sup>1</sup>

**Hypnotism or Mesmerism**—This is a sleep like condition brought on by artificial means or by suggestion and is allied to somnambulism. During a hypnotic trance though unconscious of surrounding objects a person may perform acts suggested by the hypnotizer, but does not remember them afterwards. Sometimes the suggestive influence may last beyond the period of the hypnotic trance. Difference of opinion exists as to whether a hypnotized person can be made to commit a criminal act but the best authority would seem to indicate that while persons under hypnotic control can be influenced to commit acts in line with defects in character or weakness of morals which they might otherwise not commit the fundamental principle holds true that no one can be compelled by hypnotic influence to commit any deed of which he was not capable in the normal state. A person cannot be hypnotized against his will hence if he volunteers to be hypnotized he is expected to have anticipated all the consequences of the act and agreed to become responsible for them and the well settled principle of law that a person cannot take an advantage of his own misconduct would govern in case he violated the law in the state of hypnosis.<sup>2</sup>

Hypnotism as a defence to a criminal act is not generally recognized in courts. In a case where Gouffe was murdered by hanging Bompard one of the murderers unsuccessfully pleaded that she had been hypnotized by Lyraud the other murderer and while under his influence was induced to take part in the murder.

**Delirium**—According to Tuke<sup>3</sup> delirium is a perversion of the mental processes the perversion being manifested in speech or action. The disturbance is characterized by incoherent speech hallucinations illusions and delusions.

<sup>1</sup> *La Cet Dec 14 1909 p 106.*

<sup>2</sup> *Times Jan 2 1933 p 9 & H C Med Leg and Criminol Rev Vol 1 Part 1 Jan 1933 p 94.*

<sup>3</sup> *Medico-Legal Jour Vol LVI Jan 2 March April 1924 No 2 p 48.*

<sup>4</sup> *Det of Psych Med et c.*

restlessness, watchfulness apparently purposeless actions, inability to fix the intention ? Owing to hallucinations and delusions being present in a state of delirium the patient may commit violent fatal acts. Such a person is not legally responsible for acts committed during an access of delirium if, in the words of section 84 I.P.C., he lost consciousness to such an extent as would prevent him from knowing the nature of the act or distinguishing between right and wrong.

**Drunkenness**—The law relating to drunkenness and criminal responsibility is laid down in the following two sections of the Indian Penal Code.—

**Section 85**—Nothing is an offence which is done by a person, who, at the time of doing it is by reason of intoxication incapable of knowing the nature of the act or that he is doing what is either wrong or contrary to law provided that the thing which intoxicated him was administered to him without his knowledge or against his will.

**Section 86**—In cases where an act done is not an offence unless done with a particular knowledge or intent a person who does the act in a state of intoxication shall be liable to be dealt with as if he had the same knowledge as he would have if he had not been intoxicated, unless the thing which intoxicated him was administered to him without his knowledge or against his will.

could not be regarded independent of each other and as it was not alleged that the prisoner was too drunk to form the intent of committing the rape the defence of drunkenness to the charge of murder must fail. In the course of their judgment the House of Lords have laid down "that evidence of drunkenness which renders the accused incapable of forming the specific intent essential to constitute the crime should be taken into consideration with the other facts proved in order to determine whether or not he had this intent. Evidence of drunkenness falling short of a proved incapacity in the accused to form the intent necessary to constitute the crime, and merely establishing that his mind was affected by drink so that he more readily gave way to some violent passion, does not rebut the presumption that a man intends the natural consequences of his acts." This observation of their Lordships has been followed in the cases in Indian courts and is deemed as a final statement of the law on this point. In the case of *King Emperor v. Bishan Singh*,<sup>1</sup> where the accused was charged with having murdered three persons by firing a gun in a state of intoxication, it was held that the accused was not in such an advanced state of intoxication as not to be fully aware of what he was doing and not to be perfectly cognizant of the probable consequences of his act. When firing at the persons in question he must at least be deemed to have intended to cause such injuries as he knew were likely to result in death, and accordingly he must be held guilty of murder within the terms of section 302, Indian Penal Code. In the case of *King Emperor v. Judagi Mallah*,<sup>2</sup> where the accused caused the death of his cousin, Deonarain, by stabbing him on the throat with a knife in the course of a drunken brawl, it was held that the accused was incapable by reason of drunkenness to form the intent necessary to constitute the crime. It was brought out in evidence that after he committed the crime he ran about saying that he had killed this man and was going to be hanged. He said that he had done a wrongful act. The accused had the knowledge and the intention which would make him liable under section 302, Indian Penal Code, and, therefore, he was guilty of murder.

**Homicide under the Influence of Hypnotic Drugs**—In the case of *Rex v. Salkeld*,<sup>3</sup> the defendant was indicted before Mr Justice Humphreys at the Birmingham Summer Assize, 1946 for the murder of a woman by shooting her at a dance at Langborough. In evidence Salkeld said that he had had a breakdown and had silly fits of weeping. He suffered from sleeplessness and took medicinal and other hypnotic tablets. After an absence of three hours the Jury found the accused not guilty of murder but guilty of manslaughter. Passing sentence of five years' penal servitude the learned Judge said he took it that the verdict meant that owing to Salkeld's drug taking habit he was in a muddled condition of mind so that he was not in a condition to form any intention to kill.

## CHAPTER XX

### LAW IN RELATION TO MEDICAL MEN III MEDICAL ACT

In order that persons requiring medical aid should be enabled to discriminate between qualified and unqualified practitioners an Act called the Medical Act of 1858, was passed by the British Parliament in 1858 which came into force from the first day of October one thousand eight hundred and fifty eight. This Act created the General Medical Council which, according to the Act amended in 1886, consists of five members nominated by the Crown with the advice of the Privy Council eighteen members appointed by the universities in the United Kingdom having medical faculties nine members appointed by the medical corporations such as the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons and seven members directly elected by the members of the profession as a whole. To these are added three dentists who are members of the Dental Board and are appointed for dental business.

This Council maintains the register of medical men practising in Great Britain and Ireland, and has the controlling power over the discipline of the profession and over curricula and examinations of medical schools and colleges. It also publishes the British Pharmacopoeia.

By Part II of the Medical Act of 1886 medical graduates of the Indian Universities recognized by the General Medical Council are entitled to be registered on the payment of a fee of five pounds as colonial practitioners in the medical register and their names are entered in a separate list known as the Colonial List. The General Medical Council withdrew their recognition of the degrees granted by the Indian Universities from March 1 1930, on the ground that they had no direct means to ascertain if the universities in India were maintaining a suitable standard of medical education when in 1923 the Legislative Assembly did not sanction the financial grant necessary for maintaining a medical inspector for carrying out the annual inspection of the medical examinations. It appears that after carefully considering the reports of medical inspectors to the Indian Medical Council on Bombay, Lucknow, Patna and Madras the executive committee of the General Medical Council resolved at their meeting held on May 25 1936 that the degrees of M.B. B.S. granted by the Universities of Bombay, Lucknow and Madras (together with other qualifications granted by the Universities of Bombay and Madras which were previously registrable) should again be recognized for registration, if granted on or after February 25 1930, and that the degrees of M.B. B.S. granted by the University of Patna should be recognized for registration if granted on or after May 11 1936. In February, 1937, the Executive Committee of the General Medical Council also passed a resolution that holders of diplomas granted by the Punjab University on or after the 25th February, 1930, should be entitled to registration in the Colonial List. The Committee passed a similar resolution on the 4th May 1937, recognizing the diplomas of the University of Calcutta granted on or after the 16th October, 1936.

### PRIVILEGES OF REGISTERED PRACTITIONERS

It is incumbent on every medical practitioner in the British Isles to have his name registered as by the act of registration he is entitled to practise medicine in all its branches in the United Kingdom and in any other part of His Majesty's dominions overseas, to get certain official appointments, to grant medical certificates required by an Act of Parliament, to be exempted from serving in juries

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## CHAPTER XX

### LAW IN RELATION TO MEDICAL MEN

### THE MEDICAL ACT

In order that persons requiring medical aid should be enabled to discriminate between qualified and unqualified practitioners an Act, called the Medical Act of 1858, was passed by the British Parliament in 1858, which came into force from the first day of October, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-eight. This Act created the General Medical Council which, according to the Act amended in 1886 consists of five members nominated by the Crown with the advice of the Privy Council, eighteen members appointed by the universities in the United Kingdom having medical faculties nine members appointed by the medical corporations such as the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons and seven members directly elected by the members of the profession as a whole. To these are added three dentists who are members of the Dental Board and are appointed for dental business.

This Council maintains the register of medical men practising in Great Britain and Ireland, and has the controlling power over the discipline of the profession and over curricula and examinations of medical schools and colleges. It also publishes the British Pharmacopoeia.

By Part II of the Medical Act of 1886 medical graduates of the Indian Universities recognized by the General Medical Council are entitled to be registered on the payment of a fee of five pounds as colonial practitioners in the medical register and their names are entered in a separate list, known as the Colonial List. The General Medical Council withdrew their recognition of the degrees granted by the Indian Universities from March 1, 1930, on the ground that they had no direct means to ascertain if the universities in India were maintaining a suitable standard of medical education when in 1923 the Legislative Assembly did not sanction the financial grant necessary for maintaining a medical inspector for carrying out the annual inspection of the medical examinations. It appears that after carefully considering the reports of medical inspectors to the Indian Medical Council on Bombay, Lucknow, Patna and Madras the executive committee of the General Medical Council resolved at their meeting held on May 25, 1936, that the degrees of M.B. B.S. granted by the Universities of Bombay, Lucknow and Madras (together with other qualifications granted by the Universities of Bombay and Madras which were previously registrable) should again be recognized for registration, if granted on or after February 25, 1930, and that the degrees of M.B. B.S. granted by the University of Patna should be recognized for registration, if granted on or after May 11, 1935. In February, 1937, the Executive Committee of the General Medical Council also passed a resolution that holders of diplomas granted by the Punjab University on or after the 25th February, 1930, should be entitled to registration in the Colonial List. The Committee passed a similar resolution on the 24th May, 1937, recognizing the diplomas of the University of Calcutta granted on or after the 16th October, 1936.

### PRIVILEGES OF REGISTERED PRACTITIONERS

It is incumbent on every medical practitioner in the British Isles to have his name registered, as by the act of registration, he is entitled to practise medicine in all its branches in the United Kingdom and in any other part of His Majesty's dominions overseas, to get certain official appointments, to grant medical certificates required by an Act of Parliament, to be exempted from serving on juries

and inquests or in the militia, to use certain professional titles and to recover professional fees by legal procedure, unless he happens to be a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, since its fellows are prohibited from taking legal proceedings for the recovery of their professional fees.

In India, owing to the want of uniformity of standard in preliminary education and the medical courses in schools and colleges, and owing to the prevalent Ayurvedic and Unani systems<sup>1</sup> no Medical Act had been passed till recently to control or to restrict the medical practices. In 1916, the Government of India passed the Indian Medical Degrees Act, known as *Act No. VII of 1916*, to regulate the grant of titles implying qualifications in Western Medical Science, and the assumption and use by unqualified persons of such titles.

By section 6 of this Act whoever voluntarily and falsely assumes or uses any title or description or any addition to his name implying that he holds a degree diploma license or certificate conferred granted or issued by any authority recognized by the Governor General in Council or recognized by the General Council of Medical Education of the United Kingdom or that he is qualified to practise Western medical science shall be punishable with fine which may extend to two hundred and fifty rupees or if he subsequently commits, and is convicted of an offence punishable under this section with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees.

Provided that nothing in this section shall apply to the use of any person of any title description or addition which prior to the commencement of this Act he used in virtue of any degree licence or certificate conferred upon or granted or issued to him. Section 7 provides that no Court shall take cognizance of an offence punishable under this Act except upon complaint made by order of the Local Government or upon complaint made, with the previous sanction of the Local Government by a Council of Medical Registration established by any enactment for the time being in force in the province.

Within the last few years the Provincial Governments have created Medical Councils in Bombay, Madras, Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Punjab, and United Provinces by passing the Medical Act for the registration of certain medical practitioners and supervision of medical education in their own provinces. Each of these Councils consists of members elected by the registered medical practitioners and those nominated by the Provincial Government. The administrative head of the medical department is generally the President of the Council and the Registrar or Secretary of the Council maintains a medical register for the province. Persons possessing medical qualifications included in the schedule maintained by the Provincial Medical Councils are eligible for registration on payment of the prescribed fees and on furnishing proof of the qualifications possessed by them.

It was found desirable that the Government of India should pass an Act on some such lines as the Medical Act of 1858 so as to have uniformity of qualifications and to confer almost the same rights and privileges on the registered practitioners as in Great Britain and Ireland. At the Simla session of the Legislative Assembly in 1929, the Government of India proposed to introduce a bill for the creation of an All India Medical Council, but had to give up the idea at the time, as it was not approved at a meeting of the ministers and the administrative heads of the medical departments of the different provinces. In June, 1930, the Government of India again convened a meeting of the ministers and the administrative heads of the medical departments and the representatives of the medical faculties of various universities, and formulated a new bill for the creation of the All India Medical Council which was introduced in the Legislative Assembly in the winter session of 1933 at Delhi. It was passed into an Act, known as the Indian Medical Council Act, 1933 (Act No. XXVII of 1933) in the autumn session.

<sup>1</sup> The *Bombay Medical Practitioners Act* (Bombay Act No. XVI of 1938) was passed in 1938 to regulate the qualifications and to provide for the registration of practitioners of the Indian systems of Medicine with a view to encourage the study and spread of such systems and to amend the law relating to medical practitioners generally. See also the U.P. Indian Medicine Act, 1939 (1 of 1939) which came into effect on October 1, 1946.

at Simla and received the assent of the Governor-General on the 23rd day of September, 1933. The Act has since been modified upto the 1st December, 1937. The object of the Act is to constitute a Medical Council in India in order to establish a uniform minimum standard of higher qualifications in medicine for all provinces. The Medical Council constituted under this Act shall consist of (a) one member from each Governor's province, to be nominated by the Central Government, (b) one member from each British Indian University, to be elected by the members of the Senate of the University (or, in the case of the University of Lucknow the Court), from amongst the members of the medical faculty of the University (c) one member from each province where a Provincial Medical Register is maintained, to be elected from amongst themselves by persons enrolled on the Register who possess recognized medical qualifications or medical qualifications granted by a British Indian University, and (d) four members to be nominated by the Central Government. The President of the Council shall be elected by the members of the Council from amongst themselves provided that for four years from the first constitution of the Council the President shall be a person nominated by the Central Government who shall hold office during the pleasure of the Central Government and, where he is not already a member shall be a member of the Council in addition to the members prescribed in this Act. The members of the Council shall hold office for five years.

The Medical Council recognizes for the purpose of this Act those medical qualifications which are granted by medical institutions in British India and which are included in the first schedule<sup>1</sup>. The Medical Council also recognizes the medical qualifications granted by medical institutions outside British India which are included in the second schedule,<sup>2</sup> and are considered sufficient qualifications for enrolment on my Provincial Medical Register. The Medical Council is also empowered to complete or enter into negotiations with the authority in any state or country outside British India which by the law of such state or country is entrusted with the maintenance of a register of medical practitioners for the settling of a scheme of reciprocity for the recognition of medical qualifications and in pursuance of any such scheme the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, amend the second schedule so as to include therein any medical qualification which the Council has decided should be recognized.<sup>3</sup>

## DISCIPLINARY CONTROL

The General Medical Council exercises disciplinary control over registered medical practitioners in virtue of the 29th section of the Medical Act, 1858, which provides that—

“If any registered medical practitioner shall be convicted in England or Ireland of any felony or misdemeanour, or in Scotland of any crime or offence, or shall after due inquiry, be judged by the General Council to have been guilty of infamous conduct in any professional respect, the General Council may, if they see fit direct the Registrar to erase the name of such medical practitioner from the Register.

Infamous conduct is a technical legal expression, and means “disgraceful or dishonourable conduct in a qualified professional person acting as such. What constitutes the disgraceful or dishonourable conduct has often been a controversial point in a Court of law. Sir Donald Mac Alister in 1892 defined it as follows—

If it is shown that a medical man in the pursuit of his profession has done something with regard to which it would be reasonably regarded as disgraceful or dishonourable by his professional brethren of good repute and competence, then it is open to the Council to say that he has been guilty of infamous conduct in a professional respect.”

The Indian Medical Council is almost analogous to the General Medical Council, but it does not maintain a register of medical practitioners and does not exercise any disciplinary jurisdiction over them. These functions are carried out by the Provincial Medical Councils which have the power to remove the names of medical practitioners permanently or for a specified period from their registers when they are judged after due inquiry to have been guilty of infamous conduct in a professional respect. They have also the power to direct the restoration of any name so removed. It must be borne in mind that the Provincial Medical Councils like the General Medical Council do not take cognizance of any offence of misconduct committed by a registered medical practitioner unless someone lodges a complaint in writing accompanied by one or more statutory declarations as to the facts alleged when they assume the functions of professional Courts of Justice.

Some of the Provincial Medical Councils have published codes containing some of the main principles of medical ethics for the information and guidance of registered medical practitioners and have issued warning notices comprising certain unethical practices which are regarded as falling within the meaning of the term infamous conduct in a professional respect. The Bombay Medical Council have issued a similar warning notice which has come in force from the first of July, 1948, and have suggested that they are in no way precluded from considering and dealing with any form of unethical practice which may be brought before them although it may not appear to come within the scope of precise wording of any of the categories mentioned below—

### PART I

*Note*—Any one found guilty of offences mentioned in this Part will be liable to have his name erased from the Register without any further warning.

- 1 Immorality involving abuse of professional relationship
- 2 Conviction by a court of law for an offence involving moral turpitude
- 3 Issuing in connection with various Government and Municipal Acts sick benefit insurance and kindred societies passports matters relating to armed forces, attendance in Courts of Justice, in the public services, or in ordinary

employment, a certificate, notification or report which is untrue, misleading or improper

4 Withholding from the health authorities information of the notifiable diseases

5 Performing or enabling an unqualified person to perform an abortion or any illegal operation for which there is no medical, surgical or psychological indication

6 Performing or enabling an unqualified person to attend, treat or perform operations on patients in respect of matters requiring professional discretion or skill or to issue certificates

7 Contravening the provisions of the Drugs Act and Regulations made under it

8 Selling scheduled poisons to the public under cover of his own qualifications, except to his patients

9 Disclosing the secrets of a patient that have been learnt in the exercise of his profession These may be disclosed only in a court of law under orders from the presiding Judge

10 Soliciting private practice either by splitting fees or paying commissions to those who bring patients to him or by advertising by means of laudatory or other notices in the press, or, by placards or by handbills

11 Receiving commissions from surgeons consultants or from any one to whom patients are referred be it a medical practitioner, a manufacturer or a trader in drugs or appliances or a chemist or a dentist or an oculist

12 Advertising himself directly or indirectly such as through price lists or publicity materials of manufacturers or traders with which he may be connected in any capacity though it will be permissible for him to publish his name in connection with the prospectus or directors or technical experts reports

## PART II

13 Associating in professional matters with persons who do not possess a qualification registrable in India or who possessing such a qualification have been struck off the respective Registers for unethical practices

14 Writing prescriptions in a secret formula

15 Keeping an open shop for the sale of medicines

16 Publishing or sanctioning the publication in the lay press of reports of cases treated or operated on by him or of any certificates for drugs, foods, appliances, and sanatoria used by him or of any laudatory statement about himself or his address and telephone number unless he has changed his office or has resumed practice after a long interval in which case the notice should not appear more than twice and in not more than two papers, or inserting his name in the telephone

- 18 Attending a patient who is under the care of another practitioner
- 19 Attending on his own a patient who has been seen by him before in the capacity of a consultant during the same illness
- 20 Removing the patient in the absence of the attending physician to a hospital or a nursing home or transferring him to the care of his assistants by a consulting practitioner
- 21 Doing anything that means unfair competition
- 22 Talking disparagingly of his colleague who attended the case before him or attends with him at a consultation
- 23 Examining and reporting on employees at the instruction of the employer without previously intimating the regular attendant of the employee of his commission and giving him the option of being present
- 24 Using an unusually large sign board and writing on it anything else other than his name, qualifications obtained from a university or a statutory body, titles conferred by Government and the name of a speciality he practised. The same should be the contents of his prescription paper which may in addition contain address and telephone numbers. Appointments held now or before should not be mentioned either on the board or prescription paper
- 25 Refusing to attend on a patient who has been under his care unless he finds that the patient and his relatives are non-cooperative or his fees are not paid or another practitioner is consulted without his knowledge

*Note*—The foregoing do not apply so as to restrict the proper training and instructions of *bona fide* students or the legitimate employment of dressers and wives dispensers, surgery attendants and skilled mechanics under the immediate personal supervision of a registered medical practitioner.

The decision of the Bombay Medical Council when given after due inquiry and without malice, is final but according to section 27 of the United Provinces Medical Act 1917 an appeal shall lie to the Local Government from every decision of the Council under section 24 or 25.

#### DUTIES OF A PHYSICIAN

When a medical man is registered to engage in the practice of medicine and surgery after he has obtained a necessary degree or diploma from a university or a medical corporation he is presumed by law—

- 1 To use the necessary skill, care and attention in the treatment of his patients
- 2 To continue to treat his patients and to pay them visits as long as it is necessary unless he has given due notice for discontinuing his treatment or visits so as to enable them to obtain the services of another medical attendant or the patients themselves have signified their intention of changing the doctor or where he is convinced that the illness is an imposture and he is being made a party to a false pretence

A medical practitioner is entitled to receive reasonable remuneration for any professional service rendered by him except in a case where there is a definite understanding that his services shall be gratuitous. A medical practitioner should give free medical aid to a professional brother, his wife, and children and to a medical student. There is a common belief among the public that a medical practitioner is at the beck and call of anyone who chooses to send for him but it must be remembered that there is no law to compel a medical practitioner to attend a patient except in a case where he has previously bound himself by contractual

obligations or has already undertaken the treatment<sup>1</sup>. Neither a police nor any other official has the right to force or commandeer a physician's services without his consent under any circumstances, except during military necessity<sup>2</sup>. The Coroner of Aldershot also observed in an inquest that a doctor is not obliged to attend a case if he does not want to, he can be criticized if he promises to attend and then fails to do so, but he is perfectly entitled—like any other professional man—to say he cannot attend a case<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless it is necessary to remember that a medical practitioner should not hesitate to render medical or surgical assistance in an emergency, especially in a locality where there is no other suitable medical aid; refusal in such a case would be considered a dereliction of moral and professional duty. A medical practitioner serving on the staff of a charitable hospital is bound to render professional service to every patient attending the institution.

When a medical practitioner comes to know that his patient wishes to make an expensive gift to him or to bequeath a portion of his property to him in his will in recognition of his professional services he should take care to bring this fact to the notice of his patient's natural heirs and legal advisers so that he may not be accused of having used undue influence on his patient for his benefit.

### 3 To use clean and proper instruments and appliances

4 To furnish his patients with proper and suitable medicines if he is in the habit of dispensing his own medicines. If he has no dispensary of his own he should legibly write prescriptions, using such abbreviations as are usually employed and mentioning full and detailed instructions in language which the chemist or pharmacist dispensing prescriptions can readily understand. He is held responsible for any damage in health, temporary or permanent caused to the patient as a result of his wrong or ununderstandable instructions mentioned in the prescription.

5 To give in simple language full directions to his patients or their attendants concerning the administration of remedial measures including the articles of diet, exact quantities and precise times for the administration of medicines should be specifically mentioned.

6 To keep inviolate the secrets of his patients communicated to him by them or discovered by him at the time of medical examination. The Hippocratic Oath enjoins on every medical practitioner not to divulge the things he sees or hears in the exercise of his art, or outside its exercise in his intercourse with men and to keep silent regarding them as inviolable secrets. According to the principles of Ayurvedic medicine a votary of medicine should never gossip of the practices of a patient's house even if possessed of sufficient knowledge; he should not boast of that knowledge.

Professional secrecy is an implied term of contract between the medical practitioner and his patient and its disclosure would be a breach of trust and confidence and would render the medical attendant liable to damages. In France and Germany disclosure of medical secrets is regarded as a criminal offence. It must however, be remembered that a medical witness is bound to reveal them in a judicial proceeding, if ordered by the court.

A medical practitioner should not answer inquiries addressed to him by an insurance company respecting a person who may have consulted him without having obtained the patient's consent which, if possible, should be in writing. But, if he is a medical examiner, he must furnish all the information a party

<sup>1</sup> *Conduct of Medical Practice* 1937, p. 63

<sup>2</sup> *Carl Schefel Med Juris* 1931, p. 84

<sup>3</sup> *Lancet*, March 15 1930, p. 602

by him without reservation, even though it may be detrimental to the interests of his client.

**Privileged Communications**—A medical practitioner cannot withhold professional secrets in those cases where he has a statutory duty to notify births deaths infectious diseases etc., to the public authorities. On certain occasions he has a moral duty to protect the interests of the community or the public and in doing so if he divulges the secrets of his patient obtained in the course of his professional treatment, he will be absolved from legal liabilities. For instance a medical practitioner has a privilege to inform the warden of a hostel if any boarder is suffering from a venereal disease. He has also a privilege to inform the railway authorities if he finds that a particular engine driver is colour blind and that he does not wish to change his employment although he is persuaded to do so. In such cases the communication if made *bona fide* and without malice will be deemed to be privileged by the occasion. A privileged communication is, therefore defined as a statement made by a person who has an interest to protect, or a legal, social or moral duty to perform to another having a corresponding interest or duty for the purpose of protecting his interest or performing his duty even though such communication may under normal conditions, amount to defamation or slander.

A case<sup>1</sup> occurred at a Turkish bath at Debretzine where a venereal diseases specialist recognized in a young man who was about to enter the water one of his own patients who had consulted him two weeks ago for a syphilitic sore on the penis. He went up to the young man and whispered to him not to enter the bath on account of his chancre but the young man persisted in entering the bath hence the specialist sent for the manager and explained matter to him. The latter asked the man to leave at once. He left the bath and sued the specialist for trespassing the medical secrecy laws but lost his case the court decreeing that the specialist only carried out his professional duty and acted in the interests of the community.

7 To advise consultation with another medical practitioner, preferably a specialist or a medical practitioner of a high professional standing in the following circumstances —

- (a) When his case is obscure and difficult or has taken a serious turn,
- (b) When an operation or special treatment involving danger to life is to be undertaken
- (c) When an operation affecting vitally the intellectual or generative functions is to be performed on a patient
- (d) When an operation is to be performed on a patient who has received serious injuries in a criminal assault,
- (e) When an operation of a mutilating or destructive nature is to be performed on an unborn child
- (f) When a therapeutic abortion is to be procured to save a pregnant woman from death or permanent ill health
- (g) When a woman on whom an illegal operation for procuring abortion has already been performed has sought his advice for treatment
- (h) When it is suspected that his patient is suffering from symptoms of poisoning especially criminal

It is also necessary that an attending physician should not avoid or refuse consultation when his patient or his relatives and friends desire it. Refusal for such a consultation may lead the patient or his relatives and friends to conclude that the doctor is afraid of criticism of his diagnosis or treatment.

In regard to the choice of a consultant it is generally expedient to follow the wish of his patient or his relatives and friends, although the attending physician is justified in giving his opinion that the suggested consultant is not the proper

person for the particular case if he sincerely believes so. The consultant should never treat the attending physician as his inferior, for all qualified medical practitioners are considered equal in consultation. The consultant should also exercise the utmost care to avoid disturbing the confidence of the patient in the attending practitioner, and should not try to supersede the practitioner through whom he has received an introduction to the patient.

It is wrong and illegal for a medical practitioner to accept a commission for the introduction of a patient to a consultant. Such a practice is known as dictyotomy or fee sharing, and may render him liable to have his name erased from the Medical Register.

### PHYSICIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY IN CRIMINAL MATTERS

Ordinarily, it may be presumed that a medical practitioner should at once communicate to the police any information about a criminal act that might have come to his knowledge in his professional work, but this is not always the case. He should not play the part of a detective but use his own discretion. For instance, he should hand over to the police a man whom from the nature of his injury, he may suspect to be an assailant in a murder case. If he happens to treat a person who has attempted to commit suicide, he is not bound by law to report him to the proper authorities, but he has to inform the police if he happens to die. If the friends or relatives of the suicide undertake to carry the information to the police, he must see that they do.

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his duty towards his patient but there are cases, and it appears to me that this is one where the desire to preserve that confidence must be subordinated to the duty which is cast upon every good citizen to assist in the investigation of a serious crime such as is here imputed to this woman. In consequence of no information having been given it appears to me that there is no evidence whatever upon which the woman can properly be put upon her trial. I have been moved to make these observations because it has been brought to my notice that an opinion to which I was a party some twenty years ago when I was at the Bar, has been either misunderstood or misrepresented in a text book of medical ethics and I am anxious to remove any such misunderstanding if it exists. It may be the moral duty of a medical man even in cases where the patient is not dying or not likely to recover to communicate with the authorities when he sees good reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed. However that may be I cannot doubt that in such a case as the present, where the woman was in the opinion of the medical man likely to die and therefore her evidence was likely to be lost, that it was his duty, and some one of those gentlemen ought to have done it in this case.

This matter was also taken up by the Royal College of Physicians of London, who after discussing it fully and obtaining Counsel's opinion on some legal points passed the following resolutions for publication to the medical profession at their meeting held on January 27, 1916 —

The college is of opinion—

1 That a moral obligation rests upon every medical practitioner to respect the confidence of his patient and that without her consent he is not justified in disclosing information obtained in the course of his professional attendance on her

2 That every medical practitioner who is convinced that criminal abortion has been practised on his patient should urge her especially when she is likely to die to make a statement which may be taken as evidence against the person who has performed the operation, provided always that her chances of recovery are not thereby prejudiced

3 That in the event of her refusal to make such a statement he is under no legal obligation (so the college is advised) to take further action but he should continue to attend the patient to the best of his ability

4 That before taking any action which may lead to legal proceedings a medical practitioner will be wise to obtain the best medical and legal advice available both to ensure that the patient's statement may have value as legal evidence and to safeguard his own interests since in the present state of law there is no certainty that he will be protected against subsequent litigation

5 That if the patient should die he should refuse to give a certificate of the cause of death and should communicate with the coroner

The college has been advised to the following effect —

1 That the medical practitioner is under no legal obligation either to urge the patient to make a statement or if she refuses to do so to take any further action

2 That when a patient who is dangerously ill consents to give evidence, her statement may be taken in one of the following ways —

(a) A magistrate may visit her to receive her deposition on oath or affirmation. Even if criminal proceedings have not already been instituted her deposition will be admissible in evidence in the event of her death provided that reasonable written notice of the intention to take her statement was served on the accused person and her or his legal adviser had full opportunity of cross examining her

(b) If the patient has an unqualified belief that she will shortly die, and only in these circumstances her dying declaration will be admissible. Such a declaration may be made to the medical practitioner or to any other person. It need not be in writing and if reduced into writing it need not be signed by the patient nor witnessed by any other person so long as it is desirable that both should be done or that if the patient is unable to sign she should make her mark. If possible the declaration should be in the actual words of the patient, and if questions are put the questions and answers should both be given but this is not essential. If the declaration can not then and there be reduced into writing it is desirable that the person to whom it is made should make a complete note of it as soon as possible

It must be remembered that this is the view held by the Royal College of Physicians but it has not been accepted as the law on this subject. If followed, it may land a medical practitioner into conflict and difficulty with the legal authorities. Hence, in view of the important observations of the two eminent judges

as mentioned above a medical practitioner is advised to adopt the following course of action in cases of criminal abortion —

A medical practitioner must give his best attention in treating a case of attempted abortion or in which an illegal operation has been performed to procure abortion, but he must immediately call in another practitioner for consultation and must make a careful record of the woman's general condition and the signs present in her genital organs. It is not incumbent on him to give the information to the police, especially when the abortion has been procured by the woman herself or with the assistance of a relative or friend. If he happens to know that the abortion was induced by a professional abortionist, he must send at once a report to the police, so as to lead to the arrest of such a person. If the woman's condition is so serious that she is about to die, he must arrange to record her dying declaration as to the cause of her condition. If death occurs, he must give information to the police or magistrate for necessary action before the body has been disposed of. It must, however, be borne in mind that in India a medical practitioner is not legally obliged to give information to the police officer or magistrate of the commission of, or of the intention of any other person to commit the offence of criminal miscarriage under section 44 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which makes the keeping back of information of several other offences punishable (*vide Appendix III*)

### DUTIES OF A PATIENT

When a patient employs a medical practitioner for the treatment of his ailment, he may reasonably be expected to supply his doctor with complete information concerning the facts and circumstances of the case, to allow him full opportunity for his own treatment, to obey his instructions and carry out his directions to the very letter as regards his diet, medicine, mode of life, and to pay him a reasonable fee for his services.

### MALPRAVIS

*Malpraxis is defined as want of reasonable care and skill, or wilful negligence on the part of a medical practitioner in the treatment of a patient such as to lead to his bodily injury or to the loss of his life.* The question of malpraxis arises in civil courts when a patient raises it as a plea for not giving fees to his physician who files a suit against him for their recovery, or when a patient brings an action for damages against his medical attendant if he has suffered injury in consequence of negligent or unskilled treatment. A criminal charge is brought against him, if gross carelessness, gross negligence or gross ignorance has been displayed in the treatment and has led to the death of the patient.

The question of malpraxis may also arise in criminal courts, when the defence counsel may attribute the death of the assaulted person to the negligence or undue interference of the medical attendant in the treatment of the deceased.

In such cases the medical practitioner should be able to prove that he used a reasonable degree of knowledge, skill and care in the treatment of his patient to the best of his judgment. He is, however, not liable for an error of judgment. The court expects a general medical practitioner to use only the average degree of skill and knowledge which other general practitioners of his qualifications use, but does not expect him to perform a cure or bring the highest possible degree of skill and knowledge in the treatment of his patients. On the other hand, the court expects a specialist to possess and exercise the higher degree of skill and learning in his special line than the general practitioner, and judges him by comparing him with other specialists engaged in the same line. A medical practitioner will be exonerated from a charge of malpraxis, if it is proved that he exercised reasonably sound judgment in applying his medical knowledge and skill for the benefit of his patient and that he consulted, or suggested the consultation

of, a brother practitioner in the diagnosis of, or treatment of, a case or that he examined or suggested the examination of an alleged fractured or dislocated limb by X rays. But no new treatment in the form of an experiment can be adopted without the consent of the patient or his guardian, if he happens to be a minor. A medical practitioner is also guilty of malpraxis, if he has a sore or infection, and dresses his patient, and consequently infects him or does not warn a dresser with infection. It is advisable to inform the patient, if he is suffering from an infectious disease, such as plague, small pox, etc.

A medical practitioner, whether licensed or unlicensed, may, under English law, be charged with manslaughter by negligence, and may, under Indian law, be charged with having caused death by doing a rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide under section 304 A, I P C, when a patient dies from the effects of an anaesthetic, operation, or some other treatment, if it can be proved that the death was the result of gross negligence or criminal inattention on the part of the medical attendant. In such a case there is a presumption of the absence of intention to cause death, and of the want of knowledge that the act done will most probably result in death. Before a medical practitioner can be held criminally responsible for the death of his patient, the prosecution must prove all matters necessary to establish civil responsibility except pecuniary loss, and in addition must prove negligence or incompetence on his part which went beyond a mere matter of compensation between subjects and showed such disregard for the life and safety of others as to amount to a crime against the state.

In a case where the accused cut out the piles of a person with an ordinary knife and, from the profuse bleeding, the person died, it was held that the accused was guilty of a rash and negligent act<sup>1</sup>. An unqualified person who was in charge of a dispensary had to make up a quantity of quinine mixture for cases of fever. He went to a cupboard where non poisonous medicines were supposed to have been kept and took therefrom a bottle with an outside wrapper marked 'poison'. This wrapper he tore off and threw away. The bottle was itself labelled 'strychnine hydrochloride', but, without regarding this and apparently because there was a resemblance between this bottle and another in which quinine hydrochloride was kept, he made up the entire contents of the bottle as if it had been quinine. The result was that seven persons died. It was held that he was guilty under section 304 A, even though he had no intention of doing any bodily harm to the deceased, and had made up the mixture with an intent to prevent or cure the fever<sup>2</sup>. In a Privy Council Appeal<sup>3</sup> in which a medical practitioner prepared an injection which he gave to fifty seven children of whom ten died and others were made gravely ill, it was held that the medical practitioner's one act of carelessness in preparing too strong a solution did not amount to criminal negligence.

In order to prove that reasonable care and diligence and necessary professional skill had been exercised in the course of the treatment a medical practitioner should take the following precautions before he undertakes to administer an anaesthetic or perform an operation —

1. The administration of an anaesthetic or the performance of an operation should not be undertaken without the consent of the patient, or his guardian, if he is minor or unconscious, after the nature and consequences of the operation have been explained to him or to his guardian. But in cases of accident or other emergency where delay is dangerous an operation may be performed without the consent of the patient or his relative or guardian, if the medical attendant thinks that the operation is absolutely necessary to save the life of the patient.

<sup>1</sup> *Sukarao Kobiraj*, (1887) 14 Cal 566, 569, *Ratanlal and Thakore, The Law of Crimes*, Ed VI<sup>II</sup>, p 772.

<sup>2</sup> *DeSouza*, (1920) 42 Ill 272, *Ratanlal and Thakore, The Law of Crimes*, Ed VII, p. 771.

<sup>3</sup> *John Oni Akerele v. The King*, 44 Cr. Law Jour., 1943, p. 560.

In a case where the surgeon is not sure what he would have to do during the operation owing to some obscure signs he should obtain a written authority to use his discretion in doing what appears to him to be in the best interests of the patient.

2 In a case of criminal wounding an operation ought not to be performed, unless it is absolutely necessary. In such a case care should be taken to keep an accurate record of the state of the patient before it is performed. It is also better before performing any operation, to get the opinion and help of another surgeon, if possible.

3 An anaesthetist should be a duly qualified man, and he should always administer a generally accepted anaesthetic after he has examined the heart urine etc., of the patient to prove that he had used reasonable care and skill in administering it.

4 In the case of death from anaesthesia the surgeon or anaesthetist should at once report the matter to the police for holding a public inquiry.

**Contributory Negligence**—Contributory negligence consists in not avoiding the consequences to one's self brought about by the negligence of another person e.g. a medical practitioner by exercising reasonable care and caution and following instructions given for one's own benefit. The doctrine of contributory negligence is not recognized by law in an indictment of criminal negligence but is a good defence in cases of civil liabilities, and is taken into consideration by the court while awarding damages to the plaintiff. The onus of the proof of contributory negligence on the part of the person injured rests entirely on the defendant.

#### RESPONSIBILITY OF A MEDICAL PRACTITIONER FOR NIGHTLY ACTS OF NURSES OR STUDENTS

A medical practitioner may be held responsible civilly, but not criminally, for a negligent act of a nurse, student or assistant employed to carry out nursing and medical duties to his patients, if the act was committed in his presence and to which he acquiesced. The principle is that "as a general rule a man is responsible for any wrongful act done by his agent or subordinate provided such act is within the reasonable scope of their employment." But he is not held responsible, if the negligent act was done in his absence and the nurse, student or assistant was considered quite competent to perform the act and had traversed beyond his instructions in committing it.

In a case where a swab, sponge or some instrument is left in the patient's body after an operation the surgeon renders himself liable for damages, even though it is the theatre sister's responsibility to count all the swabs, sponges and instruments used during the operation, inasmuch as the theatre sister and other assistants were acting under the direct and immediate supervision of the surgeon so long as the operation lasted in the operating theatre.<sup>1</sup> In deciding such cases the courts are generally inclined to depend upon the practice of the institution as to what comes within the scope of a nurse's duties and to limit the surgeon's liability for those matters over which he has direct personal control. Where a woman died of peritonitis after a caesarian section after a swab, 24" x 8", was left in the body, it was held that the matron who failed to report to the surgeon the fact that a swab was missing failed in her duty even though her attention was directed by the nurse counting the swabs.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James v. Dunlop, *Brit. Med. Jour.* Vol. I, 1931, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Lancet*, July 5 1937, p. 2.

The managers of a public hospital cannot be held responsible for the negligent acts of the members of the superior medical staff in matters relating to the professional treatment of the patients in their charge, if it can be proved that the managers exercised "the due care and skill" in selecting the properly qualified and experienced staff. The physicians and surgeons employed in the hospital are not the servants of the managers, as the latter cannot interfere with the professional treatment of the patients, nor can they issue any order to the medical staff in this connection. In respect of the nursing staff the rule laid down in the case of *Hillyer v St Bartholomew's Hospital* (1909, 2 K B 820) that the managers are liable for the negligence connected with their administrative or ministerial duties but not with their professional duties was regarded binding on judges till the case of *Gold v. Essex County Council* was decided by the Court of Appeal in the year 1942. In this case,<sup>1</sup> where a radiographer, while treating a child with Grenz rays for warts on the face, omitted to protect the healthy parts of the face with a lead rubber with the result that the child's face was burnt and permanently disfigured, it was held that a hospital was liable for the negligence of a medical auxiliary (a radiographer, masseuse, occupational therapist, dispenser and the like), and doubtless also of a nurse, in the performance of a duty otherwise than under the direct supervision of a physician or surgeon. It is also understood from the *dicta* of the judges that even if, as in the operating theatre, an auxiliary or nurse is under the direct supervision of a medical practitioner, the hospital may still be liable, if she carries out his orders negligently; she does not cease to be the hospital's servant.

Hospital managers may be held responsible for the mistakes of house physicians and surgeons or resident medical officers. In a case<sup>2</sup> where Mrs Collins of Lytton-Road, New Barnet brought an action against the managers of Wellhouse hospital, Barnet and the surgeon for damages for the death of her husband from the injection of 80 mls. of 1 per cent cocaine and 1 in 20,000 adrenaline solution in mistake for procaine just before an operation on the jaw, Mr Justice Hilbery of the King's Bench Division gave judgment for the plaintiff for £2500 damages against both defendants and he apportioned the damages equally between them. In his judgment the Judge stated that the surgeon who performed the operation and injected the anaesthetic was under a duty to ensure that he was getting what he ordered although he expected the resident medical officer to use her skill and reason and to bring her mind to bear on what he was saying. The managers of the hospital had negligently failed to bring to the attention of the resident medical officer the rules covering dangerous drugs. If the hospital had had a proper system, such a solution could not have reached the operating theatre, let alone the body of the unfortunate patient. The Judge took the view that part of the amenities which the hospital offered to patients was the presence of a resident medical officer at all times, and that his acts done in the course of treatment were acts for which the hospital was responsible.

*Illustrative Cases—1 Operation in a State of Drunkenness*—A physician had been convicted at the Durham Assizes of the manslaughter of a man's wife on whom he operated for eclampsia while he was in a state of drunkenness. It was proved that the woman died two days later from the injuries received during the operation which were due to want of reasonable skill and care owing to intoxication. He was sentenced by the Judge to twelve months imprisonment—*Jour Amer Med Assoc*, April 15, 1922, p 1139.

2 In the case of *Vance v. Beattie (Kansas)* the evidence tended to show that the defendant a dentist, treated the plaintiff's jaw several weeks after he made an unsuccessful attempt to remove an impacted wisdom tooth. He then dismissed the case advising the plaintiff that she needed no further professional attention. A few days later, another dentist extracted the tooth apparently with little difficulty, and found the jaw infected. Pus flowed freely from the wound. The court thought that the negligence was sufficient to uphold the verdict of the jury in favour of the plaintiff—*Jour Amer Med Assoc*, Nov 9 1929, p 1500.

1 *Med Leg and Criminological Rev*, 1942, Vol X, Part IV, p 187

2 *Pharm Jour*, March 15, 1947, p 162

3 A case occurred in Paris where while a dentist was treating a young woman, a small sharp instrument, termed a "nerve puller," slipped from his hand and fell into her throat. Later, it necessitated a serious surgical operation on the stomach. The client brought a suit against the dentist, but the court before rendering a decision heard the testimony of expert witnesses who declared that the dentist was not guilty of any tort, as the dropping of the nerve puller was due to the imprudence of the client, who had seized his hand. However, the civil tribunal did not take the view of the experts, and decided that in not foreseeing the reactions of his patient, and in not taking all precautions to prevent such an accident the dentist had been guilty of negligence, and imposed on him a fine of 20 000 francs in addition to the cost of the operation that the patient had been obliged to undergo —*Jour Amer Med Assoc*, Dec 28, 1923, p. 041

4 A hot water bottle used to warm a bed was negligently left in it. An unconscious patient after an operation, was placed in the bed in such a position that the hot water bottle lay between her shoulders, and as a result she was severely burnt. While she was recovering from the anaesthetic the operating surgeon came into the room. She complained to him bitterly of the pain between her shoulders, but he paid no attention to her complaint and saying that she "had a fine jag on," left the room. Thereafter she sued the surgeon for damages and judgment was rendered in her favour. It was held that when his patient complained the surgeon owed her the duty of making an examination hence he showed carelessness to that extent —*Haring et al v Banks* (V J), 146 A 67, *Jour Amer Med Assoc*, April 12 1930 p 1170

5 *Babu Benarsidas Kankhan v Major Shyam Behari Lal* — In August 1925 Babu Benarsi das Kankhan who was a munsif at Tilhar consulted Major Shyam Behari Lal, Civil Surgeon of Shahjahanpur, as he was suffering from dyspepsia, sleeplessness and palpitation of the heart. According to the plaintiff at first the doctor made a very superficial examination and said that there could not be anything wrong with the plaintiff's heart, but some medicine should be prescribed for his bad digestion. When the civil surgeon was writing out a prescription the plaintiff told him that occasionally he felt dryness in his ear and used to find an accumulation of white matter like dry wax in his ear. The doctor prescribed a mixture of carbolic acid and paraffin for the ear trouble also telling him to use three or four drops of the mixture whenever he felt dryness or irritation in the ear. The plaintiff got the prescription dispensed by a chemist at Bareilly but did not use the prescription for the ear drops as he did not feel any further trouble in his ear. On October 10, 1925, the doctor gave the plaintiff a certificate recommending him for three months' leave on account of the plaintiff's suffering from neurasthenia. The doctor in giving history of the case did not mention anything about the ear trouble as it appeared that the plaintiff made no complaint of such trouble after August 10, 1925.

The plaintiff had no recurrence of the irritation in his ear until the end of July, 1926. On August 1, 1926, he had the doctor's prescription for ear drops dispensed by a chemist at Aligarh, where he was stationed. On August 3 the plaintiff had three or four drops of the medicine dropped into his ear by his brother, Hirday Narain, at 8 or 9 p.m. As soon as the drops were put in the plaintiff felt an acute burning sensation in his ear which caused considerable pain but after a time the pain subsided and the plaintiff was able to go to sleep. Next morning he felt pain in his right ear and sent for Dr Chand Behari Lal of Aligarh who said that the ear appeared to have been burnt by some medicine. The plaintiff consulted several doctors about his ear and adopted proper medical treatment, but after the inflammation had subsided it was found that the drum of the right ear had been practically destroyed. The hearing of the ear had become very defective and he suffered from troublesome noises in the ear. The plaintiff sued Major Shyam Behari Lal who had prescribed the ear drops and Amulya Chiran De the chemist who had dispensed the prescription, in the Additional Judge's Court at Aligarh claiming Rs 15 000 as damages for the permanent injury to his ear and for the mental and physical pain and for the expenses for consulting a number of doctors.

The Additional Judge dismissed the plaintiff's suit and so the plaintiff appealed to the division bench consisting of Justices Bannerji and Iking at the High Court, Allahabad. The doctor denied that he was guilty of negligence or want of medical skill in giving the prescription and maintained that the prescription was medically correct and could not have caused the injury if properly dispensed and used. He also contended that the plaintiff was not justified in using the prescription about a year after it had been given without obtaining fresh medical advice. The chemist asserted that he had dispensed the prescription correctly and that he was not guilty of any negligence.

On consideration of all the evidence their lordships agreed with the court below in finding that the doctor was not negligent in his examination and diagnosis, but was negligent in prescribing a novel prescription for which no authority could be found although the complaint for which it was prescribed was not uncommon. They found also that the mixture was dangerous in the sense that it was likely to cause harm to the plaintiff's ear unless it was applied after a vigorous shaking and that the doctor had no justification for prescribing such a novel and dangerous mixture for a petty complaint. They found also that the doctor did not give any clear warning as to the necessity of shaking the mixture before use. If such directions were essential to avoid the risk of harm he should have entered the necessary directions in the prescription itself.

As regards the chemist their lordships agreed with the court below that he was not guilty of negligence or breach of duty. He had admittedly dispensed the prescription correctly. He had labelled the bottle as poison and as there was no direction in the prescription about shaking the mixture their lordships held that he was not to blame in failing to label the bottle shake the bottle. The same prescription had been dispensed in precisely the same manner by two firms of Calcutta chemists and also by a chemist in Bareilly. Their lordships found no reason therefore for holding that the chemist was guilty of negligence or lack of skill. Their lordships accordingly dismissed the appeal as against the chemist with costs and allowed the appeal as against the doctor to the extent of granting the plaintiff a decree for Rs. 4,000 against the doctor with proportionate costs in both courts—*Leader, May 29, 1932*

**G Manslaughter by Negligence**—An unqualified practitioner treated a patient who complained of pain in the chest and dissuaded him from consulting a medical man. Haemopysis and high fever developed but he continued to treat the patient on his own responsibility. On the fourth day the family introduced a medical man who diagnosed severe pneumonia and pleurisy and two days later the patient died. The unqualified practitioner was prosecuted for manslaughter by gross negligence and sentenced by the court to three months imprisonment. According to the verdict his negligence consisted in having undertaken the case without any medical training. It was further considered negligence that the patient was dissuaded from consulting a medical practitioner—*Lancet Jan 24 1931 p 213*

### THE LEPERS ACT

In the year 1898, the Lepers Act (Act No III of 1898) was passed to provide for the segregation and medical treatment of pauper lepers and the control of lepers following certain callings. This Act was further amended in the year 1920, and the amended Act is called the Lepers (Amendment) Act, 1920 (Act No XXII of 1920).

The Lepers Act extends to the whole of British India, but it does not come into force in any part thereof until the Local Government has declared it applicable thereto. A leper is defined in the Act as any person suffering from any variety of leprosy, and a pauper leper is defined as a leper who publicly solicits alms or exposes or exhibits any sores, wounds, bodily ailment or deformity with the object of exciting charity or of obtaining alms, or who is at large without any ostensible means of subsistence. Any police-officer or any other person empowered by the Local Government within a notified area may arrest without a warrant any person who appears to him to be a pauper leper and shall take or send him immediately to the nearest convenient police station. The person so arrested must, without unnecessary delay be taken before a qualified medical practitioner appointed by Government as an Inspector of Lepers, who—

(a) if he finds that such person is not a leper as defined in the Act, will give him a certificate in Form A (see below), whereupon such person will be forthwith released from arrest,

(b) if he finds that such person is a leper within the meaning of the Act will give to the police officer, in whose custody the leper is a certificate in Form B (see below) whereupon the leper will, without unnecessary delay, be taken before a Magistrate having jurisdiction under this Act. If it appears to the Magistrate from the evidence placed before him that the person is not only a leper but also a pauper leper, he may order such person to be detained in a leper asylum. If any friend or relative of the pauper leper will undertake in writing to the satisfaction of the Magistrate that he will be properly taken care of and will be prevented from publicly begging in any notified area, the Magistrate, instead of sending the leper to an asylum, may make him over to the care of such friend or relative, requiring him, if he thinks fit, to enter into a bond with one or more sureties.

The Local Government may, by Gazette notification, order that no leper shall, within any notified area—

(a) personally prepare for sale or sell any article of food or drink or any drugs or clothing intended for human use, or

- (b) bathe, wash clothes or take water from any public well or tank debarred by any municipal or local bye law from use by lepers; or
- (c) drive conduct or ride in any public carriage plying for hire other than a railway carriage, or
- (d) exercise any trade or calling which may by notification be prohibited to lepers

**Form A —Certificate.**

I THE undersigned (here enter name and official designation) hereby certify that I on the      day of      at      personally examined (here enter name of person examined) and that the said is not a leper as defined by the Lepers (Amendment) Act 1920

Given under my hand this      day of      19

(Signature)

*Inspector of Lepers*

**Form B —Certificate**

I THE undersigned (here enter name and official designation) hereby certify that I on the      day of      at      personally examined (here enter name of leper) and that the said is a leper as defined by the lepers (Amendment) Act 1920 and that I have formed this opinion on the following grounds namely,—

(Here state the grounds )

Given under my hand this      day of      19

(Signature)

*Inspector of Lepers*

**THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT**

Under the Workmen's Compensation Act 1923 (Act VIII of 1923) as amended upto 1942 an employer is liable to pay compensation to a workman employed on monthly wages not exceeding three hundred rupees if personal injury is caused to him by accident arising out of and in the course of his employment provided that the employer is not so liable—

- (a) in respect of any injury which does not result in the total or partial disablement of the workman for a period exceeding seven days
- (b) in respect of any injury, not resulting in death caused by an accident which is directly attributable to—
  - (i) the workman having been at the time thereof under the influence of drink or drugs or
  - (ii) the wilful disobedience of the workman to an order expressly given or to a rule expressly framed for the purpose of securing the safety of workmen, or
  - (iii) the wilful removal or disregard by the workman of any safety guard or other device which he knew to have been provided for the purpose of securing the safety of workmen

If a workman is killed from an accident arising out of and in the course of his employment, his dependants will be entitled to compensation for his death. The Act further provides that if a workman employed in any employment specified in the following Part I of Schedule III contracts any disease peculiar to that

employment or if a workman, whilst in the service of an employer in whose service he has been employed for a continuous period of not less than six months in any employment specified in the following Part B of Schedule III, contracts any disease specified therein as an occupational disease peculiar to that employment the contracting of the disease shall be deemed to be an injury by accident for purposes of compensation and unless the employer proves the contrary, the accident shall be deemed to have arisen out of and in the course of the employment —

*Schedule III List of Occupational Diseases*

Occupational diseases	Employment
<i>Part A</i>	
Anthrax	Any employment—
	(a) involving the handling of wool, hair, bristles or animal carcasses or parts of such carcasses including hides, hoofs and horns, or (b) in connection with animals infected with anthrax, or (c) involving the loading or unloading or transport of merchandise
Compressed air illness or its sequelæ	Any process carried on in compressed air
Poisoning by lead tetra ethyl	Any process involving the use of lead tetra ethyl
Poisoning by nitrous fumes	Any process involving exposure to nitrous fumes
<i>Part B</i>	
Lead poisoning or its sequelæ excluding poisoning by lead tetra ethyl	Any process involving the use of lead or any of its preparations or compounds except lead tetra ethyl
Phosphorus poisoning or its sequelæ	Any process involving the use of phosphorus or its preparations or compounds
Mercury poisoning or its sequelæ	Any process involving the use of mercury or its preparations or compounds
Poisoning by benzene and its homologues or the sequelæ of such poisoning	Handling benzene or any of its homologues and any process in the manufacture or involving the use of benzene or any of its homologues
Chrome ulceration or its sequelæ	Any process involving the use of chromic acid or bichromate of ammonium potassium or sodium, or their preparations

Occupational diseases	Employment
Arsenical poisoning or its sequelae	Any process involving the production, liberation or utilization of arsenic or its compounds
Pathological manifestations due to— (a) radium and other radio-active substances	Any process involving exposure to the action of radium, radio active substances or X rays
(b) X rays Primary epitheliomatous cancer of skin	Any process involving the handling or use of tar, pitch, bitumen, mineral oil, paraffin or the compound products or residues of these substances

A commissioner appointed by the Provincial Government will not entertain any claim for compensation unless notice of the accident has been given to him as soon as practicable after the occurrence of the accident and unless the claim is preferred before him within one year of the occurrence of the accident or in the case of death, within one year from the date of death. The commissioner may for the purpose of deciding any matter referred to him for decision in connection with any claim for compensation choose one or more persons possessing special knowledge of any matter relevant to the matter under inquiry to assist him in holding the inquiry. He has all the powers of a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure 1908 for the purpose of taking evidence on oath and of enforcing the attendance of witnesses and compelling the production of documents and material objects and he is also deemed to be a civil court for all the purposes of section 195 and of Chapter XXXV of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898. The commissioner is required to take down the evidence of a medical witness word for word as far as possible although he is allowed to make a brief memorandum of the substance of the evidence of every other witness in the proceeding. If he thinks fit he may submit any question of law for the decision of the High Court and if he does so he is required to decide the question in conformity with such decision. An appeal lies to the High Court from certain orders of a Commissioner provided a substantial question of law is involved and the amount in dispute in the appeal is not less than three hundred rupees.

A qualified medical practitioner is usually asked to examine a workman either on his own behalf or on behalf of the employer and to give his opinion as to whether the workman is partially or totally disabled from an accident or occupational disease. In such cases the medical practitioner must be very careful in making a thorough examination of the injured workman before he pronounces his opinion inasmuch as he is apt to exaggerate the symptoms or to practise deliberate fraud and to delay the recovery. The medical practitioner should not however, approach every case of accident with a suspicious mind as owing to financial anxiety from insecurity of compensation the injured workman may develop anxiety neurosis which is likely to prejudice his recovery to a great extent.

#### MALINGERING OR FEIGNED DISEASES

Malingering or shamming a disease or injury or exaggerating its effects is very common in India and is usually practised by soldiers or policemen to evade their duties by prisoners to avoid hard work, by persons to evade legal responsibility for their criminal conduct, by workmen to claim compensation under the

Workmen's Compensation Act or by beggars to excite the sympathy of charitable people. Similarly an assailed person tries to aggravate the effects of injuries or simulates them when he has none so as to mislead the medical jurist. A medical practitioner who has any experience of medico legal or police work in India must have come across such cases of feigned diseases and injuries.

The number of diseases shammed by a malingerer is legion. Ophthalmia, dyspepsia, intestinal colic, diabetes, spitting of blood, ulcers, burns, feigned abortion, rheumatism, lumbago, neurasthenia, nervous diseases such as aphasia, sciatica, vertigo, headache, epilepsy, insanity and paralysis of the limbs, and feigned bruises and injuries of the internal organs are very common. In some cases it is quite easy to find out the deception but in others it is difficult to find out whether an individual is shamming or not. In such cases the medical practitioner should bear in mind the following hints before he decides the question of malingering —

1. Keep the patient under observation and have him carefully watched without his knowledge.

2. Pay him several unexpected visits before you decide on the case.

3. Hear patiently the history of the case and compare the symptoms if they refer to a particular disease or a group of diseases and find out if there are any discrepancies in his description of the symptoms of the disease which he simulates.

4. Have all the bandages and dressings removed. An injured person often goes to a medical man with the application of turmeric (*haldi*) on the body. It should be thoroughly washed and wiped out to ascertain if there are any abrasions or bruises on the body.

5. Try to find out the motive of deception in each case.

6. Be wary in giving credence to the story of the bystanders or relatives of the malingerer.

7. Examine each and every organ carefully and thoroughly.

8. Suggest in the presence of the patient some heroic method of treatment such as the application of an actual cautery or some severe operation. In one case where an assaulted man pretended aphasia he started speaking when he was laid down on the operating table and a big amputation. In fact he was shown to him to open his skull to find out the injury on his brain. I have often succeeded in making the malingerers admit their deception by applying strong currents of electricity or Liston's long splint or by administering some nasty drug such as castor oil etc.

9. Administer an anaesthetic if necessary.

## SECTION II

### TOXICOLOGY

#### CHAPTER XXI

##### POISONS AND THEIR MEDICAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS

**Definition**—It is difficult to give an exact definition of the term, "poison" for substances which are harmless to the body in certain conditions may become dangerous in other conditions. For instance, the salts of potassium are not only not poisonous in small doses, but are essential for the maintenance of a healthy condition of the body. In large quantities, however, they act as acute poisons, capable of destroying life. Broadly speaking, a poison may be defined as a substance of the nature of a drug which, if administered in a way and in an amount in which it is likely to be administered, will produce deleterious effects of a serious nature. This, however, only applies to the term as usually employed. It does not cover the poisonous gases which are not substances of the nature of a drug. But they are not often used criminally, except during warfare.<sup>1</sup>

**Law relating to Poisons**—In cases of criminal poisoning in India the law does not insist on the precise definition of a poison since sections<sup>2</sup> of the Indian Penal Code dealing with the offences relating to the administration of a poison make use of such self explanatory terms as "any poison or any stupefying, intoxicating, or unwholesome drug, or other thing," or "any corrosive substance or any substance which it is deleterious to the human body to inhale, to swallow, or to receive into the blood." With regard to "any poisonous substance" used in section 284 of the Indian Penal Code<sup>3</sup> all that the law requires is that the substance is such as, if taken, will endanger human life, or will be likely to cause hurt or injury to any person. Again, the law takes cognizance of the malicious intention of the individual who administers a drug or other substance with a view to causing injury or death, irrespective of the quantity or quality of the substance.

**Sale of Poisons**—In the year 1866 the Bombay Poisons Act (Bombay Act No. VIII of 1866) was passed, which controlled the sale of certain specified poisons in the Presidency of Bombay but there was no law restricting the sale of poisons in the whole of India, until the Poisons Act was passed in 1904 by the Governor-General in Council providing for regulating the possession and sale of all poisons in certain local areas and the importation, possession and sale of white arsenic without a licence throughout the whole of British India. This Act was repealed, and another Poisons Act (Act No. XII of 1919) was passed in 1919, which extends to the whole of British India, including British Baluchistan and the Sonthal Parguns. Under this Act the Governor General in Council may, by notification in the Gazette of India, prohibit except under and in accordance with the conditions of a licence the importation into British India of any specified poison, and may by rule regulate the grant of licences. Subject to the control of the Governor General in Council, the Local Government may by rule regulate within the whole or any part of the territories under its administration the possession for sale and the sale, whether wholesale or retail, of any specified poison. The Local Government may also by rule regulate the possession of any specified poison in any local area in

<sup>1</sup> The Geneva Protocol of 1925 prohibits the use of poisonous or asphyxiating gases in warfare but it is alleged that the Italians used them in the Italo-Ethiopian war.

<sup>2</sup> Vide Appendix II Sections 324, 325, and 328, I.P.C., as also sections 289 and 304-A, Indian Penal Code.

<sup>3</sup> Vide Appendix II.

which the use of such poison for the purpose of committing murder or mischief by poisoning cattle appears to it to be of such frequent occurrence as to render restrictions on the possession thereof desirable.

Under the rules made by the Government of the United Provinces in exercise of these powers a medical practitioner who does not possess qualifications registrable under the United Provinces Medical Act, 1917, is not to be granted a licence for the sale of any of the following poisonous preparations of the British Pharmacopœia —

1 Atropine—its salts and B P preparations, 2 Chloroform and all preparations containing more than 20 per cent of chloroform 3 Cocaine, its salts and B P preparations, 4 B P preparations of Dhatura, 5 Diethyl Barbituric acid and such derivatives as Veronal, Proponal, Medinal, 6 Digitalis and its B P preparations, 7 Homatropine hydrobromide and its preparations, 8 Hyoscine hydrobromide, 9 Hyosciamine sulphate, 10 All B P. preparations of Nux Vomica containing more than 0.2 per cent of strichnine, and all its alkaloids with their salts and preparations 11 Oxalic Acid, 12 Phosphorus and all preparations containing 0.005 or more per cent of free phosphorus, 13 Physostigmine sulphate, 14 Pilocarpine nitrate, 15 Prussic acid and all preparations containing more than 0.1 per cent of it

*Note* — Preparations ' or B P preparations ' in the above mentioned list refer to preparations official in the British Pharmacopœia, 1932 Edition, except item No 4 (Preparations of Dhatura) included in the 1911 edition of the British Pharmacopœia

It is also provided that a licence holder shall not sell powdered white arsenic to any person unless the same is, before the sale thereof, mixed with soot in the proportion of an ounce of soot at least to one pound of white arsenic, or with indigo or Prussian blue in the proportion of half an ounce of indigo or Prussian blue to one pound of arsenic, and so on in proportion for any greater or less quantity

Provided that the licensing authority may, after full investigation and reference, if necessary, to higher authorities, permit on such conditions and with such restrictions as it thinks necessary any licence holder to sell white arsenic without any admixture

With a view to regulating the cultivation, manufacture, importation, exportation, possession, sale and use of dangerous drugs, especially those derived from opium, Indian hemp and coca leaf in accordance with the Geneva Convention or in pursuance of any international convention, the Indian Legislature passed in 1930 the Dangerous Drugs Act (Act No II of 1930), which extends to the whole of British India, including British Baluchistan and the Sonthal Parganas, and provides uniform penalties for offences relating to the dangerous drugs. The object of the Act is to suppress the contraband traffic in and abuse of dangerous drugs. This Act was amended in 1933 and 1938 and the amended acts are known as the Dangerous Drugs Amendment Act, 1933 (Act No XXVI of 1933) and the Dangerous Drugs Amendment Act, 1938 (Act No III of 1938).

The drugs to which the Dangerous Drugs Act applies are—

1 The leaf and young twigs of any coca plant *i.e.*, of the *erythroxylon coca* and the *erythroxylon novocanadense* and their varieties, and of any other species of this genus which the Governor General in Council may, by notification in the Gazette of India, declare to be coca plants for the purposes of this Act, and any mixture thereof with or without neutral materials, but does not include any preparation containing not more than 0.1 per cent of cocaine

2 Crude cocaine, *i.e.*, any extract of coca leaf which can be used directly or indirectly, for the manufacture of cocaine

3 Egonine, *i.e.*, lev-o-egonine having the chemical formula  $C_{17}H_{21}NO_4H_2O$ , and all the derivatives of lev-o-egonine from which it can be recovered

4 Cocaine, *i.e.*, methyl benzoil lev-o-egonine having the chemical formula  $C_{17}H_{21}NO_4$ , and its salts

5 All preparations, official and non-official, containing more than 0.1 per cent of cocaine

6 The leaves, small stalks and flowering or fruiting tops of the Indian hemp plant (*Cannabis sativa*), including all forms known as *bhang*, *sudhi*, or *ganja*

7. *Charas*, i.e., the resin obtained from the Indian hemp plant, which has not been submitted to any manipulations other than those necessary for packing and transport.

8. Any mixture, with or without neutral materials, of any of the above forms of hemp or any drink, prepared therefrom.

9. Medicinal hemp, i.e., any extract or tincture of hemp.

10. The capsules of the poppy (*Papaver somniferum*).

11. The spontaneously coagulated juice of poppy capsules which has not been submitted to any manipulations other than those necessary for picking and transport.

12. Any mixture, with or without neutral materials, of poppy capsules or coagulated juice of opium, but does not include any preparation containing not more than 0.2 per cent of morphine.

13. Medicinal opium, i.e., opium which has undergone the process necessary to adapt it for medicinal use in accordance with the requirements of the British Pharmacopoeia whether in powder form or granulated or otherwise or mixed with neutral materials.

14. Prepared opium, i.e., any product of opium obtained by any series of operations designed to transform opium into an extract suitable for smoking, and the dross or other residue remaining after opium is smoked.

15. Morphine, i.e., the principal alkaloid of opium having the chemical formula  $C_{17}H_{21}NO_3$ , and its salts.

16. Diacetylmorphine, i.e., the alkaloid also known as diamorphine or heroin, having the chemical formula  $C_{21}H_{23}NO_5$ , and its salts.

17. All preparations, official and non-official containing more than 0.2 per cent of morphine, or containing any diacetylmorphine.

The committee responsible under the United Nations for dealing with the international control of narcotic drugs have decided to introduce a new convention so as to bring under control certain synthetic drugs, especially of the amide series, which are capable of producing addiction, and which are not covered by the convention of July 13, 1931 as amended on December 11, 1946. Under this new convention the manufacture of these drugs, including their preparations and compounds, will be limited by international agreement to the world's legitimate requirements for medicinal and scientific purposes, and their distribution will also be regulated accordingly.

The Drugs Act, 1940 (Act No XXIII of 1940), which extends to the whole of British India, was passed by the Indian Legislature for the purpose of regulating the import into, and the manufacture, distribution and sale in, British India of drugs, such as (1) patent or proprietary medicines, (2) substances commonly known as vaccines, sera, toxins, toxoids, antitoxins, and antigens and biological products of such nature, (3) vitamins, hormones and analogous products and (4) other drugs, which are meant for the internal and external use of human beings, or animals and are also intended to be used for or in the treatment, mitigation or prevention of disease in human beings or animals. This Act is not applicable to medicines and substances exclusively used or prepared for use in accordance with the Ayurvedic or Unani systems of medicine.

The Drugs Act empowers the Central Government to constitute a Drugs Technical Advisory Board and to establish a Central Drugs Laboratory. The duties of these bodies will be to advise the Central Government and the Provincial Governments on technical matters arising out of the administration of this Act and to fix standards for drugs, to register formulae and to decide whether a drug is labelled correctly or whether it is made to appear of better or greater value than it really is. The most important provision of the Act is that no person shall import, or manufacture for sale, or sell, or stock or exhibit for sale, or distribute any patent or proprietary medicine, unless there is displayed on its label or container either the true formula or list of ingredients contained in it in a manner readily intelligible to members of the medical profession, or the number of the certificate of registration granted by the Central Drugs Laboratory after being

correctly informed of the formula of such medicine. The Act also empowers the Central Government to specify the diseases or ailments which an imported drug may not claim to cure or mitigate to prescribe conditions of packing bottles packages or other containers of imported drugs and to prescribe the maximum proportion of any poisonous substance contained in any imported drug.

When taking a sample of a drug for analysis an inspector is required to pay the fair price thereof and to divide the sample into four portions which he will dispose of as follows —

i one portion he will restore to the vendor,

ii the second portion he will send to the Government Analyst for test or analysis

iii the third he will retain for production in Court when required,

iv the fourth he will send to the warrantor, if any who will then have the opportunity of ascertaining if in fact he supplied the drug or if it has undergone any change since he supplied it.

Offences punishable under this Act can be tried only by a Presidency Magistrate or by a Magistrate of the first class.

The Drugs Rules 1940 under the Drugs Act 1940 have been made by the Central Government to regulate the import of drugs into British India, the functions and procedure of the Central Drugs Laboratory and manufacture distribution and sale in the central areas. The rules regulating manufacture distribution and sale in the Provinces exactly similar to those in the central areas are issued by Provincial Governments and should be referred to by those concerned with them.

The rules are divided into twelve Parts. Of these Parts I to IV extend to the whole of British India and the remaining Parts to the Chief Commissioners Provinces of Delhi, Ajmer, Merwara and Coorg.

In accordance with the rules laid down in Part III an application for registration of a patent or proprietary medicine which does not bear a disclosure of the true formula on the label is to be made to the Director of the Central Drugs Laboratory and is to be accompanied by a sample of the medicine sufficient for test or analysis and by a sealed cover containing the correct formula of the medicine. Strict secrecy regarding the composition of the medicine will be observed. Registration will be for a period of three years and may be renewed for periods of three years at a time. An application must be made for a fresh certificate of registration if there is any alteration in the name or composition of the registered medicine. A fee of fifty rupees is required to be paid with each application for a certificate or renewal of a certificate of registration. If the manufacture of a

registered patent or proprietary medicine is discontinued the manufacturer or his agent must within six months from the date of such discontinuance give notice of the fact to the Director of the Central Drugs Laboratory.

Under the rules described in Part IV biological and other special products,<sup>1</sup> such as sera solution of serum proteins intended for injection vaccines to in antigens antitoxins neoarsphenamine and analogous substances used for the specific treatment of infective diseases insulin, pituitary (posterior lobe) extract adrenaline and solutions of salts of adrenaline penicillin any other preparations in a form to be administered parenterally sterilized surgical ligature and sterilized surgical suture preparations of the digitalis group of drugs not in a form to be administered parenterally ergot and its preparations not in a form to be administered parenterally adrenaline preparations not in a form to be administered parenterally fish liver oil preparations containing any vitamins not in a form to be administered parenterally preparations containing liver extract not in a form

1 Vide Schedule C and C (1)

to be administered parenterally and preparations containing hormones not in a form to be administered parenterally, must be imported only under a license. They must comply with the specified standards of strength, quality and purity, and they must be packed and labelled in the prescribed manner. Small quantities of drugs may be imported for personal use, provided that they form part of a passenger's bona fide baggage and are intended for the exclusive personal use of the passenger.

The following is a list of poisons given in Schedule E to which special restrictions apply with regard to their storage and sale and the dispensing of medical prescriptions containing any of these drugs —

Aacetamide, alkyl acetanilides

Aconite, roots of

Alkaloids, the following, their salts, simple or complex —

Acetylhydrocodone, its esters

Aconite, alkaloids of, except substances containing less than 0.02 per cent of the alkaloids of aconite

Aipomorphine, except substances containing less than 0.2 per cent of apomorphine

Atropine, except substances containing less than 0.15 per cent of atropine

Belladonna alkaloids of, except substances containing less than 0.15 per cent of the alkaloids of belladonna calculated as hyoscyamine

Benzoylmorphine

Benzylmorphine

Brucine except substances containing less than 0.2 per cent of brucine

Calabar bean alkaloids of

Coca, alkaloids of, except substances containing less than 0.1 per cent of the alkaloids of coca

Cocaine, except substances containing less than 0.1 per cent of cocaine

Codeine, except substances containing less than one per cent of codeine

Colchicine, except substances containing less than 0.5 per cent of colchicine

Conine except substances containing less than 0.1 per cent of conine

Cotarnine, except substances containing less than 0.2 per cent of cotarnine

Cutarime

Diamorphine (Diacetylmorphine hydrochloride)

Dihydrocodeine, its esters

Dihydrocodeinone, its esters

Dihydromorphine, its esters

Dihydromorphinone, its esters

Ergonine, except substances containing less than 0.1 per cent of ergonine — its esters

Emetine, except substances containing less than one per cent of emetine

Ephedra, alkaloids of, except substances containing less than one per cent of the alkaloids of ephedra

Frog, alkaloids of

Iethylmorphine except substances containing less than 0.2 per cent of ethylmorphine

Gelsemium, alkaloids of, except substances containing less than 0.1 per cent of the alkaloids of gelsemium

Homatropine, except substances containing less than 0.1 per cent of homatropine

Hyoscine, except substances containing less than 0.15 per cent of hyoscine

Hyoscyamine except substances containing less than 0.15 per cent of hyoscyamine

Jaborandi, alkaloids of, except substances containing less than 0.5 per cent of the alkaloids of jaborandi

Lobelia alkaloids of, except substances containing less than one per cent of the alkaloids of lobelia

Morphine, except substances containing less than 0.2 per cent of morphine calculated as anhydrous morphine

## Nicotine

Papaverine, except substances containing less than one per cent of papaverine

Pomegranate, alkaloids of except substances containing less than 0.5 cent of the alkaloids of pomegranate

Quebracho, alkaloids of

Sabadilla, alkaloids of, except substances containing less than one per cent of the alkaloids of sabadilla

Solanaceous alkaloids, not otherwise included in this List except substances containing less than 0.1 per cent of solanaceous alkaloids calculated as hyoscyamine

Stavesacre, alkaloids of except ointments, lotions for external use and substances containing less than 0.2 per cent of the alkaloids

Strychnine, except substances containing less than 0.2 per cent of strychnine

Thebaïne except substances containing less than one per cent of thebaïne

Veratrum, alkaloids of, except substances containing less than one per cent of the alkaloids of veratrum

Yohimba, alkaloids of

Allylisopropylacetamide

Amodopyrine, its salts

Amino-alcohols esterified with benzoic acid phenylacetic acid, phenylpropionic acid cinnamic acid or the derivatives of these acids except in substances containing less than ten per cent of esterified amino alcohols

Ammonia except substances containing less than 5 per cent, weight in weight, of ammonia

Amphetamine (beta aminopropylbenzene) its salts its N-alkyl derivatives their salts beta amino iso propylbenzene its salts its N-alkyl derivatives, their salts, except when present in inhalers provided that the poison is absorbed in inert solid material within the inhaler

Amyl nitrite

Antimony chlorides of oxides of antimony, sulphides of antimony, antimonates, antimonites organic compounds of antimony Preparations of antimony, except substances containing less than the equivalent of one per cent of antimony trioxide

Arsenic, halides of oxides of arsenic, sulphides of arsenic, arsenates, arsenites, aceto arsenites, thioarsenates, organic compounds of arsenic Preparations of arsenic, except substances containing less than the equivalent of 0.01 per cent of arsenic trioxide

Barbituric acid its salts derivatives of barbituric acid their salts, compounds of barbituric acid, its salts, its derivatives, their salts, with any other substance

Barium salts of, other than barium sulphate

Butylechloral hydrate

Cannabis (the dried flowering or fruiting tops and leaves of *Cannabis sativa Linn*) the resin of cannabis extracts of cannabis tinctures of cannabis, canabin tannate

Cantharidates except substances containing less than the equivalent of 0.01 per cent of cantharidin

Cantharidin except substances containing less than 0.01 per cent of cantharidin

Chloral formamide

Chloral hydrate

Chloroform except substances containing less than 10 per cent of chloroform

Creosote from wood

Croton oil and seeds of

Datura, seeds and leaves of, preparations of datura except substances containing less than 0.1 per cent of the alkaloids of datura calculated as hyoscine

Diamunodiphenylsulphone, its salts and derivatives

Digitalis glycosides of except substances containing less than one unit of activity (as defined in the British Pharmacopoeia) in two grammes of the substance

Dinitroresols, dinitronaphthols, dinitrophenols, dinitrothymols

Elatern

Ergot (the sclerotia of any species of *Claviceps*), extracts of ergot, tinctures of ergot

Erythrityl tetranitrate

- Formaldehyde, except substances containing less than 5 per cent formaldehyde  
 Glyceryl trinitrate (nitroglycerin)  
 Guanidines the following, polymethylene diguanidines, dipara anisyl phenethyl guanidine  
 Hydrochloric acid, except substances containing less than 9 per cent, weight in weight, of hydrochloric acid  
 Hydrocyanic acid, except substances containing less than 0.1 per cent of hydrocyanic acid (HCN) cyanides except substances containing less than the equivalent of 0.1 per cent, weight in weight, of hydrocyanic acid (HCN), double cyanides of mercury and zinc  
 Hydrofluoric acid, potassium fluoride sodium fluoride, sodium silicofluoride  
 Insulin  
 Lead acetates, compounds of lead with acids from fixed oils  
 Mannetyl Hexanitrate  
 Mercuric chloride or mercuric ammonium chlorides, except substances containing less than one per cent of mercuric chloride, mercuric iodide, except substances containing less than two per cent of mercuric iodide, nitrates of mercury except substances containing less than the equivalent of three per cent weight in weight, of mercury (Hg) potassium-mercuric iodides except substances containing less than the equivalent of one per cent of mercuric iodide, organic compounds of mercury, except substances containing less than the equivalent of 0.2 per cent, weight in weight, of mercury (Hg), mercuric oxycyanides, oxides of mercury  
 Nitric acid, except substances containing less than 9 per cent, weight in weight, of nitric acid  
 Nitrobenzene  
 Nitrophenols, ortho meta or para  
 Nux Vomica seeds of preparations of nux vomica, except substances containing less than 0.2 per cent of the alkaloids of nux vomica  
 Oil of Savin  
 Opium, except substances containing less than 0.2 per cent of morphine calculated as anhydrous morphine  
 Orthocaine, its salts

Sulphonal, alkyl sulphonals

Sulphuric acid except substances containing less than 9 per cent, weight in weight, of sulphuric acid

Suprarenal gland the active principles of, their salts.

Thallium salts of

Thyroid gland, the active principles of, their salts

Tribromethyl alcohol

Zinc Chloride

A person holding a license to sell, stock and exhibit for sale and distribute these poisons is required to observe the following conditions among others (Rule 65, clauses 1 to 15) —

Any poison or any preparation containing any such poison and any poison supplied on the prescription of a registered medical practitioner must, if compounded or made up on the licensee's premises, be compounded or made up by or under the supervision of a qualified person<sup>1</sup>

The supply of any poison on the prescription of a registered medical practitioner must be recorded at the time of supply in a prescription register specially maintained for the purpose and the serial number of the entry in the register must be entered on the prescription. The following particulars must be entered in the register —

- (a) serial number of the entry ,
- (b) the date of supply ,
- (c) the name and address of the prescriber ,
- (d) the name of the patient ,

(e) the name of the poison or preparation and the quantity or, in the case of a medicine made up by the licensee, the ingredients and the quantities thereof,

(f) the signature of the qualified person by or under whose supervision the medicine was made up and supplied ,

Provided that if the medicine is supplied on a prescription on which the medicine has been supplied on a previous occasion, it must be sufficient if the entry in the register includes a serial number, the date of supply, the quantity supplied and a sufficient reference to an entry in the register recording the dispensing of the medicine on a previous occasion

Poisons kept in a retail shop or premises used in connection therewith must be stored—

- (a) in a cupboard or drawer reserved solely for the storage of poisons , or
- (b) in a part of the premises separated from the remainder of the premises and to which customers are not permitted to have access

Poisons must be kept in containers impervious to the poison and sufficiently stout to prevent leakage arising from the ordinary risks of handling and transport

A poison sold by retail must be labelled with the word "Poison" in such language or languages as the Chief Commissioner may prescribe by notification in the official Gazette

The container of a medicine made up ready for the treatment of human ailments must be labelled with the word "Poison," if it contains a poison

<sup>1</sup> A qualified person means a person who holds a degree or diploma in pharmacy or pharmaceutical chemistry of an Institution approved by the licensing authority, or is a member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain or has had not less than four years practical experience of dispensing which is in the opinion of the licensing authority adequate, and has been approved by that authority as a qualified person

The container of an emulsion, liniment, lotion liquid antiseptic or other liquid medicine for external application, which is made up ready for the treatment of human ailments must be labelled with the words 'Poison For external use only,' if it contains a poison.

The container of a medicine made up ready for the treatment of animals must be labelled with the words 'Poison' 'For animal treatment only,' if the medicine contains a poison.

The container of a medicine which is not made up ready for treatment must be labelled with the word 'Poison,' if the medicine contains a poison.

**Explanation**—A medicine must be deemed to be made up ready for treatment if it is made up and labelled with a dose ready for use, whether after or without dilution.

Schedule H to the Rules contains a list of the following poisons which are subject to special restrictions both with regard to sale and prescribing (Rule 65, clauses 9, 10 and 11) —

**Amidopyrine, its salts**

Barbituric acid its salts derivatives of barbituric acid their salts compounds of barbituric acid its salts its derivatives their salts with any other substance provided that compounds the barbituric acid content of which does not exceed 50 mill grammes in a single therapeutic dose shall be exempted.

**Dinitrocresols, dinitronaphthols, dinitrophenols dinitrothymols**

Para aminobenzenesulphonamide its salts derivatives of para aminobenzenesulphonamide having any of the hydrogen atoms of the para amino group or of the sulphonamide group substituted by another radical their salts

**1 Phenyleinchominic acid Salicyl-cinchoninic acid their salts their esters**

**Sulphonal alkyl sulphonals**

The restrictions provide that these substances must not be sold by retail except on and in accordance with a prescription of a registered medical practitioner provided that no prescription shall be required for sale or supply to a registered medical practitioner, hospital, infirmary or an institution approved by the order of a licensing authority.

For the purposes of these rules a prescription must—

(a) be in writing and signed by the person giving it with his usual signature and be dated by him,

(b) specify the name and address of the person for whose treatment it is given,

(c) indicate the total amount of the medicine to be supplied and the dose to be taken.

The person dispensing a medicine must comply with the following requirements—

(a) the prescription must not be dispensed more than once unless the prescriber has stated thereon that it may be dispensed more than once,

(b) if the prescription contains a direction that it may be dispensed a stated number of times or at stated intervals, it must not be dispensed otherwise than in accordance with the directions,

(c) at the time of dispensing there must be noted on the prescription above the signature of the prescriber, the name and address of the seller and the date on which the prescription is dispensed.

The rules regarding the custody and dispensing of poisonous drugs in all hospitals and dispensaries in India provide that all poisonous drugs shall be issued by the Government Medical Storekeeper with labels printed on orange coloured

paper with the word "Poison" in large English and Vernacular characters affixed to all bottles vessels etc., containing such articles, that they shall be kept separate from all others in an almirah, box or drawer to which the word "Poisons" shall be affixed that written prescriptions containing poisons shall be dispensed by a Provincial Subordinate Medical Service or Provincial Medical Service officer attached to a dispensary and not by a compounder unless he (or she) has put in at least four years' service and that a copy of these rules pasted on stiff paper or board shall be suspended in every apartment where medicines are dispensed.

**Indian Pharmacy Act**—The Indian Pharmacy Act (Act No VIII of 1948) 1948 which extends to all the provinces of India, was passed by the Indian Dominion Parliament "to make better provision for the regulation of the profession of Pharmacy and for that purpose to constitute Pharmacy Councils" Clause 42 of the Act is the most important and reads as follows—

(1) On or after such date as the Provincial Government may, by notification in the official Gazette appoint in this behalf, no person other than a registered pharmacist shall compound, prepare mix, or dispense any medicine on the prescription of a medical practitioner except under the direct and personal supervision of a registered pharmacist, provided that this sub section shall not apply to the dispensing by a medical practitioner for his own patients, or with the general or special sanction of the Provincial Government, for the patients of another medical practitioner.

(2) Whoever contravenes the provision of sub section (1) shall be punishable with simple unprisonment, which may extend to six months, or with fine or with both.

(3) Cognizance of an offence punishable under this section shall not be taken except upon a complaint made by an order of the Provincial Government.

Under this Act it is also proposed to constitute the Central Council and Provincial Councils of Pharmacy which would have a control over the education and examination of those desirous of entering the profession of Pharmacy and also the registration and licensing of all qualified pharmacists and all establishments where pharmaceutical business of any description is conducted.

The Indian Pharmacy Act received the assent of the Governor General on the 4th March 1948 and came into force at once but the constitution and composition of Provincial Councils and registration of pharmacists and certain miscellaneous sections shall take effect in a particular province from such date not later than three years from the commencement of this Act, as the Provincial Government may, by notification in the official Gazette appoint in this behalf.

**Poisoning in India**—Human poisoning, as well as cattle poisoning, are both prevalent in India.

**Human Poisoning**—Both suicidal and homicidal cases of poisoning are much more common in India than in England owing to the facility with which poisons can be had in any bazaar. Accidental cases of poisoning are not unfrequently met with on account of the carelessness with which the earthen pots containing innocuous and poisonous roots and drugs are indiscriminately mixed up in a so called grocer's shop. Accidental poisoning may also occur from the injudicious use of love philters and quack remedies which sometimes contain poisonous drugs. Accidental cases of bites by venomous snakes frequently occur in India.

The poisons that are chiefly used for suicidal purposes are opium and arsenic. Sometimes, potassium cyanide, hydrocyanic acid, oxalic acid, carbolic acid, one

of the mineral corrosive acids, aspirin, barbitone or any other hypnotic, chloral hydrate rat paste or coal gas is used. A determined suicide may take two or more poisons at a time.

The poisons that are usually selected for the purposes of homicide are arsenic, pounded glass mercury, copper, antimony, aconite, oleander, nux vomica, strichine and madar. Opium is, sometimes, used to kill children or intoxicated persons. In some cases a mixture of two poisons, such as aconite and arsenic, is administered.

Rarely, cultures of disease germs are injected into the body with a view to causing the death of the victim. In the Pakur murder case which occurred in 1933 cultures of plague germs were introduced by means of a hypodermic syringe into the skin of the arm of Anarendra who died of plague in about nine days.

Datura is used, not as a rule, with homicidal intent, but for the purpose of stupefying persons to facilitate theft or robbery. In rare cases cannabis indica, chloral hydrate and chloroform are also used for the same purpose.

*Cattle Poisoning*—This is resorted to by Chamars who deal in hides. The poisons employed to destroy cattle are often arsenic, abrus precatorius, yellow oleander and sometimes aconite. A common mode in which arsenic is administered to an animal is to make a small quantity of white arsenic into a paste with some flour dough, and then to wrap it up in some fresh grass or stems of the grain plant. Sometimes, a bamboo *sui* is armed with arsenic paste and thrust into the tongue of an animal, especially in the Punjab. Other poisons that are also used, though rarely, are mercuric chloride, copper sulphate, lead oxide, croton, nux vomica, madar juice and snake venom.

## CLASSIFICATION OF POISONS

Poisons are classified according to the chief symptoms which they produce on the body, as follows—

### I Corrosives—Strong acids and alkalies

### II Irritants—*A* Inorganic—

Non metallic—Phosphorus, Chlorine, Bromine, Iodine

Metallic—Arsenic, Antimony, Mercury, Copper, Lead, Zinc, Silver, etc

### B Organic—

Vegetable—Castor oil seeds, Croton oil, Madar, Aloes, etc

Animal—Cantharides, Snake and insect bites, etc

### C Mechanical—Diamond dust, Powdered glass, Hair, etc

### III Neurotatics

#### 1 Affecting the brain (Cerebral)—

(a) Somniferous—Opium and its alkaloids

(b) Inebriant—Alcohol, Ether, Chloroform

(c) Deliriant—Datura, Belladonna, Hyoscyamus, Cannabis indica

#### 2 Affecting the spinal cord (Spinal)—nux vomica, Gelsemium

#### 3 Affecting the heart (Cardiac)—Aconite, Digitalis, Oleander, Tobacco, Hydrocyanic Acid

4 Affecting the lungs (Asphyxiants) —Poisonous irrespirable gases e.g., Carbon dioxide, Carbon monoxide, Coal gas, etc

5 Affecting the peripheral nerves (Peripheral) —Conium, Curara, etc

**The Methods of Administering Poisons** —The following are the methods by which poisons may be administered into the system —

1 By the mouth

2 By inhalation through the air passages

3 By absorption through the skin and serous membrane

4 By hypodermic injection The dose that acts as poison by this method may be taken as one third less than that which is required when administered by the mouth

5 By introduction within the spinal membranes

6 By injection into a blood vessel

7 By introduction into an open wound

8 By introduction into the natural orifices such as the rectum, vagina urethra ears etc The dose to act as poison through the rectum is probably double that required by the mouth

**The Channels of Elimination** —The channels of elimination by which poisons are excreted from the body are the urine, bile, milk, saliva, mucous and serous secretions and perspiration

### ACTION OF POISONS

The action of poisons on the animal system is—

1 Local

2 Remote

3 Both, i.e., combined

**1 Local** —The local action of a poison by coming into direct contact with the part may consist in—

(a) Chemical destruction by corrosives, such as strong acids and alkalies

(b) Congestion and inflammation by irritants, such as weak acids arsenic, tartar emetic, or cantharides

(c) Effects on the nerves of sensation or motion, e.g., tingling of the skin and tongue by aconite, and dilatation of the pupils by belladonna or datura

**2 Remote** —Remote action is produced either by shock acting reflexly through severe pain caused by corrosives, or by poisons being first absorbed into the system through the blood and then exerting a specific action on certain organs, and tissues. For instance, cantharides acting on the kidneys produces nephritis, nux vomica acting on the spinal cord causes tetanic convulsions opium acting on the brain produces narcosis and potassium chlorate acting on the blood converts oxyhaemoglobin into methaemoglobin

**3 Both, i.e., Combined** —Certain drugs such as carbolic acid, oxalic acid, phosphorus etc act locally by producing irritation and inflammation of the parts with which they come into contact, and then produce remotely serious symptoms, after they have been absorbed through circulation

## CAUSES MODIFYING THE ACTION OF POISONS

The causes which modify the action of poisons are four in number—

- 1 Quantity
- 2 Form
- 3 Mode of administration
- 4 Condition of the body

**1 Quantity**—The natural presumption is that a large dose of a poison will produce death more rapidly by causing severe symptoms than a smaller one but, in some cases the evil effects are mitigated by vomiting excited by a large dose of a poison such as copper sulphate. Moreover, the action of a poison varies with the quantity of its dose. For instance, a very large dose of arsenic may produce death by shock without causing irritant symptoms, while a smaller dose than a lethal one may produce its therapeutic action, as happened in the case of the late Mr. I. Lulham of Agra, when he was being poisoned by small doses of arsenic. Similarly, oxalic acid when administered in a large dose, produces a local corrosive action and may result in instantaneous death from shock but in a smaller dose it may prove fatal by acting on the heart, while in still smaller doses it acts on the spinal nervous system and the brain.

**2 Form**—Under this head will have to be considered—(a) Physical state, (b) Chemical combination, (c) Mechanical combination.

(a) *Physical State*—Poisons administered in the form of gases or vapours act at once and most energetically. Poisons in the form of solutions act much more rapidly than powders. Poisons in the form of solids act very slowly, because they are difficult to be absorbed and, in some cases may prove quite harmless.

(i) *Chemical Combination*—The action of a poison depends upon the solubility or insolubility resulting from a chemical combination. Thus silver nitrate and hydrochloric acid are both strong poisons when taken separately but, when combined form an insoluble salt of silver chloride which is almost innocuous. Similarly barbita (barium dioxide) and sulphuric acid act as poisons if administered separately but, in combination form an insoluble salt, barium sulphate which has no poisonous effects on the system. In the same way strong acids and alkalies when administered together, are rendered inert by their neutralizing effect.

It should be borne in mind that certain poisons which are almost insoluble in water may become dissolved in the acid secretion of the stomach and are then readily absorbed into the blood. For instance, lead carbonate white precipitate and copper arsenite which are insoluble in water are thus rendered sufficiently soluble for absorption through the mucous membrane of the stomach.

(c) *Mechanical Combination*—The action of a poison may be altered very much if combined mechanically with inert substances. For instance a small dose of a concentrated mineral acid produces a corrosive action but the same dose largely diluted with water may be taken internally with impunity. A heavy poisonous powder when mixed with water will settle down at the bottom of a vessel and the victim fails to take it, while it would have been swallowed had it been taken with a fluid of nearly the same specific gravity as that of the powder. For this reason arsenic is usually mixed with milk, tea coffee or cocoa when administered for homicidal purposes. Alkaloids, when taken with mineral charcoal are rendered more or less inert.

**3 Mode of Administration**—The rapidity of the action of a poison depends upon the mode in which it is introduced into the system. Thus, a poison

acts most rapidly when inhaled in a gaseous or vaporous form or introduced into the blood current by injection into a vein by subcutaneous injection, or by application to an open wound. Next in rapidity is the action of a poison which is applied to a serous surface, next when introduced into a cellular tissue, and next when applied to a mucous membrane. The least rapid is the action of a poison applied to the unbroken skin. In this case a drug dissolved in oil acts more rapidly than a watery solution.

A poison ingested into the stomach acts more rapidly than when injected into the rectum, since the absorptive power of the stomach and small intestine is greater than that of the large intestine and rectum. If a poison is eliminated as rapidly as it is absorbed, no poisonous symptoms are likely to occur. On the other hand, if the rate of absorption is greater than that of elimination the poison tends to accumulate in the system, and has a cumulative action. For example, mercury, lead, etc., are cumulative poisons.

Absorption by the stomach occurs more rapidly when the stomach is empty than when it is full of food at the time of taking the poison. In some cases however, absorption may be hastened if the nature of the stomach contents is such as will dissolve the poison. Thus, the action of phosphorus will be hastened if oil is taken immediately it is swallowed, as it dissolves in all oils except turpentine.

Finally, it must be remembered that some poisons, when administered by the mouth, are quite harmless, although they are highly dangerous when given subcutaneously. Thus, snake venom, when swallowed into the stomach has no poisonous effect on the body. Curare, when taken by the mouth, is practically inert, but it is highly toxic if administered hypodermically. Hydrogen sulphide is more poisonous when inhaled into the lungs than when given in solution either by the mouth or as an enema by the rectum.

#### 4 Condition of the Body—Under this head will have to be considered— (a) Age, (b) Idiosyncrasy (c) Habit, (d) State of health, (e) Sleep and intoxication

(a) *Age*—Ordinarily, poisons have a greater effect at the two extremes of age. Certain drugs, such as belladonna and calomel, are, however, better tolerated by children than by adults.

(b) *Idiosyncrasy*—This means natural susceptibility or tolerance of an individual towards certain drugs, such as arsenic, mercury, potassium iodide, tartar emetic, opium, strychnine etc., as also towards various articles of diet, such as shell fish, pork, pulses, vegetables, etc., which may be harmful to others. Thus, a medical dose of arsenic or mercury may produce alarming symptoms in susceptible persons, while even a very large dose of the same drug may be tolerated by other individuals without any deleterious effects. I have known half a grain of calomel to produce in an adult acute symptoms of mercurial poisoning. The same is the case with certain kinds of food. Hence the proverb "one man's meat is another man's poison."

(c) *Habit*—By the long continued use of such drugs as opium, tobacco, alcohol, strychnine and arsenic, people establish the habit of tolerating very large doses which, under ordinary circumstances, are liable to prove fatal. Even infants and children who cannot bear very small doses of certain drugs, such as opium etc., may, by the influence of habit, be made to bear considerably large doses of these drugs with comparative impunity. It should, however, be borne in mind that the habit cannot altogether counteract the evil effects of these poisons and that their habitual use is apt to impair the constitution or give rise to organic disease.

*Table showing Instances of Similarities of Symptoms produced by Poisons and Diseases*

Symptoms	Poison	Disease
1. Coma	Lead copper arsenic	Volvulus obstruction
2. Collapse	Corrosives, arsenic antimony, aconite tobacco lobelia, antipyrin exalgyn etc	Diphtheria cholera, fever
3. Coma	Opium morphine, chloral hydrate veronal, trional, sulphonal para dehyde, alcohol, camphor, chloro form carbolic acid atropine, hyos cine cyanides carbon monoxide carbon dioxide	Uremia, diabetes eclampsia, epilepsy, brain injury, tetraplex and other brain diseases
4. Contracted Pupils	Opium morphine chloral hydrate carbolic acid pilocarpine, muscarine	Irritation of 3rd nerve paralysis of sympathetic, and certain nervous diseases such as tabes dorsalis
5. Convulsions	Nux vomica and its alkaloids camphor cyanides santonin arsenic, antimony and opium in rare cases	Tetanus hysteria epilepsy, meningitis, eclampsia uremia, dentition in children
6. Cramp	Arsenic antimony lead	Cholera diarrhoea
7. Cyanosis	Aniline antifebrin, exalgyn, opium nitrobenzene	Valvular heart disease and diseases of the respiratory system
8. Delirium	Datura belladonna hyoscyamus, can nabis alcohol camphor cocaine	Pneumonia phthisis meningitis, nephritis fevers epilepsy in sanity and delirium tremens
9. Diarrhoea	Irritant poisons digitalis colchicum	Dysentery cholera, typhoid tubercle
10. Dilated Pupils	Belladonna hyoscyamus stramonium datura and their alkaloids aconite (alternate dilatation and contraction) gelsemium alcohol chloroform conium cocaine nicotine	Paralysis of 3rd nerve Irritation of sympathetic Certain nervous diseases causing optic atrophy
11. Dry Skin	Belladonna hyoscyamus, datura and their alkaloids	Fever, pneumonia
12. Moist Skin	Opium aconite antimony tobacco lobelia alcohol	Acute rheumatism
13. Paralysis	Conium aconite gelsemium, physos tigmine arsenic lead	Injury to cord or brain tetraplex hysteria
14. Vomiting	Corrosive and irritant poisons generally	Gastric ulcer acute gastritis brain tumour, cl olera acidosis etc

## II In the Dead —Diagnosis in the dead has to be made from—

- A Post mortem appearances
- B Chemical analysis
- C Experiments on animals
- D Moral and circumstantial evidence

### A POST MORTAL APPEARANCES

In order to make a probable guess of the poison and to look for its characteristic post mortem appearances, it is advisable that a medical officer, before commencing a post mortem examination on the body of a suspected case of poisoning, should read the police report and endeavour to get as much information as possible from the relatives of the deceased regarding the quality and quantity of the poison administered, the character of the symptoms with reference to their onset and the time that elapsed between the taking of the poison and the deve-

lopment of its first symptoms, the duration of the illness, nature of the treatment adopted, and the time of death. He will find that in most cases the account supplied by the police and the relatives is very meagre, or incorrect and misleading. His task is, therefore, very difficult, especially when many of the poisons except corrosives and irritants do not show any characteristic post mortem signs and when bodies are in an advanced state of decomposition. In cases where positive signs of poisoning are not manifest the medical officer should not give a definite opinion regarding the cause of death, but should suggest that the viscera be forwarded to the Chemical Examiner for analysis. He must carry out in all the cases of suspected poisoning, a thorough examination of the body, both external and internal, as far as possible.

**External Examination** — Some poisons such as hydrocyanic acid, carbolic acid, chloroform, ether, opium etc., give off a peculiar smell on opening the body. Hence no odorous disinfectant that is likely to mar such smell should be used. The surface of the body and the clothes may show stains or marks of vomit, faeces or of the poison itself. The skin may be jaundiced in phosphorus poisoning, or yellow in acute copper poisoning.

The natural orifices, such as the mouth, nostrils, rectum and vagina may show the presence of poisonous material or the signs of its having been used.

It must be borne in mind that the presence of wounds or disease sufficient to account for death does not contra indicate the use of a poison. It is therefore, necessary to preserve the viscera in all cases of suspected poisoning, even if there are no positive post mortem signs of poisoning.

**Internal Examination** — The alimentary system should be chiefly examined as the signs of irritant and corrosive poisons are likely to be found in the oesophagus, stomach and intestines.

The changes produced by irritant and corrosive poisons in the digestive tract, especially the stomach are—

- 1 Hyperemia
- 2 Softening
- 3 Ulceration of the mucous membrane
- 4 Perforation

These have to be differentiated from similar appearances caused by disease and putrefaction.

**1 Hyperemia** — Hyperemia (redness) of the mucous membrane caused by an irritant poison is generally marked at the cardiac end and greater curvature of the stomach, but rare at the pyloric end. It is usually of a deep crimson colour, and may be found either in patches or so diffused over its whole surface as to give it a velvety appearance as in arsenical poisoning. The mucous membrane is often covered with a viscid secretion which may be blood stained.

Instead of redness some other discolouration may be found due to poison or fruit juice. For instance a yellow colour may be due to nitric acid, a blue or green coloration to copper and blackening may be due to sulphuric acid poisoning. Discoloration produced by staining of fruit juice is uniform, and is not marked by signs of inflammation.

It should be noted that the appearance of the mucous membrane of the stomach in the healthy state is pale and white or nearly so except during the act of digestion, when it becomes reddened. Slight redness is often visible in the stomach if death has occurred during the process of digestion. Redness is

also found in the stomach as a result of general venous congestion in cases where death has occurred from asphyxia. It is, sometimes, so intense that it leads one to suspect poisoning.

On the 3rd August, 1929, a Brahmin male died all of a sudden in a street while returning from a dispensary where he had gone for some medicine. Owing to a good deal of redness of the mucous membrane of the stomach and the upper part of the small intestine and general congestion of the other abdominal organs it was suspected that death might be due to some irritant poison but the microscopic examination of a lung tissue showed that death was due to lung apoplexy, and the Chemical Examiner did not find any poison in the viscera.

Hyperemia caused by disease is uniformly spread over the whole surface, and not in patches, besides the ridges of the mucous membrane are more likely to be involved in poisoning than in disease. Redness produced by post mortem hypostasis is limited to the posterior wall, the most dependent part. In this case there is no thickening of the mucous membrane nor is there any glairy mucus on its surface.

It is right to bear in mind that redness caused by poisoning is rapidly altered by putrefaction but it is difficult to give the exact time when such a change occurs. It generally depends upon the nature of the poison and the degree of decomposition. In a case of arsenical poisoning redness of the gastric mucous membrane was perceptible nineteen months after interment,<sup>1</sup> and in the other case the hyperemic condition of the stomach and intestines was evident when the body was exhumed after twenty one months' burial.<sup>2</sup>

**2 Softening**—Softening of the mucous membrane of the stomach, especially at its cardiac end and greater curvature, is usually caused by the action of corrosive poisons, chiefly alkaline corrosives. It is also observed in the mouth, throat and oesophagus. But when caused by disease it is confined to the stomach alone and is commonly found at its cardiac end.

Some corrosive poisons, such as carbolic acid, produce hardening and shrinking of the mucous membrane instead of softening.

Softening caused by putrefaction commences at the most dependent parts and affects all the coats of the stomach without the detachment of its mucosa and the softened patch is not surrounded by an inflamed area as is the case in corrosive poisoning.

**3 Ulceration**—Ulceration caused by corrosive or irritant poisons is generally found at the greater curvature of the stomach, and presents the appearance of an erosion with thin, friable margins and surrounded by the softened mucosa due to intense inflammation. An idiopathic gastric ulcer is situated frequently on the lesser curvature with sharply defined, but thickened and indurated edges. The mucous membrane is commonly reddened only in the neighbourhood of the ulcer, while the redness is generally diffused over other parts of the stomach and extends up to the duodenum and small intestine when the ulcer is due to a corrosive or irritant poison.

**4 Perforation**—Perforation of the wall of the stomach or small intestine resulting from corrosive poisoning is rare, though it may be met with in cases of sulphuric acid poisoning. Perforation caused by poisoning must be distinguished from one caused by disease or by the post mortem action of the gastric juice.

In a perforation caused by poisoning the aperture is large, the edges are ragged and irregular and the coats are easily lacerated. The tissues round the margins are disintegrated beyond the edges of the aperture. The stomach in such a case is charred owing to the severe corrosive action.

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *On Poisons*, Fd III, p 110

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, Reg v Bacon, Lincoln Summer Assizes, 1857

If a perforation has been the result of a chronic ulcer due to disease, the aperture is commonly oval or rounded, the margin are more or less punched out, and the stomach does not show the signs of charring but it shows chronic adhesions to the neighbouring organs. Very rarely, perforation may follow an ulcer caused by irritant poisoning, when its appearance will be similar to that produced by the idiopathic ulcer.

In a perforation produced after death by auto digestion of the stomach by the gastric juice the aperture is very large and irregular with rough and pulpy edges, there is no inflammation or charring of the stomach, but the surrounding mucous membrane is often softened and gelatinous.

### B CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

The most important proof of poisoning is the detection of poison in the excreta (vomit, urine, etc.) during life, and in the contents of the stomach and bowels and in the tissues of the body after death. The finding of poison in food, medicine or any other suspected substance is corroborative, but not conclusive proof for the poison may have been added to any of these substances just to substantiate a false charge against an enemy. In cases of *suspected* poisoning it is advisable to elicit from the patient the poison he suspects to have been administered to him, so as to note if the symptoms complained of are referable to the same poison. The medical practitioner should also preserve for chemical analysis only the portions of the vomit, urine and faeces ejected in his presence.

When poison has been detected in the stomach-contents, the defence pleader may argue that it may have been introduced after death, or the contents may have been preserved in an unclean vessel. But these arguments are quite futile and worthless if the poison has also been detected in one or more of the solid viscera, such as the liver, spleen, kidneys, etc., and if clean china plates and glass bottles free from contamination, have been used for examining and preserving the stomach and other viscera.

It is not necessary to lay any stress on the amount of poison actually recovered except in those cases where it is alleged that the poison may have been administered as a medicine, that it may have been present owing to the deceased being habituated to its use, that it may have been a natural constituent of the body or a normal constituent of some article of food, or that it may have been produced in the body during the process of decomposition, e.g., leucomaines and ptomaines.

It is quite possible that a person may die from the effects of a poison, and yet none may be found in the body after death, if the whole of the poison has disappeared from the lungs by evaporation, or has been removed from the stomach and intestines by vomiting and purging, and after absorption has been eliminated from the system by the kidneys and other channels. Certain vegetable poisons may not be detected in the viscera as they have no reliable tests, while some organic poisons, especially the alkaloids and glucosides, may, by oxidation during life or by putrefaction after death, be split up into other substances which have no characteristic reactions sufficient for their identification.

I have seen cases in which there were definite signs of death from poisoning, although the Chemical Examiner failed to detect the poison in the viscera preserved for chemical analysis. In his annual report for the year 1927, the Chemical Examiner of Bengal also mentions that of the cases in which medical officers gave definite opinions that death was due to poisoning, poison was detected only in 60% per cent cases. It has, therefore, been wisely held by Christison that, in cases where a poison has not been detected on chemical analysis the judge, in deciding a charge of poisoning, should weigh in evidence the symptoms, post-mortem appearances and moral evidence.

**Examination of the Viscera and their Contents**—A medical officer who has no experience of chemical analysis should never undertake the analysis nor should he ever make any guess from the nature of the stomach contents etc , but after obtaining necessary orders from the District Magistrate he should forward the viscera to the Chemical Examiner for analysis. The Magistrate conducting the proceedings should furnish the Chemical Examiner with a copy of the medical officer's post mortem report and with every fact and detail either from deponents or from the police investigation, which may indicate the direction in which analytical inquiry may yield a positive result<sup>1</sup>

The Chemical Examiner has got the most responsible work, as his findings are final because he is not as a rule liable to cross examination (*Vide sec 510, Cr P C, Appendix III*)

The Chemical Examiner or his assistant who receives the articles for analysis from medical officers first verifies the seals, and compares the labels with the invoice list of the materials sent and then opens the bottles etc. He then places the contents in separate shallow porcelain basins after weighing and measuring them according to the nature of the material

A careful inspection of the contents of the stomach and its mucous membrane is now made both with the naked eye and with a hand magnifying lens making a note of the colour and reaction of the contents Any foreign substances, such as particles of undissolved poisons and fragments of seeds leaves roots, etc of poisonous plants are next picked up and examined on a slide under the microscope. The inner wall of the stomach is then washed with distilled water, and the washings added to the contents A little of the stomach contents may be taken on a slide rubbed up with a drop or two of glycerin and when examined under the microscope may show fragments of dhatura seeds or *blang* leaves

For chemical analysis the contents of the stomach are diluted with water and the solid viscera are finely chopped up and macerated in water If the Chemical Examiner has any clue or indication of the nature of the poison he begins by searching for it If not he usually divides the mixture into three parts for the examination of volatile vegetable and metallic poisons

**1. Volatile Poisons**—Volatile poisons such as alcohol ether hydrocyanic acid benzene nitro-benzene *aniline carbolic acid bromine iodine* and phosphorus are separated by distilling the first portion of the mixture acidulated with tartaric acid but to separate ammonia nicotine and volatile bases the mixture has to be rendered alkaline by the addition of magnesia The distillate is then examined for the presence of these poisons by applying distinctive tests for each

**2. Vegetable Poisons**—The detection of vegetable poisons depends on the isolation of their alkaloids and glucosides from the stomach contents or organs of the body and the suspected articles of food and their identification by the application of chemical and physiological tests

These alkaloids may be grouped under three heads (1) those derived from pyridine e.g. atropine conine (2) those derived from quinoline e.g. cinchonine narcotine and (3) substituted amines and amides Most of the vegetable alkaloids belong to the first two groups They are mostly solid crystalline and colourless except a few such as conine nicotine and pilocarpine, which are liquid They are insoluble in water but soluble in ether while with acids they form salts which dissolve in water but not in ether This fact of solubility is made use of in separating them from organic mixtures for which the following processes are adopted —

**3. Stas Otto Process as modified by Autenrieth**—The second part of the original mixture is put in a glass flask acidulated with the addition of twenty

<sup>1</sup> G O No 02/3 I 109 dated 25th July 1917 I G C H U P & Circular No 5 dated 6th August 1917 U P Med Manu al 1934 p - 0

to thirty drops of ten per cent of tartaric acid and digested with two to three times its weight of absolute alcohol. The mixture is heated for a period of ten to fifteen minutes on a water bath with a reflux condenser attached. It is then cooled and filtered to remove fat. The residue is then extracted with alcohol. The filtrates are combined, evaporated in a shallow porcelain dish to a thin syrupy consistency and mixed with 100 c.c. of water. An abundant precipitate of fat and resinous matter is removed by filtration. The filtrate is then evaporated to a thick syrupy consistency and extracted again with absolute alcohol. The alcoholic extract is evaporated and the residue is dissolved in 50 c.c. of water. The solution now contains alkaloidal tartrates and may be extracted with the undermentioned immiscible solvents —

(a) The acid solution is extracted with ether and on separation of ether and evaporation the residue will contain such substances as caffeine, acetanilide, phenacetin, antipyrin, salicylic acid, veronal, picric acid, colchicine, mercuric cyanide and narcotine.

(b) The acid aqueous residue from the above is treated with sodium hydroxide solution to render it strongly alkaline and is again extracted with ether. On separating and evaporating the extract most of the alkaloids except morphine, apomorphine and narcotine are obtained. If small globules with a strong odour are visible an attempt should be made to search for cocaine and nicotine.

(c) Ammonium chloride is added to the remaining alkaline residue which when extracted with ether, will yield apomorphine and traces of morphine.

(d) Extraction of the ammoniacal solution with hot chloroform will remove morphine, narcotine, colchicine, caffeine, antipyrin and traces of others.<sup>1</sup>

Several important modifications of the Stas Otto process depending upon the use of absorption and chromatographic methods and upon the use of other solvents, such as trichloroacetic acid, acetone saturated ammonium sulphite solution, tannin in glycerin etc. in place of absolute alcohol have been devised but these discoveries are still in the experimental stage and need not be discussed here.

**B Dragendorff's Process as modified by Haines** — This is specially intended for the separation of alkaloids, glucosides and vegetable principles from each other when the Chemical Examiner has no idea as to the type of vegetable poison used. It<sup>2</sup> consists in dissolving about 100 grammes of the mixture containing the suspected material in three times its volume of 50 per cent alcohol in a distilling flask of a capacity of 500 c.c. to which a reflux condenser is attached. The solution is acidified by adding a small quantity of acetic or tartaric acid and is digested on a water bath to a temperature not exceeding 50°C for an hour or two. The mixture is allowed to cool and filtered. The solid material on the filter is washed thoroughly with dilute alcohol and the washings are added to the rest of the filtrate. The residue is again acidulated and extracted. This process is repeated a third time to ensure complete extraction. The various filtrates and washings are combined in a large evaporating dish and heated on a water bath and are evaporated at a moderate temperature not exceeding 60°C to the consistency of a syrup and while it is still warm three or four volumes of 50 per cent alcohol are added slowly while stirring it. The mixture is allowed to stand in a warm place with frequent agitation for at least an hour and is then filtered. The insoluble residue on the filter is extracted several times with slightly acidulated absolute alcohol. The filtrates and washings thus collected, are combined, evaporated to a syrupy consistency and the process is repeated using absolute alcohol as an extracting fluid in order to free the solution of all co-soluble

<sup>1</sup> *A tutelrie à Laboratorj Manual for the Detection of Poisons and Powerful Drugs* Ed 2 transl by Warren Ed II p 10

<sup>2</sup> *Peterson Haines and Websters, Legal Med and Toxicol* Vol II Ed II p 58

material. The final filtrate and washings are evaporated to a syrupy consistence which when cold is mixed with two or three volumes of water acidulated with a few drops of sulphuric acid. The precipitate which is formed is filtered and washed with water. The resulting acid filtrate and washings are collected and placed in a separating funnel and are shaken out successively with the following immiscible solvents to extract the undermentioned substances—

1 Petroleum ether to extract picric acid salicylic acid benzoic acid camphor ethereal oils capsaicin piperine and the esters of salicylic and benzoic acids with guaiacol naphthol and cresol

2 Benzene to extract caffeine veratrine hydrastine piperine, cantharidin santonin colcovanthin digitalin absinthin elaterin and resorcin

3 Chloroform to extract theobromine colchicine papaverine, narcotine hydrastine cinchonine cinchonidine jervine acetanilide, picrotoxin gelsemine acid helleborin etc

The acid solution is now shaken up with petroleum ether to remove traces of chloroform. It is then rendered slightly alkaline by the cautious addition of ammonia and the following solvents are added successively to separate the under mentioned substances

1 Petroleum ether to dissolve out volatile alkaloids and aniline as also strychnine brucine conine nicotine lobeline quinine veratrine pyrline acornitine gelsemine etc

2 Benzene to dissolve out strychnine brucine cocaine atropine hyoscyamine hyoscine veratrine codeine narcotine thebaine apomorphine physostigmine etc

3 Chloroform to dissolve out berberine cinchonine narcotine papaverine and traces of morphine

4 Amyl alcohol to dissolve out morphine solanine safron and traces of saponin narcotine etc that may have been still left in the alkaline solution

5 The remaining portion of the alkaline solution is evaporated to dryness with the addition of powdered glass and the residue is extracted with chloroform when curarine will separate out

In order to obtain quicker and better results Webster<sup>1</sup> recommends the use of a perforator instead of shaking out with the immiscible solvents. The solvent is automatically and continuously carried through the aqueous liquid contained in the perforator which is of two forms—one to be used with liquids such as ether which are lighter than water and another to be employed with liquids such as chloroform which are heavier than water

**General Tests for Alkaloids**—1 *Wagner's Reagent*—Iodine dissolved in a solution of iodide of potassium gives a reddish brown precipitate if added to most alkaloids

2 *Mayer's Reagent*—Biniodide of mercury gives a yellowish white crystalline precipitate with an acid solution of most alkaloids. Biniodide of mercury is prepared by adding a solution of iodide of potassium to one of mercuric chloride when a scarlet precipitate is formed which is just dissolved by a further addition of either of the two

3 *Sonnenschein's Reagent*—Phosphomolybdic acid gives a yellow amorphous precipitate with most alkaloids

4 *Scheibler's Reagent*—Phosphotungstic acid has the same reaction as No. 3

5 *Platinum Chloride*—A solution of platinum chloride gives a brown precipitate with alkaloids

<sup>1</sup> Ralph W. Webster *Legal Medicine and Toxicology* 1930 p. 346

**G Tannin, Picric Acid or Mercuric Chloride**—Each of these, when added to alkaloids, precipitates them.

**Metallic Poisons**—Two methods exist, wet and dry, are employed for extracting metallic poisons from organic mixtures.

**Wet Method**—This consists in oxidizing the organic matter by thoroughly wetting in a Kjeldahl flask about 25 grammes of the third portion of the original mixture with about 15 c.c. of dilute nitric acid possessing a specific gravity of 1.2, or containing 10 per cent by weight of nitric acid and heating the flask for a few minutes. It is cooled and about 20 c.c. of concentrated sulphuric acid are added. The mixture is again heated and concentrated nitric acid is dropped in from a specially prepared dropping funnel at the rate of 10 to 15 drops a minute till the occurrence of complete oxidation which is indicated by the absence of charring on further heating without the addition of nitric acid. The atmosphere in the flask must at no time be free from red fumes. When all the organic matter is destroyed, the addition of nitric acid is stopped and the heating is carried on till the red fumes are no longer seen. After cooling 10 c.c. of water and 25 c.c. of a saturated solution of chemically pure ammonium oxalate are added and the whole mixture is boiled and reduced to a small bulk by the decomposition of excess of sulphuric acid as indicated by white fumes of sulphur trioxide. The solution is then ready for estimation of metals such as lead, arsenic, copper, zinc, manganese etc., which may be tested by the grouping reagents and confirmatory tests.<sup>1</sup>

**Dry Method**—The organic matter in the mixture is destroyed by heat so as to incinerate it completely. To the ashes thus obtained add strong nitric acid. The excess of the free acid should be removed by heat and the nitrate should be dissolved in water and tested in the usual way. If the mixture is strongly acid in reaction caustic potash may be added to neutralize it.

### C EXPERIMENTS ON ANIMALS

Domestic animals may be fed with the suspected food or with the poison after it is separated from the viscera and the symptoms exhibited by them should be noted. However the evidence derived in this manner cannot be relied on in all cases, as some symptoms, such as vomiting etc. may be produced without any poison, and some animals may not be affected even by poisons. For example, rabbits are insusceptible to the leaves of belladonna, hyoscyamus and stramonium, so are pigeons to opium. But the cat and the dog are affected by poisons almost in the same way as man.

### D MORAL AND CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

In a case of criminal poisoning the fact whether the accused was the person who administered the poison can be proved only from moral and circumstantial evidence. This is furnished by common witnesses who testify to the recent purchase of the poison by the accused, etc. The medical witness should not hazard an opinion on moral and circumstantial proof. He should confine to the cause of death from medical facts only. He should not however, omit to note the surroundings of the patient, and the nervousness and anxiety of the relatives or some other persons regarding the haste with which they want the body to be disposed of by burial or cremation.

### III. DUTY OF A MEDICAL PRACTITIONER IN A CASE OF SUSPECTED POISONING

A medical practitioner must be very cautious in giving his opinion about poisoning. On mere suspicion he should never give a verbal or written opinion lest he be the victim of an action for damages brought against him. In a suspicious

case of acute poisoning the medical practitioner must try to find out the nature of the suspected poison so that he can at once administer the appropriate treatment and save the patient's life. In a case where he suspects slow poisoning by the administration of small doses at varying intervals he should make a very careful note of all the symptoms exhibited by the patient. He should also collect the vomited matter and twenty four hours' urine, if possible, and get them analysed for the presence of poison. It is always advisable to call in one or two other practitioners in consultation and to have the patient removed to hospital where the doctor in charge should be informed of the suspicion, so that he would not allow any one except the hospital nurses to administer medicine and nourishment. If the patient cannot be removed to hospital and if he can afford the expenses the employment of two trained and trustworthy nurses to take charge of the patient in his house and also of the preparation and administration of his food and medicine for day and night will be a safeguard against further administration of poison. If that arrangement is not possible the only alternative left for the medical practitioner is to take some near relative or friend in his confidence and inform him of his suspicion. The patient may also be warned against the danger, if he happens to be an adult and in full possession of his senses.

In every case of suspected poisoning a medical practitioner, whether in private practice or in Government service, must preserve the vomited matter or stomach wash and samples of urine and faeces passed in his presence and likely to contain poison and suspected articles of food, drink or medicine in separate wide mouthed glass bottles or jars with tightly fitting glass stoppers. These bottles or jars should be properly labelled with the name of the patient, the material preserved and the date of the examination, and should be kept under lock and key in his own custody till required for transmission to the Chemical Examiner for chemical analysis. A medical practitioner must also preserve any other evidence of the suspected poisoning, e.g. a bottle, cup or tumbler in which the poison is suspected to have been mixed before administration, a mortar and pestle with which the poison must have been powdered, or a piece of paper used for dispensing and wrapping the poison. If he fails in his duty in this connection, he may render himself liable to be charged with causing the disappearance of evidence under section 201, I.P.C. (*Vide Appendix IV*). It must, however, be proved that a medical practitioner did it with the intention of screening the accused otherwise it is merely an error of judgment for which he cannot be held responsible.

If a medical practitioner in private practice is convinced that the patient upon whom he is attending is suffering from homicidal poisoning, he is bound, under section 41, Criminal Procedure Code, to communicate the fact to the nearest police officer or magistrate. Non compliance is punishable under section 176, Indian Penal Code. He is not liable for giving notice, if the case has already been reported to the police by the village headman, village watchman or any other officer required under the law to give such information under section 45, Criminal Procedure Code. A medical practitioner is not bound to supply information of his own accord to the police or magistrate, if he is sure that his patient is suffering from suicidal poisoning, since section 309 of the Indian Penal Code which refers to the offence of an attempt to commit suicide is not included in the sections of the Indian Penal Code for which information has to be given under section 41, Criminal Procedure Code. A medical practitioner is, however, bound to divulge all the information regarding the case that has come to his notice, if he is summoned by the investigating police officer to give such information under section 172, Criminal Procedure Code. If he conceals any information he is liable to be prosecuted under section 202, Indian Penal Code. If he gives false information he is liable to be charged with the offence of giving false information under section 193, Indian Penal Code. To avoid these difficulties the Inspector General of Police, Bengal, suggests that every case of suspected poisoning should be treated

A stomach wash out on a comatose or unconscious patient, whose cough reflex is absent may be fraught with danger, as the stomach contents which are regurgitated around the tube may flow into the trachea and cause either immediate suffocation or later broncho pneumonia. As a safeguard against such an accident it is necessary that the mouth and pharynx should be lower than the larynx. This is usually achieved either by putting pillows under the shoulders and bending the head right back, or by hanging the head and shoulders over the end of the bed. Both these methods are not satisfactory, inasmuch as the former method does not get the mouth quite low enough if there should be a copious regurgitation of fluid, and the latter method is arduous with a heavy patient. Marriott<sup>1</sup> therefore suggests that the patient be taken to the operating theatre and placed in the Trendelenburg position. In this position the gravitation of fluid from the mouth into the trachea is impossible.

The stomach tube should never be used in cases of poisoning by corrosives except carbolic acid as there is danger of causing perforation of the oesophagus or stomach owing to the softening and ulceration produced by them. In cases of irritant poisoning the stomach tube should be passed with caution.

When the stomach tube or pump is not available, or when a patient is conscious, and does not wish to have it passed into the stomach free emesis should be produced by tickling the fauces with the fingers, a feather, or a leafy twig of a tree. The vomited matter must be preserved for chemical analysis. The following emetics may also be administered —

1 Copious draughts of warm water

2 A table spoonful of ground mustard or two table-spoonfuls of common salt in half a pint of warm water

3 Half a drachm of sulphate of zinc in a tumblerful of warm water, to be repeated in a quarter of an hour, if necessary

4 Twenty to thirty grains of ipecacuanha powder, or two to six drachms of ipecacuanha wine. In the case of a child syrup of ipecacuanha from half a tea spoonful to two tea spoonfuls, according to the age, is to be preferred, as it is easy of administration

5 Fifteen to thirty grains of ammonium carbonate dissolved in water

6 Five to ten grains of copper sulphate dissolved in water, but it should not be used except in cases of poisoning by phosphorus

7 One tenth grain of apomorphine hydrochloride hypodermically. This acts promptly and produces vomiting within three or four minutes, but it causes great prostration and its effects are occasionally greatly prolonged. Hence it must be used with caution.

2 Use of Antidotes —Antidotes are remedies which counteract the effects of poisons. They are divided into *mechanical*, *chemical*, and *physiological*.

Mechanical antidotes are those which render poisons inert by mechanical action. For instance, finely powdered charcoal acts mechanically by absorbing and retaining within its pores organic and also, to a less degree inorganic poisons. Fats, oils and egg albumen prevent the action of the poison by forming a coating on the mucous membrane of the stomach. Bulky food acts as a mechanical antidote to glass as it prevents its action by imprisoning its particles within its meshes.

Chemical antidotes are those which counteract the actions of poisons by forming harmless or insoluble compounds when brought into contact with them. The examples are acids for alkalies, alkaline carbonates and magnesia for mineral acids, lime for oxalic acid, sodium sulphate for lead and tannin and albumin for

alkaloids It must be remembered that only those substances should be selected as chemical antidotes which are by themselves almost harmless, so that if an excess is given they will not produce any ill effects. Thus vinegar or lemon juice should be used as an antidote to a caustic alkali but not a mineral acid such as hydrochloric or sulphuric acid which if given in excess might prove as harmful as the original poison.

From his experiments on animals Jona has proved that the administration of a tannine delays the absorption of rapidly acting poisons such as cyanides, strichnine and aconite, by its constricting action on the vessel of the gastric mucos*1*.

A very important chemical antidote for organic poisons is potassium permanganate owing to its oxidizing properties. A solution of potassium permanganate in the proportion of 10 to 15 grains in the pint is commonly used in opium poisoning but should be used in all cases of organic poisons. The patient should drink as much as he can of it both before and after vomiting or it should be introduced by means of the stomach tube when the patient is unconscious. If this remedy is used, the magistrate should be informed of the fact as its use greatly decreases the chance of detection by the Chemical Examiner. This however should not deter the medical man from using the drug as his duty is to save life. If in doing so he destroys evidence that might be useful to the police that is bad for the police but is no concern of the doctor. If without harming the patient he can obtain material of evidential value, then by all means he should do so but not otherwise. Hence before trying the permanganate he may wash out the stomach with water and preserve this washing for the Chemical Examiner, if it is possible to do so without causing the patient to undergo any extra risk.

The following formula is a useful chemical antidote which is recommended in cases where the nature of the poison swallowed is not definitely known, or in cases where it is suspected that a combination of two or more poisonous substances had been taken —

Powdered charcoal	2 parts
Tannic acid	1 part
Magnesia (Magnesium Oxide)	1 part

These drugs are mixed together and the mixture is administered in the doses of a tea spoonful stirred up in a tumblerful of water to be repeated frequently. Charcoal has the property of absorbing alkaloids. Tannic acid precipitates alkaloids, glucosides and many of the metals. Magnesia neutralizes acids and is used as an antidote to arsenic if hydrated ferric oxide is not at hand.

Physiological antidotes or antagonists are those which act on the tissues of the body and produce symptoms exactly opposite to those caused by the poison acting on the same tissues. Thus a perfect physiological antidote is one which exactly counteracts each evil effect produced by the poison but most of the known antidotes are only partial in their action and when pushed to their physiological action are liable to prove dangerous to life. Atropine is an example which though it is regarded and used as a physiological antidote of morphine is liable to cause death by paralysing the motor and sensory nerves just like morphine. Hence caution must be observed while using it. Atropine and physostigmine are two real physiological antagonists as both of them affect nerve-endings and produce opposite effects. Atropine paralyses the vagus nerve endings accelerating the heart's action while physostigmine stimulates these nerve endings producing slowing of the heart. Atropine dilates the pupil by paralysing the third nerve-endings while physostigmine contracts the pupil by directly stimulating the terminals of the third nerve. Atropine diminishes glandular secretion by paralysing

**Treatment** The stomach tube or emetics must never be used. The acid should be immediately diluted and neutralized *in situ* by administering a pint of water or milk to which 4 table spoonsfuls of calcium or magnesium oxide or calcined magnesia are added. But as these are not likely to be retained, soap solution, lime water, wood ashes or powdered white wall plaster suspended in water should be administered without delay and should be followed by demulcent drinks such as barley water, linseed tea etc.

The use of alkaline carbonates or bicarbonates should be avoided as far as possible as they evolve carbon dioxide gas which will increase distress and may even cause perforation by suddenly distending the stomach.

Intense thirst should be relieved by giving pieces of ice to suck at. Pain should be relieved by hypodermic injections of morphine. Nutritive enemata should be given to keep up the strength of the patient. Excoriations on the surface must be treated as burns. Tracheotomy must be resorted to if suffocation is threatened from an affection of the larynx.

**Post mortem Appearances** The conditions found after death depend upon the quantity and strength of the acid used and the time that the patient survives after taking the acid. If death has occurred in a short time there will be signs of corrosion and destruction of the mouth, throat, oesophagus and stomach varying from a few localized patches to extensive destruction. There may be perforation of the stomach with the escape of its contents into the peritoneal cavity and consequent destruction of the peritoneum and abdominal organs. The tissues beyond the corroded area show the signs of inflammation.

If the patient lived for some days the signs of repair due to separation of the sloughs will be evident and the cicatrized tissue will be noticeable if death did not occur for a very long time.

The marks of corrosion may also be noticed on the skin and clothes.

**Medico legal Points**—Cases of poisoning by corrosive mineral acids are rare in India but are more frequent in Europe. They are rarely used for homicidal purposes though sometimes cases are met with in which corn酸 is thrown on the face out of jealousy or in fits of rage. Accidental cases of swallowing acids in mistake for some harmless medicine do occur especially amongst children. Occasionally a coolie while carrying a jar containing some concentrated mineral acid may accidentally fall down and break the jar so as to spill the acid which may affect him, as also the passers by. A few suicidal cases also occur.

### SULPHURIC ACID (OIL OF VITRIOL) $H_2SO_4$

**Properties**—Pure sulphuric acid is a colourless heavy oily liquid which emits no fumes when exposed to the air. When mixed with water it evolves much heat and is reduced in volume. It chars and blackens the skin, cloth and any other organic matter. The portion of the cloth or paper which comes into contact with the acid is destroyed leaving a reddish brown stain which is usually moist. Similarly the stain on wood is damp black owing to its charring effect.

The sulphuric acid of commerce is usually brown or dark in colour and often contains impurities such as lead sulphate, arsenic nitric acid and the lower oxides of nitrogen. A stronger form of the acid is known as Nordhausen's acid which is a brown oily fuming liquid and is represented by the formula  $H_2S_2O_7$ . It is also called pyrosulphuric acid and is used in the manufacture of indigo. Sulphate of indigo is a dark blue liquid and consists of one part of indigo dissolved in nine or ten parts of sulphuric acid.

Sulphuric acid and its preparation *Acidum sulphuricum dilutum* (dose, 5 to 60 minims), were included in the British Pharmacopoeia, 1932 but have been deleted from the new Pharmacopoeia of 1948. *Acidum sulphuricum aromaticum*, which is known as elixir of vitriol, is a non official preparation, the dose being 5 to 20 minims.

**Special Symptoms**—In addition to the general symptoms of corrosive poisoning, the following symptoms are observed—

The tongue is swollen, and is covered with a white coating resembling soaked parchment, which subsequently becomes darker or brown in colour. It may become a corroded and shapeless mass, if the acid is highly concentrated. The teeth are of a chalky white colour, and are deprived of their polish. The lips are usually swollen and excoriated, and brown or even black streaks resulting from the action of the acid flowing from the mouth may be found extending from its angles to the sides of the chin and sometimes to the front of the neck. Occasionally salivation has been observed on the second or third day. In rare cases delay has been caused in the appearance of the symptoms.

possible for a few drops of concentrated sulphuric acid to produce death from suffocation by directly coming into contact with the glottis resulting in oedema. Half a tea-spoonful of concentrated sulphuric acid administered by mistake for castor oil caused the death of a child, one year old. The smallest fatal dose for an adult is one drachm, though recovery has followed four ounces of the strong acid. An ounce of sulphate of indigo killed a young woman in about eleven hours.

**Fatal Period.**—The average fatal period is from eighteen to twenty-four hours. The shortest recorded period is three quarters of an hour, but the period may be prolonged for some weeks, months or even years, when death occurs from secondary causes or stricture of the oesophagus. In children death may ensue instantaneously from suffocation due to the spasmodic closure of the glottis by the acid getting into the larynx.



Fig. 140.—Stomach in poisoning by Sulphuric Acid.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—These are the usual appearances of corrosive poisoning. The mouth, lips and sometimes the surrounding skin show brown or brownish black corroded spots. The mucous membrane is dark brown or black. There is great disorganization and blackening of the stomach, and its perforation is more frequent with escape of the gastric contents in the peritoneal cavity, where corrosive effects may be observed. When there is no perforation, the stomach is collapsed and contracted, the contents being a dark-brown and gummy liquid, consisting chiefly of mucous and altered blood. The mucous membrane may be of a dark brown or black colour, and is often corrugated and detached in shreds or patches. The folds are large and deep from swelling, and are sometimes so softened as to tear even under gentle manipulation. On removing the mucous membrane the underlying coats of the stomach are red and intensely inflamed. The small intestine, especially the duodenum, may show patches of corrosion and inflammation, if death has occurred after eighteen or twenty hours. Fatty

places and was yellowish brown in colour. The stomach contained a part of a raw gruel liquid and was corroded and almost charred. The fundus was so much thinned that it gave way on removal from the abdominal cavity. The duodenum presented the same appearance as that of the stomach. The remaining portion of the small intestine contained a sanguous dirty liquid and was congested and inflamed with haemorrhagic patches especially in its upper part. The large intestine was normal and contained faecal matter. The other viscera were normal.

In his annual report for the year 1928 the Chemical Examiner Punjab reports the case of a young female child who was given some sulphuric acid by mistake and died rapidly. The mucous membrane of the mouth and stomach was corroded and congested. The stomach was perforated at the greater curvature by a hole about the size of a four anna piece.

**Chemical Analysis** —The acid is at first separated from the organic mixture by filtration or dialysis and then the following tests are applied for its identification —

**Tests** —1. The strong acid chars wood, sugar or other organic matter while the dilute acid chars a blotting paper especially when heated. 2. Barium nitrate or chloride solution produces a white precipitate of barium sulphate insoluble in boiling nitric or hydrochloric acid. The precipitate is collected, dried, mixed with an equal quantity of sodium carbonate and fused on charcoal. The residue will produce a dark stain when a fragment of it is placed on a silver coin and moistened. 3. Heated with copper filings mercury or chips of wood, sulphur dioxide is evolved which is known by its odour and by first rendering blue and then bleaching starch paper dipped in a solution of iodine acid or potassium iodide. 4. On heating and evaporating with veratrine on a porcelain dish a crimson deposit is obtained.



Fig. 142.—Stomach in poisoning by a mixture of sulphuric and nitric acids.

**Stains on Clothing** —The stained cloth should be soaked in alcohol until the tests applied to the alcoholic solution.

**Medico Legal Points** —Sulphuric acid is largely used commercially in several trades. Hence it is easily obtainable and may be taken for suicidal purposes.

Owing to its acid taste and physical changes brought about in the food it is not possible to use it for homicidal purposes unless the victim happens to be a child or an adult who is drunk or helpless.

A baby aged 6 months died at Bhandara within five hours as a result of sulphuric acid being administered to her by the step mother during the mother's absence in consequence of a quarrel between the two. The lining membrane of the mouth, pharynx and oesophagus was dark brown and corroded and the stomach was blackish with a big perforation. An infant

**Vitriol Throwing (Vitriolage)**—Malicious persons occasionally resort to strong sulphuric acid to disfigure the face or ruin the clothes by throwing a quantity of it at the hated person. The local effects of the acid are severe burning pain and corrosion of the tissues with the formation of brownish black eschars which leave permanent scars. Death may occur from the severe burns inflicted on the skin. Blindness may result, if the eyes are involved. It is necessary to wash the parts immediately with plenty of water and soap or sodium or potassium bicarbonate, and the burns should then be treated by applying magnesium oxide or carbonate in powder form or as a thick paste. The raw surface may, afterwards be covered with tannic acid solution or jelly.

If the eyes are involved, they should be washed at once with a large quantity of water and should then be irrigated with a lotion containing 5 grains of sodium bicarbonate to the ounce of water. A few drops of castor oil or olive oil should subsequently be dropped into them.

The face, hands and other parts of the body may be burnt accidentally in chemical laboratories and in manufacturing establishments, where the acid is used.

#### NITRIC ACID (AQUA FORTIS, RED SPIRIT OF NITRE) HNO<sub>3</sub>

**Properties**—Pure nitric acid is a clear, colourless liquid giving off colourless fumes when exposed to the air and having a peculiar and choking odour. It is a powerful oxidizing agent and dissolves all the metals except gold and platinum. Commercial nitric acid varies in colour from yellow to deep red from the presence of lower oxides of nitrogen. Saturated with red oxides of nitrogen it is generally known as fuming nitric acid. The pharmacopoeial acid contains 70 per cent of nitric acid in water. The following two non official preparations are made from it—

1 *Acidum nitricum dilutum*—It contains 10 per cent by weight of nitric acid. Dose, 5 to 20 minims.

2 *acidum nitro hydrochloricum dilutum*—It contains about 1.2, per cent by weight of nitric acid and 13.5 per cent by weight of hydrochloric acid. Dose, 5 to 20 minims.

**Special Symptoms**—The lips, tongue and mucous membrane of the mouth are softened and white at first and later become intensely yellow from the formation of anthroproteic acid. The teeth also become yellow, and the enamel is partially destroyed by the action of the acid. The skin and cloth which come into direct contact with the acid are coloured yellow. These yellow stains turn to orange on the addition of ammonia water. The colour of blood contained in the vomited matter is yellowish brown. Owing to the development of a larger quantity of gas by the direct action of the acid on organic matter in the stomach the abdomen is more distended and tender than in poisoning by sulphuric acid. Gaseous eructations are also more frequent and distressing with this acid. Lockjaw and insensibility are known to have occurred as special symptoms.

The fumes of nitric acid produce irritation of the eyes, cough and dyspnoea and may cause death immediately from suffocation or later from pulmonary oedema or pneumonia. Several deaths from inhalation of the fumes have been recorded.

**Fatal Dose**—The smallest quantity on record is two drachms which killed a boy aged 13 years; a similar dose killed an adult woman in 14 days. But a smaller quantity—even a drachm—would suffice to kill a child, and under certain conditions an adult, for the fatal result depends on the extent of the mischief produced by its corrosive action on the throat windpipe and stomach. Recovery has taken place after half an ounce or more.

**Fatal Period**—The average fatal period is from twelve to twenty four hours. A Hindu silver smith took one ounce of the pure acid and died in ten hours. A goldsmith's wife drank the concentrated acid with the intention of committing

suicide, and died after twenty days<sup>1</sup>. The shortest record period in an adult is one hour and forty-five minutes and a few minutes in an infant.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—The skin and the mucous membranes are corroded and yellow in colour, but the colour of the mucous membrane of the stomach is greenish, if bile is present. The stomach wall is soft, friable and ulcerated, but perforation is not so common as in sulphuric acid poisoning. There may be corrosion of the duodenum. In his annual report for the year 1929, the Medical Officer to the Government of Bombay reports a case of death by nitric acid poisoning, in which the post mortem examination showed that the lips and fingers were stained yellow and corroded. The alimentary canal from the lips to the duodenum was stained yellow and there was necrosis of the coats of the stomach with perforation.

In death from inhalation of the nitric acid fumes the larynx, trachea and bronchial tubes are usually congested, and the lungs are sometimes oedematous or show an effusion of blood. Inflammatory changes in the lining membrane of the right auricle of the heart may be found in some cases.<sup>2</sup>

**Chemical Tests.**—1. If strong ferrous sulphate solution and sulphuric acid are added to a solution containing nitric acid, a brown ring is formed at the junction of the two fluids.

have occurred the victims being either infants and children or drunken helpless adults Taylor<sup>1</sup> mentions a case, in which a woman killed her infant shortly after its birth by pouring nitric acid down its throat A case occurred in France where a woman died from the effects of nitric acid poured into her ear by her husband while she was intoxicated<sup>2</sup> The acid has also been used as an abortifacient Strong nitric acid has occasionally been thrown in the face to destroy or disfigure the features

**Case—1** On the 3rd July 1933 Mr Monmath Basu a medical practitioner attached to Messrs Mackintosh Burn Company's brick field at Jogernathnagore Akra was playing cards with some friends in a house close to his dispensary when he was disturbed and startled by some shouts of thief thief and forthwith ran to his quarters On a search being made one Lakh Kumar Nasar was found standing at a place close to the outer side compound wall The doctor took him to be a thief dragged him into the dispensary placed him upon a chair and emptied a bottle of strong nitric acid over his head Then the contents of a second bottle of the acid were similarly poured on his back and other parts of his body The poor man fell down groaning in agony and was removed on an improvised stretcher to a remote part of the brick field Unable to bear his great agony the man cut his own throat with a fish knife The next morning some neighbours removed him to the Alipore Police Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries The accused was found guilty under sec 304 I P C and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment —Leader Oct 1 1933

**2** At about 6 a m on July 21 1937 Baijnath the complainant was proceeding along Beni Bandh when the two accused Haridas and Ramprasad assaulted him with lathis Baijnath fell down and accused Ramprasad sat upon his chest while Haridas took a phial from his pocket and poured out the contents presumably nitric acid into Baijnath's right eye and when an attempt was made to pour the same into the left eye as well they fell on the eyebrows instead The result was the permanent loss of the vision of the right eye They were found guilty under section 326 I P C and were each sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for two years including solitary confinement for one month They were further ordered to pay a fine of Rs 500 each in default of which each should undergo a further term of six months imprisonment Out of the fine if realized Rs 300 were ordered to be paid to Baijnath —Leader Oct 5 1932 p 6

### HYDROCHLORIC ACID (MURIATIC ACID, SPIRITS OF SALTS) HCl

**Properties** — Pure hydrochloric acid is a colourless gas, having a specific gravity of 1.259 and an intensely irritating odour It is extremely soluble in water, one volume of this liquid dissolving 480 volumes of the gas at 0°C (32°F) The acid of commerce which is generally known as muriatic acid or spirits of salts is a solution of this gas in water, having a yellow colour, fuming strongly in damp air, and yielding dense white vapours with ammonia It not infrequently contains a trace of arsenic derived from sulphuric acid used in generating it The acid of the British Pharmacopœia is a colourless fuming liquid, containing not less than 35 per cent and not more than 38 per cent of hydrochloric acid by weight *Acidum hydrochloricum dilutum* is an official preparation which contains 10 per cent of hydrochloric acid by weight The dose is 10 to 120 minims

**Special Symptoms** — It is less active than the other two acids Hence the symptoms produced by it are much milder It does not stain the skin or mucous membrane but stains dark cloth reddish brown Salivation, convulsions, delirium and paralysis of the limbs have occurred as special symptoms in some cases

The fumes of the acid cause great irritation of the air passages Those who are constantly exposed to the fumes of this gas suffer from chronic poisoning It is characterized by coryza conjunctivitis, pharyngitis, laryngitis and bronchitis It also causes nausea vomiting and epigastric pain, and produces inflammation of the gums and loosening of the teeth

<sup>1</sup> *On Poisons Ed III p 201*

<sup>2</sup> *Morrison Arch gen de Med*, 1826, VI, 104, *Withaus, Med Juris and Toxic*, Vol II, p 290

was used<sup>1</sup>. A bottle of hydrochloric acid was also thrown on the Head Ticket Inspector at Victoria Terminus, Bombay while he was standing near the Crawford Market. As a result of this he received grievous burns<sup>2</sup>.

### HYDROCHLORIC ACID III

This is a colourless gas which becomes a fuming liquid when dissolved in water. On account of its etching property on glass it is kept in gutta percha bottles.

**Acute Poisoning—Symptoms**—The fumes of the gas, when inhaled produce inflammation and ulceration of the conjunctiva, nostrils and gums and severe cough due to laryngitis and bronchitis. There may be intense vomiting and collapse.

The liquid acid produces on the skin severe and painful burns and ulcers which are difficult to heal. When taken internally it immediately produces retching, vomiting, agonizing pain in the abdomen and diarrhoea. Collapse sets in and death occurs usually from closure of the glottis with shreds of mucous membrane.

Sodium fluoride and sodium silico fluoride are white crystalline powders and are used as wood preservatives and as insecticides. They are the constituents of most cockroach powders. They are also used for the etching of glass. They are general protoplasmic poisons and exert a strong and local irritant action on the mucous membranes.

The symptoms of poisoning by either of these salts are pain in the stomach, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, muscular cramps, spasmodic contraction of the extremities and tetany. Cyanosis, dilated pupils, collapse and death from cardiac or respiratory failure.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period**—The fatal dose of commercial hydrofluoric acid is about half an ounce. The fatal period is usually from half an hour to two hours. A woman, 39 years old took a heaping table spoonful of sodium fluoride in water by mistake for magnesium sulphate, and died in seven hours.<sup>3</sup> Half a tea-spoonful of silico fluoride has proved fatal.<sup>4</sup>

**Treatment**—Ammonia vapour is the antidote when the fumes are inhaled. Weak alkalies should be administered to neutralize the liquid acid when taken internally. Milk and demulcent drinks should be administered and castor oil should be given as a purgative. When sodium fluoride or sodium silico fluoride is taken the stomach should be washed out with lime water or a weak solution of calcium chloride and a soluble calcium salt should be given intravenously.

**Post Mortem Appearances**—The lips, tongue and mouth may show white patches or may be charred. The oesophagus may show shreds of the denuded epithelium. The mucous membrane of the stomach may be eecymosed or blackened and inflamed with frequent ulceration. The trachea, lungs and other organs are hyperemic. The liver and kidneys show fatty and parenchymatous degeneration.

In the case in which a woman died after taking a heaping table spoonful of sodium fluoride the post mortem examination showed that the skin had deep greyish blue cyanosis most marked over the scalp, face, neck, upper thorax and upper extremities. The buccal and pharyngeal mucous membrane and the mucosa of the vagina, labia minora and inner aspect of the labia majora showed similar bluish discolouration. The gastric mucosa and submucosa showed extreme acute passive congestion and oedema with multiple petechiae, the mucosa was covered with a thin layer of blood tinged mucus. The lower third of the oesophagus showed similar changes. The duodenal mucosa showed more extensive petechial haemorrhages. The liver was of deep slate purple with mottled greyish yellow areas presenting acute passive congestion with advanced cloudy swelling and patchy fatty degenerative infiltration. The kidneys showed passive congestion and cloudy swelling. The lungs were congested.

**Chronic Poisoning**—This occurs among those who are exposed to the fumes of hydrofluoric acid or who ingest small quantities of its salts for a prolonged period. The symptoms as described by Holland<sup>5</sup> are neuralgia, weak heart, dropsies, phlebitis, painful urination and loss of calcium salts from the system impairing nutrition of the bones. Mottling of the enamel of the teeth and osteosclerosis have also been observed.<sup>6</sup> Death occurs from respiratory failure.

1. *Bombay Chem. Analyst's Annual Report*, 1931.

2. *Times of India* Jan 30 1937, see also *Bombay Chem. Analyst's Annual Report*, 1940.

3. *Sharkey and Simpson Jour Amer Med Assoc*, Jan 14 1933, p. 37.

4. *Luhris Chem Zeitsch*, Sep 22, 1925, p. 80.

5. *Med Chem and Toxic* 1'd 1 p. 140.

6. *Brit Med Jour* Jan 21, 1939 p. 120.

soon sets in. It very often persists till death. The ejected matter contains altered blood and mucus and appears greenish brown or black, resembling coffee grounds. In some cases vomiting may not occur or may be delayed for some time. Tenesmus is present but purging is rare, unless the case is prolonged for some time. The urine is diminished in quantity and may be suppressed for two or three days. Later it increases in quantity and contains albumin in a large quantity. The sediment after a few hours shows hyaline casts and octahedral crystals of calcium oxalate under the microscope. Great prostration occurs with cold, clammy sweats a feeling of numbness of the limbs feeble, irregular and rapid pulse and shallow gasping hurried respirations. The condition of collapse passes into coma which ultimately ends in death. Sometimes cramps convulsions lock jaw and delirium precede death.

In his treatise on *Poisons* Christison has remarked "If a person immediately after swallowing a solution of a crystalline salt which tasted purely and strongly acid is attacked with burning in the throat, then with burning in the stomach, vomiting particularly of bloody matter imperceptible pulse and excessive languor and dies in half an hour, or still more in twenty, fifteen or ten minutes I do not now any fallacy which can interfere with the conclusion that oxalic acid was the cause of death. No parallel disease begins so abruptly and terminates so soon and no other crystalline poison has the same effect."



the best form of treatment Alkalies or their carbonates must not be administered as they unite with oxalic acid and form soluble poisonous salts. Large draughts of water should also be avoided as they dissolve the poison and thus increase its rapid absorption.

After the acid is neutralized in the stomach vomiting may be promoted by emetics or the stomach may be washed out very cautiously and the bowels may be relieved by an enema or by a purgative preferably castor oil. The usual symptomatic treatment must then be followed. Infusion<sup>1</sup> of an isotonic or hypertonic solution of glucose has been recommended as retention of urea seems to be the principal disturbance. Coutt ascribes to this the cramps and convulsions often observed in such cases.

Post mortem Appearances — If oxalic acid has been taken in a concentrated form the marked signs of corrosion are found in the mouth, throat, oesophagus and stomach. Their mucous membranes are white and shrivelled and are easily detached from the underlying tissues. They may sometimes be found black in colour from altered blood. The inner surface of the oesophagus is corrugated and shows longitudinal erosions. The stomach contains a dark brown, granular liquid, acid in reaction. The blood vessels are seen as dark brown or black streaks over its internal surface. Perforation of the stomach is rare, though the walls are often softened and easily torn. The stomach may be pale and not corroded if death has occurred immediately after taking the poison. The intestines generally escape but the upper part of the duodenum may be affected.

The kidneys are congested and loaded with oxalates.

If the acid is very diluted there will be signs of local irritation, redness, congestion and inflammation of the mucous membrane.

If the effects are only narcotic there will be congestion of the lungs, liver, kidneys and brain without any local appearances.

In the case<sup>1</sup> of a Parsi who committed suicide with oxalic acid the mucous membranes of the mouth and oesophagus were softened and easily stripped off. The mucous membrane of the stomach was corroded and its whole thickness was perforated in one place. The interior of the stomach and its contents were blackened. The intestines were grey and granular.

4 Lead acetate gives a white precipitate, soluble in nitric acid, but insoluble in acetic acid

5 Potassium permanganate in an acid solution is decolourised and is reduced to the colourless manganese salt

6 About 5 c.c. of oxalic acid are mixed with 1 c.c. of sulphuric acid (1 : 2) and 2 drops of 10 per cent copper sulphate solution, about 1 g. of granulated zinc is then put into the mixture so as to form a zinc copper couple. After three minutes 2 c.c. of concentrated sulphuric acid and 0.1 c.c. of a 2 per cent aqueous solution of resorcinol are added to the mixture. A pale blue colour develops which deepens on warming.

**Medico-Legal Points** — In the form of oxalate of ammonium, sodium, potassium or calcium, oxalic acid exists as a natural constituent of several plants and vegetables, such as sorrel, rhubarb, cabbages, lichens and guano. Hence it may gain access to the body through food and drugs of vegetable origin. It often occurs as a constituent of the human urine, 0.02 gramme (0.3 gram) being excreted in 24 hours.

Oxalic acid is largely used in calico printing, in the manufacture of straw hats, and in cleaning brass and copper articles, and wooden surfaces. It is used for removing writing and signatures from paper and parchment documents. It is a common household remedy for removing ink stains and iron moulds from linen.

Cases of accidental poisoning by oxalic acid have, sometimes, occurred from it having been swallowed in mistake for a saline purgative of magnesium sulphate.

A young woman took 2 drachms of oxalic acid by mistake for magnesium sulphate at about 8 a.m. on the 29th October, 1930. Immediately she complained of burning sensation in the mouth, throat and abdomen, and induced vomiting by tickling her fauces. She vomited many times and two hours later she brought up a good quantity of blood. She was removed to the King George's Hospital Lucknow, where she was found restless with a rapid pulse (132 per minute) and hurried respirations (52 per minute). She complained of very severe epigastric pain. She had no difficulty in swallowing but experienced burning pain in the abdomen after swallowing liquids. Excoriations were present on the tongue and the post pharyngeal wall but not on the lips and gums. She vomited occasionally, and brought up a few streaks of blood with the detached pieces of the mucous membrane. She was given lime water and morphia hypodermically. She was discharged cured on the third day.

A case<sup>1</sup> occurred at Amritsar where 30 grains of oxalic acid were used instead of 40 grains of tartaric acid in the manufacture of darling Seidlitz powders. Due to the prompt action of the Police Department, all the tins containing these powders were confiscated from different areas in the Punjab and no accidents occurred.

During recent years cases of suicide by oxalic acid poisoning, although very few, have occurred in India due to its increased use as a remover of stains on clothes and the ease with which it can be obtained at a druggist's shop. Owing to its taste, it is rarely used for homicidal purposes. In his annual report for the year 1939, the Chemical Analyser, Bombay, mentions a case in which some solution containing oxalic acid was poured on the head of a woman with a result that it caused falling out of her hair in two big patches. There was no hyperæmia, or any sign of irritation on the skin over the patches, but it was stained lightly black.

Oxalic acid is eliminated chiefly by the kidneys ✓

When applied externally, oxalic acid does not produce corrosion of the skin nor does it produce any deleterious effects on the system. Workmen engaged in trades requiring the constant handling of the acid are not known to have suffered from ill health except that their finger nails are white, opaque and brittle, but they may, in rare cases, suffer from the symptoms of chronic poisoning, especially when exposed to its vapour.

A man<sup>1</sup>, aged 53, was employed in America in cleansing radiators by means of boiling them over a fire with a strong solution of oxalic acid. During the operation he scooped crystals of the acid with his fingers into the radiator filler. As the boiling progressed the concentration increased and vapour was emitted which was extremely irritating to breathe. In due course the man was compelled to leave his work and later became disabled and confined to bed. The initial symptoms consisted in epistaxis, severe headaches, spells of vomiting, constant pain in the back and rapid loss of weight. Extreme nervousness developed and the man stated that he was scarcely able to move as he seemed to be paralysed. An ulcer was noticed on the nasal septum with marked congestion of the mucous membranes of both nostrils and down the back of the throat. Anaemia and severe albuminuria were present.

**Binoxalate (Acid oxalate) of Potassium,  $KHC_2O_4 \cdot 2H_2O$**  —This is commercially known as 'salts of sorrel' or 'essential salts of lemon,' and is used for the same purpose as oxalic acid. It is acid in reaction and sour in taste and dissolves in 40 parts of cold, and in 6 parts of boiling, water. It is likely to be mistaken for acid tartrate of potassium (cream of tartar), and may cause accidental poisoning. It is also taken for suicidal purpose.

This salt is practically as poisonous as oxalic acid, producing similar symptoms and post mortem appearances, and requiring similar treatment. Four drachms may be regarded as a fatal dose.

A woman<sup>2</sup>, aged 24 years, swallowed three quarters of an ounce of binoxalate of potassium, and died in twenty five minutes. On post mortem examination white corrosions were seen on the left corner of the mouth, on the tongue and on the inside of the cheeks. The stomach showed at the cardiac end two circular perforations about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches apart. The stomach wall was found to be extremely thin and quite denuded of the mucous membrane for a radius of several inches.

#### CARBOLIC ACID (PHENOL, PHENYL ALCOHOL OR PHENIC ACID), $C_6H_5OH$

This is hydroxybenzene obtained from coal tar oil by fractional distillation, and is commonly prepared from acetylene by synthesis.

Pure carbolic acid occurs as long, colourless, prismatic needle like crystals, which turn pink on exposure to light, and are deliquescent in moist air. It has no acid reaction but forms carbolates when acted upon by strong bases. It has a characteristic odour and has a sweetish, pungent taste. It melts at  $38^{\circ}\text{C}$ . It is insoluble in liquid paraffin and is slightly soluble in cold water (1 in 13) but freely in boiling water, alcohol (90) ether, chloroform, glycerin and fixed and volatile oils. To all these it communicates its characteristic odour. The non official dose of carbolic acid (Phenol, B P) is 1 to 3 grains. The other preparations prepared from it are—

1 *Phenol Liquefactum (Acidum Carbolicum Liquefactum)* —It contains 50 per cent of phenol.

2 *Glycerinum Phenolis* —It contains 16 per cent of phenol in glycerin.

3 *Suppositoria Phenolis (Suppositoria Acidi Carbolici)* —1 grain of phenol in each.

4 *Trochisci Phenolis (Trochisci Icdi Carbolici)* —Each contains approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  grain of phenol.

5 *Unguentum Phenolis (Unguentum Acidi Carbolici)* —Phenol 3 per cent made up with white beeswax, lard and soft and hard paraffins.

Phenol camphor (Carbolic camphor) is a non-official preparation containing 1 part of phenol and 3 parts of camphor. It is a clear solution smelling strongly

<sup>1</sup> C D Howard Jour Ind Hyg 1932 IV, pp 283-290, Med Leg and Criminological Review Apr., 1933 p 143.

<sup>2</sup> Braithwaite Brit Med Jour, Vol I, 1905 p 183.

of camphor and is not miscible with water or glycerin It is used as a local anaesthetic in toothache

The crude carbolic acid of commerce is a dark brown liquid containing several impurities chiefly cresol

Poisoning by carbolic acid is known as *carbolism*. The acid in a concentrated form acts locally as a corrosive and remotely as a narcotic poison It coagulates proteins but does not enter into chemical combination with them and thus it has a great penetrating power Applied to the skin it causes a burning sensation followed by tingling numbness and anaesthesia and produces a white opaque eschar which falling off in a few days leaves a brown stain which may persist for several weeks When applied for some time and prevented from evaporating by the application of India rubber tissue carbolic acid may cause necrosis of the part even in weak solutions It causes irritation and necrosis of the mucous membranes and if applied in sufficient quantity may lead to sloughing and inflammation

**Symptoms** Immediately after swallowing the concentrated acid there is an intense burning sensation in the mouth throat and stomach with occasional vomiting of frothy mucus The mucous membranes of the lips and mouth become hard and white Owing to the rapid absorption of the acid these symptoms are soon followed by giddiness and insensibility which soon deepens into coma The face is pale or cyanosed the pupils are contracted the temperature is subnormal the skin is cold and clammy the pulse is small and thready and the respirations are slow laboured or stertorous There is a strong odour of carbolic acid in the breath Convulsions and lock jaw may be present The urine is suppressed or scanty When voided it is normal in colour or of a greenish hue which becomes dark or olive green on exposure to the air and stains the linen as well This change of colour is due to the formation of hydroquinone and pyrocatechin oxidation products of carbolic acid and serves as a warning of the toxic properties of the acid when used as an antiseptic dressing for some time This symptom is known as carboloria

Death results from paralysis of the respiratory and cardiac centres

**Fatal Dose** —Five to seven grains of carbolic acid may cause dangerous symptoms Four drachms is the average fatal dose although an oily solution of one drachm has proved fatal A quarter of a tea spoonful dissolved in glycerin killed a child six months old Recoveries have, however ensued after large doses as much as six ounces

**Fatal Period** —Death usually occurs within three to four hours, but it has taken place within three to twenty minutes On the other hand death has been delayed for sixty hours and even for some days

**Treatment** —Ordinary emetics often fail to produce vomiting owing to the local anaesthesia Pass a soft stomach tube with caution and wash out the stomach with lukewarm water containing syrup calcis or sodium sulphate until the contents of the stomach lose their peculiar odour Sodium sulphate in a strong solution is one of the best known antidotes It forms a harmless soluble salt of sodium sulphocarboilate In the absence of sodium sulphate magnesium sulphate may be used Liquid paraffin may be used for washing out the stomach and a quantity may be left in the stomach after the washing is complete Alcohol is not an antidote but a 10 per cent solution is used in the belief that it will neutralize the action of carbolic acid and thus prevent extensive sloughing of the tissues No doubt the effect of alcohol is simply that of diluting and washing away the carbolic acid Give demulcents such as white of egg and milk Give atropine sulphate hypodermically before administering stimulants such as caffene, strophanthin and strychnine Administer intravenously normal saline containing

3 grains of sodium bicarbonate to the ounce to combat the circulatory depression as also to dilute the carbolic acid content of the blood and to encourage excretion by promoting a flow of urine (Use oxygen inhalation or carry on artificial respiration if necessary)

(Q) Apply castor oil or liquid paraffin to the burns caused by carbolic acid on the skin after washing the surface with alcohol or soap and water

**Post mortem Appearances** —White or brownish stains may be seen on the angles of the mouth and on the chin. The mucous membranes of the lips, mouth and throat are corrugated, sodden, whitened or ash grey and partially detached marked by numerous small submucous haemorrhages.

The mucous membrane of the oesophagus is tough white or grey, corrugated and arranged in longitudinal folds.

The stomach is brown and leathery with haemorrhagic spots and prominent rugae or it is sometimes soft and greyish white in colour. It may contain a reddish fluid mixed with mucus and shreds of epithelium emitting an odour of carbolic acid. The same changes are observed in the duodenum. The kidneys show haemorrhagic nephritis in cases of delayed death. The lungs are congested and edematous. The brain is congested. The blood is dark and semifluid or only partially coagulated.

**Chemical Analysis** —Carbolic acid may be separated from organic matter by washing it with ether decanting the ethereal liquid and allowing the ether to evaporate. It may also be readily separated from organic matter by distillation with dilute sulphuric acid. The following tests may then be applied to the distillate —

1 A few drops of very dilute ferric chloride solution added to a solution of carbolic acid yields a bluish violet colour which disappears on the addition of alcohol but changes to yellow on the addition of a dilute mineral acid.

2 *Landolt's Test* —Bromine water produces a white crystalline precipitate of tribromo phenol soluble in alkal ether and alcohol but insoluble in acids.

3 *Millon's Test* —Heated with Millon's reagent a solution of carbolic acid produces a red colour. This test is very delicate as it will give a red colour to a solution containing only 1 part of carbolic acid in 100 000 parts of water. It is however not characteristic of carbolic acid as it produces the same reaction with many other substances especially monophenols and proteins.

Millon's reagent is prepared by dissolving 1 part of mercury in 1 part of strong nitric acid (sp gr 1.4) by diluting with twice its volume of water. The solution is allowed to stand overnight and a clear liquid is then decanted off for use as a reagent.

4 Heated with a little dilute ammonia and a few drops of a freshly prepared solution of calcium or sodium hypochlorite an aqueous solution of carbolic acid yields a blue bluish green or green colour which depends upon the amount of carbolic acid present in the aqueous solution. This is known as Lex's test.

5 *Liebermann's Test* —This is a very delicate and characteristic test, which is performed as follows —

Dissolve a crystal or drop of carbolic acid in concentrated sulphuric acid, cool if necessary then add a very small crystal of sodium or potassium nitrite a deep blue or green colouration will be produced when poured on a beaker of water it is turned red which is again turned green or blue on adding an alkali.

**Medico Legal Points** —Carbolic acid is largely used as an antiseptic and as a disinfectant. It is used in the preparation of many disinfecting powders. For instance Macdougall's disinfecting powder consists of crude carbolic acid and

calcium sulphite Calvert's carbolic acid powder is made by adding carbolic acid to the siliceous residue obtained from the manufacture of alumino sulphate from shale

Being easily procurable several cases of accidental and suicidal poisoning by carbolic acid have occurred On account of its powerful odour and taste carbolic acid is very rarely used for homicidal purposes, though it has been, sometimes, used for murdering children and infants It has also caused death when used as an abortifacient by injection into the vagina or uterus

Poisonous symptoms followed by fatal results in some cases, have occurred from swallowing carbolic acid, from its application to a wound or an unabraded skin, from injection into an abscess cavity, rectum or uterus, as also from inhalation of its vapour

*Cases* —1 On October 20th 1921 a man aged 30 years, in robust health and sober habits broke accidentally a bottle of crude carbolic acid he was carrying home in his trouser pocket and became unconscious in twenty minutes About an hour later he was removed to the Whipp Cross Hospital where he was found unconscious with stertorous breathing and extensive carbolic acid staining and burning of the left hip left thigh and scrotum His pupils were contracted Later in the evening he became irritable and vomited The next day he regained consciousness, but complained of severe abdominal pain and passed blood in the urine On the 22nd he appeared better but did not pass urine and on the 23rd it was recognized that there was complete suppression of urine He remained mentally clear till the 28th At 6-20 p m there was a sudden change he felt cold and collapsed The pulse went, and the extremities became cold and clammy He died at 6-23 p m At the autopsy there was no erosion of the mucous membrane of the stomach The liver and spleen were congested and the kidneys showed acute haemorrhagic nephritis —*Turtle and Dolan Lancet, Dec 16 1922 p 1273*

Carbolic acid may normally occur in traces in the urine in the form of phenol-sulphonate of potassium, derived from the digestion of albuminous substances or of their putrefaction. From his experiment Engel<sup>1</sup> has estimated that the quantity of carbolic acid excreted by a healthy man living on mixed diet is 15 milligrammes in twenty four hours.

Cresol, creolin (a constituent of Jeyes' disinfecting fluid) Lysol (a mixture of cresol and soap solution) and izal are all similar in action to carbolic acid, but they are believed to be less toxic. Stapelmoehr<sup>2</sup> reports a case in which the terminal phalanx of the thumb sloughed off, and had to be amputated after application of a 5 per cent dilution of a compound solution of cresol.

Smith<sup>3</sup> describes the case of a man, aged 32, who with intent to commit suicide, swallowed 2 ounces of a weed killer of emulsified tar acids consisting of 35 per cent orthocresol +0 per cent meta Cresol and 25 per cent para Cresol. He had no pain or vomiting but became comatose in about an hour and died in about one hour and forty minutes. The necropsy did not reveal any signs of corrosion of the lips tongue, mouth pharynx oesophagus stomach or intestines. In a case<sup>4</sup> where a Hindu male 17 years old died after swallowing a quantity of lysol the post mortem examination showed that the mouth pharynx and oesophagus were ulcerated. The tongue was white and the stomach was perforated. The liver and kidneys were congested.

Death has occurred after swallowing one to two tea spoonfuls of lysol. On the other hand, recovery has followed much larger doses. A woman, 23 years old took about two ounces of a preparation labelled "Lysol pure" at 7.18 p.m. After swallowing she felt no pain but only a slight burning in the throat and then she went off to sleep. At 7.45 p.m. she was comatose, the pupils were contracted, the face was cyanosed and the lips and skin of the face were burnt as though by some corrosive fluid. The breathing was rattling and stertorous and the breath smelt strongly of carbolic acid. There was foam on the lips mouth and nose, but the pulse was fairly good. The urine passed was very dark and smoky, but did not contain albumin or blood. The stomach was washed out with warm water, and a pint of warm water containing an ounce of magnesium sulphate was left inside it. Brandy was given per rectum, and oxygen inhalation was administered. The patient recovered in a couple of days.<sup>5</sup> Several cases of suicide by lysol occur every year chiefly in Germany. In February 1923 a case occurred at Bangalore, where a woman was charged with attempting to commit suicide on Christmas Eve by drinking lysol. She was found guilty, and fined fifty rupees.

Accidental cases of poisoning have, sometimes, occurred. A European boy 14 years old, died in four hours and forty five minutes after he had taken an enema of one and a half ounces of lysol in a pint of water.<sup>6</sup> Shore<sup>7</sup> describes a case of accidental poisoning by absorption of lysol through the unbroken skin. A seaman purchased a bottle of lysol, and put it into his hip pocket. Afterwards he met with an accident as a result of which the bottle was broken and the lysol saturated his clothes so that he was burned from the hip to the heel on that side, there was a certain amount of burning on the other leg as well. The man died in about three quarters of an hour. The post mortem examination showed that the kidneys were red and enlarged.

In a case<sup>1</sup> in which an infant, two months old, was given a gramme of creosote by mistake for a laxative, there was little indication of a local caustic action, only a little vomiting at first and no bowel symptoms at any time. Haemolytic jaundice, haemoglobinuria and leucocytosis were the main symptoms. Death occurred in sixty hours.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period**—Two drachms killed an aged woman in thirty six hours. Twenty four to thirty drops killed an infant ten days old, in sixteen hours. Three six-drop doses of creosote taken in milk proved fatal to a woman, 52 years old, in five days. Recovery has however, occurred after one ounce of creosote.

**Treatment.**—This is the same as that for carbolic acid poisoning.

**Post mortem Appearances**—The mucous membranes of the lips, tongue, mouth, oesophagus and stomach are grey or red in colour inflamed and eroded in patches. The brain and lungs are congested. The kidneys are usually congested, but they may be inflamed. In the abovementioned case where death took place in five days two large erosions were found in the upper part of the oesophagus and others near the pylorus. The stomach was red and injected, and the kidneys were acutely inflamed.

In a case<sup>1</sup> where a woman died of creosote poisoning, the post mortem appearances were almost negative. No excoriations were found on the mouth, lips or oesophagus, the stomach was uniformly redder than normal and parts were slightly hemorrhagic. There was no sign of ulcer or of gross hemorrhage. The intestines were normal. The liver, spleen and kidneys were normal. The brain was hyperemic and softer than usual, but there was no lesion and no suspicion of meningitis. The heart was normal, and the lungs were hyperemic. The odour of creosote was present in the brain as well as in the stomach contents.

**PICRIC ACID (CARBAZOTIC ACID, TRINITROPHENOL, TRINITROPIOL)**  
 $C_6H_2(NO_2)_3OH$

This is obtained by the action of nitric and sulphuric acids on phenol. It exists as yellow crystalline prisms or plates, and explodes under the action of heat or percussion. It is soluble in about 70 parts of water and in 10 parts of alcohol. It has no odour, but has an intensely bitter taste, and consequently has been used as a substitute for hops in beer.

Picric acid precipitates albumin and causes local necrosis. It decomposes the red blood corpuscles, and produces methaemoglobin. It also irritates the central nervous system causing convulsions.

**Symptoms** — Pain in the stomach, severe vomiting of yellow matter, diarrhoea with yellow stools. The conjunctiva and the skin assume a bright yellow colour which is known as "picric jaundice"; the pupils are dilated; there may be itching and eczema. The urine is at first dark yellow in colour and later becomes ruby red, owing to the formation of picramic acid but it does not contain bile or albumin; there may be anuria and strangury. Rapid pulse, muscular cramps, convulsions, drowsiness, delirium, stupor and collapse.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period** — The fatal dose and fatal period are uncertain. Poisoning has followed thirty grains, but recovery has ensued after swallowing about 300 grains. In his annual report for the year 1943, the Chemical Examiner Bengal mentions a case in which death occurred on the 4th day after the ingestion of picric acid.

**Treatment** — Wash out the stomach. Give diuretics and purgatives. Administer morphine to relieve pain. The antidotes are proteins as found in raw eggs and milk. The administration of large doses of dextrose has been recommended as this substance is believed to aid the reduction of picric acid to the less poisonous picramic acid.

**Post mortem Appearances** — All the viscera are stained yellow and are congested. The stomach and the upper part of the intestine show signs of irritation.

**Chronic Poisoning** — Men who handle picric acid in munition plants and get dusted over with it suffer from dermatitis which may be extremely irritating. Workmen engaged in the manufacture of the explosive melinite, which chiefly consists of picric acid suffer from a form of chronic poisoning, the chief symptoms being abdominal cramps, vomiting, diarrhoea, loss of appetite and loss of weight.

A case<sup>1</sup> is recorded in which a youth aged 17, was unpacking Explosive D ammonium picrate, which covered his face and hands and got into his eyes. He suffered from conjunctivitis and tubular nephritis with heavy albumin and casts in urine.

**Chemical Tests** — An aqueous solution is intensely yellow, is acid to litmus and dyes wool and silk yellow. Ammonio sulphate of copper produces a green precipitate.

When an aqueous solution of picric acid is warmed with potassium cyanide a blood red colouration is produced owing to the formation of potassium isopurpurite.

**Medico Legal Points** — Picric acid is used as a yellow dye for silk and wool and is also used in the manufacture of explosives and fireworks. It has produced toxic effects when swallowed in the form of a solution, when applied externally and also when inhaled in the form of dust or fumes. Picric acid is now largely used as a dressing for burns and one death<sup>2</sup> has been recorded from the poisonous effects thus produced.

Picric acid is sometimes used by malingerers to simulate jaundice and to escape military service.

Picric acid is eliminated in the urine, though the elimination is slow. In one case its presence was detected in the urine for six days after the administration of a single dose of one gramme of picric acid.<sup>3</sup> It is also eliminated in the faeces.

In his annual report for the year 1938 the Chemical Examiner Punjab, mentions that an attempt was made by the tribesmen to poison the water supply of the troops at Razani Camp on the North West Frontier by introducing picric acid into the water supply tanks. Owing to its yellow colour and intensely bitter taste the acid was detected in time before any mischief could be made.

**SALICYLIC ACID,  $C_6H_5(OH)COOH$**

This is prepared by the interaction of sodium phenoxide and carbon dioxide. It may also be obtained from natural salicylates contained in *gaulethria* and sweet birch. It is an odourless crystalline solid, sweetish and acrid in taste, sparingly soluble in cold water (1 in 500), but readily in hot water, alcohol, ether and chloroform. The non official dose is 5 to 10 grains.

<sup>1</sup> *Jour Amer Med Assoc*, Oct 19 1920, p 1247.

<sup>2</sup> *Alexander, Med Press and Cir*, 1912 p 112.

<sup>3</sup> *Warren, Fotheringham's Detection of Poisons*, Ed VI, p 120.

Sodium salicylate is prepared by neutralizing salicylic acid with sodium carbonate. It occurs in odourless white scales or shining tabular crystals, having a sweetish unpleasant, saline taste. It is soluble in water, alcohol and glycerin, but insoluble in ether. The dose is 10 to 30 grains.

**Symptoms**—These are burning pain in the throat and stomach, difficulty of swallowing, thirst, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, headache, noises in the ears, giddiness, flushing of the face, profuse perspiration, cold, moist skin, slow, weak, and irregular pulse, confused mind, delirium, insensibility and coma. Haemorrhages occur from the mucous membranes e.g., epistaxis, bleeding from the gums, retinal hemorrhages causing amblyopia, and bleeding from the kidneys giving rise to haematuria. There may be bleeding from the uterus, leading to abortion. Death occurs from the stoppage of the heart or respiration.

**Chronic Poisoning**—This occurs when salicylic acid and its salts are administered for a prolonged period or when articles of diet preserved by salicylic acid are taken daily for a long time. The chief symptoms are loss of appetite, impaired digestion, diarrhoea alternating with constipation, eczematous eruptions on the skin and mental depression. The urine may be albuminous.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period**—One ounce of salicylic acid has caused death after four days.<sup>1</sup> A less quantity would prove fatal if the heart or kidneys were diseased. An infant died from the application of a ten per cent ointment of salicylic acid to the head and neck.<sup>2</sup> Thirty-four grammes<sup>3</sup> of sodium salicylate proved fatal to a patient, 17 years old, and 100 grammes<sup>4</sup> of the same drug caused the death of a child 5 years old.

**Treatment**—Emetics, lavage, sodium bicarbonate, magnesium oxide, raw eggs, milk, warmth and stimulants.

**Post mortem Appearances**—The signs of gastritis, enteritis and nephritis may be found. The organs are usually found hyperæmic.

**Tests**—Ferric chloride gives a violet colour which disappears on the addition of mineral acids but not on the addition of alcohol or acetic acid. Bromine water produces a yellowish white precipitate of tribromosalicylic acid which dissolves in alcohol.

**Medico Legal Points**—Accidental cases of poisoning by salicylic acid occur from an overdose when given in medicine and from its widespread use in preserving food and liquors.

Salicylic acid is eliminated chiefly by the kidneys as salicyluric acid. Its elimination in the urine begins within fifteen minutes of its administration by the mouth and ends, as a rule, within forty-eight hours. It is also excreted in perspiration, bile and milk.

**Methyl Salicylate**—This is also known as artificial oil of wintergreen and is obtained by the interaction of methyl alcohol and salicylic acid. It is a colourless liquid, having a characteristic aromatic odour and a sweetish warm aromatic taste. It is slightly soluble in water, and freely soluble in alcohol, ether, chloroform, glacial acetic acid or carbon bisulphide.

Methyl salicylate is taken accidentally or suicidally or to procure abortion and causes symptoms of acute gastro-intestinal irritation resembling those of poisoning by salicylic acid, followed occasionally by death. About an ounce of methyl salicylate proved fatal to an adult woman in 10 hours.<sup>5</sup> Doses of 10 c.c. to 12 c.c. of methyl salicylate have killed children.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand a child aged 2 years recovered after swallowing an ounce.<sup>7</sup>

The treatment consists in the washing out of the stomach and administration of olive oil and sodium bicarbonate mixed freely with water. Dextrose, saline and lactate solutions may be administered intravenously and artificial respiration may be performed if necessary.

The post mortem appearances are inflammation of the mucous membrane of the stomach and intestine and congestion of the viscera. There may be submucous haemorrhages in the pelvis of the kidneys and petechial haemorrhages in the renal cortex.

**Acetylsalicylic Acid (Aspirin)**—This is obtained by the action of acetic anhydride or acetyl chloride on salicylic acid. It occurs as a white, odorless, crystalline powder, having a slightly acid taste. It is sparingly soluble in water but dissolves in 2 parts of alcohol and freely in ether. It is a pharmacoporial preparation the dose being 5 to 10 grains. Its action is antipyretic and analgesic.

<sup>1</sup> Holland Med Chemistry and Toxic, Fd IV, p. 473.

<sup>2</sup> Zumbroch Monatsschr f Kinderh 1918 10, p. 167. Peterson, Haines and Webster Leg Med and Toxic Vol II Fd III p. 716.

<sup>3</sup> Quincke, Berl Klin Wochenschr, 1882, VI, p. 709. Ralph Webster, Leg Med and Toxic, 1930, p. 811.

<sup>4</sup> Langmaid Lancet Vol I, 1906 p. 1822.

<sup>5</sup> Pinkham Boston Med and Surg Jour Vol 117, p. 518.

<sup>6</sup> Meyerhoff Jour Amer Med Assoc May 31 1930 p. 1751.

<sup>7</sup> Miers, Jour Amer Med Assoc, Dec 25, 1920 p. 1783.

**Symptoms**—These are headache, dizziness, buzzing in the ears, thirst, gastric pain, nausea, vomiting, red and swollen face, weak and rapid pulse, quick breathing, general perspiration, prostration, drowsiness and coma. The temperature is usually subnormal but is, sometimes raised. In some cases there may be cutaneous eruptions of various kinds, delirium and abortion in pregnancy. In severe cases the alkali reserve of the blood is diminished and clinical signs of acidosis with Cheyne-Stokes respiration are found. Death occurs from cardiac or respiratory failure.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period**—Four hundred and fifty to six hundred grains<sup>1</sup> of a pure is the minimum fatal dose, although five<sup>2</sup> and ten<sup>3</sup> grains have caused in susceptible individuals an enormous swelling of the face, especially the eyelids, lips, nose and tongue, while seventy-five to one hundred and two hundred<sup>4</sup> and three hundred<sup>5</sup> grains have proved fatal. A rare case<sup>6</sup> is reported in which a woman, aged 45 years died in about ten minutes after a dose of five grains. In his annual report for the year 1940 the Chemical Analyser, Bombay, mentions the case of a person 18 years old, who died after swallowing 2 five grain tablets of aspirin. A man<sup>7</sup> aged 72 years died in twelve hours after a dose of 1.0 five grain tablets. A man<sup>8</sup> 30 years old died in about twelve hours after taking one thousand grains of aspirin for the purpose of committing suicide. On the other hand recoveries have followed much larger doses of twelve hundred<sup>9</sup> and fifty<sup>10</sup> and fifteen hundred<sup>11</sup> grains of aspirin.

**Treatment**.—This consists in the washing out of the stomach and the administration of saline purgatives. Intravenous injection of a 1 per cent solution of sodium bicarbonate is very beneficial. This may also be administered by mouth or by rectum after vomiting has stopped. Large quantities of water may be given to hasten the elimination of the poison. Cardiac stimulants may be administered, if necessary. Lumbar puncture in serious cases may have a beneficial effect.

**Post mortem Appearances**—These are not characteristic, but there may be haemorrhages in the viscera.

**Chemical Analysis**—Aspirin can be easily extracted with water. The aqueous solution is shaken out with ether and the ether extract is then evaporated. The residue contains aspirin. If the residue is heated with sodium or potassium hydroxide or even with water, aspirin is hydrolyzed into salicylic acid and acetic acid. A few drops of dilute ferric chloride solution added to aspirin in neutral solution produce a yellow brown colour.

**Medico Legal Points**—Aspirin is commonly used as a household remedy for common cold and neuralgic or rheumatic pains and has caused accidental poisoning when taken in large doses. Idiosyncrasy has, sometimes, produced alarming symptoms even from medicinal doses. Aspirin has been taken for suicidal purposes, especially in England and other European countries. It has also been used as a homicidal poison. A woman 45 years old and her daughter 20 years old were charged with murdering the latter's child, 7 months old, by administering aspirin in its feeding bottle.<sup>12</sup>

### ACETIC ACID, CH<sub>3</sub>COOH

This acid occurs in nature in combination with alcohols in the essences of many plants, and is formed during the decay of certain organic substances. It is prepared on a large scale from pyrolytic acid obtained in the distillation of wood. It is a clear colourless liquid, having a pungent odour.

Acetic acid acts as a corrosive poison in the concentrated form known as glacial acetic acid, but acts merely as an irritant poison when diluted. Vinegar (*Sirka*) which contains four to five per cent of acetic acid may cause poisonous symptoms when taken in large quantities. Vinegar and acetic acid contain traces of sulphuric acid as an impurity. Acidum aceticum dilutum is a pharmacopoeial preparation containing 6 per cent of acetic acid.

**Symptoms**—The mucous membrane of the mouth and other parts of the body, with which the acid comes in contact, are softened and prevent the appearance of a yellowish white colour. There is intense pain extending from the mouth to the stomach. The other symptoms

<sup>1</sup> Balasz, *Medizinische Klinik*, Berlin Nov 7, 1930 p 1664 *Jour für Med. Assoc.*, Feb 7, 1931, p 477

<sup>2</sup> Morgan *Brit. Med. Jour.* Feb 11 1911, p 307

<sup>3</sup> Killen, *Brit. Med. Jour.* Feb 20 1911, p 176

<sup>4</sup> Sidney O Bransoff and M Bernstein *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.* Nov 15, 1917, p 71.

<sup>5</sup> Neale, *Brit. Med. Jour.*, Jan 18, 1936, p 110

<sup>6</sup> Balasz, *Lec. Cs.*

<sup>7</sup> Djsart, *Jour. Inter. Med. Assoc.*, Aug 5 1933 p 446

<sup>8</sup> Neale, *Brit. Med. Jour.* Jan 18, 1936 p 110

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> P Hopkins *Lancet*, Feb 3 1940 p 115

<sup>11</sup> Evans *Brit. Med. Jour.* 1938, 1 of II, p 386

<sup>12</sup> *Pharm. Jour.*, March 3, 1940, p 120

are vomiting, difficulty in swallowing, convulsions, irritable cough and collapse. The symptoms of suffocation are usually more marked as the acid being volatile affects the larynx and lungs during the act of swallowing. According to Sklodwaski<sup>1</sup>, haemoglobinuria is a constant feature in this poisoning. It appears within the first twelve hours, and is evident even in the benign form. This sign may be helpful in differential diagnosis from other poisons.



*Fig. 140.—Acetic Acid Poisoning. Stains on the lips and tongue caused by glacial acetic acid.*

**Fatal Dose**—One drachm of the concentrated acid has caused the death of a child, but recoveries have taken place in adults after swallowing two<sup>2</sup> and six<sup>3</sup> fluid ounces respectively.

**Fatal Period**—Death usually takes place within from one to forty-eight hours, although it has been delayed for three, seven and fourteen days.<sup>4</sup>

**Treatment**—Neutralize the acid by giving magnesia and then produce emesis by giving emetics. Give demulcents and allay pain by hypodermic injections of morphine. Laryngeal symptoms may be treated by the application of cold compresses to the throat and by giving the patient pieces of ice to suck. Tracheotomy may be performed if necessary.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Erosion or corrosion of the mucous membrane of the mouth, oesophagus, stomach and intestines with eechymosed patches.

**Chemical Analysis**—Acetic acid may be separated from organic mixtures by distillation. If combined it should be liberated by adding 1 hoz. of hydrochloric acid.

**Tests**—Acetic acid is recognized by its characteristic odour. When heated with alcohol and sulphuric acid acetic ether (ethylacetate) is formed, which is known by its peculiar aromatic smell.

Ferric chloride added to its solution after it is neutralized with ammonia produces a deep red colour which disappears on the addition of hydrochloric acid. The red solution when boiled changes to a red brown precipitate of ferric subacetate.

<sup>1</sup> *Presse Medicale Paris Nov 28 1933 p 153; Jour Amer Med Assoc, Jan 9 1936 p 106.*

<sup>2</sup> *Karunakaran and Pillai Ind Med Ga., Dec, 1944, p 600.*

<sup>3</sup> *Dixonmann Forens Med and Toxic Ed II p 352.*

<sup>4</sup> *Karunakaran and Pillai, Ind Med Ga., Dec, 1944, p 600.*

**Medico Legal Points** —Poisoning by acetic acid is rare in India, although a few suicidal and accidental cases have recently occurred in Travancore

### TARTARIC ACID, ( $\text{C}_4\text{H}_6(\text{COOH})_2$ ).

This acid is a constituent of a large number of plants and occurs in many fruits, especially grapes. It may be prepared from potassium acid tartrate. It occurs as colourless crystals or as a white powder is odourless and strongly acid in taste. It is soluble in less than 1 part of water in about 2.5 parts of alcohol and slightly soluble in ether. It is a pharmacopelial preparation the dose being 3 to 30 grains. It is also a constituent of Seidlitz powder (*Pulvis effervescentis compotus*).

Ordinarily, tartaric acid is not regarded as a poison, but in large doses it may act as a poison. A few severe and fatal cases of poisoning by it have been recorded.

**Symptoms** —These are more of a strongly irritant nature than corrosive. There is a burning sensation in the throat and stomach followed by vomiting and diarrhoea. Death may occur from exhaustion. There may occasionally be convulsions.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period** —The fatal dose may be regarded as one ounce of tartaric acid although a strong solution containing at least 140 to 160 grains of tartaric acid killed a woman aged 67 years<sup>1</sup> while recovery followed a dose of 4 *tolas* (720 grains) given to a man in Delhi in place of some 'salts' for his constipation from an Indian medicine shop<sup>2</sup>. Death may occur in from seven to nine days.

**Treatment** —Neutralize the acid by giving calcium hydroxide or magnesium hydroxide freely in water. Then pass the stomach tube gently and wash out the stomach with a solution of sodium bicarbonate. Administer 1 ounce of castor oil as a purgative. Morphine may be used to relieve pain.

**Post mortem Appearances** —Erosions of the mucous membrane of the oesophagus and inflammation of the greater part of the alimentary canal. According to Tardieu the blood remains persistently fluid and acquires the colour of red currant juice.

**Chemical Analysis** —Tartaric acid forms large transparent crystals and is readily soluble in water and alcohol but with difficulty in ether. Calcium chloride yields a white precipitate soluble in acetic acid (distinction from oxalic acid). Boiling darkens tartrates and potassium permanganate decolorises them.

With a neutral solution of tartaric acid silver nitrate produces a white precipitate of silver tartrate, which dissolves in dilute ammonium hydroxide and forms a beautiful mirror of metallic silver on the sides of the test tube, when heated on a water bath.

### CITRIC ACID, $\text{C}_6\text{H}_8\text{O}_7$ , $\text{H}_2\text{O}$

This acid is found free in the juice of lemons, oranges and many other sour fruits and is stated to occur to the extent of from 0.05 to 0.1 per cent in human and cow's milk. It is prepared by boiling lemon juice and neutralizing with calcium carbonate. It occurs as large, colourless prismatic crystals or as a white powder. It is odourless and strongly acid in taste. It dissolves in less than 1 part of water, in about 1.5 parts of alcohol and is slightly soluble in ether. The pharmacopelial dose is 5 to 30 grains.

As shown by experiments on animals, citric acid is more poisonous than tartaric acid. Fatal cases of poisoning by this acid have occurred. A young girl<sup>3</sup> died after she had taken 2.5 grammes of citric acid as an abortifacient. The treatment is the same as in poisoning by tartaric acid.

**Tests** —Calcium chloride yields a white precipitate on boiling but not in the cold. Boiling has no effect on citrates, but potassium permanganate turns them green. It gives no mirror test with silver nitrate.

## III ALKALIES

Like acids, alkalies act as corrosive poisons when administered in the concentrated form, but act as irritant poisons when diluted.

The hydroxides or hydrates and carbonates of alkalies which act as corrosives are the following —

**1 Ammonia (Hartshorn),  $\text{NH}_3$ ,** —Gaseous ammonia, when dissolved in water, forms a strong solution of ammonia (Liquor Ammoniae Iortis), known as spirits of Hartshorn. It contains 32.5 per cent of ammonia and is a colourless

<sup>1</sup> *Treatise Brit. Med. Jour.*, 1893, Vol. I, p. 1321.

<sup>2</sup> *Punjab Chemical Examiner's Annual Report*, 1926.

<sup>3</sup> Zaenger quoted in *Frich Leschi's Clinical Toxicology Eng. Transl.*, by Stewart and Dorter, 1934 p. 270.

liquid, having a very pungent characteristic odour, and a strong alkaline reaction. The solution is largely employed for domestic purposes, such as removing paint, oil, and dirt generally from clothing. When freshly prepared the gas is freely given off and serious poisonous symptoms have occurred from its inhalation when large ammonia jars or ammonia refrigerators in factories have burst. The pharmaceutical preparation, liquor ammoniae dilutus (liquor ammoniae) is an aqueous solution containing 10 per cent of ammonia by weight.

**2 Potassium Hydroxide (Potassium Hydrate, Caustic Potash), KOH**—This is usually met with as hard, deliquescent white pencils or cakes. It is soapy to the touch, acrid to the taste, rapidly absorbs carbon dioxide from the air and is very soluble in water. Its solution is known as liquor potassæ (liquor potassi hydroxidi), which has also a soapy feel, and a strong alkaline reaction, and contains 3 per cent of caustic potash in water.

**3 Sodium Hydroxide (Sodium Hydrate, Caustic Soda), NaOH**—This occurs as white, solid masses or as cylindrical sticks closely resembling potassium hydroxide. It is strongly caustic and, when dissolved in water forms a solution known as liquor sodiæ. It is largely employed in manufactures but cases of poisoning are rarely met with.

**4 Ammonium Carbonate (Sal Volatile), (NH<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>**—This occurs as translucent hard crystalline masses. It has a strongly ammoniacal odour and a pungent ammoniacal taste. It is soluble in 4 parts of water. Exposed to the air it partially dissociates, and becomes converted into porous lumps or a white powder. Commercial ammonium carbonate is a mixture of hydrogen ammonium carbonate and ammonium carbonate and possesses a strongly ammoniacal odour.

**5 Potassium Carbonate (Pearl Ash, Salt of Tartar, Ja akhar), K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>**—This salt occurs as a white, crystalline powder, having a caustic and alkaline taste. It is highly deliquescent and very soluble in water but insoluble in alcohol. It is used for washing and other cleansing purposes.

**6 Sodium Carbonate (Soda, Washing Soda, Sajjal hara), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, 10H<sub>2</sub>O**—This occurs as large, transparent, monosymmetric crystals. When exposed to the air the crystals soon effloresce, and become white on the surface. They are soluble in water but insoluble in alcohol. Fissicated sodium carbonate (Soda carbonas exsiccatus) is obtained by the action of heat on sodium carbonate. It occurs as a dry inodorous, white powder, with a strongly alkaline taste, and dissolves readily in water. The impure combined carbonates of sodium and potassium are sold in the bazaar as *papad I hara*.

A mixture of caustic soda and sodium carbonate, known as soap lye, is used for washing purposes. Casper<sup>1</sup> reports two cases of poisoning by soap lye. In one case an unmarried woman attempted to murder her child, aged three years, and in the other an old man accidentally swallowed six to eight ounces of this instead of beer and died on the fifth day.

**Symptoms**—The usual symptoms of poisoning by corrosive mineral acids are present with the following exceptions—

1 The taste is acrid and soapy

2 The vomited matter is strongly alkaline, and does not effervesce on coming in contact with the earth. It is at first thick and slimy, and later contains dark altered blood, and shreds of the mucous membrane from the gullet and stomach.

1 *Forens Med, Eng Transl*, Vol II, pp 111, 112

3. Purging, which is rare in poisoning by corrosive acids, is a frequent symptom, accompanied by severe pain and straining. The motions consist of stringy mucus mixed with blood.

It should be noted here that the sense of heat and burning pain in the throat and stomach are much greater when a strong solution of ammonia is swallowed than when a solution of caustic soda or potash is taken.

The ammoniacal vapour is very irritating to the respiratory organs. When inhaled, it produces congestion and watering of the eyes, running of the nose, and a feeling of suffocation with a sense of great heat in the throat. Death may occur immediately from suffocation due to inflammation of the glottis, or later from pneumonia or broncho pneumonia. A Bengali druggist of Agra was seriously affected by the gas escaping from a suddenly opened bottle containing a strong solution of ammonia, and suffered from conjunctivitis, corneal ulcers and iridocyclitis and had almost lost his vision.

4-16c

**Fatal Dose.**—The average fatal dose of ammonia, caustic potash or caustic soda is half an ounce. The smallest fatal dose of liquor ammonie fortis is one fluid drachm, and that of caustic potash is forty grains. A dose of 8.5 grammes of caustic soda taken with a view to committing suicide killed a Turkish woman, aged 20 years, in eleven days, and a dose of 60 grammes killed another woman, 35 years old, in twenty nine hours and thirty minutes.<sup>1</sup> Half an ounce of carbonate of potassium is regarded as a fatal dose. The fatal dose of carbonate of sodium is not certain. It is much less poisonous than potassium carbonate.

**Fatal Period.**—Usually within twenty four hours. Inhalation of ammonia vapour has caused death in four minutes,<sup>2</sup> and three ounces of a strong solution of potassium carbonate taken internally killed a boy in three hours.<sup>3</sup> Death may occur after weeks or months, or even after two or three years from inanition and starvation due to the oesophageal or pyloric stricture.

**Treatment**—Do not use the stomach tube or enemas, but neutralize the alkaline poison by giving vegetable acids, such as acetic (vinegar), citric (lemon or orange juice) or tartaric acid mixed with a large quantity of water. These should be followed by olive oil, white of egg, milk, butter and acidulated demulcent drinks. Pieces of ice should be given to suck. Morphine may be given hypodermically to relieve pain, and ether to counteract the effects of collapse.

The cesophageal stricture should be dilated by means of a bougie, or it may be necessary to perform oesophagostomy or gastrostomy.

In poisoning by ammonia vapour give oxygen inhalation, or keep the patient in an atmosphere rendered moist with steam. Anodynes may be given for pain.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—These indicate marks of corrosion, but not so well marked, as in poisoning by mineral acids. The mucous membrane of the mouth, throat, gullet, stomach and duodenum is softened, exfoliated and inflamed in patches of chocolate or black colour. The contents of the stomach are turbid, usually blood stained, but frequently coffee coloured. Perforation of the stomach is rare, but may occur in ammonia poisoning. The deeper tissues are inflamed and congested.

The mucous membrane of the larynx and trachea shows the same appearances as are found in the mouth, throat, etc. In protracted cases of poisoning stenosis is found more often at the lower end of the oesophagus than at the pylorus.

1. Bellamy and Gosden, *Brit. Med. Jour.*, June 9, 1934, p. 1022.

2. Christison, *Poisons*, p. 104.

3. Taylor, *On Poisons*, Ed. III, p. 251.

In the case<sup>1</sup> of a man who died from poisoning by a solution of ammonia, the viscera were found in a highly congested state, including the oesophagus, the lungs and the pancreas, which latter was adherent to the duodenum, and the contents of the stomach smelled strongly of ammonia and had a soapy feel. The Chemical Analyst detected both free and combined ammonia in the viscera.

**Chemical Analysis.** The contents of the stomach are alkaline in reaction and soapy to the feel. Ammonia may be separated from organic mixtures by distillation, and other alkalies may be separated by dialysis or by incinerating them in a porcelain capsule to drive off animal and vegetable matter. The residual ash is then dissolved in acidulated water, and tested for the presence of sodium and potassium as given in the following table —

Reagents	Ammonium	Potassium	Sodium
1. Caustic potash and heat	Ammonia gas is given off known by its odour by its turning red litmus paper blue and by giving rise to white fumes of ammonium chloride when a glass rod wet with hydrochloric acid is brought into contact with it	Nil	Nil
2. Nesler's reagent	Yellow or brown colouration or dark brown precipitate	Nil	Nil
3. Tartaric acid (strong) and alcohol	Nil	White granular precipitate	Nil
4. Platonic chloride	Yellow crystalline precipitate in solutions acidulated with hydrochloric acid soluble in 80 per cent alcohol	Yellow crystalline precipitate in solutions acidulated with hydrochloric acid insoluble in 80 per cent alcohol	Nil
5. Flame test	Nil	Violet	Yellow

The caustic alkalies give a brown precipitate with silver nitrate, while their carbonates give a whitish yellow precipitate and effervesce on the addition of an acid.

Ammonia is formed during putrefaction. Hence its detection is of no consequence unless analysis is undertaken immediately after death when the body is still fresh.

**Medico-Legal Points.** —Poisoning by alkalies is much less frequent than poisoning by mineral acids. A few suicidal and accidental cases have, however, occurred. In most of the accidental cases the alkalies were taken by adults or children in mistake for beer, medicine, etc. Homicidal cases are very rare indeed. A case<sup>2</sup> of attempted murder by the administration of caustic soda is recorded. A man, aged 78, and his wife, aged 76, were given soup containing 7.99 grammes of caustic soda. After the first swallow the couple noticed that the soup had an unpleasant taste and smell and their mouths began to burn. The man spat out the liquid but the woman swallowed a teaspoonful. A dark red painful swelling on the tip and sides of the tongue was found, the man recovered in 8, the woman after 20 days.

Cases have occurred where a solution of caustic soda has been thrown maliciously on the face and body of an enemy. In one case<sup>3</sup> a cloth soaked in caustic

1. *Bombay Chemical Analyst's Annual Report*, 1939, p. 2.

2. *Fachges. Deuts. Zeits. f. ges. gerichtl. Med.*, 1934, XXVIII, 101. *Med. Leg. und Recht*, Oct. 1, 1934, p. 37.

3. *Leader*, May 28, 1939, p. 10.

soda solution was rubbed on the eyes of one Rajaram, a *Mulhtar*, son of a lady zamindar, when he was struck with acute pain, and sat down and began to cry. As a result of throwing this corrosive substance he lost his power of sight in one eye completely. His other eye was saved, though it was not in a normal condition at the time. The motive for the assault was the grudge and enmity existing between the complainant and the accused, Gajadhar. In another case<sup>1</sup> a man visited a brothel in Bombay City early one morning and threw some corrosive liquid over the face and bodice of a prostitute who was sleeping there. The liquid on analysis proved to be a concentrated solution of caustic soda.

Caustic soda is also applied externally to the neck of an ox or a buffalo so as to render it unfit for bearing the yoke of a plough owing to its local corrosive action and thus causing serious loss to an agriculturist.<sup>2</sup>

Poisoning by ammonia is more common than poisoning by fixed alkalies. Accidental poisoning may occur from inhalation of ammonia fumes escaping from broken jars or from leaking pipes in refrigerating installations. Owing to its strong smell ammonia is not used ordinarily for homicidal purpose though a case is recorded in which a man was tried for the murder of a child by administering to it spirits of hartshorn.<sup>3</sup> In another case a man was convicted of throwing maliciously a lantern containing a strong solution of ammonia into a woman's face with intent to injure her. A portion reached the eyes but she recovered from its effects.<sup>4</sup> Cases have also been recorded in which ammonia was taken with a view to procuring abortion. In one case a woman swallowed 90 grammes of aqua ammonia, was delivered of a dead foetus on the second day, and died on the eighth day.<sup>5</sup> In another case ammonia was injected into the vagina causing uterine vaginæ.<sup>6</sup>

## CHAPTER XXIII

### IRRITANT POISONS

Irritant poisons are those which by their specific action set up inflammation in the gastro intestinal canal

**General Symptoms** —The symptoms are delayed from half an hour to an hour or more. These are burning pain difficulty in swallowing feeling of constriction in the throat and oesophagus severe pain in the stomach intense thirst nausea and violent persistent vomiting. The vomited matter at first contains food then becomes bilious and lastly contains altered blood. There is purging accompanied by tenesmus and pain and tenderness over the abdomen the stools may contain mucus and blood. There is dysuria. Collapse sets in when the skin is cold and clammy and the pulse is quick feeble and intermittent. Cramps also occur in the legs. Sometimes convulsions occur before death which may take place at once from shock or from exhaustion in one to four days.

If the patient survives for some time reaction sets in consequently the skin becomes hot and dry with a rise of temperature but death may occur later from stricture of the oesophagus

**Diagnosis** —Irritant poisoning has to be diagnosed from certain diseases such as cholera acute gastritis acute gastro intestinal catarrh peritonitis colic and rupture of the stomach

#### A INORGANIC

#### I NON METALLIC POISONS

#### PHOSPHORUS

**Symptoms** — In acute poisoning the symptoms may appear in a few minutes after swallowing a poisonous dose, but usually they are delayed from one to six hours. In a case where a girl swallowed a quantity of phosphorus paste the symptoms did not set in till the fifth day.<sup>1</sup>

The symptoms complained of by the patient are a ~~garlic-like taste~~ in the mouth and burning pain in the throat, gullet and stomach followed by intense thirst, nausea, eructations and vomiting. The ejected matter has a garlic-like odour, is luminous in the dark, and is coloured with bile but later contains almost pure blood. The breath is also garlic-like in odour and may be luminous in the dark. Diarrhoea is not a constant symptom but, when present, the motions are dark, offensive and sometimes, phosphorescent just like the vomited matter. In rapidly fatal cases these symptoms become severe, collapse sets in, and the patient passes into a state of delirium or convulsions and coma.

In most cases, however, the symptoms abate and there is a semblance of recovery. After a period of intermission lasting from two to six days jaundice makes its appearance and becomes well marked. The pain in the stomach increases in severity, and the abdomen becomes distended. The liver is greatly enlarged and tender to touch and so is the spleen. Vomiting is much more distressing. Diarrhoea is more severe. Both the vomited matters and motions contain blood. There are also haemorrhages from the nose and other mucous membranes such as the urethra, vagina and uterus. Abortion occurs in a pregnant woman with alarming flooding. Subcutaneous haemorrhages or purpuric spots may be present. The urine becomes very scanty, highly coloured and strongly acid in reaction containing albumin, blood, bile pigments and tube casts and occasionally leucin, tyrosin and cystin.

The nervous symptoms develop ~~as~~ frontal pains, restlessness, insomnia, ringing in the ears, deafness, impaired vision, formication, cramps, tremors and paralysis. There is frequently priapism. The pulse becomes feeble, quick and irregular. Fever sets in, and a condition of stupor or coma supervenes ending in death. Sometimes delirium or convulsions precede death.

West<sup>2</sup> reports the case of a woman 52 years old who swallowed phosphorus rat poison. Within fifteen minutes she complained of burning in the mouth and pain in the abdomen. In twelve days she was considered well. Four weeks later she developed jaundice with great depression, black vomit and pains in the head, back and legs. Death occurred in six days.

**Fatal Dose** — The smallest fatal dose recorded for an adult is one eighth of a grain but one to two grains may be regarded as an ordinary fatal dose. An infant of five weeks is reported to have died from sucking the head of a single lucifer match containing about one-fiftieth of a grain of phosphorus.<sup>3</sup> Recovery has followed the dose of four and six grains.

**Fatal Period** — Death occurs in four to ten hours if it is due to collapse, otherwise it usually takes place in from two to seven days, but may be delayed for two to three weeks.

**Treatment** — The stomach should be washed out with a solution of potassium permanganate of the strength of about 10 to 15 grains to one pint of water. Potassium permanganate acts as a chemical antidote oxidizing phosphorus forming harmless compounds, phosphoric acid and phosphates and itself changing to manganese dioxide. Large doses of charcoal should afterwards be administered.

<sup>1</sup> Taylor *O. Poisons* Ed III p 277

<sup>2</sup> *Lancet* Vol I 1883 p 245

<sup>3</sup> *Luff, Forens Med* Vol I p 141

The stomach can also be washed out with warm water until the smell of phosphorus disappears, and then with magnesia suspended in water or with milk of magnesia Two to three grain doses of copper sulphate may be given every five minutes until free emesis is produced It acts as an antidote, as it combines with phosphorus and forms an insoluble harmless salt, phosphide of copper Oils and fats must never be given, for they dissolve phosphorus and promote its absorption Purgatives, especially magnesium sulphate, should be given to evacuate the bowels Morphine may be given hypodermically to relieve pain Dextrose and alkaline drinks may be given to protect the liver and normal saline may be administered intravenously to combat shock.

**Post-mortem Appearances** —Petechial haemorrhages are commonly found under the skin, which is usually yellow On opening the cavities of the body the smell of garlic may be observed, but this is not possible in India owing to the rapid occurrence of putrefactive changes Casper<sup>1</sup> describes the post mortem examination of a case in which he noticed a greyish white vapour smelling strongly of phosphorus streaming from the vagina and the relaxed open anus The mucous membranes of the stomach and intestines are yellowish or greyish white in colour and are softened thickened inflamed and corroded, or completely destroyed in patches exhibiting even perforations Their contents may be garlicky in odour and luminous in the dark

The liver presents the most characteristic appearances It is very much enlarged but may be normal in size or contracted It is doughy in consistency, uniformly yellow, easily friable and contains many haemorrhagic spots in its substance There is fatty degeneration of the liver cells In acute yellow atrophy the liver is smaller in size greasy-leathery and of a dirty yellow colour Its capsule is wrinkled The liver cells are mostly necrosed, and contain crystals of leucin and tyrosin

muscles. The pericardium was normal but the cellular tissue in front of it showed obvious hemorrhages in the papillary muscles. Petechiae covered the upper surface of the diaphragm, particularly over the left dome. The liver was enlarged and there was evident fatty degeneration. The right lobe extended to the level of the third rib above and below to about an inch below the right costal margin, and 2½ inches below the ensiform cartilage. The abdominal viscera smelt very strongly of garlic. The spleen, which weighed 6½ ounces, was deeply congested, but there was no peritonitis. The left kidney weighed 0½ ounces, and there were well marked hemorrhages beneath the capsule and into the lower half of each pyramid, the capsule stripped readily. The right kidney weighed 3½ ounces and both organs showed fatty degeneration. There was no inflammation of the outer coats of the stomach. The viscera contained a blackish brown glairy fluid resembling altered blood which did not smell of phosphorus. Black specks, looking like altered blood, were studded over the inner coat, but these were not firmly adherent to the stomach wall. Hemorrhages were seen on the surface of the pancreas. The uterus was non gravid and appeared to have undergone fatty degeneration. Hemorrhages each about the size of a split pea, studded the mesentery surface. The bladder was distended, but the urine was not luminous in the dark. No naked-eye pathological changes were found in the brain.

2 On February 8, a male child, 18 months old, ate a piece of bread over which a thick layer of roach paste containing 1.19 per cent phosphorus was spread for the destruction of roaches, and became drowsy and vomited. On the following day the vomiting was repeated, the eyes became somewhat yellow, and the patient was slightly drowsy and passed urine only once. On February 10, he became irritable and was given castor oil; the resulting stools were yellowish brown and fluid in character, but without blood. In the evening he vomited five or six times. On the next day the abdomen was distended and the wrists and ankles began to swell. The urine was blood red and the patient vomited a black material and the drowsiness and jaundice increased. He no longer recognized the parents and had taken no food and passed no urine during the last sixteen hours. The child was removed to hospital at 11 a.m. when he was in a moribund comatoso condition with icteroid skin, slight cyanosis of the lips and finger nails and edema of the hands and feet. Blood was noted in the nostrils oozing from the mouth and about the anus. There were two small ecchymotic patches in the skin about 1 cm in diameter, one over the hypochondrium and another over the inner aspect of the left thigh. The pupils were dilated and irregular and reacted sluggishly to the light. The sclera were jaundiced. The mucous membrane of the mouth was normal the throat was injected and the tonsils were enlarged. The cervical glands were moderately large. The pulse was 90 per minute and the respirations were 60 per minute with periods of apnea. The knee reflexes were exaggerated. The spleen was slightly enlarged and the liver was hard and enlarged and almost reached the crest of the ileum. The temperature was 98.6° F. and four hours later it had risen to 103° F. The urine was acid, with a specific gravity of 1020 and albumin. Hyaline and granular casts were seen. Twenty per cent dextrose was given intravenously, and transfusion of whole blood

and the teeth if found carious, should be filled in or extracted. The workmen should also be persuaded to use systematically mouth washes of sodium bicarbonate.

**Chemical Analysis**—Phosphorus may be separated by distillation from organic mixtures and may be detected by its smell and luminosity in the dark. Its phosphorescence is diminished by the presence of alcohol. Hence, in cases of suspected phosphorus poisoning a saturated solution of common salt should be used as a preservative instead of alcohol. It can also be separated by shaking the contents of the stomach, etc., with carbon bisulphide, which dissolves phosphorus.

**Tests**

- 1 *Scherer's Test*—The suspected material in a finely divided condition is placed in a conical flask with a capacity of about 500 c.c. and covered with cold water. A few cubic centimetres of cadmium sulphate solution are added and the liquid is acidified with dilute sulphuric acid. The flask is closed with a cork having two slits from which are suspended two strips of filter paper one soaked in a per cent silver nitrate solution and the other in a solution made by adding sodium hydroxide solution to 5 per cent lead acetate solution until the precipitate first formed is redissolved. The strips of filter paper must be so arranged as not to touch each other or the sides of the flask. The flask is then heated on a water bath in the dark to 40° or 50°C. If the silver paper darkens from the fumes while the lead paper does not change, phosphorus may be present. If the silver paper does not darken phosphorus is not present. If both the papers darken hydrogen sulphide is present or both hydrogen sulphide and phosphorus may be present.

- 2 *Mitscherlich's Test*—If the mixture is acidulated with sulphuric acid and distilled the luminous vapour of phosphorus will be seen in the cool condenser in the dark. Certain substances such as alcohol, ether, chloroform, phenol and turpentine if present will prevent the development of luminosity. This is a very delicate test and will reveal one part of phosphorus in 100 000 parts of the material.

- 3 *Phosphine Test*—If hydrogen is passed through the warmed suspected fluid material phosphoretted hydrogen is evolved which will burn with a green flame. If the gas is passed into a solution of silver nitrate, a black precipitate is formed. The green flame when examined with a spectroscope, shows one band in the orange and yellow between C and D but very close to D and several bands in the green. This test is also known as Dusart Blondlot's test.

- 4 Heated with a few drops of strong nitric acid and some ammonium molybdate solution a concentrated acid solution of the suspected material gives a yellow crystalline precipitate if phosphorus is present.

**Medico Legal Points**—The poisonous effects are more powerful if phosphorus is dissolved or well triturated than when used in solid lumps.

In Europe phosphorus poisoning is usually suicidal. Pregnant women have often been accidentally poisoned by phosphorus as they take it to induce criminal abortion. It is seldom used for homicidal purposes. The odour and taste as also the luminosity in the dark reveal its presence. Casper describes a case in which the luminous appearance of the poisoned food led to a suspicion of poisoning with phosphorus and this was subsequently proved. A woman mixed a preparation of phosphorus into soup and gave it to her husband. He ate it in a dark room in the presence of a few friends who noticed that the warm liquid as he stirred it was luminous. At the Norwich Autumn Assizes 1871 a girl aged 14 was convicted of an attempt to poison a family with a vermin compound of phosphorus. She put the substance into a tea pot containing tea. When hot water

was poured on it, the smell at once led to suspicion. The girl was sentenced to penal servitude for life.<sup>1</sup>

Poisoning by phosphorus is rare in India, but a few accidental and suicidal cases have occurred. A Hindu student took phosphorus for three days to improve his memory, and died on the seventh day after the first dose.<sup>2</sup> A Hindu male child<sup>3</sup> died after swallowing accidentally 4 or 5 "cracker caps," little reddish pellets containing phosphorus and enclosed in circular discs of paper. They are intended to be rubbed against any hard or rough surface when they will ignite spontaneously and continue burning in a succession of small explosions accompanied by evolution of bright sparks and clouds of irritating vapour. In his annual report for the year 1940, the Chemical Examiner, Bengal, reports a case in which a girl, aged 12 years, committed suicide by taking "cracker caps." A Parsi lad,<sup>4</sup> not seeing his name in the first published list of the successful candidates at the matriculation examination declared on May 31, 1933, took a dose of phosphorus with fatal consequences, as he thought that he had failed. His name appeared in the second list of the successful candidates.

A case<sup>5</sup> of attempted homicidal poisoning by phosphorus is recorded. A woman administered tips of matches in a betel to her husband with the intention of poisoning him. The man, on chewing the betel, detected a peculiar taste and smell, and immediately spat it out. The chewed betel was found to contain tips of lucifer matches in which phosphorus was detected. In his annual report for the year 1940, the Chemical Examiner, Madras, records a case where yellow phosphorus was mixed in the food which was served to a guest who was invited to dinner. After eating a few morsels of the food the guest was seized with an uneasy sensation in the stomach and vomited. Yellow phosphorus weighing about 2/5 grain was detected in the remaining food.

In war time phosphorus is used for creating smoke screens and for its incendiary properties it is used in small arms, in bullets, in hand grenades, in shells and in bombs. A case<sup>6</sup> is recorded in which an airman while flying over enemy territory, received a bullet wound in the left thigh and died of acute phosphorus poisoning after six days. The bullet being an explosive one and containing a charge of high explosive and 3½ grains of phosphorus exploded in the soft tissues and set free concentrated phosphorus which was absorbed in the system.

Phosphorus is occasionally used to set fire, and is frequently suspected of being the cause of the so called spontaneous combustion occurring in cotton bales. In his annual report for the year 1928, the Bombay Chemical Analyst mentions that he received two small tin pill boxes from Ahmedabad where they had been seized in connection with a case of suspected arson. One contained a piece of charred cotton wool waste and the other a few fragments of a dark, fuming, semi-solid substance. The fuming matter proved to be yellow phosphorus, and the same was detected in the charred cotton. Yellow phosphorus, rolled up in a wet cloth,<sup>7</sup> or dissolved in carbon bisulphide,<sup>8</sup> was also employed to set fire to postal letter boxes during the civil disobedience movement in 1932.

Although phosphorus is very readily oxidized in the air, it may be detected in the unoxidized form in a dead body several days after death even when it has reached an advanced state of decomposition. This is probably due to the fact that the reducing gases which are developed during decomposition protect phosphorus

1 Reg v Fisher, Taylor On Poisons Ed III p 75

2 Ind Med Gaz, June 1887 p 171

3 Bombay Chemical Analyst's Annual Report, 1930, p 6

4 Free Press Journal, June 4 1933

5 Ind Med Gaz, Oct 1907, p 394 Beng Chem Exam Annual Rep 1906

6 1 J Blaxlan Brit Med Jour Dec 5, 1942, p 664

7 Madras Chem Examiner's Annual Rep 1932 p 8

8 Punjab Chem Examiner's Annual Rep 1932, p 7

from oxidation Hoffmann<sup>1</sup> detected phosphorus in the putrid intestinal contents after three months in a case which proved fatal in eight hours and after five months in another case which proved fatal in three days Poleck<sup>2</sup> found free phosphorus in a cadaver three months after poisoning had occurred Alpers<sup>3</sup> found phosphorus in the gastro intestinal contents of a woman who had died as a result of acute phosphorus poisoning and whose body was not exhumed until four weeks after death Felletar<sup>4</sup> proved the presence of free phosphorus in the two bodies which had been buried for twelve and thirteen months respectively It must, however, be remembered that such instances are very rare, and it is advisable that in cases of suspected phosphorus poisoning the chemical analysis should be made as early as possible It must also be borne in mind that phosphorus occurs in combination mainly as phosphates in the various articles of food and in the tissues and fluids of the human body hence its detection in these forms has no value for medico legal purposes but its presence in the body in the elementary form is sufficient to prove phosphorus poisoning as its does not occur free in nature

**Phosphoretted Hydrogen (Trihydrogen Phosphide, Phosphine PH<sub>3</sub>)**—This is obtained by boiling phosphorus in a flask with a solution of potassium or sodium hydroxide It is also produced, when calcium phosphide is brought into contact with water It is a colourless gas very slightly soluble in water and having a penetrating garlic like odour It is not inflammable in the air at ordinary temperatures but it ignites at a temperature below 100°C

This gas when inhaled is highly poisonous reducing the oxyhaemoglobin of the blood and proves rapidly fatal when 2000 parts of it are contained in one million parts of air Four hundred to six hundred parts of the gas per million parts of air produce dangerous symptoms if inhaled for half to one hour while 100 to 200 parts per million of air is the maximum amount that can be inhaled for an hour without serious results<sup>5</sup> The chief symptoms are nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea rapid and then slow and laboured respirations cold clammy sweats, weakness tremors convulsions delirium, coma and death from respiratory

vitis, increase of nasal and bronchial secretions, loss of sexual power and general depression. In some cases stupor and coma may set in. In severe cases mental confusion, delirium, dementia or melancholia may occur.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period**—Uncertain. One ounce of undiluted bromine has caused death in seven hours and a half<sup>1</sup>. About 2 grains of free bromine caused the death of a girl, aged ten years, in 12 hours. She was given a mixture containing potassium bromide and chlorine water in three doses<sup>2</sup>. A woman suffering from epilepsy took two drachms of potassium bromide continuously for weeks. At last she got poisonous symptoms and died in 5 days<sup>3</sup>. One ounce and a half of potassium bromide have caused alarming symptoms without any fatal results<sup>4</sup>. A dose of one hundred grammes of sodium bromide caused death in six days from a bilateral pneumonia of the inferior lobe<sup>5</sup>.

**Treatment**.—Administer apomorphine hypodermically or other emetics, and give starch or albumen. Give ammonia vapour and steam for inhalation when bromine fumes are inhaled. Administer sodium chloride to hasten the elimination of bromides from the system.

**Post-mortem Appearances**.—When liquid bromine is administered, there is inflammation of the oesophagus and stomach with dark brown stains on the mucous membrane which presents a leathery parchment like appearance. Occasionally there is perforation of the stomach, or the stomach wall is destroyed altogether.

When bromine fumes are inhaled, there is inflammation of the respiratory tract.

**Chemical Analysis**.—Free bromine may be separated from organic mixtures by distillation. If combined, the mixture should be saturated with potassium bichromate and acidulated with sulphuric acid before it is distilled.

**Tests**.—Bromine can be recognized by its colour and odour, as well as by its colouring starch paper yellow. It forms an orange or yellow coloured solution in chloroform or carbon bisulphide, and with phenol forms a white, crystalline precipitate due to the formation of tri bromophenol insoluble in water. A filter paper impregnated with a dilute solution of fluorescein and moistened with 35 per cent acetic acid, when exposed to the vapours of bromine, will become pink. Compounds of bromine give a whitish yellow precipitate with silver nitrate, which is not readily soluble in ammonium hydrate, but soluble in potassium cyanide.

**Medico-Legal Points**.—Poisoning by bromine, though rare, has occurred when it was swallowed in the liquid form or when its fumes were inhaled. A case<sup>6</sup> is recorded where a saturated solution of potassium bromide was administered by a man to his wife with intention to cause harm.

During the first Great War the Germans used certain organic compounds of bromine in asphyxiating and lacrymating shells. The vapours of these substances in concentration as little as one part in several millions of air are said to cause watering of the eyes and inability to open them so specifically irritating are they to the conjunctiva. In greater concentrations they are said to cause irritation of the mucous membrane of the respiratory tract<sup>7</sup>.

Bromine is eliminated in the milk. An infant, six months old, got a painful pustular eruption due to bromine excreted in the milk of the mother, who had been addicted to the use of a proprietary remedy, "Miles restorative nerve", a solution of bromides in syrup<sup>8</sup>.

## IODINE

This is a solid, having blue black, soft and scaly crystals with a metallic lustre and an unpleasant taste. At all temperatures iodine gives off a violet coloured vapour, possessing a characteristic odour. It is only slightly soluble in water, but is freely soluble in alcohol, ether, chloroform, glycerin, carbon bisulphide or aqueous solutions of iodides. The following are the pharmacopoeial preparations of iodine—

1. *Liquor Iodi Aquosus* (aqueous solution of iodine)—It is also known as Lugol's solution or liquor iodi compositus, and contains 5 per cent of iodine with 10 per cent of potassium iodide in water. Dose, 5 to 15 minims.

2. *Liquor Iodi Fortis* (Tinctura Iodi Fortis or Liniment Iodine)—It contains 10 per cent of iodine by weight and 6 per cent of potassium iodide by weight.

1. Snell, New York Med Jour., Nov., 1850 V, p. 179.

2. Hering, Zeitschr f Medicinalbeamte, 1889, II, p. 217.

3. Eigner, Wiener Med Presse, 1886.

4. Dougall, Glasgow Med Jour., 1893.

5. Vilen Quoted by Erich Leschke in his Clinical Toxicology, Eng. Transl by Stecatt and Dorrier, 1934, pp. 95, 96.

6. Beng Chem Examiner's Annual Report, 1934, p. 13.

7. Leonard Hill, Brit Med Jour., Dec 4 1915, p. 801.

8. Jour Amer Med Assoc., April 9, 1921, p. 1012; Amer Jour Dis Children, 1921,

3. *Liquor Iodi Mitis* (*Tinctura Iodi Mitis* or *Tincture of Iodine*)—It contains 2.5 per cent of iodine and 2.5 per cent of potassium iodide. Dose, 5 to 10 minims.

Iodine, when swallowed in the solid form, acts as a corrosive poison, while its vapours are strongly irritant to the respiratory passages.

**Symptoms—Acute Poisoning.**—Soon after swallowing a large dose of iodine, there is a burning pain in the mouth, oesophagus and stomach, followed by intense thirst, salivation, vomiting and purging. The vomited matters and stools are dark, yellow or blue in colour, contain blood and have the peculiar odour of iodine. The lips and the angles of the mouth are stained yellow. The urine is suppressed or scanty, dark, red brown in colour and has the strong smell of iodine. The pulse is small and compressible, the skin is cold and clammy and the patient passes into a state of collapse. Consciousness is retained till death. Severe symptoms from poisoning by potassium iodide are more frequently seen in patients suffering from goitre. Some people are particularly susceptible to the poisonous symptoms of this salt even from medicinal doses (5 to 30 grains).

**Chronic Poisoning.**—The symptoms of chronic poisoning, sometimes, occur from the continued use of large doses of potassium iodide medicinally, and are known as *sodium*. The symptoms are heavy pain over the frontal sinus, running of the nose, salivation, nausea, vomiting, purging, emaciation, wasting of the breasts, testicles, and other glands, and erythematous patches on the skin.

Lilier and Ox<sup>1</sup> report a fatal case of iododerma in a man, aged 31 years, with macules, papules, tubercles, ruptured lesions and fungating and granulomatous ulcerations on the trunk and extremities. The eruptions commenced a few weeks after the administration of three doses daily of 5 grains of potassium iodide and 1/60 grain of arsenic. This was continued for four months and the patient died from profound iodide intoxication four months later. Large quantities of iodides were found in the urine during the month preceding the death, and at the post mortem examination in the skin.

**Chemical Analysis.**—If iodine is present in the free state in organic mixtures, it may be extracted by agitating it with chloroform or carbon bisulphide, and then obtained by evaporation and sublimation. If in combination, nitric acid may be added and then iodine may be extracted as above.

**Tests.**—Free iodine is recognized by its peculiar odour, the violet colour of its vapour, and by its turning starch paper blue.

Iodides produce a flocculent whitish yellow precipitate with a solution of silver nitrate, insoluble in ammonia, but soluble in potassium cyanide. A solution of mercuric chloride produces a scarlet precipitate, soluble in excess of either. Mixed with chlorine water and starch, a blue colouration is formed, which disappears on heating but reappears on cooling.

**Medico-Legal Points**—Acute poisoning by free iodine is a rare occurrence. Accidental cases of poisoning by drinking carelessly tincture or liniment of iodine have occurred, and a few suicidal cases have also been reported. In his annual report for the year 1930, the Chemical Examiner of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh describes the case of a woman who attempted to commit suicide by taking tincture of iodine. On analysing the vomited matter he found potassium iodide but no free iodine. The preparations of iodine cannot be used for homicidal purposes, as they colour farmaceous foods blue.

A strong solution of iodine (liquor iodi fortis) has produced irritant symptoms when injected into a cyst or a body cavity, or when applied to the skin.

Iodine is excreted in the form of iodide and iodate in the urine, perspiration, saliva, bile, mucus and bronchial mucus. During its elimination by the kidneys it causes the inflammation, giving rise to suppression of urine.

## BORON

**Boracic Acid or Boric Acid (Acidum Boricum, B.P.), H<sub>3</sub>BO<sub>3</sub>.**—This occurs in powder or in white pearly lamellar crystals. It is feebly acid and soapy or greasy to the touch, and is slightly acid and bitter in taste. It is soluble in 25 parts of cold water, in 3 parts of boiling water, in 4 parts of glycerin and in 30 parts of alcohol. The dose is 5 to 15 grains.

The official preparations made from boric acid are—

1. *Glycerinum acidi borici*—It is known as boroglycerin glycerite and contains 31 per cent of acid boric.

2. *Luguentum acidi borici*—It contains 1 per cent of acid boric.

**Borax Na<sub>2</sub>B<sub>4</sub>O<sub>7</sub>·10H<sub>2</sub>O**—This salt is also known as sodium boraborate, sodium borate or sodium borate, and is known in the vernacular as *shohaga* or *tant ankar*. The pharmaceutical preparation is called borax purificatus, which occurs as transparent, colourless crystals, having a saline, alkaline taste. It is soluble in 25 parts of cold water and in equal parts of glycerin but insoluble in alcohol. The dose is 5 to 15 grains. *Glycerinum boracis* is a pharmaceutical preparation, containing 12 per cent of borax.

**Symptoms**—The chief symptoms are loss of appetite, epigastric pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and suppressed or scanty urine. There are erythematous eruptions of the skin, and the symptoms of collapse are soon evident. Death occurs from paralysis of the heart. Sometimes, delirium and hallucinations appear.

**Fatal Dose.**—Uncertain. Five grain-doses of boric acid administered internally for a chronic bladder ailment have produced poisonous symptoms.<sup>1</sup> A teaspoonful of boric acid caused the death of a woman, aged 70, in 46 hours.<sup>2</sup> Fifteen grammes proved fatal in one case. Thirty grammes of boric acid dusted over a chronic ulcer from a severe burn of the abdominal and thigh killed a girl, aged 4 years, in 5 days.<sup>3</sup> Six infants died after swallowing boric acid solution instead of drinking water. Each infant may have taken from 15 to 16 c.c. of a saturated solution of boric acid in 24 hours or approximately 0.8 to 3 G. of boric acid.<sup>4</sup>

**Fatal Period.**—The usual fatal period is three to four days. Death, however, occurs in twenty-four hours in the case of a young pregnant woman, who swallowed boric acid with intent to procure abortion.<sup>5</sup> A painter, aged 66, took about two ounces of borax in mistake for a proprietary saline cathartic, and died in three hours.<sup>6</sup>

1. *Glaister, Med. Juris and Toxic., Ed. VIII*, p. 524.

2. *Stringer, Lancet*, Aug. 4, 1917, p. 162.

3. *Schaefer, New Yorker Med. Monatschr.*, 1895, VIII, 264; *Willhaus, Med. Juris. et Toxic.*, Vol. IV, p. 11.

4. *Gissel, Zentralbl. f. Chir.*, 1933, LX, pp. 1635-1638; *Med. Leg. and Criminological Rec.* July, 1934, p. 275.

5. *Mc Nally and Rust, Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, March 12, 1927, p. 811.

6. *Brit. Med. Jour.*, Dec. 7, 1907, p. 1695.

7. *Caryl Potter, Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, Feb. 5, 1921, p. 378.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### IRRITANT POISONS—(Contd.)

#### II METALLIC POISONS

##### ARSENIC

Metallic arsenic is not poisonous, as it is insoluble in water and therefore incapable of absorption from the alimentary canal; but it oxidizes by exposure to the air, and then becomes poisonous. It is believed that some portion of elementary arsenic may undergo oxidation in the alimentary canal under some conditions and may produce poisonous symptoms. When rubbed on the skin in a finely powdered state it acts as a poison, as it is capable of being absorbed in the form of an oxide.

When volatilized by heat, metallic arsenic readily unites with oxygen of the air, forming the poisonous vapour of arsenic trioxide. The vapours emanating during smelting of arsenic ores are destructive to vegetation and animal life, and cause chronic injurious effects to smelters.

##### COMPOUNDS OF ARSENIC

**Arsenious Acid (Arsenious Oxide, Arsenic Trioxide or Arsenious Anhydride),  $As_2O_3$ .**—This is commonly known as white arsenic or merely as arsenic. It is called in the vernacular *Sant hya* or *Somalkhar*. It is sold as a white, gritty, crystalline powder, or in the form of a solid mass or cake. The mass first appears transparent and crystalline, but after some time becomes white and opaque, having a porcelain like appearance.

Arsenious acid is odourless and tasteless, but it is sometimes described as having a roughish taste due to mechanical irritation of the tongue caused by the gritty character of the powder. If heated on charcoal it is reduced to metallic arsenic, which in a vaporous form, has a garlic like odour and a very faint sweet taste. Arsenious acid is almost insoluble in water one half to one grain dissolving in one ounce of cold water, and twelve to sixteen grains in one ounce of water kept boiling for an hour.

Arsenious acid is a heavy substance, its specific gravity being 3.600. A teaspoonful containing finely powdered arsenious acid weighs 1.00 grains, a table spoonful weighs 3.00 grains and a pinch or the quantity taken up between the finger and the thumb of an adult weighs 17 grains<sup>1</sup>. In spite of this heavy weight powdered arsenic has the curious property of floating on water as a white film. If stirred up a good deal the film disappears, but reappears on standing. It is soluble in spirits and wines in the same proportion as in water, but is much more soluble in acids and alkalies. It is also soluble in about 8 parts of glycerin.

Arsenious acid is largely used in the arts in calico printing, in taxidermy, in the preparation of wall papers and artificial flowers, and as a mordant in dyeing. It constitutes the principal ingredient of fly papers, and many powders and pastes used for killing rats and vermin, and is an adulterant of "complexion or violet powders". In India, it is used for preserving timber and skins against white ants. It is not unfrequently used by *halwans* and *caids* in the treatment of certain diseases, such as fevers, rheumatism, skin diseases, syphilis, and impotence.

Arsenious acid is a pharmacopoeial preparation and is called *arsenic trioxide*, the dose being 1/60 to 1/12 gram. *Liquor arsenicalis* (Fowler's solution) is an official preparation, derived from arsenious acid. Its dose is 2 to 8 minims.

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, on Poisons, Ed III, p 291

**Arsenites**—These are formed when arsenious acid combines with alkalies and their carbonates or with other metals. The alkaline arsenites thus formed are soluble salts. The arsenites that are commonly used as poisons are—

**1 Potassium Arsenite,  $K_3AsO_3$ , and Sodium Arsenite,  $Na_2AsO_3$** —These are both poisonous, and are used in manufacturing fly papers, sheep-dips and weed killers.

**2 Copper Arsenite (Scheele's Green),  $CuHAsO_3$ , and Copper Aceto-arsenite (Paris Green, Schweinfurt Green or Emerald Green)  $HuCaCu (C_2H_3O_2)_2, Cu_2 (AsO_3)_2$** —These are used for colouring artificial flowers, wall papers, articles of dress, toys and sweetmeats. They are insoluble in water, but soluble in acid juices of the stomach. Chevers<sup>1</sup> reports two cases of chronic poisoning caused by sleeping in rooms papered with aceto-arsenite of copper. M. Elzas describes a case of chronic arsenic poisoning in which a man of 30, healthy until 1918, suddenly developed polyneuritis, oedema and eruption, and 0.0005 grammes of arsenic per thousand was detected in the urine. He died some months after he had married and had his house repapered. Three milligrammes of arsenic per square metre were found in one of the wall papers.<sup>2</sup> In his annual report for the year 1927, the Chemical Analyser, Bombay cites the case of a man who committed suicide by taking Scheele's green and no less than 60 grains were found in the contents of the stomach.

**Arsenic Acid,  $H_3AsO_4$** —This is obtained by warming arsenious oxide with nitric acid, when oxides of nitrogen are given off. Arsenic acid is a white, crystalline solid, and is used in manufacturing mink dyes and fly papers. It is less poisonous than arsenious acid. When deprived of water by heating, arsenic acid changes into a white, amorphous powder known as arsenic anhydride or arsenic pentoxide,  $As_2O_5$ .

**Arsenates**—Arsenic acid combines with metals to form salts called arsenates. The arsenates of the alkali metals are soluble in water, while those of the other metals are insoluble in water. The chief alkaline arsenites are sodium arsenite,  $Na_3AsO_4$ , and potassium arsenate,  $K_3AsO_4$ . Both these salts are poisons and are used for homicidal purposes and for destroying cattle.

Anhydrous sodium arsenite (*Sodium arsenas anhydrosus*) is a white powder, soluble in water. It is a non-official preparation the dose being 1/40 to 1/10 grain.

**Arsenic Sulphides**—These are found naturally as ores of arsenic the chief being *realgar* or red arsenic (*mansi*)  $As_2S_3$  and *orpiment*, yellow arsenic or king's yellow (*hartal*)  $As_2S_3$ . Both these varieties are used as pigments in the arts. Mixed in two parts of quicklime the yellow variety is commonly used as a depilatory by Indian women.

Both the sulphides in the pure form being insoluble, are said to be non-poisonous but, in the commercial form are invariably found to contain a large proportion of arsenious acid, which renders them poisonous.

**Arsenic Trichloride,  $AsCl_3$** —This is formed by burning arsenic in chlorine or by the action of hydrochloric acid on arsenious acid. It is a highly poisonous, colourless, fuming liquid, and is used in the treatment of cancerous tumours.

**Arsenic Triiodide (Arsenious Iodide),  $AsI_3$** —This is obtained by heating a mixture of iodine and arsenic. It occurs in small, orange coloured crystals or crystalline masses, and is soluble in water in alcohol, in chloroform in ether and in carbon bisulphide.

<sup>1</sup> *Med. Juris* p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> *Nederl. dsch. Tijdschrift v. Ganeeskunde* Amsterdam, April 16 1921 p. 214. *Jour. Inter. Med.* 1920, July 16, 1921, p. 41.

**Arseniuretted Hydrogen (Arsenic Hydride, Arsine).** AsH<sub>3</sub>.—This is formed by the action of nascent hydrogen on soluble arsenic compounds, and may be liberated during the charging of accumulators from arsenic contained in the lead plates or sulphuric acid. It is a colourless, inflammable gas, having a fetid, garlicy odour. It burns with a bluish white flame, forming water and white fumes of arsenuous oxide. It acts as a deadly poison, its discoverer Gehlen having been killed on the ninth day after inhaling a small quantity of the pure gas.

### ORGANIC COMPOUNDS OF ARSENIC

The most important organic compounds of arsenic which are used in medicine are cacodylic acid, sodium cacodylate, atoxyl, stovarsol, tryparsamide, salvarsan, neosalvarsan, silver salvarsan and sulpharsenobenzene.

**Cacodylic Acid (Dimethylarsonic Acid), (CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>AsO OII.**—This is a white, crystalline substance, readily soluble in water and in alcohol, and forms salts known as cacodylates, when it unites with metals and organic substances. It contains 54.3 per cent of arsenic. The dose is  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 grains.

**Sodium Cacodylate (Sodium Dimethylarsonate).**—This is a white, odourless, deliquescent, crystalline or granular powder, and contains 35 per cent of arsenic. It is soluble in water and in alcohol. The dose is  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 grain to be given by mouth, per rectum or hypodermically. When given by mouth or per rectum, it may be decomposed and give rise to toxic symptoms, viz., garlic taste nausea, pain in the stomach, thirst and renal congestion with albuminuria. Sodium methyl arsonate (Disodium methyl arsonite, Arrhenal or New Cacodyle) is similar in action to sodium cacodylate and is given in doses of  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 grains by mouth or by hypodermically.

**Atoxyl (Sodium para-aminophenylarsonate).**—It is also known as sodium aminarsonate, sodium arsanilate, soamin or arsamin, and is a white, crystalline, modorous powder with a slightly saline taste. It is soluble in about five parts of water and dissolves freely in hot water with neutral reaction. It is soluble in 125 parts of alcohol (90 per cent) and is easily soluble, when anhydrous, in methyl alcohol. It usually contains about 24 to 25.6 per cent of arsenic. It is a B.P.C. preparation, the dose being  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 grains by mouth or hypodermically dissolved in water. It must be used with caution, as it may cause blindness due to optic atrophy. It has even caused death. A man received 2.4 grammes in four hypodermic injections within eight days and died from pulmonary oedema on the second day after the last injection.<sup>1</sup>

Sodium acetylarsanilate (arsacetin) is synthetized from atoxyl by the introduction of an acetyl radicle, and may be used in the same doses as atoxyl, but it is less poisonous.

**Stovarsol (3-Acetylmino-4-hydroxyphenylarsonic acid).**—It is also known as Acetarsol, Acetarsone or Kharophen. It occurs as colourless crystals and contains 27 per cent of arsenic. It is insoluble in cold water, alcohol and dilute acids, but soluble in boiling water and in alkalies. The dose is 1 to 4 grains.

**Tryparsamide (Sodium n-phenylglycineamide p-parsonate).**—It is a white, crystalline powder and contains 25.1 to 25.5 per cent of arsenic. It is soluble in water, but almost insoluble in alcohol, in ether and in chloroform. The dose is 15 to 30 grains subcutaneously, intramuscularly or intravenously.

**Salvarsan (Dioxy-diamino-arseno-benzene Di-hydrochloride, Arsenobenzol, "606," Kharsivan or Arsphenamine).**—It is a pale yellow, crystalline, odourless powder, slowly dissolving in water with acid reaction. It is hygroscopic, and decomposes readily by exposure to the air. It is soluble in glycerin, and

dissolves in three parts of methyl alcohol, but is insoluble in ether. It contains not less than 10 per cent or more than 14 per cent of arsenic. The dose by intravenous injection is 0.1 to 0.6 G or 1½ to 10 grains.

**Neosalvarsan** (Sodium dihydroxydiamino arsenobenzene Methanesulphonate, "914," Neokharsivan, Novarsenobenzene, Novarsenobillon, Neoarsphenamine or Neoarsphenamina B P)—It is a yellow powder readily dissolving in water with neutral or slightly alkaline reaction. It readily changes in the air, becoming highly poisonous. It is, therefore, supplied in sealed glass ampoules. It contains about 20 per cent of arsenic. The dose by intravenous injection is 0.15 to 0.6 G or 2½ to 10 grains.

**Silver Arsphenamine** (Silver Salvasan, Arsphenamina Argentica)—This is a sodium salt of Silver diamino dihydroxyarsenobenzene. It is a dark brown powder readily soluble in water with alkaline reaction. It contains 18 to 21 per cent of arsenic and 12 to 13 per cent of silver. The dose by intravenous injection is 0.1 to 0.6 G or 1½ to 10 grains in a 1 per cent solution.

**Sulpharsphenamine** (Disodium dihydroxy-diamino-arsenobenzene-dimethylene sulphonate), Sulfarsenol, Kharsulphan, or Sulpharsenobenzene—It is a yellow powder, dissolving readily in water and contains about 20 per cent of arsenic. It is a pharmacopial preparation, and is administered subcutaneously or intramuscularly in doses of 0.1 to 0.6 G or 1½ to 10 grains.

#### PROPRIETARY ARTICLES CONTAINING ARSENIC

**1 Rough on Rats**—A greyish powder consisting of white arsenite and barium carbonate. Strength, 98.89 per cent of arsenious oxide.

**2 Fly Papers**—Strength varying from half a grain to one grain of arsenious acid per each paper. Fly papers were soaked in tea and administered by Mrs Maybrick to her husband who died from slow arsenical poisoning in about a month.<sup>1</sup>

**3 Weed-Killer**—This consists of a strong solution of caustic soda and arsenite of sodium. Strength, 14 to 10 per cent of arsenious acid. In 1891, a man died and four members of his family were made seriously ill by drinking gooseberry wine stored in a cask in which a weed killer had been sent out.<sup>2</sup> Each fluid ounce was found to contain nearly 6 grains of arsenious acid. At the Carmarthen Assizes in November, 1920 Mr H. Greenwood, was charged with having murdered his wife by administering Eureka weed killer, a pink powder containing 60 per cent of arsenic, in red wine but was acquitted by the jury.

**4 Fly-Water**—This consists of one part of arsenite of sodium or potassium, two parts of sugar and twenty parts of water. It is used for killing flies. Paper dipped in this solution and dried is also used for this purpose.

**5 Fly-Powder**—This is a mixture of metallic arsenic and arsenious acid. It contains from 4 to 11 per cent of arsenious acid.

**6 Sheep-Dip**—This is used to destroy parasites in wool. It is sold in packets in the form of a yellow granular powder containing about 20 per cent of arsenious acid. It is prepared by mixing arsenious acid and potassium or sodium carbonate with soft soap and ground sulphur. It is made into a solution by mixing it with fair water.

**Symptoms**—In cases of acute poisoning the symptoms usually appear within half an hour, but they may be delayed for several hours, especially in those cases where arsenic enters the system by channels other than the mouth, e.g., by the rectum or vagina or by its application to the skin or to ulcerated or diseased

<sup>1</sup> H. v. Maybrick, Liverpool Summary Ass. xx, 1588.

<sup>2</sup> Taylor, *Princ. and Pract. of Med. Juris* F. T. Vol. II, p. 397.

surfaces. The patient first of all complains of a feeling of faintness, depression and nausea, and then severe burning pain in the throat and stomach which increases on pressure. Intense thirst and severe vomiting are the constant symptoms. The vomited matter at first contains the ordinary contents of the stomach but later contains mucus and blood in streaks or in spots. The colour is dark brown yellow green or bluish on account of yellow sulphide of arsenic or sulphate of arsenic being mixed with bile. Rarely, vomiting may be absent. Robertson Milne describes the case of a Mahomedan male who after a meal took in mistake for chalk a *tola* (180 grains) of white arsenic. He had marked salivation and burning pain in the stomach but no vomiting. He passed two or three motions became rapidly unconscious and died in 2 hours and 35 minutes.<sup>1</sup>

Purging is usually accompanied by tenesmus pain and irritation about the anus. The stools are expelled frequently and involuntarily and are dark coloured foetid and bloody but later become colourless odourless and watery resembling the rice water stools of cholera. The urine is suppressed or scanty and contains blood. There is pain in micturition. There may be severe cramps in the calf muscles as well as other muscles which usually commence with purging. The patient becomes restless greatly prostrated and passes into a state of collapse. The surface becomes cold and clammy and the face is pale and anxious but later becomes cyanosed. The eyes are sunken. The pulse is feeble irregular and frequent. The respirations become laboured. Lastly convulsions and coma precede death. The intellect generally remains clear to the end.

When a very large dose is taken death may occur rapidly from shock without producing any symptoms. On the other hand a large quantity often causes intense vomiting which expels the arsenic from the stomach before it is absorbed and thus the patient's life is saved. Several such cases<sup>2</sup> had occurred in the Punjab during 1925.

**Narcotic Form** — In this form the gastro-intestinal symptoms if present at all are very slight. The patient complains of giddiness, formication and tenderness of the muscles and becomes delirious but soon passes into a state of coma, and dies without regaining consciousness. The pupils are dilated. Sometimes there is complete paralysis of the extremities.

At about 8 p.m. on the 24th July 1906 a convict compounder in Fort Blair was found to be groaning and having violent spasms being quite unconscious just after he went to bed after taking some milk. This condition lasted only a few minutes after which he died. There was no vomiting or purging. The post mortem examination showed inflammation of the mucous membrane of the stomach and small intestine with large patches of punctiform haemorrhages. The large intestine was healthy and contained semi solid faeces. Arsenic was detected in the viscera — *Bengal Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1906 Ind. Med. Ga. Oct 1907 p 393*

**Sub-Acute Form** — This is the condition which usually results when arsenic is administered in small doses at repeated intervals with the object of causing death by gradual prostration. The symptoms are first dyspepsia, cough and tingling in the throat, then vomiting, purging with abdominal pain and tenesmus, foul tongue, dry and congested throat and a feeling of depression and languor. The motions are bloody. The symptoms of neuritis are more pronounced. The patient complains of severe cramps in the muscles which are extremely tender on pressure. He is very restless and cannot sleep. Ultimately collapse sets in and results in death. In cases which end in recovery chronic peripheral neuritis may persist ending paralysis from degeneration of the nerves extending up to the nerve centres.

**Unusual Symptoms** — These are convulsions, lock jaw, delirium of a maniacal character, rise of temperature, salivation, loss of speech, ringing in the ears and disordered vision with intolerance to light. Death occurs from asphyxia.

<sup>1</sup> *Ind. Med. Ga. 1907 p 399*

<sup>2</sup> *Punjab Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1925, p 7*

Arsenuretted hydrogen, when inhaled in toxic amounts, acts as a direct poison to the haemoglobin of the red blood corpuscles producing hemolysis, haemoglobinuria, jaundice and sometimes anaemia. The other symptoms are faintness, giddiness, intense headache, nausea, vomiting, burning pain in the abdomen, pain in the loins, dark red urine containing blood pigment and albumin, cyanosis and collapse. Coma or delirium may precede death, which occurs from oedema of the lungs or sudden failure of the heart.

**Fatal Dose**—Three grains of arsenious oxide is the average fatal dose. Two grains is the smallest amount known to have caused death. Half a fluid ounce of Fowler's solution equal to two grains of arsenic taken in divided doses during a period of five days has proved fatal to a woman.<sup>1</sup> Two ounces of water containing two grains and a half of arsenic has caused the death of a strong, healthy girl, aged nineteen years.<sup>2</sup> Recovery has taken place after much larger doses varying from sixty grains to two ounces, but these are exceptional cases.

The fatal dose of arsenuretted hydrogen is uncertain. An exposure to a concentration of 50 parts of this gas in a million parts of air for one hour is dangerous to adults,<sup>3</sup> while an exposure to a concentration of 250 to 1 million parts of air for half an hour is fatal.<sup>4</sup>

**Fatal Period**—The average fatal period is twelve to forty eight hours, though death has frequently occurred within two to three hours. The shortest period is forty five minutes<sup>5</sup> in one case and one hour<sup>6</sup> in another case. In these cases it appears that death occurred from shock before the poison was absorbed into the system. In mild or sub acute cases life may be prolonged for several weeks. In one case after a dose of 180 grains of white arsenic death did not occur until three months and seventeen days.<sup>7</sup> In such cases the symptoms of gastrointestinal irritation subside, and are usually followed by nervous affections.

**Treatment**—It should be remembered that when taken in a finely powdered state on an empty stomach, arsenic sticks to the mucous membrane of the stomach, excites violent inflammation and forms tenacious mucus which glued it to the surface, and protects it from the action of both emetics and antidotes.

The first step in the treatment is to remove the poison as promptly as possible from the stomach. If the stomach is full, i.e., if no vomiting has occurred, empty it by giving emetics, but do not use tartar emetic, or copper sulphate. If not, wash out the stomach by passing the stomach tube, preferably with large draughts of warm milk and water, and then administer freshly prepared hydrated ferric oxide, which will convert arsenious acid into ferric arsenite, a harmless and insoluble salt. It is prepared by adding an alkali (half an-ounce of strong ammonia or potassium or sodium carbonate dissolved in about half a tumblerful of water) to ferric chloride tincture (one and a half ounces of the tincture mixed with a wineglassful of water). The precipitate should be separated from the excess of the alkali by straining through a muslin cloth, and should be given suspended in water in tablespoonful doses at short intervals, or 4 ounces of arsenic antidote (antidotum arsenicum B.P.C. or ferri hydroxidum cum magnesia ovoido) should be administered, and the dose repeated, if necessary. To prepare this antidote two solutions should be stored ready for use, namely, (1) two hundred and eighty eight minims of a strong solution of ferric chloride mixed with two and a half ounces of water, and eighty seven and a half grains of light magnesium oxide triturated to a smooth paste with water and diluted to fifteen ounces. Before being used, 3½ ounces of the magnesium oxide suspension should be shaken well and added to 400 minims of the ferric chloride solution.<sup>1</sup> Ounce doses of dravised iron in water may be employed as a substitute, but it is not so efficacious as hydrated ferric oxide or arsenic antidote. If none of these is available calcined magnesia mixed with an equal quantity of animal charcoal may be administered.

Intravenous injection of 7½ grains of sodium thiosulphate in a ten per cent solution has been recommended and is said to have beneficial effects. Intramuscular injections of a solution containing 5 to 10 per cent B.U.L. (British Anti-Lewisite,<sup>2</sup> 3-Dimercaptopropanol or Dimercaprol) and 10 per cent benzyl benzoate in arachis oil into the thigh or gluteal region should be tried to counteract the effects of arsenic poisoning. Later, demulcents, such as ghee (clarified butter), albumen water, barley water, linseed tea, etc., should be administered to allay irritation and pieces of ice to relieve thirst. Castor oil or magnesium sulphate may be given to diminish intestinal absorption of arsenic. Hypodermic injections of morphine may be required to relieve pain. Subcutaneous or intravenous injections of normal saline or a five to ten per cent solution of glucose should be administered in cases of severe diarrhoea. Massage should be used to relieve cramps, and heart stimulants should be administered hypodermically to combat collapse. The body heat should be maintained by the application of hot water bottles.

The treatment of arsenic-contaminated hydrogen consists in the supply of fresh air, oxygen inhalation, blood transfusion, infusion of salt solution and administration of alkaline drinks to aid its elimination from the blood and tissues.

**Post-Mortem Appearances—External Appearances**—Rigor mortis lasts longer than usual. The body, sometimes, presents a shrunken appearance. The eyeballs are sunken and the skin cheeks of the hands and feet is cyanosed, but not so much as in death from Asiatic cholera. The skin may be found discoloured as happened in a case described by Von Hoffmann.

**Internal Appearances**—The mucous membrane of the mouth pharynx and oesophagus is not generally affected, but may occasionally be found inflamed.

1. Martindale, Extra Pharmacopoeia, Ed. XXII, Vol. I, p. 210.

or ulcerated. In the case of Soufflard, who committed suicide with 12 grammes of arsenic, the gums, inner surface of the cheeks, palate, fauces and uvula were bright red, and the pharynx and oesophagus were found injected<sup>1</sup>. Taylor reports two fatal cases in which the oesophagus was found inflamed<sup>2</sup>. In the case of a man who died after taking two gulps of a weed killer, the post mortem examination revealed slight blistering of the lips, and the mucous membrane, which was covered with slimy mucus, presented patches of injection ('crimson plush') at the lower end of the oesophagus<sup>3</sup>. I found the oesophagus congested and inflamed in a case in which a Mahomedan male committed suicide with arsenic.



The small intestine appears flabby and contains large flakes of mucus with very little faecal matter. On opening the intestine, the mucous membrane is found finely injected and pale violet coloured, and presents signs of inflammation with submucous haemorrhages along its whole length, but more marked in the duodenum and jejunum. These changes are similar to those in the stomach but less intense. The epithelium is flabby, oedematous and sheds freely.

The large intestine contains a small quantity of seromucus, but more often is empty and contracted. The cecum and rectum are inflamed and their mucous membrane is flabby. The intestinal glands are often enlarged and swollen but not inflamed. The peritoneum is congested and pink in colour.

Sometimes, in fatal cases the stomach and intestines may not show any signs of inflammation. Rai Chun Lal Bose Bahadur reports a case in which a child of eight years died within six hours after taking some molasses mixed with arsenic. At the post mortem examination the stomach was found congested, but the intestines were healthy and contained semi solid healthy faecal matter<sup>1</sup>. A woman died in Agra from the symptoms of irritant poisoning. The post mortem examination did not show any signs of irritant poisoning, but arsenic was detected in the viscera<sup>2</sup>. In Moradabad a man, aged 50 years, died with the symptoms of irritant poisoning after 6 hours of the onset of the symptoms. The post mortem examination failed to reveal any definite signs of poisoning but suggested early pneumonia. On chemical analysis the viscera were found to contain arsenic<sup>3</sup>. In an Itawah case two ladies one aged 22, and the other, aged 70, were found dead in their house at about midnight under suspicious circumstances. On enquiry it was found that some rapidly acting poison was responsible for the deaths. On analysis the poison found in the viscera of both the ladies was arsenic, the quantity in the case of the young lady being 9.31 grains (of which 9.26 grains were in the stomach), and in that of the other only 0.0076 grain. The post mortem appearances were not, however indicative of acute arsenical poisoning. The intestines of both the ladies contained faecal matter and the stomach of both contained digested food, it being about one seer (two pounds) in the case of the young lady.<sup>4</sup>

 The liver spleen and kidneys are highly congested, enlarged, and may show signs of fatty infiltration and degeneration.

Arsenic has been known to penetrate through the walls of the stomach and has appeared on the liver, omentum and endocardium. Rai Chun Lal Bose Bahadur reports a case of arsenical poisoning in which a deposit of yellow arsenic was found on the internal surfaces of both the ventricles<sup>5</sup>.

#### The lungs are congested with subpleural ecchymoses

Both sides of the heart contain loosely coagulated blood and ecchymoses are often present under the endocardium, and in the muscle of the left ventricle. In a large number of fatal cases of arsenical poisoning I have found petechial haemorrhages on the internal surface of the pericardium and ecchymosed patches in the endocardium and muscle of the left ventricle. These signs are typical of poisoning by arsenic, although they are sometimes found in poisoning by phosphorus and barium and also in deaths from acute infectious diseases e.g., influenza.

1 *Ind Med Gaz Oct 1907 p 393*

2 *United Provinces Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 19-4 p 5*

3 *Ibid 1925 p 3*

4 *United Provinces Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1930, Leader, June 14 1931, p 14*

5 *Ind Med Gaz May, 1892, p 142*

In cases where life is prolonged for some time, cloudy swelling and fatty degeneration of the myocardium liver and kidneys are seen



Fig 147.—Heart showing echymoses in the left ventricle in acute poisoning by arsenic

pigments or prepared with coloured papers or among persons who have been taking arsenic as a medicine for a prolonged period or in too large a quantity. It must be remembered that chronic poisoning may follow acute arsenical poisoning especially when recovery has occurred from a large dose of arsenic.

**Symptoms**—The symptoms of chronic poisoning are exhibited in four stages

**First Stage**—The symptoms in the first stage are those of gastric troubles irritation, loss of appetite, salivation, colicky pain, constipation, or sometimes diarrhoea and vomiting of glairy mucus tinged with bile. The gums are red and soft and the tongue is coated with a thin white silvery fur. The temperature is raised to  $102^{\circ}$  or  $103^{\circ}\text{F}$  with a frequent pulse.

**Second Stage**—This is marked by cutaneous eruptions and catarrh of the larynx and bronchial tubes. There is a feeling of dryness and itching in the fauces and larynx. Hence the voice becomes hoarse and husky. The eyes are suffused and the conjunctivae are greatly congested. There is running from the nose with intense coryza. The patient gets spasmodic cough with expectoration tinged with blood on account of inflammation of the bronchial tubes.

Irritantaneous eczematous urticarial or pustular eruptions manifest themselves on the skin chiefly on the folds of the armpits and groins, as well as on the scrotum. After a certain time the skin becomes pigmented and the epidermis comes off in desquamations. The nails become brittle and loose. The hair becomes dry and may fall off.

**Third Stage**—In this the sensory troubles are more prominent. They resemble those met with in alcoholic poisoning more than in lead poisoning.

The first symptom which appears from a week to three or four weeks is headache followed by numbness, tingling, formication and cutaneous anesthesia. Perspiration is well marked. There is extensive tenderness of the muscles of the extremities on pressure and the knee jerk is usually lost. The loss of sexual power is a constant symptom but the special senses are not deranged.

The membranes of the brain are hyperemic and the ventricles are full of serum.

In poisoning by arseniuretted hydrogen the post mortem examination shows a dirty yellow colour of the skin. The mucous membrane of the stomach and small intestine is yellow in colour and may show signs of inflammation. The liver is normal in size or somewhat enlarged, and may show some fatty degeneration. The spleen shows the evidence of blood destruction in the deposits of blood pigment throughout the organ. The kidneys are enlarged and congested. The lungs may be edematous.

**Chronic Poisoning**—Chronic arsenical poisoning occurs among persons engaged in works and factories where arsenic compounds are used among persons inhabiting rooms the walls of which have been painted with arsenical

**Fourth Stage**—This is the stage of paralysis. In this stage the muscles become weak and feeble so that the patient gets easily fatigued while walking or ascending a stair case. He also adopts an ataxic gait when he walks. The extensor muscles of the extremities atrophy hence the patient is unable to use his limbs and becomes bed ridden but the sphincters are rarely affected. Tremors are noticed in the muscles which become markedly paralysed. The interosseous and intercostal muscles are more often affected. These are followed by general emaciation, dysuria, mental hebetude or delusions and death occurs from failure of the heart muscle.

**Treatment**—Remove the patient from the source of the poison administer potassium iodide in 5 grain doses and treat the symptoms as they arise. Inject sodium thiosulphate intravenously every day. Administer five to ten per cent solutions of RAL in arachis oil and 20 per cent benzyl benzoate intramuscularly into the thigh or gluteal region. Give tonics such as iron and strichnine to improve the general health of the patient.

**Post mortem Appearances**—The stomach and intestines present a chronic inflammatory condition but more often there may not be any characteristic changes. The liver shows the signs of fatty degeneration and the kidneys show parenchymatous nephritis. The muscles are greasy and atrophied.

#### ORGANIC COMPOUNDS OF ARSENIC

Death occurs among those suffering from visceral and degenerative lesions. It may also occur from a faulty technique or from auto intoxication.

Occasionally the toxic symptoms may not appear immediately after the intravenous administration of the drug, but may be delayed for some weeks and death may occur from acute yellow atrophy of the liver. Poliard and Pinard<sup>1</sup> cite a case of syphilis in a man, aged 28 years, who, fifty days after three doses equivalent to 1.05 grammes of neosalvarsan, developed acute yellow atrophy of the liver and died in six days.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period** — According to Holland<sup>2</sup> 10.5 grammes of salvarsan might cause death. Medicinal doses have, however, caused death. A dose of 0.5 gramme of salvarsan injected intravenously caused the death of a Kashmiri Mahomedan, aged 20 years, in 2.5 hours.<sup>3</sup> A woman, 42 years old, suffering from Addison's disease, died in 12 hours after an intravenous injection of 0.15 gramme of neosalvarsan.<sup>4</sup> A male, aged 50 years who was suffering from asthma, died within half an hour of receiving an intravenous injection of 0.6 gramme of neosalvarsan.<sup>5</sup>

**Treatment** — Inject adrenaline hydrochloride hypodermically before or after the injection to ward off the symptoms of an anaphylactic nature. Give intravenous or rectal injections of normal saline as well as hypertonic solutions of sodium chloride and sodium bicarbonate to render the blood alkaline and to eliminate arsenic from the system. Inject intravenously sodium thiosulphate in doses of 0.45, 0.6 and 0.9 gramme dissolved in 5 c.c. of water on alternate days and 25 ml. of a 25 per cent solution of dextrose on each of the intervening days for the treatment of exfoliative dermatitis. Give also Liver extract and ascorbic acid. Administer intravenously 25 to 50 ml. of a 25 per cent solution of glucose for the treatment of jaundice. Inject intravenously 10 c.c. of a 10 per cent solution of sodium dehydrocholate mixed with neosalvarsan to combat its toxic action on the liver.

BAL has been recently recommended in the treatment of dermatitis and other complications arising in the course of arseno therapy. Two millilitres of a solution containing 5 to 10 per cent BAL and 20 per cent benzyl benzoate in arachis oil should be injected intramuscularly into the thigh or gluteal region four times on the first day, twice on the second, third and fourth day and once only on the fifth and sixth day.

**Post-mortem Appearances** — Cloudy swelling or fatty degeneration of the liver, kidneys and heart may be present. Acute encephalitis with hemorrhagic spots in the brain may be found.

**Chemical Tests** — 1 Ammonio nitrate of silver produces a yellow precipitate of arsenite of silver in an arsenious acid solution.

2 Ammonio sulphate of copper gives a bright green precipitate of arsenite of copper (Scheele's green).

3 *Reinsch's Test* — This is a very delicate test, and arsenic may be readily detected to the extent of 1/1,000,000 and 1/7,000,000 if the solution is con-

<sup>1</sup> Presse Medicale, Jan 8, 1921, p 4. Peterson Haines, and Webster, *Jugl Med and Toxicol II, Ld II* p 258

<sup>2</sup> *Med Chem and Toxic* p 88

<sup>3</sup> *New Ind Med Ga*, Jan 1915, p 20

<sup>4</sup> *Hollors Medizinische Klinik Berlin*, Jan 20 1933, p 317 *Jour Amer Med Assoc March 18 1933* p 860

<sup>5</sup> C C Mahadeva, *Ind Med Ga*, Feb, 1943 p 326

**Fourth Stage**—This is the stage of paralysis. In this stage the muscles become weak and feeble, so that the patient gets easily fatigued while walking or ascending a stair case. He also adopts an ataxic gait when he walks. The extensor muscles of the extremities atrophy, hence the patient is unable to use his limbs, and becomes bed ridden, but the sphincters are rarely affected. Tremors are noticed in the muscles which become markedly paralysed. The interosseous and intercostal muscles are more often affected. These are followed by general emaciation, dysuria, mental hebétude or delusions and death occurs from failure of the heart muscle.

**Treatment**—Remove the patient from the source of the poison, administer potassium iodide in 5 grain doses and treat the symptoms as they arise. Inject sodium thiosulphate intravenously every day. Administer five to ten per cent solutions of BAL in trichloroethylene oil and 10 per cent benzyl benzoate intramuscularly into the thigh or gluteal region. Give tonics, such as iron and strichnine to improve the general health of the patient.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—The stomach and intestines present a chronic inflammatory condition but, more often there may not be any characteristic changes. The liver shows the signs of fatty degeneration, and the kidneys show parenchymatous nephritis. The muscles are greasy and atrophied.

### ORGANIC COMPOUNDS OF ARSENIC

Organic compounds of arsenic are used in the treatment of syphilis, jaws sleeping sickness and other protozoal diseases. They contain arsenic either in trivalent combination or in pentavalent combination. The trivalent compounds, such as salvarsan, neosalvarsan etc., are more potent upon protozoa than the pentavalent compounds such as atoxyl, arsacetin, etc. The organic compounds have arsenic in chemical combination with a carbon atom and are, therefore, less poisonous than the inorganic compounds of arsenic.

Salvarsan and its derivatives are generally administered intravenously and occasionally intramuscularly. Arsenic is found in the blood soon after an intravenous injection of one of these preparations and is rapidly eliminated by the kidneys and bowels but may be retained in the tissues for a longer time after an intramuscular injection. Thus arsenic was not detected in the viscera of a female patient who died fourteen days after the intravenous injection but a large quantity was found in the gluteus muscle when post mortem examination was held on the body of a woman who died thirty-six days after the intramuscular injection.<sup>1</sup>

**Symptoms**—The symptoms of an anaphylactic nature may occur during or soon after the intravenous injection of a medicinal dose of salvarsan or its derivatives. They are malaise, flushed face, oedema of the tongue or eyelids, nausea, giddiness, headache, rigors with a slight rise of temperature, pain in the chest and joints, dyspnoea, cough, urticarial rash and slight diarrhoea. These symptoms usually last from half an hour to a day or two. More severe poisoning ending in death may sometimes ensue after the first injection or after two or three injections repeated at short intervals. The symptoms in such cases are stomatitis, abdominal pain, vomiting, profuse diarrhoea with bloody stools, severe headache, exfoliative dermatitis, jaundice, hyperpyrexia, dilated pupils, anuria, cramps, convulsions, coma, collapse and death. Extensive sloughing, abscesses and necrosis of the surrounding tissues may occur at the site of the intramuscular injection. Optic atrophy which is so common in poisoning by atoxyl and other pentavalent compounds is not produced in poisoning by salvarsan and other trivalent compounds.

<sup>1</sup> B. Heel selmann. Treat of Syphilis with Salvarsan. Eng Transl p 80

Death occurs among those suffering from visceral and degenerative lesions. It may also occur from a faulty technique or from auto intoxication.

Occasionally the toxic symptoms may not appear immediately after the intravenous administration of the drug but may be delayed for some weeks and death may occur from acute yellow atrophy of the liver. Polocard and Pinard<sup>1</sup> cite a case of syphilis in a man aged 28 years who, fifty days after three doses equivalent to 100 grammes of neosalvarsan developed acute yellow atrophy of the liver and died in six days.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period**—According to Holland<sup>2</sup> 100 grammes of salvarsan might cause death. Medicinal doses have however caused death. A dose of 0.5 gramme of salvarsan injected intravenously caused the death of a Kashmiri Muhomedan aged 20 years in 25 hours.<sup>3</sup> A woman 42 years old suffering from Addison's disease died in 12 hours after an intravenous injection of 0.15 gramme of neosalvarsan.<sup>4</sup> A male aged 50 years who was suffering from asthma died within half an hour of receiving an intravenous injection of 0.6 gramme of neosalvarsan.<sup>5</sup>

**Treatment**—Inject adrenaline hydrochloride hypodermically before or after the injection to ward off the symptoms of an anaphylactic nature. Give intravenous or rectal injections of normal saline as well as hypertonic solutions of sodium chloride and sodium bicarbonate to render the blood alkaline and to eliminate arsenic from the system. Inject intravenously sodium thiosulphate in doses of 0.45, 0.6 and 0.9 gramme dissolved in 5 c.c. of water on alternate days and 25 ml of a 25 per cent solution of dextrose on each of the intervening days for the treatment of exfoliative dermatitis.<sup>6</sup> Give also Liver extract and ascorbic acid. Administer intravenously 25 to 50 ml of a 20 per cent solution of glucose for the treatment of jaundice. Inject intravenously 10 c.c. of a 20 per cent solution of sodium dehydrocholate mixed with neosalvarsan to combat its toxic action on the liver.

BAL has been recently recommended in the treatment of dermatitis and other complications arising in the course of arseno therapy. Two millilitres of a solution containing 5 to 10 per cent BAL and 20 per cent benzyl benzoate in arachis oil should be injected intramuscularly into the thigh or gluteal region four times on the first day, twice on the second, third and fourth day and once only on the fifth and sixth day.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Cloudy swelling or fatty degeneration of the liver kidneys and heart may be present. Acute cerephritis with haemorrhagic spots in the brain may be found.

**Chemical Tests**—1 Ammonio nitrate of silver produces a yellow precipitate of arsenite of silver in an arsenious acid solution.

2 Ammonio sulphite of copper gives a bright green precipitate of arsenite of copper (Scheele's green).

3 Reinsch's Test—This is a very delicate test and arsenic may be readily detected to the extent of 1 in 1 000 000 and 1 in 7 000 000 if the solution is con-

1. *Presse Medicale Jan 8 1911 p 4* Petersen Haas and Webster *Jug Met d Fox e Vol II Ed II p 208*  
 2. *Med Chem ad Toxic* 1 288  
 3. *Acta Ind Med Ga Jan 1911 p 9*  
 4. *Helsingfors Medicinska Akademie Berit* 1911 J 0 1933 p 117 *Journ Inter Met Assoc March 18 1933 p 860*  
 5. *C C Maladaria Ind Med Cal Feb 1943 p 196*

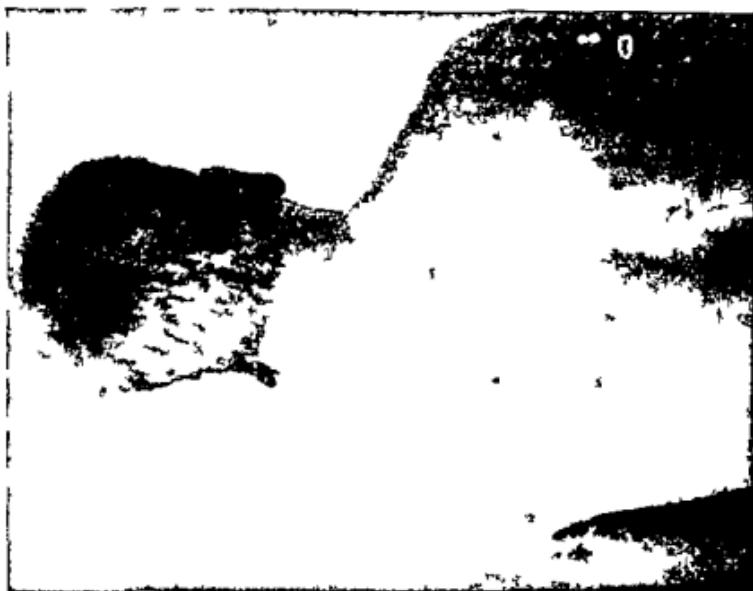


Fig 149.—Cirro c. Arter calloso l g B tk  
(From a photo of Prof. Dr. H. S. Mehta)



Fig 148.—Cirro l. Arni 110 o t g. Front view  
(From a photo of Prof. Dr. H. S. Mehta)

centrated The method of procedure is as follows —

Drop one or two strips of bright copper foil into the suspected solution previously acidulated with pure hydrochloric acid and boil it for five to ten minutes when the copper foil is coated steel grey or black with a deposit of arsenic if present. The foil is then removed washed successively in distilled water alcohol and ether dried on filter paper and then heated by placing it in a small test tube. The deposit, if due to arsenic volatilizes and forms a white deposit further up in the cooler portions of the tube. This deposit when seen under the microscope shows octahedral crystals of arsenious acid with their apices chopped off. If the coating is very thick it may be scraped off dissolved in acid and the liquid tests may be applied. Before proceeding with Reinsch's test a control test should be tried to prove the purity of hydrochloric acid and copper foils.

Sometimes even with a sufficient amount of arsenic present for its successful detection by Reinsch's test in the normal course very faint blackening or only a faint dulling of copper is obtained specially in the case of solid tissues such as the liver, or in the case of earthy matter or fishes containing vomit or stool. In such cases by heating the faintly blackened or dulled copper strips crystals of arsenious acid are not detected. As arsenic present in such cases is in a higher state of oxidation or the alkali present in earthy matter etc partly or wholly neutralizes the acid in the Reinsch's bath the deposition of arsenic is retarded. In such cases the following modification evolved by Mr D N Chatterji F I C Chemical Examiner to Governments, United Provinces and Central Provinces, should be

**4 Marsh's Test**—This forms such a delicate test for the presence of arsenic that exceedingly small quantities even up to one thousandth of a milligramme may be detected.

The test is based on the formation of arsenuretted hydrogen when the compounds of arsenic except the metal and its sulphides are brought into contact with nascent hydrogen. It is carried out by means of a Woulffe's bottle (hydrogen generating bottle) to which is connected a long glass tube ending in a jet. Granulated zinc and dilute sulphuric acid are dropped into the bottle when hydrogen will be evolved and will burn with a pale blue flame on applying a light to it. It must be remembered that hydrogen is not ignited at once but after about ten minutes when all the air in the bottle is chased out otherwise the mixture of hydrogen and oxygen will ignite with a loud explosion and break the apparatus thus injuring those round about. The other reason for expelling all the air out is that even if traces of air are left behind when the flame is applied to the tube water will be formed to the detriment of the arsenical deposit which will appear as a grevish white cloud.

On adding the suspected mixture of arsenic into the bottle the flame begins to burn with a bluish or greenish violet or purple tint due to the formation of arsenuretted hydrogen which also emits a garlic like odour. If a cold porcelain dish be depressed into the flame a blackish brown stain of metallic lustre is produced. This stain is readily soluble in a solution of calcium hypochlorite while the addition of ammonium sulphide does not dissolve, but detaches it from the porcelain and on heating turns it yellow.

If the deposit be heated with a few drops of strong nitric acid and if silver nitrate be then added a brick red (reddish brown) precipitate of silver arsenate is formed which is soluble in ammonia.

If the flame be extinguished and the central part of the tube conveying arsenuretted hydrogen be heated to redness by means of a spirit lamp for some time a brilliant arsenical mirror of a darker and less silvery white colour appears immediately beyond the heated spot. If the portion be cut off and heated in a dry test tube a white deposit is formed on its inside which shows octahedral crystals under the microscope. Very low mirrors such as obtained with 0.006, 0.008 and 0.001 mg. of arsenic trioxide do not give crystals of arsenious acid when heated in dry test tubes. In order to determine whether such mirrors are due to arsenic, the following technique evolved by Mr K. R. Ganguly Assistant Chemical Examiner United Provinces Agra may be adopted—

The two ends of the narrower portions of the Marsh's tubes (used for determination of arsenic by deposition of mirrors) containing the mirror, should be sealed with air instead of hydrogen inside it. The mirror should then be passed gently over a flame several times until the mirror is visible. The broader portion of the sealed tube should then be heated to drive the crystals of arsenious acid in the narrower part. After cooling the characteristic crystals of arsenious acid may be detected under the high power of a microscope.

Commercial zinc and sulphuric acid are often contaminated with arsenic hence a control experiment must be made to prove the purity of these reagents or the exit tube may be heated for at least thirty minutes before any of the suspected fluid is introduced into the hydrogen generating bottle. If the tube remains free from deposit the purity of the reagents is established.

To obtain pure hydrogen without any trace of arsenic it is better to use hydrogen generated by the electrolysis of water.

**5 Gutentz's Test**—One c.c. of the suspected solution is placed in a large test tube with a piece of chemically pure zinc and a few c.c. of dilute sulphuric or hydrochloric acid containing enough solution of iodine in potassium iodide

to colour it yellow so as to remove sulphur dioxide and hydrogen sulphide if formed. A plug of absorbent cotton wool is inserted in the upper part of the tube and the mouth is covered with a piece of filter paper moistened with a concentrated solution of silver nitrate (1 : 1). If arsenic is present the paper is turned yellow owing to the formation of a double compound of silver arsenide and silver nitrate ( $\text{AsAg}_3 \cdot 3\text{AgNO}_3$ ). On the addition of water the yellow colour becomes black by the separation of silver.

The colour produced by antimony is not yellow but brown or black. On the other hand phosphoretted hydrogen produces the same colour as that of arsenic. In order to avoid this fallacy absorbent cotton is moistened with a solution of lead acetate.

A modified form of Gutzeit's test is used in which a dry paper permeated with mercuric chloride instead of silver nitrate produces a yellow stain, the intensity of which varies according to the quantity of arsenic present.

**6. Bettendorff's Test** — This test can be used even when arsenic is present with antimony. It depends on the reduction of arsenic compounds to elementary arsenic by the action of stannous chloride in the presence of strong hydrochloric acid. It detects both inorganic and organic compounds of arsenic.

When 2 c.c. of the acid solution of the oxidized suspected material are added to 10 c.c. of Bettendorff's reagent in a test tube and the mixture is gradually heated a brown, brownish black or black precipitate is formed, if inorganic arsenic is present.

When 1 c.c. of the suspected solution is added to 3 c.c. of the reagent in a test tube, a lemon yellow precipitate or colour results, if the organic compounds of arsenic are present.

Bettendorff's reagent is made by dissolving 1 part of crystallized hydrated stannous chloride in 10 parts of strongly fuming hydrochloric acid.

**Medico-Legal Points** — 1. Arsenic is used homicidally much more frequently in India than in any other country, as it is cheap, is easily obtained in every town and is easily concealed in the food in consequence of its freedom from smell and taste. A very small quantity of arsenic is necessary to produce fatal effects although cases have occurred, where much larger quantities were given for homicidal purposes. In a homicidal case that came under my observation in 1931 101 g. grams of arsenic were detected in the stomach contents. Mass homicidal poisoning, in which several persons have been affected has sometimes occurred from arsenic having been administered by an individual in some article of food. In a few instances arsenic is administered with some other poison, such as powdered glass, copper sulphate, mercury, mercuric chloride, opium, aconite, nux vomica etc.

Instead of administering a single fatal dose of arsenic at once, the murderer in Western countries usually administers small doses over a long period in order to produce the symptoms simulating gastro enteritis and thus to conceal the crime.

Arsenic is often employed to produce abortion, especially in the form of ointment or paste on abortion sticks. It is also used to poison cattle. Wells are known to have been poisoned by arsenic not only during war, but also in peace time.

A case occurred at Nagpur where the accused was stated to have added poison to water as it was being drawn from a well. A quantity of arsenic was found in the water.<sup>1</sup> A bundle of cloth was recovered from a well in the district of Purnia. The cloth contained some dark grey coloured pasty substance which on analysis was found to be arsenic.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> U.P. Crim. Exam. Annual Rep. 1907.

<sup>2</sup> Bengal Crim. Exam. Annual Rep. Ind. Med. Gaz., Aug., 1915, p. 303.

Arsenic is used occasionally for suicidal purpose, but owing to much pain caused by its ingestion suicides resort to this poison much less frequently than to opium.

Accidental cases of poisoning by arsenic, sometimes occur from its admixture with drink or articles of food, or from its improper medicinal use. White arsenic has been mistaken for baking powder, soda, cream of tartar, sugar, salt or flour, and has caused mass accidental poisoning. Multiple accidental cases may also occur from drinking water from streams containing arsenical mineral deposits. Accidental deaths occur from an overdose, when arsenic is given by women to their husbands as a love philter.

Accidental or homicidal poisoning by opium is not possible owing to its bright yellow colour, which can be easily recognized. But cases of suicidal poisoning, though rare, have occurred.

In January 1921, a case came under my observation, in which a Hindu male, 50 years old committed suicide by taking opium. The stomach contained a lot of mucus in which were entangled particles of yellow sulphide of arsenic. The mucus was adherent to the inner wall of the stomach which was inflamed with bloody patches and ulcerations spread all over the surface especially at the greater curvature and posterior aspect.

A Mahomedan male, aged about 20 committed suicide by swallowing yellow sulphide of arsenic. About 37 grams of it were found in the stomach after death.<sup>1</sup>

A woman aged about 25 died in about 6 hours after taking yellow arsenic with a view to committing suicide. About 81 grams of the sulphide were detected in the stomach.<sup>2</sup>

Chronic arsenical poisoning with the symptoms of peripheral neuritis broke out among beer drinkers in an epidemic form in the county of Lancashire in 1900. Beer was found contaminated with arsenic, varying from 0.01 to 0.3 gram or even 1.4 grams per gallon, and derived from impure sulphuric acid used in the manufacture of glucose and cane sugar required for brewing it.<sup>3</sup> A case<sup>4</sup> is also recorded where an outbreak of arsenic poisoning occurred among more than three hundred French officers and sailors by the drinking of wine in February, 1932. The wine on chemical analysis was found to contain sulphurous acid and 3 to 12 mg of arsenic per litre. It appeared that sulphurous acid might have got into the wine from applying sulphur to the wine casks in the cleansing process. Arsenic appeared to have got into the wine through the grapes being contaminated with arsenic by the spraying of the vines with copper or other arsenic containing solutions to protect them against insects. It was also possible that arsenic containing sugar might have been added to the wine.

**2. Method of Introduction**—In most of the homicidal cases arsenic is administered by the mouth after disguising it with articles of food, such as sweetmeat, bread, dal, cooked vegetables, and drinks, such as milk, tea, coffee, sharbat, port wine, or with medicine. It has, sometimes, been given with *prepared pan*.

Recently arsenic is mixed with the tobacco of a cigarette which is then offered to a person with a view to robbing him on his becoming senseless after he has smoked it. In his annual report for the year 1941, the Chemical Examiner, Bengal, mentions a case where he received from the Police Magistrate of Sealdah a cigarette box containing six "Passing Show" cigarettes which was recovered from three old offenders loitering on the platform of the Shambazar Railway Station. Four of these cigarettes were found to contain arsenic (about 1 gram in each cigarette) mixed with the tobacco. It is not known if the offenders were ever successful in robbing their victims by this novel method. It is not known if arsenic carried mechanically to the lungs along with the smoke produces acute

1. *Bombay Chem. Analyst's Annual Report*, 1935, p. 5.

2. *Beng. Chem. Exam. Annual Rep.*, 1936, p. 14.

3. *Brit. Med. Jour.*, Feb. 16, 1901, p. 397.

4. *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, July 23, 1932, p. 319.

poisoning in which shock or unconsciousness is the main feature or if arsenic or a new volatile organic arsenic compound, e.g., a nicotine arsenic complex is formed during smoking which is likely to cause unconsciousness when inhaled.

The fact that the fumes emanating from burning incense impregnated with arsenical compounds in a closed space will produce fatal arsenic poisoning is sometimes utilized by secret poisoners for homicidal purposes.

Arsenic has occasionally been injected into the rectum after mixing it with the liquid to be used as an enema. Arsenic has also been introduced into the vagina either for the purpose of committing suicide or for procuring abortion. It has produced poisonous symptoms, when used as an urethral injection.

Cases of poisoning have occurred from the application of arsenic paste to a cancerous growth or of its ointment or solution to a blistered or abraded surface or even to the uninjured skin.

Sometimes fly papers or weed killers are soaked in water tea or wine and the solution is then administered with homicidal intent.

**3 Tolerance**—Individuals who are in the habit of taking arsenic acquire a certain amount of tolerance to bear it up to four grams or more in one dose. They use it daily with the idea of improving their looks and becoming more hardy to carry weights and to climb mountains. This habit is common among the peasants of Styria and Hungary. The people using this drug as a habit are called *arsenophagists*, and suffer from the symptoms of mild arsenical poisoning if the drug is withheld from them.

In India, some people are in the habit of taking arsenic daily as a tonic or as an aphrodisiac. Sometimes it is given in small quantities with a view to producing death from slow poisoning but instead it makes a man plumper and stronger as happened in the case of the late Fulham of Agra who was being poisoned with arsenic by Clark.

Arsenic is largely given by grooms to improve the coats of horses. If it is withheld the animals become dull and lose flesh.

**4 Solubility of Arsenic**—When administered in a soluble form by the mouth arsenic gets absorbed into the blood almost in a few minutes but when taken in solid lumps it may not be absorbed by the stomach and sometimes, passes out with the feces without producing any poisonous symptoms. For instance in 1872 a Parsee in Bombay had swallowed two masses of arsenious oxide without any serious effects. Within forty five hours after swallowing the poison he passed per rectum two lumps one weighing eighty grains and the other weighing twenty five grains.<sup>1</sup>

Arsenious acid is converted into yellow sulphide of arsenic in the stomach and intestines, but sulphide of arsenic is not converted into white arsenic.

**5 Elimination**—Arsenic when taken for some time in medicinal doses does not accumulate in the system so that it may give rise to sudden poisonous symptoms. It is therefore, not regarded as a cumulative poison.

Arsenic is eliminated through the urine, faeces, skin, hair and nails and to some extent through the sweat, saliva, bile, bronchial secretion and milk. After its administration arsenic appears in the urine and faeces usually from two to eight hours but it may be detected within half an hour after a single dose of five drops of liquor arsenicalis (Fowler's solution). The elimination by these channels continues for a period of two to three weeks after which arsenic is not found in the urine and faeces, although it may be found in the hair and nails. A case is, however, recorded in which arsenic was detected in the urine ninety three

days after the administration of a single large dose, which produced the symptoms of acute poisoning followed by paralysis<sup>1</sup>. In his annual report for the year 1935, the Chemical Analyser of Bombay describes a case in which a man sustained severe injuries including a penetrating wound of the abdomen and laceration of the left hand from an explosion of a powder consisting of potassium chlorate and arsenic sulphide contained in a porcelain jar. Six days after the explosion the man's urine was found on analysis to contain 1,200 grain of arsenic. Twenty days after this the man developed dermatitis, and his hair and nail parings were found to contain 1/25 grain of arsenic. In this explosion arsenic seems to have entered the system through the wound and also by inhalation of arsenic-uretted hydrogen which is evolved in the explosion. Willcox<sup>2</sup> reports a case in which a Government official of a tropical country was administered arsenic on October 6, 1922, and the chemical analysis of his hair revealed the presence of arsenic on December 19, 1922, when he was suffering from the symptoms of chronic poisoning. Arsenic was also detected in the proximal portions of the hair in a case where a woman, 74 years old, died 30 hours after the toxic symptoms had commenced and where the body was not exhumed until 9 years and 4½ months.<sup>3</sup>

By dividing hair in small successive lengths from the root upwards and analysing them separately one may obtain important information regarding the time that has elapsed since the administration of arsenic. For instance if arsenic is administered to a patient daily for a few days and then discontinued, the portion of the hair growing during this period yields a much larger amount of arsenic than the portion growing during the non arsenic period. The time depends upon the rate of the growth of hair which is generally about half an inch per month. Bagchi describes a case in which he was able to show on analysing the distal and proximal ends of the hair that a patient suffering from suspected arsenic paralysis had been given arsenic two to three months before his admission into hospital in Patna.<sup>4</sup>

In the fatal cases of acute arsenical poisoning where the patient has survived for ten to fourteen days, it is hardly possible to find the poison in the viscera usually preserved for chemical analysis, although arsenic was detected in the viscera of a woman who survived fifty two days after taking the last dose.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, a case is reported in which arsenic was found in the vomit and faecal matter, but was not found in the viscera when death occurred after six days.<sup>6</sup>

blood is negligible. Foetal tissues contain no arsenic, while the placenta is fairly rich in arsenic. It is, therefore, necessary that a medical practitioner ought to be very cautious in affirming that death was due to arsenic poisoning in a case where a very small amount, a minute fraction of a grain, is detected in the viscera, unless some of the characteristic symptoms and post mortem appearances of arsenic poisoning were present. In a murder case where about 1/5th grain of arsenic was found in the viscera of the victim, Justice Young of the Allahabad High Court acquitted the accused on the ground that this amount might be due to the food that the deceased took or that might be the normal arsenic content of the viscera.

Arsenic is, sometimes, found as an accidental impurity in some medicines, such as bismuth nitrate, sodium sulphate, magnesium sulphate and glycerin. A firm of chemists at Bradford was fined for selling glycerin which was found to contain arsenic to the amount of 1/18 grain to the pound. The Medical Officer of Health for Bradford stated in his evidence that a Royal Commission had recommended local authorities to take action in cases where arsenic was found to exist in glycerin to a greater amount than 1/100 grain to the pound.<sup>1</sup>

**9 Post-mortem Imbibition of Arsenic.**—In a criminal charge of arsenical poisoning the plea is, sometimes, raised by the defence that the poison was introduced into the stomach after death, and post mortem imbibition occurred in the tissues. Such a presumption is certainly possible, but the transudation of poison through the organs in such cases seeks an anatomical course, hence the organs of the left side are affected before those of the right. Besides, the fact of ante or post mortem imbibition of arsenic can be ascertained by examining the condition of the mucous membrane of the stomach and duodenum. The signs of inflammation and ulceration, being the result of vital processes, will be absent in post mortem imbibition of the poison.

When arsenic has been found in exhumed bodies a further question may arise as to whether arsenic found in the body has been absorbed from the earth which surrounded the coffin or the body. In this connection it must be remembered that arsenic met with in the soil is usually an insoluble salt mixed with lime or iron, hence it is impossible that an insoluble salt should percolate into the cadaver buried in such soil, especially if the body is laid in a coffin. However, to avoid the possibility of any doubt, it is safest, if the body has to be disinterred, to preserve for chemical analysis samples of the earth surrounding the coffin or the

stomach and small intestine were found congested, and there was oedema near the cardiac end of the stomach. The uterus was enlarged and uniformly congested. It contained a fetus of about four months with its membranes and liquor amni intact. Arsenic was detected in the viscera as well as in the plug of cotton wool removed from the vagina.—*Bengal Chemical Examiner's Annual Report, Ind. Med. Gaz., Aug., 1935, p. 304*

4 Abdul Majid aged 35 years, was given by Ibrahim arsenic mixed with milk on the evening of the 12th May 1926. Within half an hour he suffered from burning pain in the stomach and began to vomit and had purging. At about 2 a.m., while he was suffering from the acute symptoms of poisoning, he was assaulted by Ibrahim with a gandava and he received several extensive incised wounds on the face and left shoulder. He died at 8 a.m. on the 13th May, 1926. Arsenic was detected in the vomit as well as in the viscera.—*King Emperor v. Ibrahim, Allahabad High Court, Criminal Appeal No. 518 of 1926*

5 In the beginning of 1931, a Mahomedan male became ill soon after taking his night meal in the Police Lines, Lucknow. He complained of severe burning pain in the stomach had persistent vomiting and purging and was in a state of collapse. He was removed to the Police Hospital, where he was diagnosed as a case of cholera, and was transferred to the King George's Hospital for more efficient treatment. Soon after admission to this hospital he died. The Police suspecting foul play forwarded the body to me for post mortem examination. The examination was held six hours after death, and showed the characteristic appearances of acute poisoning by arsenic. The Chemical Examiner detected arsenic in the stomach contents and in the viscera.

6 A Hindu male, aged about 45, survived for seven days after he took some arsenic in bananas sent by his neighbour who owed some money to him. He had frequent vomiting blood stained stools, extreme thirst, pain in the throat and abdomen, cramps in the legs and hot lache for two days and nights. He was removed to hospital where except headache other symptoms subsided. He was in hospital for five days and during this period he had vomiting only once and had yellowish green watery stools. About ten hours before death he passed a large quantity of a dark, tarry stool, gradually collapsed and died.—*Bengal Chemical Examiner's Annual Report, 1932, p. 14*

7 A Mahomedan woman mixed arsenic in some halwa, and got it distributed by a servant of her relative to a large number of families residing in Lahore. The halwa was tasted by about 13 persons including children. All developed symptoms of arsenic poisoning and while some recovered after treatment at home, a large number was removed to the Mayo Hospital where all except an old woman and her eight year-old grandson revived.—*Leader, October 23, 1937, p. 10*

8 A case occurred at Gaya where arsenic was used as an intoxicant. A Hindu male, aged 24 who was in the habit of taking intoxicants took one early morning about half a pound of bhang sherbat. As this did not produce any intoxicating effect on him, he took about 40 grains of arsenic. Immediately afterwards symptoms of poisoning appeared and death occurred within an hour and a half after his admission to hospital.—*Bengal Chemical Examiner's Annual Report, 1932, p. 16*

9 On the 11th July, 1938, a sweet known as Churmī, which was prepared by a local sweet seller, was distributed among school children both boys and girls, from various schools in Mianwali Town. Within a few minutes all those children suffered from vomiting, diarrhoea and colicky pains in the abdomen. Two hundred and forty seven of them were admitted into the Civil Hospital for treatment. All recovered except one. The presence of white arsenic and red sulphate of mercury was demonstrated in some of the vomited matters and in the sweets.—*Punjab Chemical Examiner's Annual Report, 1938, p. 11*

pharmacopœial preparation, known as *antimonii et potassii tartras*, and occurs in colourless, transparent crystals or in a white, granular powder, containing about 35 per cent of metallic antimony. It is insoluble in alcohol (90%), but is soluble in seventeen parts of cold water and in three parts of boiling water, the solution having a faintly acid and nauseating metallic taste. The dose is 1/32 to 1/8 grain as an expectorant, 1/2 to 1 grain as an emetic and 1/2 to 2 grains by intravenous injection (in 2% solution). It has been occasionally mistaken for tartaric acid, Epsom salts, sodium bicarbonate and, sometimes, for cream of tartar. It constitutes an ingredient of many quack pills, such as Dixon's pills, etc. It is largely used in veterinary practice for improving the condition of the horse's skin.

*Vinum antimoniale*, a non official preparation, is a solution of tartar emetic in sherry wine, the strength being 2 grains to an ounce. The dose is 10 to 30 minims as an expectorant and 2 to 4 drachms as an emetic. It is, sometimes, employed for criminal purposes.

Sodium antimonyl tartrate is an official preparation, known as *antimonii et sodii tartras*, and occurs as a white, crystalline powder, freely soluble in water, and insoluble in alcohol (90%). The dose is the same as that of *antimonii et potassii tartras*.

**2 Antimony Trioxide (Antimonious Oxide)  $Sb_2O_3$** —This is a non official preparation known as *antimonii oxidum*, and occurs as a greyish white powder, having neither taste nor odour. The dose is 1 to 2 grains. It is an ingredient of *pulvis antimonialis* (James's powder, dose 3 to 6 grains), and gives rise to an important series of salts. When volatilized it condenses into two distinct forms, prismatic and octahedral crystals. It is almost insoluble in water, but soluble in hydrochloric acid and in the gastric juice forming antimony trichloride. It is readily soluble in tartaric acid, and in a boiling solution of hydrogen potassium tartrate (cream of tartar) forming potassium antimonyl tartrate or tartar emetic.

**3 Antimony Trichloride (Butter of Antimony)  $SbCl_3$** —This is a colourless, deliquescent, crystalline substance, fusing to a yellow, oily liquid at the temperature of 73.2°C. It dissolves unchanged in a small quantity of water, but a white powder of oxychloride ( $SbOCl$ ) is formed if an excess of water is added. When dissolved in hydrochloric acid, it is known as a *bromizing liquid*, and is employed in the arts and in farriery. It was formerly employed by quacks as an escharotic, but is now used mainly in veterinary practice.

**4 Antimony Trisulphide (Black Antimony)  $Sb_2S_3$** —This is known as *Surma* in the vernacular. It occurs native as the steel grey ore, and is also formed as an orange red or brick red powder when sulphuretted hydrogen is passed through a solution of antimony trichloride or tartar emetic. The orange variety is an ingredient of Plunimer's pill and antimony sulphuratum. The mineral often contains arsenic as an impurity.

**Antimony Hydride (Antimoniumretted Hydrogen or Stibine),  $SbH$** , —This is a colourless, offensive, poisonous gas, which closely corresponds to arseniumretted hydrogen but it differs from the latter in being less poisonous.

**Organic Preparations**—Organic preparations, such as Stibenyl, Stibamine, Urea Stibamine, Stibosan (Von Heyden '471'), Neostibosan (Von Heyden '633b') and Stibophen (Equadim) have been introduced in medicine in recent years for the treatment of kala azar and other protozoal diseases. Most of these preparations are used intravenously or intramuscularly.

**Proprietary Medicines**—Dixon's pills contain 0.06 grain of tartar emetic in each pill, while Johnson's pills and Mitchell's pills contain 0.002 to 0.003 grain of tartar emetic per pill.

**Fatal Period**—Death usually occurs within twenty four hours. It occurred in six hours in one case, and in ten hours in another<sup>1</sup>. It may be prolonged for several days or weeks. It should be remembered that death occurs much more rapidly in young children who are very susceptible to antimony salts. Charier<sup>2</sup> reports the case of a child who was given three quarters of a grain of tartar emetic in an enema, and died within an hour. The shortest recorded period in cases of poisoning by antimony trichloride is less than two hours<sup>3</sup> and the longest is twenty four hours<sup>4</sup>.

**Treatment**—Promote vomiting by administering mustard and water or wash out the stomach with the stomach tube except in the case of poisoning by antimony trichloride. Give a drachm of tannic acid as an antidote to form an insoluble salt of antimony tannate, or give liquids containing tannin or tannic acid, such as strong and hot tea, coffee, or infusion of gallnuts. Demulcent drinks, such as milk, oils, mucilage albumen water, linseed tea, etc., should then be given. Morphine may be given to relieve pain, and ice to control vomiting. Stimulants, such as caffeine, strychnine, camphor, alcohol and ether, may be given to combat heart failure.

the mucous membrane of the mouth, oesophagus and stomach. The stomach is corrugated and contracted, and its wall may be pale or yellow. The contents of the stomach are dark brown in colour, slightly acid in reaction and consist chiefly of a grumous, bloody fluid mixed with mucus which adheres to its inner wall. The liver, spleen and kidneys are congested. The brain is congested with effusion into ventricles. The lungs are usually congested, and are dark in colour.

In exceptional cases the post-mortem appearances of poisoning by antimony may be absent. For instance, in the case of Mrs Taylor, one of the victims of Dr Pritchard, where death occurred from acute poisoning by tartar emetic, the post mortem examination revealed nothing although the poison was detected in the viscera, urine, blood and intestinal contents<sup>1</sup>.

In poisoning by antimony trichloride the post mortem appearances will be charring and corrosion of those parts with which it has come into contact. In the case recorded by Cook<sup>2</sup> the mucous membrane of the stomach was almost black from intense congestion, but the corrosion and blackening of the lips, tongue, mouth, pharynx and oesophagus were not found.

**Chronic Poisoning**—This occurs from the administration of repeated small doses of tartar emetic. The symptoms are nervous irritability, giddiness, headache, nausea, persistent vomiting of bile and mucus, and watery purging sometimes alternating with constipation. The tongue becomes foul, there is loss of voice, and the pulse is weak and rapid. The skin is cold and clammy. There is great prostration and the patient is very much emaciated. He abhors the sight of food, as he cannot retain it in the stomach. Death results from exhaustion, or from the effects of a larger dose than usually administered. Sometimes, cramps occur instead of relaxation of the muscles.

**Treatment.**—Remove the patient from the source of poisoning, and eliminate the poison from the system by giving potassium iodide.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—The post mortem appearances in chronic poisoning are not so characteristic as in acute poisoning. The body is emaciated. The tongue and the interior of the mouth are covered with fur or marked with aphthous spots. There may be ulcerations in the stomach and intestines. The heart, liver and kidneys show fatty degeneration.

**Chemical Tests.**—1. The addition of hydrochloric acid to a liquid solution gives a white precipitate, soluble in excess.

2. Sulphuretted hydrogen forms an orange precipitate of sulphide of antimony, soluble in ammonia or ammonium sulphide.

3. If the fluid containing some free hydrochloric acid be put in a platinum capsule, and a fragment of zinc be introduced, a black deposit of metallic antimony is formed on the inside of the capsule, this will be turned yellow on adding ammonium sulphide.

4. *Reinsch's Test*—The procedure is the same as in arsenic, but a bluish-black deposit is formed on the copper foil. On heating, the deposit sublimes readily and yields amorphous particles or needle shaped crystals of antimony trioxide.

5. *Marsh's Test*—The process is the same as in arsenic, but the flame produced by burning antimoniumated hydrogen (stibine) has a bluish green tint, and the stain formed by the deposit of antimony on the porcelain dish is black and lustreless, insoluble in hypochlorite of lime, but soluble in stannous chloride. On heating the delivery tube the metallic and silvery mirror of antimony is formed on both the sides in the vicinity of the heated part, the mirror does not sublime, yielding octahedral crystals as in arsenic.

1 Peterson Haines and Webster, *Leg. Med. and Toxic.*, Vol. II, Ed. II, p. 207.

2 *Lancet*, May 10, 1887, p. 860.

**Medico-Legal Points** — Antimony as a metal is not considered poisonous but when inhaled in the form of vapour it is said to have produced dangerous symptoms

Poisoning by antimony salts is rare in India. In his annual report for the year 1922, the Chemical Analyser of Sind reports the case of a person who died from the effects of antimony tartar given in 24 grain doses thrice with a purgative. The poison was detected in the viscera.

In Europe, a few homicidal and still fewer suicidal cases have occurred. For homicidal purposes tartar emetic is given in small doses for several days, so that the symptoms caused by it may simulate some gastro intestinal disease.

Accidental cases of poisoning by tartar emetic have been recorded from an overdose when given medicinally, or from its administration in mistake for cream of tartar, Epsom salts bicarbonate of sodium, etc.

Outbreaks of acute accidental poisoning by antimony have sometimes occurred from drinking lemonade prepared in cheap enamelled utensils. They are due to tartaric acid in the lemonade crystals<sup>1</sup> or citric acid of fresh lemons dissolving some of the antimony oxide which is used instead of a non-poisonous tin oxide in the manufacture of the white enamel coating<sup>1</sup>. About seventy workmen of a firm at New Castle on Tyne suffered from the symptoms of acute antimony poisoning after they had taken lemonade prepared from tartaric acid crystals which were dissolved in boiling water overnight in enamelled buckets. They all recovered. The enamel of the bucket contained antimony trioxide equivalent to 5 per cent of metallic antimony. Dr Dunn found on analysis that an ordinary tumbler of ten ounces contained 0.57 grain of antimony or 1.52 grains of tartar emetic<sup>2</sup>. In a school at Ilkeston lemonade from fresh sliced lemons was prepared in white enamelled jugs. Half an hour after it was served, twenty five persons were sick.<sup>3</sup>

Acid vegetables and fruits may extract antimony from cheap enamelled vessels, hence they should not be cooked in such vessels<sup>4</sup>. Hellen Lukis reports the cases of three families in which all the members were stricken down with sickness and diarrhoea, investigation showed that the symptoms came on shortly after eating rhubarb pie baked in a cheap new enamelled pie dish<sup>5</sup>.

Tartar emetic is given to confirmed drunkards as a cure for the habit and accidental poisoning has occurred from an overdose thus given.

Tartar emetic acts as a depressant to the heart muscle hence even if given in medicinal doses it may prove fatal to the persons who are aged, infirm and debilitated from disease, while these doses would not have any deleterious effect on strong, healthy individuals.

Cases of accidental poisoning sometimes, occur from chloride of antimony, as it is used in arts as a bronzing liquid.

**Method of Administration** — Symptoms of poisoning have occurred not only from its administration by the mouth but from its external application in the form of a powder or an ointment to the unbroken skin from its use as an enema and from its absorption into the system by wearing a cloth to colour which tartar emetic was used as a mordant.

**Elimination of Antimony** — By the vomit and purging it promotes antimony is largely expelled immediately after it is swallowed and is eliminated rapidly.

<sup>1</sup> Brit Med Jour, June 16 1931 p 1083.

<sup>2</sup> Lancet Aug 18 1938 p 337.

<sup>3</sup> Brit Med Jour March 11 1933 p 423.

<sup>4</sup> Miller Jour Home Econ 1916 III p 361.

<sup>5</sup> Brit Med Jour April 1, 1933 p 581.

and is known as *Hydrargyri oxidum flatum*. It is contained in the official preparations of *Oculentum hydrargyri oxidum* and *Oculentum atropinae cum hydrargyri oxidum* and enters into the composition of *Hydrargyri olateum* (mercuric oleate) and *Unguentum hydrargyri olateum*.

**2 Mercuric Chloride (Perchloride of Mercury, Corrosive Sublimate),  $HgCl_2$** —It exists in the form of heavy, colourless masses of prismatic crystals or as a white, crystalline powder. It has a styptic, nauseous, metallic taste. It is soluble in eighteen parts of cold water and three parts of boiling water. It is readily soluble in alcohol (90%), ether and glycerin and is very soluble in solutions of the alkaline chlorides. On account of its antiseptic properties it is largely used in medicine as well as in tinsidermy. It is a violent poison, and is obtained in the bazaar, often mixed with impure subchloride. The official dose of mercuric chloride (*Hydrargyri perchloridum*) is 1/32 to 1/16 gram. The pharmacopoeial solution *Liquor hydrargyri perchloridi* contains 0.1 per cent of mercuric chloride, the dose being 30 to 60 minimis.

When ammonia is added to a watery solution of mercuric chloride, ammonio-chloride of mercury is formed. It is also known as ammoniated mercury or white precipitate (*Hydrargyrum ammoniatum*, B.P.). It is a white, heavy, tasteless powder insoluble in water, alcohol (90%) and ether, but readily soluble in warm hydrochloric acid and in warm acetic acid. It is used in preparing an official ointment *Unguentum hydrargyri ammoniatum* (white precipitate ointment).

**3 Mercuric Iodide  $HgI_2$** —This is also called red iodide of mercury or biniodide of mercury. It is a scarlet red powder, obtained by the action of a watery solution of mercuric chloride on one of potassium iodide. It is almost insoluble in water but soluble in about 130 parts of alcohol, and freely in ether, in nitric acid and in a solution of potassium iodide or mercuric chloride. It forms one of the constituents of a non official preparation *Liquor arseni et hydrargyri iodidis* (Donovan's solution) the dose of which is 5 to 15 minimis.

**4 Mercuric Cyanide  $Hg(CN)_2$** —This is nearly as poisonous as corrosive sublimate but has no corrosive action. It exists as white prismatic crystals, having a bitter, metallic taste but no odour. It is soluble in 12 parts of water and in 15 parts of alcohol.

Mercuric cyanide  $HgO \cdot 3[Hg(CN)_2]$  is a white, crystalline powder, soluble in 18 parts of water. Mercuric thiocyanate (sulphocyanide)  $Hg(CNS)_2$  is an insoluble powder which when ignited, gives off obnoxious fumes of the metal and forms an exceedingly voluminous ash. It is moulded into pellets, which are known as Pharaoh's serpents, as these, when burnt, produce long snake like tubes of ash.

**5 Mercuric Nitrate  $Hg(NO_3)_2$** —This is crystalline, but deliquescent. It is used for painting on porcelain, and is used by hatters and furriers as well as in veterinary medicine. It acts as a corrosive poison, and is similar in action to mercuric chloride. Symptoms of chronic poisoning occur among hatters and furriers.

**6 Mercuric Sulphide (Cinnabar),  $HgS$** —This is known in the vernacular as *hingul, ras sindoor cheena sindoor or shingar*. It occurs as the chief ore of mercury, and is artificially prepared as a red, crystalline powder, which is then known as the pigment vermilion. It is regarded as non poisonous, but its vapours are poisonous. Cases of acute poisoning have occurred from its use as a fumigant. Chronic poisoning has also occurred from it having been used to colour vulcanized rubber meant for artificial teeth.

**7 Mercuric Sulphate,  $HgSO_4$ .** —This is a white, crystalline powder, and acts as a corrosive poison. It has been administered in mistake for sulphocarbolate of sodium, and has caused death. It has also been taken with suicidal intent.

**8 Mercuric Methide (Mercury Dimethyl),  $Hg(CH_3)_2$ .** —This is a highly poisonous liquid, and has produced death by the inhalation of its noxious vapour. It has also produced insanity.

**9 Mercurous Chloride (Subchloride of Mercury, Calomel),  $Hg_2Cl_2$ .** —This is sold in the bazaar as *rasl apoor* in fibrous, heavy, dirty white masses, often mixed with mercuric chloride. The pharmacopæcial preparation *Hydrargyri subchloridum*, is a heavy, amorphous white and tasteless powder insoluble in water alcohol (90%) ether or cold dilute acids. The dose is  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 grains. When heated, it sublimes without fusing. It is converted into mercuric chloride by chlorine water, nitrohydrochloric acid, alkaline chlorides and common salt; hence it should never be prescribed with any of these substances. Exposure to sunlight decomposes it into mercury and mercuric chloride. It enters into the composition of the following preparations —

**1 Tabella Hydrargyri Subchloridi** (Tablets of calomel or mercurous chloride) —Each tablet should contain one grain.

**2 Unguentum hydrargyri subchloridi** (*Calomel ointment*) —It contains 20 per cent of calomel.

Calomel is one of the ingredients of a non official preparation *Pilula hydrargyri subchloridi* (*Plummer's pill*) the dose being 4 to 8 grains.

**10 Subsulphate of Mercury (Turpeth Mineral),  $HgSO_4 \cdot 2HgO$ .** —This is a lemon yellow powder, sparingly soluble in water. It is used as an emetic in three to five grain doses, especially on the continent and in the United States. It has occasionally caused death by acting as an irritant poison.

**11 Mercurous Nitrate,  $Hg_2(NO_3)_2$ .** —This is colourless and crystalline. It is soluble in water acidulated with nitric acid, and is as poisonous as mercuric nitrate.

**12 Novasurol (Merbaphen).** —This is a double salt of sodium mercurichlorophenyl oxacetate with diethyl barbituric acid. It is a white crystalline powder soluble in water and contains 33.3 per cent of mercury. It is a powerful diuretic, the dose being  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 c.c. of a 10 per cent solution by intravenous or intramuscular injection.

**13 Mersalyum (Mersalyl, Salyrgan, Mercurgan).** —This is a sodium salt of salicyl (1 hydroxymercuyl 2 methoxypropyl) amide-o acetic acid. It is a white, odourless, deliquescent powder, having a bitter taste, and containing 38.5 to 40.5 per cent of mercury. It dissolves in water in alcohol (35°) and in methyl alcohol. *Injectio Mersalyli* is a pharmacopæcial preparation, the dose being 8 to 30 minims by intramuscular or intravenous injection.

**14 Mercurochrome-220 (Disodium Dibromo-hydroxy-mercuri Fluorescein),  $C_{20}H_9O_4Br_2HgOHNa_2$ .** —This is also known as mercurome and occurs as iridescent green scales and dissolves readily in water. It contains 25 to 28 per cent of mercury. It has been used intravenously in cystitis, gonorrhœa, articular rheumatism, endocarditis, and septicemic conditions. The dose is 0.002 to 0.005 grammes per kilogramme of body weight in a 10 per cent solution by intravenous injection. Ten milligrammes per kilogramme of body weight given intravenously kill rabbits. Five milligrammes per kilogramme of patients' weight in a 1 per cent solution have been injected intravenously twice a week without trouble in several cases.<sup>1</sup> G P B Huddy<sup>2</sup> treated adult patients with

<sup>1</sup> Joseph O'Carroll *Lancet* Dec 31, 1927 p 1416  
<sup>2</sup> *Lancet*, *Ibid*

mercurochrome after an operation with a view to preventing the onset of post operative pneumonia. He injected intravenously 20 c.c. of a 1 per cent solution immediately following an operation and 10 c.c. of a similar solution two days later. Reaction started in 12 patients after the second injection. This suggests that the drug may be cumulative. The most common reaction consisted of a rigor with a rise of temperature to about 102° F. In one case there was blood in the urine and stools and in another case there was a severe rigor with headache, cyanosis and collapse.

Toxic effects have occurred mostly after the prolonged use of the drug in fairly large doses. A. V. St. George<sup>1</sup> reports that death followed the intravenous injection of a 1 per cent solution in five cases of sepsis. The post mortem examination showed that it induced nephritis and intestinal lesions which resulted in death.

**Acute Poisoning—Symptoms**—The symptoms are mostly due to corrosive sublimate and commence immediately after swallowing the poison. They are rarely delayed beyond half an hour although in a case reported by Wood<sup>2</sup> the symptoms were delayed one hour and a half. These are an acrid metallic taste and a feeling of constriction or choking sensation in the throat, hoarse voice and difficult breathing. The mouth tongue and fauces become corroded swollen and coated with a greyish white coating. Hot burning pain is felt in the mouth extending down to the stomach and abdomen, followed by nausea, retching and vomiting. The vomited matter is a greyish slimy mucoid material containing blood and shreds of mucous membrane. This is followed by diarrhoea with bloody stools and accompanied by tenesmus. The urine is suppressed or scanty containing blood and albumin. The pulse becomes quick, small and irregular, and collapse soon supervenes. In some cases spasms, tremors convulsions and unconsciousness are observed before death occurs. Gangrenous colitis<sup>3</sup> may be observed if the patient has survived six or more days.

It should be noted that the symptoms are liable to great variation in different cases although the doses have been the same.

Salivation, gingivitis and loosening of the teeth with foetid breath are usually common when mercurial vapours are inhaled.

Intravenous injections of novasurol and mersalyl as diuretics are, sometimes, followed by dyspnoea, cyanosis convulsions and death. They may produce death almost suddenly from anaphylactic shock.

**Diagnosis**—This has to be diagnosed from arsenical poisoning. The symptoms of mercurial poisoning commence sooner, and the acridity and the constriction of the throat are more marked. The vomited matters and stools more often contain blood. The irritation of the kidneys is also more pronounced.

**Fatal Dose**—An intravenous injection of 0.06 grammes of metallic mercury as a 40 per cent oil emulsion has proved fatal. On the contrary, recovery has followed 27.2 grammes (2 c.c.) of metallic mercury injected intravenously with a view to committing suicide.<sup>4</sup> Thirty grains of red oxide of mercury taken with an ounce of acetic acid proved fatal to a girl of 17 years within 30 hours.<sup>5</sup> The average fatal dose of mercuric chloride for an adult is three to five grains. Its smallest recorded dose is two grains which killed a child.<sup>6</sup> Recovery<sup>7</sup> has resulted after the administration of ninety or one hundred grains, or even much larger

<sup>1</sup> *Jour Inter Med Socie Dec 26 1910 p 200.*

<sup>2</sup> *Jour Inter Med Socie 1915 LVI p .07*

<sup>3</sup> Berger Applebaum and Young *Jour Inter Med Socie Feb 27 1931 p 700*

<sup>4</sup> Leschke *Clin Toxic Fig Transl by Stewart and Dorner, 1931 p 33*

<sup>5</sup> *Brit Med Jour Vol I 1890 p 19*

<sup>6</sup> Taylor, Prince and Tract of Med Juris Ed 1 Vol II p 300

<sup>7</sup> Wittkau *Med Juris and Toxic Vol II, p 35*

doses under prompt treatment by milk, eggs, and emetics. The average fatal dose of mercuric cyanide is ten to twenty grains. That of mercuric nitrate is one drachm, and of turpeth mineral is forty to sixty grains though three to six grains of the latter have caused death in from 3 to 15 hours when administered to young children<sup>1</sup>. Six grains is the smallest quantity of calomel which has caused the death of a boy, aged fourteen years, in three weeks from ulceration and gangrene of the face<sup>2</sup>.

**Fatal Period** —The usual fatal period is 3 to 5 days, but death may take place much sooner or later than this. The shortest recorded period from mercuric chloride poisoning is half an hour<sup>3</sup>, and the longest is twenty three days<sup>4</sup>.

**Treatment** —If vomiting has not already commenced, give emetics or pass the stomach tube cautiously and wash out the stomach with warm water to which carbonate of magnesium has been added. Albumen in the form of raw white of egg, or vegetable gluten, mixed with a large quantity of skim milk should then be administered, the albuminate of mercury thus formed although insoluble in water, is soluble in excess of albumen, and is liable to be digested and absorbed if left in the stomach. It must, therefore, be removed by the administration of emetics or lavage of the stomach. Demulcent drinks may be administered to protect the stomach wall.

Three to four tablespoonfuls of animal charcoal suspended in about a pint of water should be administered as soon as possible, as it has the great power of absorbing mercury salts. The addition of about five drachms of magnesium sulphite increases the absorptive power of the charcoal and hastens the removal of the ingested poison<sup>5</sup>.

The stomach may be washed out with 500 c.c. of water containing 30 grammes of sodium thiosulphate. Intravenous injection of sodium thiosulphate in doses of  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 grammie in a ten per cent solution has been recommended, but administration by mouth of 10 ml. of a ten per cent solution of sodium hypophosphate with 5 ml. of hydrogen peroxide in a glass of water and gastric lavage with the same solution are regarded more effective. Intramuscular injections of a solution containing ten per cent B.A.L. and 20 per cent benzyl benzoate in arachis oil are suggested as a useful remedy in acute mercurial poisoning, provided it is administered as early as possible.

Rosenthal<sup>6</sup> recommends the use of sodium formaldehyde sulphoxylate as a chemical antidote for mercury poisoning. His method of treatment consists of gastric lavage with a 5 per cent solution of sodium formaldehyde sulphoxylate, 200 c.c. being left in the stomach and slow intravenous injection of 10 G. of the substance dissolved in 100 to 200 c.c. of distilled water, the dose being repeated in 4 to 6 hours. He also gives high colonic lavage with a 1 in 1000 solution.

Intravenous injections of 20 to 40 c.c. of a 25 per cent solution of glucose have been recommended. The solution of glucose in the form of a drop by drop enema has also a beneficial effect. Later on, the symptoms should be treated as they arise. It is said that sodium chloride is to be avoided, as it favours the absorption of mercury, but Professor Michaud<sup>7</sup> recommends the liberal supply of sodium chloride (about 15 grammes daily) with the food in order to combat the dangerous acidosis and, in addition, a 0.9 per cent solution of sodium chloride and a 10 per cent solution of sodium bicarbonate by podermically and intravenously.

1 *Me. Phedron Med. Actas Plata*, 1843, *VIII*, p. 682; *Wittaus, Ibid.*, p. 39.

2 *London Med. G.<sup>n</sup>*, Vol. 18, 1830, p. 484.

3 *Taylor on Poisons*, *I* & *III*, p. 378.

4 *Scott Supden, Ital. Med. Jour.*, April 8, 1905, p. 67.

5 *Leschke Clin. Toxic. Fiz. Transl.* by Stewart and Dorset, 1934, p. 43.

6 *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.* 1934, Vol. 102, p. 1273, see also *Josiphine Barnes, Lancet*,

Jan 11, 1939, p. 89.

7 *Fortschritte der Therapie*, No. 10, 1930, *its Medicis*, Nov., 1930, p. 502.

Since the introduction of this method he has saved two cases of serious poisoning by corrosive sublimate

**Post mortem Appearances** —The appearances of corrosive poisoning will be present if the poison is taken in a concentrated form. Otherwise the signs of irritant poisoning will be observed.

The mucous membrane of the lips mouth and pharynx presents a diffuse greyish white escharotic appearance. The same appearance is noticeable in the oesophagus its mucous membrane appears also corrugated and eroded. The stomach contents are masses of coagulated albumen mixed with mucus and liquid blood. Its mucous membrane is corroded, inflamed and covered with a greyish deposit of mercury, or a black deposit of its sulphide.

During the post mortem examination great care should be taken in removing the stomach from the abdominal cavity, lest it might be ruptured owing to the great softening of its walls. Perforation of the stomach is very rare.

The intestines chiefly the caecum and rectum are found inflamed. The liver and spleen are congested. The kidneys are often acutely inflamed.

It must be remembered that the post mortem lesions are found in the alimentary canal even if death has occurred from absorption of corrosive sublimate as a result of the external application to the skin or irrigation of wounds or abscess cavities or of the uterus and vagina.

**Chronic Poisoning** —This form of poisoning occurs among those who are exposed to the vapours of mercury in factories where mercury and its salts are largely used. It also occurs among those who have taken internally for a prolonged period excessive doses of mercurial compounds, or used the mercurial ointment in the form of an external application.

**Symptoms** —These are nausea, digestive disturbances colicky pain and vomiting. Ptyalism or salivation is a constant symptom which is accompanied by foul breath swollen and painful salivary glands and inflamed and ulcerated gums which usually present a blue line at their junction with the teeth. Later the teeth become loose and carious necrosis of the jaw occurs and diarrhoea, general wasting and anaemia result.

The skin eruptions of an erythematous eczematous or pustular type may be noticed. The nervous symptoms known as *mercurial tremors* supervene. These first of all affect the muscles of the tongue producing stammering and hesitancy of speech and then affect the muscles of the face; these latter extend to the muscles of the arms and legs. They are excited by voluntary movements, and are absent during sleep. The tremors are followed by paralysis of the limbs. The patient complains of cough with bloody expectoration and dies from exhaustion. Sometimes, he is affected by mental disturbances and hallucinations, which may result in insanity.

Lung and kidney affections, as well as nervous affections are likely to be aggravated by the toxic effects of mercury.

**Treatment** —The patient should be removed from the surroundings where he was exposed to the poison. He should be directed to drink milk freely and to gargle his mouth with potassium chlorate or borax, to keep his bowels open by saline purgatives, and to take warm baths to promote the action of the skin. Intravenous injections of sodium thiosulphate in doses of 0.1 to 0.6 grammes in a c.c. of water on alternate days are considered efficacious for the treatment of salivation.<sup>1</sup>

It is advisable to give potassium iodide in small doses so that the poison may be converted into mercuric iodide which is soluble in excess of the potassium salt. Massage and electricity should be advised for paralysis. Narcotics should be given for severe tremors.

**Chemical Tests for Mercuric Salts —** 1 Hydrochloric acid and sulphuretted hydrogen give a yellow precipitate which changes to orange brown and lastly black insoluble in alkalies or dilute acids

2 Caustic potash gives a yellow or orange precipitate

3 Potassium iodide gives a scarlet precipitate soluble in excess

4 Stannous chloride gives a white precipitate changing to black

5 If a piece of a bright wire of copper be introduced into the solution acidulated with a few drops of hydrochloric acid a silver coating of mercury will be formed on the wire

**Chemical Tests for Mercurous Salts —** 1 Hydrochloric acid gives a white precipitate, which is insoluble in acids and is blackened by ammonia

2 Potassium iodide gives a yellowish green precipitate which becomes grey or greyish black if the reagent is added in excess and then heated

3 Caustic potash yields a black precipitate insoluble in excess

4 Potassium bichromate gives a brick red precipitate

5 Stannous chloride gives a white precipitate changing to grey

6 *Reinsch's Test* — This is used to detect mercury in organic mixtures. A grey coating of mercury forms on the copper foil. If the copper foil is dried and heated in a dry test tube, mercury will volatilize and deposit as round globules of the metal on the part of the cooler tube which can be seen under the microscope.

**Medico Legal Points** — Metallic mercury when perfectly pure can hardly be considered to be poisonous. Cases are recorded where individuals have swallowed a pound or two of the liquid metal as a treatment of chronic constipation without any harmful effects. During the trial of a murder case at Agra in June 1905 it was proved in evidence that the accused first tried to kill the old woman by repeated administrations of metallic mercury but eventually put strychnine into the meal which caused her death. The analyst who made an examination of the organs said that he discovered two hundred and ninety six grains of pure metallic mercury in the body. The mercury however was not the cause of death and did not act as a poison. He found one seventh of a grain of strychnine in the stomach liver and kidneys and there was little doubt that strychnine had been the cause of death.<sup>1</sup> In exceptional cases however mercury may undergo chemical changes in the body and operate as a poison. A girl who took four and a half ounces by weight of mercury as an abortifacient did not abort but in a few days suffered from mercurial tremors and loss of muscular power. These symptoms continued for two months but there was no ulceration and no blue line on the gums.

In India mercury is sometimes given in food to cause injury. A case is recorded in which liquid mercury was administered to a woman in her food. The woman vomited twice after taking mercury and had redness and swelling of the gums which bled on pressure with the finger.<sup>2</sup> Metallic mercury was introduced into a plantain which was given to a person to eat but the metal was seen by the intended victim in the portion of the fruit before he ate it.<sup>3</sup> A Mahomedan

1 C J S Thompson *Poison Mysteries* p 345.

2 *Lancet* Vol II 1833 p 39 Taylor & also *s J d III* p 360

3 *Brown Med Leg Rep Br & Ires* 1869 p 15

4 *Bo boj Clinical Alziger's Clinical Report* 1901

male of Karachi, in his afternoon meal, was given *dal* and *chapati* for eating by his wife. He suspected *para* (mercury) in these and reported the matter to the police. All these articles were examined and found to contain metallic mercury and a *louri* (shell) which were given to the woman by her paramour.<sup>1</sup>

Mercurial vapours are certainly poisonous, and accidents have occurred from their inhalation. A case is recorded by Seidel,<sup>2</sup> in which a woman inhaled for some affection or other 2.5 grammes of mercury poured on red hot coals, and died in ten days with all the symptoms of mercurial poisoning.

Mercury in a finely divided state, when rubbed into the skin as an ointment, is readily absorbed, and produces salivation and other effects of mercurial poisoning. It has also caused death in a few instances when its application was too liberal. Thus, three persons were found dead in bed; the previous day they had rubbed into the body, for the purpose of curing the itch, an ointment containing 270 grammes of finely divided mercury.<sup>3</sup>

Amalgams which are the alloys of mercury act as poisons. Stock<sup>4</sup> has drawn attention to the special danger of chronic mercury poisoning by copper amalgam used for stopping carious teeth.

Poisoning by mercuric oxide is rare. In his annual report for the year 1929, the Chemical Analyst of Bombay reports the case of a young Christian woman who had taken some red powder given her by a friend as a cure for headache from which she had been suffering. Within a quarter of an hour she had felt pains in the abdomen and had vomited blood stained matter. Her stomach was washed out at the J J Hospital, and she recovered the next day. About nine grains of red oxide of mercury were separated from the stomach washings, in which it had been plainly visible as a deposit.

A case<sup>5</sup> is also recorded in which red oxide of mercury was given by a woman to her female infant, 6 days old, with intent to kill her, who had some deformity in her legs. The infant became suddenly ill, was unable to suck and was salivating profusely, but she was saved by prompt treatment.

Of all the salts of mercury the chlorides and nitrates are responsible for most of the cases of acute poisoning. It should be noted that mercuric salts are more poisonous than mercurous salts. Children bear mercury well, and some persons have idiosyncrasy for mercury salts.

Mercuric chloride is extensively used as a disinfectant and as an antiseptic. Hence accidental cases of poisoning by this salt are likely to occur from the use of too strong a solution used in washing abscess cavities or in irrigating the vagina, uterus or rectum. Cases of poisoning have also occurred from its introduction into the vagina in tablet form as a contraceptive, antisyphilitic or abortifacient measure. C. Holtermann<sup>6</sup> has found records of ten cases of poisoning, where mercuric chloride was inserted into the vagina in tablet form in amounts, varying from 0.25 to 3 grammes. Local necroses and ulcers occurred especially in the posterior wall. Poisoning was due to absorption of mercury albuminate from the necrotic patches. Seven of these ended in death in one to three weeks. A case is also recorded in which a woman committed suicide by introducing three tablets of corrosive sublimate into the vagina. The whole of the vagina sloughed, thus facilitating absorption of the poison from the wound. In such cases it is possible for deposits of mercury albuminate to be formed in the periproctal tissue,

1. *Bombay Chem. Analyster's Annual Rep.*, 1927, p. 24.

2. *Maschka's Handbuch*, II, p. 295; *Blyth, Poisons*, Ed. V, p. 686.

3. *Leiblinger quoted by Blyth*, *Ibid.*

4. *Med. Klin.*, 1928, Nos. 23 and 30, *Leschnke, Clin. Toxic.*, Eng. Transl. by Stewart and Dorrier, 1934, p. 31.

5. *Bombay Chem. Analyster's Annual Rep.*, 1935, p. 5.

6. *Zentralbl. f Gynakol.*, Sep. 19, 1925, p. 2133; *Brit. Med. Jour.*, Oct. 24, 1925, Fp., p. 61.

hence it is advisable to inject milk at once as a neutralizer into the tissue lying between the vagina and rectum. Remoter lesions are severe parenchymatous nephritis and fatty degeneration of the heart<sup>1</sup>.

Mercuric chloride is often administered internally and an accidental case of poisoning may occur from an overdose. The solid preparations have been swallowed accidentally, and have given rise to poisoning in some cases.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes, the salt is selected for suicidal poisoning, as also for homicidal purposes.

In his annual report for the year 1934, the Chemical Examiner Madras, describes the following cases of poisoning by mercuric chloride. Of these the first two are homicidal and the last suicidal.

1 A man was suspicious of his wife's conduct and there had been frequent quarrels between them. One evening on returning from work he found his wife absent from home. He went in search of her, found her and asked her to return home to serve him food but she refused. As he was hungry he went home and began to eat the food that had been prepared by his wife early in the evening. The food had a queer taste and suspecting that his wife might have poisoned the food he reported the matter to the village magistrate. The food was forwarded to the Chemical Examiner, who found in it about 17½ grains of corrosive sublimate.

2 A man was given milk poisoned with corrosive sublimate and he died four days later. In the visceral matters only very small quantities of mercury were found whereas in the vomits that had been collected there were 25 grains of corrosive sublimate.

3 A man, aged 40, was arrested and escorted by the Police from Palmi to Mehr. On the way his escort allowed him to drink coffee at a hotel after which he had severe abdominal cramps and vomiting. He was admitted to hospital where he died about a fortnight later. Before his death he confessed to having swallowed perchloride of mercury at the coffee hotel. Extremely minute quantities of mercury were detected in the visceral matters but one of the vomits was found to contain about 1½ grains of perchloride of mercury.

In his annual report for the year 1939, the Chemical Examiner, Madras quotes an accidental case of poisoning by mercuric chloride. A religious mendicant had been in the habit of sucking alum to quench his thirst probably to impress spectators. One day he took by mistake from his bag a crystal of perchloride of mercury and sucked it thinking it to be alum. He was removed to hospital in a collapsed condition and he died there. About one and four-fifths grains of mercuric chloride were detected in the viscera of the deceased.

Mercurous chloride (calomel) is generally regarded as a safe medicine though medicinal doses have produced toxic effects. H F Bolt<sup>3</sup> cites the case of a man aged 60 years who owing to marked idiosyncrasy to calomel, had an attack of acute poisoning after taking a 1 grain pill. The symptoms were intense abdominal pain, vomiting, urticarial rash, oedema of the fore arms, legs, neck, eyelids and lobes of the ears, severe pain in the right side of the lumbos, scanty urine, dry skin and a rise of temperature to 99.8° F. Recovery occurred in four or five weeks. In some cases death may occur indirectly from septic poisoning from extensive ulceration and gangrene of the mouth and throat. Calomel, administered hypodermically or intramuscularly may cause fatal poisoning. Runeberg<sup>4</sup> reports the case of a woman 34 years old who received three hypodermic injections of calomel of 1½ grains each in one month, developed the symptoms of mercurial poisoning and died on the twenty third day after the last injection. Backer<sup>5</sup> reports a case of fatal poisoning following the intramuscular injection of 1 c.c. of a 10 per cent suspension of calomel, death resulting one week after the third injection.

A homicidal case<sup>6</sup> of poisoning by the injection of novasurol occurred at Cologne in the year 1926. The patient died from mercury poisoning with bleeding diarrhoea, inflammation of the mucous membrane of the mouth and anuria.

After it is absorbed into the system mercury is eliminated in the saliva, urine and faeces, and in the milk and perspiration, if the quantity is large. It also passes rapidly to the foetus in utero through the placental circulation. In some cases the elimination is so rapid, that mercury may not be detected in the

<sup>1</sup> Rosenthal, *Zentralbl f Gynak.*, Jan 9 1926 p 122, *Brit Med Jour* Feb 20, 1926 Ep., p 36

<sup>2</sup> Leonard Fuller, *Brit Med Jour*, Jan 19 1913, p 116, Fergusson Floyl, *Ibid*, Feb 1, 1913, p 220

<sup>3</sup> *Brit Med Jour*, Aug 14 1921 p 245

<sup>4</sup> *Deutsch Med Wochenschr*, 1889 IV, p 4, Peterson, Haines and Webster, *Leg Med and Toxic*, Vol II, Ld II, p 187

<sup>5</sup> *Hospitalstid*, 1921, 64 p 737, *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> Frich Leschke, *Clin Toxic*, Engl Transl by Stewart and Dorter, 1934, p 35.

solid organs, even though death has occurred from its poisoning. Taylor<sup>1</sup> says that it is thus completely eliminated in fifteen days from the system without leaving any trace in the organs; while according to Withaus<sup>2</sup> the elimination is rapid and complete in from one to four days if a single dose is given, but it is slow if the poison is given in repeated small doses, and may be detected in the tissues even after thirteen years.

Mercury may be detected in the bones even in acute poisoning. In a case in which a person died in Patiala very suddenly and the body was cremated, the ashes and pieces of bones were forwarded to the Chemical Examiner for analysis. Mercury was detected in the spongy parts of the bones.<sup>3</sup>

Mercury is often used as a medicine; hence the detection of a small quantity in the viscera does not contra indicate death from some other cause.

Mercury is not a constituent of the human body; hence its detection in the tissues proves that it must have been introduced into the system from outside.

### COPPER (TILMBA)

The salts of copper which are important from a toxicological point of view are—

1. **Copper Sulphate (Blue Vitriol, Blue Stone),  $\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$** —The vernacular name of this salt is *Nila tutia*. It occurs in large, blue, slightly efflorescent crystals, freely soluble in water and having a styptic taste. It is converted into a bluish white salt,  $\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ , when heated to  $100^\circ\text{C}$ . It becomes anhydrous at  $220^\circ$  to  $240^\circ\text{C}$ . The anhydrous salt is white and extremely hygroscopic. Copper sulphate is given as an astrigent in  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 2 grain doses and as an emetic in 5 to 10-grain doses. In large doses it acts as an irritant poison. It is also probable that small doses of the coarsely powdered salt, repeated frequently, would produce gastric and intestinal irritation and cause death, especially if prescribed when the mucous membrane of the intestinal canal is in a congested state.

2. **Copper Carbonate**.—The normal carbonate has not been obtained, but a basic carbonate,  $\text{Cu}_2(\text{OH})_2\text{CO}_3$ , occurs native as malachite, and is obtained when carbonate of sodium is added to a solution of copper sulphate. Natural verdigris, the green deposit, which appears on copper when exposed to atmospheric moisture and carbon dioxide, is the same compound.

3. **Copper Subacetate (Artificial Verdigris, Aerugo),  $2\text{Cu}_2(\text{OH})_2(\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{O}_2)_4$** .—This is known in the vernacular as *zangal*. It occurs in powder, or in bluish green masses of very minute crystals. It is frequently employed in the arts. It is used externally in medicine.

**Acute Poisoning—Symptoms.**—These commence from a quarter to half an hour after swallowing the poison with a metallic taste in the mouth, burning pain in the stomach, thirst, nausea, eructations and repeated vomiting. The vomited matter is blue or green in colour, and can be distinguished from bile by its turning deep blue on the addition of ammonium hydroxide. The colour does not change in the case of bile. There is diarrhoea with much straining, the motions being liquid and brown, but not bloody. The urine is suppressed or diminished in quantity, and may contain blood. The skin becomes jaundiced, and cramps of the legs or spasms and convulsions occur. There is frontal headache, and the symptoms of collapse set in, if the dose is large.

In some cases there is complete paralysis of the limbs, followed by insensibility and coma ending in death.

1. *On Poisons*, Ed III, p. 788, *Med. Gaz.*, 1850, Vol. 46, p. 255.

2. *Med. Juris. and Toxic.*, Vol IV, pp. 767-68.

3. *Punjab Chemical Examiner's Annual Report*, 1923, p. 3.

**Fatal Dose** — Uncertain. Half an ounce of verdigris<sup>1</sup> has killed a woman aged 24 years. About half an-ounce of copper sulphate has proved fatal to a woman aged 20 years<sup>2</sup>. One ounce of copper sulphate has also proved fatal to an adult<sup>3</sup>. Recovery has followed a dose of 1-0 grammes or nearly four ounces of copper sulphate<sup>4</sup>. It should be remembered that copper sulphate taken in small doses for some time is supposed to be more dangerous than when a large quantity is swallowed at a time.

**Fatal Period** — The usual fatal period is one to three days but may be prolonged for several days. On the contrary, a woman suicide died from spasm of the glottis soon after she had swallowed a strong solution of copper sulphate. A young lady<sup>5</sup> died about an hour after the onset of symptoms of poisoning. On analysis copper sulphate equivalent to 38 grains and methylene blue were detected in the stomach and its contents. A Mahomedan female<sup>6</sup> 4 years old, died within 2 to 2½ hours after she had taken copper sulphate with intent to commit suicide. A child<sup>7</sup> died in 4 hours from an unknown quantity of copper sulphate. A man died in six hours after he had taken an unknown quantity of copper carbonate<sup>8</sup>.

**Treatment** — There is no need to use emetics as vomiting occurs in five or ten minutes after taking the poison. Wash out the stomach with water containing potassium ferrocyanide which forms insoluble cupric ferrocyanide. Administer white of egg or milk as an antidote. The albumen contained in them will form an insoluble salt albuminate of copper. Give demulcent drinks. Relieve pain by injecting morphine hydrochloride hypodermically and use diuretics if the urine is suppressed. Give castor oil to remove the poison from the intestines. Support the patient by giving nutrient enemata and by using stimulants hypodermically.

**Post-mortem Appearances** — The skin may be yellow owing to jaundice. The mucous membrane of the alimentary canal may be congested swollen inflamed and excoriated. The contents of the stomach are green or blue and so is the colour of its mucous membrane. The mucous membrane of the duodenum may present the same appearance. The colon sometimes shows large ulcerations and the rectum may be perforated. The liver may be soft and fatty. The kidneys may show the signs of parenchymatous inflammation. In the case reported by Starr<sup>10</sup> the blood of the entire body was found coagulated in the vessels, and changed to a chocolate colour.

Mallory<sup>1</sup> of Boston points out that chronic copper poisoning causes the symptom complex known, under the different names, as haemochromatosis, bronzed diabetes and pigment cirrhosis.

**Treatment** — Remove the cause, and use massage and warm baths. Keep the patient in fresh air, and attend to his diet and dyspepsia. Copper vessels used for cooking purposes should be tinned, and kept scrupulously clean.

**Post mortem Appearances** — The chief post mortem appearances are fatty degeneration of the liver and degeneration of the epithelial cells of the kidneys.

**Chemical Tests** — 1. Hydrochloric acid and hydrogen sulphide give a brownish black precipitate insoluble in ammonium sulphide, but soluble in potassium cyanide and freely soluble in warm nitric acid.

2. Ammonium hydroxide gives a greenish blue precipitate, soluble in excess forming a blue solution.

3. A few drops of potassium ferrocyanide solution added to a neutral or faintly acid solution of a copper salt produces a reddish brown precipitate of cupric ferrocyanide soluble in warm dilute nitric acid.

4. A bright steel needle or piece of iron wire, if introduced into a solution of a copper salt acidulated with a few drops of hydrochloric acid, becomes covered with a red coating of metallic copper after some time.

5. **Feigl's Test** — A few drops of dilute zinc nitrate solution and 1 or 2 c.c. of Feigl's reagent added to a neutral or faintly acid solution give a pink, purple or deep violet precipitate if copper is present.

Feigl's reagent is prepared by dissolving 8 grammes of mercuric chloride and 9 grammes of ammonium thiocyanate in 100 c.c. of distilled water.

**Medico-Legal Points** — 1. Copper as a metal is not poisonous. Copper coins when swallowed, may remain in the stomach or in the intestines for days without producing any poisonous symptoms. However, when alloyed with other metals and reduced to a fine powdery state, copper may act as a poison. All the copper salts are poisonous.

2. The blue or green colour and the strong metallic taste of copper salts prevent their use for homicidal purposes though, in India, copper sulphate is known to have been used homicidally mixed with powdered glass sweetmeat or some other article of food. In his annual report for the year 1935, the Chemical Examiner, Madras records a case in which a woman of immoral character put copper sulphate in the food intended for her husband. The husband tasted the food and noticed a peculiar burning sensation in the mouth as well as the peculiar colour of the food. The matter was reported to the police, and the woman was prosecuted and sentenced to undergo eight months' rigorous imprisonment. A case<sup>2</sup> is also recorded where a boy aged about 7 years, died from poisoning by copper sulphate given to him in *peras* by the man who wanted to marry his widowed mother. The widow had refused to marry the man saying that she would remain a widow for the rest of her life for the sake of her only son.

Copper sulphate has been used, though rarely, as a cattle poison. In his annual report for the year 1907, the Chemical Examiner of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh mentions a case in which copper sulphate was found in a piece of meat stated to have been inserted into the rectum of a buffalo. In his annual report for the year 1919, the Chemical Analyst of Bombay also mentions some cases of cattle poisoning by copper sulphate.

1. *Archives of Internal Medicine, Chicago March 15 1936 p 330*  
2. *U.P. and C.P. Chem. Exam. Annual Rep., 1930 p 5*

Suicidal cases are occasionally met with. Sometimes, copper sulphate is taken internally with a view to procuring abortion.

Accidental cases occur from swallowing copper sulphate by mistake or from contamination of food due to the formation of verdigris resulting from the action of vegetable acids on copper cooking vessels which are dirty and have not been properly tinned.

The author has seen two cases of accidental poisoning. In one case a child playfully swallowed a big crystal of copper sulphate. In the other case an adult woman took it by mistake for a condiment. Both recovered after having suffered from pain in the stomach, vomiting and purging. In his annual report for the year 1940, the Chemical Examiner, Madras, records three cases of accidental poisoning by copper sulphate. In one case a young man found a blue lump on the floor of a latrine and ate it thinking it to be candy. In the second case a man found a packet containing cashew nut kernels mixed with blue stone pieces in front of a cinema and devoured the lot in spite of the disagreeable taste. In the third case a person found a packet of blue stone lying on the road and ate the contents. Vomiting ensued in each of these individuals, and recovery occurred after their removal to hospital.

A case<sup>1</sup> of accidental poisoning is also reported in which a boy, 6 years old, died from copper poisoning after 9 c.c. of 10 per cent copper sulphate solution were injected into a tuberculous fistula. The autopsy showed severe parenchymatous injury to the heart, liver and kidneys. Chemical analysis revealed almost the total amount of the injected copper in the liver.

3. Poisonous symptoms may occur from the application of the salt to an abraded or raw surface and from its introduction into the vagina.

4. Copper sulphate is added to impart a rich green colouration to preserved and tinned peas, other vegetable substances and pickles, but the quantity is so small (probably one grain to one pound), that toxic effects are not usually produced and the salt, when taken into the stomach, is very likely converted into harmless albuminate of copper.

5. Copper is a normal constituent of the body, and is found in the liver. It is taken into the system along with food, as it exists in minute traces in almost all the varieties of food, such as cereals, potatoes, beans, spinach, different varieties of fruits, and even in mineral water. Hence the detection of copper in the viscera is of no value unless the quantity found is excessive, however, on account of free vomiting provoked by its salt, a very small quantity may be left in the organs. It is, therefore, essential to examine chemically the vomited matter, whenever available.

6. Copper is eliminated from the system more by the bowels than by the kidneys. It is also excreted in traces in the saliva, bile and milk, and it is possible that a portion may accumulate very slowly in the body. Copper is said to pass to the foetus *in utero* through the blood of the mother. Rai Bahadur K N Bagchi, Chemical Examiner, Bengal, has found from his investigations that the healthy foetal tissues, specially the liver, normally contain much larger quantities of copper—about three hundred per cent more—than the healthy adult tissues.<sup>2</sup>

#### LEAD (SHISHA)

The following are the preparations of lead, which are used in medicine or in the arts—

1. Lead Acetate,  $Pb(C_2H_3O_2)_2 \cdot 3H_2O$ —This is commonly called sugar of lead or salt of Saturn. It occurs in white masses of acicular crystals, slightly

<sup>1</sup> B. Beliens, *Deut. Zeit. f. Ges. Ger. Medizin*, Dec., 1937, Bd. 23, s. p. 171, *Med. Leg. und Criminol. Rev.* Vol. VI, Part II, April, 1938, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> Annual Report, 1933, p. 6.

efflorescent and having a sweet, astringent taste. It dissolves in water, forming an acid solution. It is also soluble in glycerin and in alcohol (90%). It looks very much like loaf sugar. It is an official preparation, the dose being  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 grains. It occurs in the composition of non official preparations, *Suppositorium plumbi cum opio* and *Pilula plumbi cum opio* (dose, 2 to 4 grains).

2. **Lead Subacetate**,  $\text{Pb}_2\text{O}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_2$ .—This is the chief constituent of Goulard's extract (*Liquor plumbi subacetatis fortis*), which is a colourless liquid with a sweet, astringent taste, and alkaline reaction. The extract contains about 12.5% of lead subacetate. Goulard water or Goulard's lotion (*Liquor plumbi subacetatis dilutus*) is prepared by adding 12.5 parts of Goulard's extract to 1000 parts of water.

3. **Lead Carbonate**,  $\text{PbCO}_3$ .—This is a white, crystalline powder, almost insoluble in water, but soluble in dilute acids. In the form of a basic carbonate or white lead (*Safeda*),  $(\text{PbCO}_3)_2$ ,  $\text{PbH}_2\text{O}_3$ , it is extensively used as a pigment in oil painting. It is also used as an ointment. Chronic cases of poisoning occur from the use of this salt.

4. **Lead Nitrate**,  $\text{Pb}(\text{NO}_3)_2$ .—This is a crystalline, poisonous salt, soluble in water, and is used in calico printing.

5. **Lead Sulphate**,  $\text{PbSO}_4$ .—This is a heavy, white powder, insoluble in water and is, therefore, supposed to be non poisonous, but cases of poisoning have occurred from sucking yarn coloured white with this salt.

6. **Lead Chromate**,  $\text{PbCrO}_4$ .—This is a bright yellow, insoluble powder, known as chrome yellow and is used as a pigment. Fatal cases of poisoning have occurred from the use of sweetmeats coloured with this salt. Joseph Uttal<sup>1</sup> also reports three cases of chronic poisoning from the use of tobacco snuff adulterated with lead chromate as a colouring agent.

7. **Lead Chloride**,  $\text{PbCl}_2$ .—This occurs as white, needle-shaped crystals, sparingly soluble in cold water, but more so in boiling water. When heated in contact with air, it is converted into an oxychloride, which is employed as a white pigment, known as Pattinson's white lead. The yellow oxychloride obtained by heating lead oxide and ammonium chloride is known as Cassel yellow, and is used as a pigment.

8. **Lead Iodide**,  $\text{PbI}_2$ .—This is a tasteless, odourless and bright yellow powder, slightly soluble in cold water, but readily soluble in boiling water. It is used in preparing a non official ointment, *unguentum plumbi iodidi*.

9. **Lead Sulphide (Galena)**,  $\text{PbS}$ .—This is naturally found in the form of cubic crystals, but is sold in the bazaar in a powder form as *Surma* in place of sulphide of tinimony which is used as a collyrium for the eyes.

10. **Lead Monoxide (Litharge, Massicot)**,  $\text{PbO}$ .—This is called *Mudrasang* in the vernacular. It is a pale brick red or pale orange scaly mass, very slightly soluble in water, but readily soluble in nitric and acetic acids. It is a constituent of a non official preparation, *emplastrum plumbi* (diachylon plaster). Quacks use monoxide as a remedy for syphilis. It is also commonly used by painters and glaziers, and is a constituent of certain hair dyes.

11. **Lead Tetroxide (Red lead, Minium)**,  $\text{Pb}_2\text{O}_4$ .—This is a scarlet, crystalline powder, varying in colour, according to its mode of preparation. It is insoluble in water but partially soluble in nitric acid. It is called *Sindur* or *Metia sindur* in the vernacular, and is employed as a pigment.

**Lead Tetra-Ethyl**,  $\text{Pb}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_5)_4$ .—This is a clear, heavy, oily liquid, somewhat volatile at ordinary temperatures. It has a specific gravity of 1.62, and has a peculiar sweetish odour. It is insoluble in ether and hot or cold water, but

1. *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, Jan 24, 1928, p. 288.

soluble in alcohol and acetone and insoluble in all proportions with fats and oils. It decomposes in sunlight with the formation of crystalline lead triethyl hydride which, in the presence of a halogen, forms lead triethyl.

This compound is added to petrol to prevent 'knocking', and the mixture, known as ethyl petrol or ethyl gasoline is used as a fuel for motor cars. It is absorbed either by inhalation or through the intact skin, and acts as a dangerous poison to persons engaged in the manufacture of lead tetra ethyl. However, investigations in England and in the United States of America have shown that drivers of cars using this fuel are not likely to be affected, if the amount of lead tetra ethyl does not exceed 1 part in 1300 parts by volume, or 650 parts by weight, of petrol, and that some absorption of lead may be noticed in the employees handling the fuel in garages and stations, but the effect is slight.<sup>1</sup>

### *Acute Poisoning* — This occurs mostly from lead acetate

**Symptoms** — A sweet metallic astringent taste, a sensation of burning and dryness in the throat, and intense thirst immediately after swallowing the poison. Vomit occurs within half an hour, the vomited matter being white or tinged with blood. Colicky pain comes in paroxysms but is relieved by pressure. The abdominal walls are tender and contracted. Constipation is a constant feature, though purging has occurred in some exceptional cases when the stools are offensive and dark or black from the formation of lead sulphide. The urine is scanty. The tongue is coated and the breath is very foul and offensive. Great prostration occurs with cold, clammy skin and quick, feeble pulse. The nervous symptoms develop viz., drowsiness, insomnia, headache, vertigo, muscular cramps, convulsions, numbness and paralysis of the lower limbs. Wasting follows, and death occurs generally from exhaustion.

In acute poisoning by lead tetra ethyl the central nervous system is affected, and the chief symptoms are irritability, nervousness, insomnia, headache, vertigo, mental excitement, muscular weakness, delirium and convulsions. There may be nausea and vomiting.

Three fatal cases<sup>2</sup> of lead tetra-ethyl poisoning occurred recently in Bengal. These men along with others were engaged in cleaning large empty petrol tanks in which leaded petrol was stored. There was some scum or semi solid substance at the bottom of these tanks which they were cleaning. After a few days they developed headache, insomnia, restlessness, forgetfulness, delirium, delirium and signs of violent mania such as shouting and knocking the head against a wall before they died. Bassells and Dod<sup>3</sup> describe twenty five cases of lead tetra-ethyl poisoning of varying degrees of severity which occurred during petrol tank cleaning operations.

**Subacute Form** — The subacute form of poisoning results from the administration of repeated small doses of a soluble salt such as lead acetate. A blue line is marked on the gums and the gastro intestinal symptoms are usually present. The face is livid and sunken and the look is anxious. The secretions are mostly arrested. The urine is scanty and deep red. The nervous symptoms are more prominent, such as numbness, vertigo, dragging pain in the loins, cramps and paralysis of the lower limbs. Death, though rare, may occur from convulsions and coma within three days.

After apparent recovery the symptoms, sometimes, return probably in an aggravated form, and the illness lasts for a long time.

**Fatal Dose** — Uncertain. Lead is not an active poison, though alarming symptoms have been produced even from the medicinal doses of acetate of lead. About 300 grains of a soluble lead salt, such as lead acetate, may cause death although recovery has followed one ounce of sugar of lead or of lead carbonate.

<sup>1</sup> For full details see later Med Assoc Jan 30 1926 p 370 Brit Med Jour, Jan 14 1928 p 61 and March 3 1928 pp 363-364 Lancet April 12 1930 p 820

<sup>2</sup> Ghosh and Baghi Organic and Toxicological Chemistry Ed II p 48 see also Imalananla Das and U C Sarkar Jour Ind Med Assoc Sep 1948 p 37

<sup>3</sup> Brit Med Jour Nov 9 1946, p 681

One and a half ounces of carbonate of lead have proved fatal, and a 'knife-pointful' of litharge taken with a view to procuring abortion has caused death.<sup>1</sup> A drop or two of pure lead tetra ethyl may cause serious symptoms.<sup>2</sup>

**Fatal Period**—Uncertain. A man, aged 26 years, died in about 34 hours after taking red lead.<sup>3</sup> Two children who swallowed Goulard's extract died within 36 hours.<sup>4</sup> An adult who took 1½ ounces of white lead died on the 3rd day.

**Treatment.**—Administer sodium or magnesium sulphate in half ounce doses freely diluted with water to form insoluble lead sulphate, and then wash out the stomach with plain water. Dilute sulphuric acid may be substituted for sodium or magnesium sulphate. In the absence of the stomach tube vomiting should be excited by giving simple emetics. Give demulcent drinks, such as barley water, milk or white of egg. Hypodermic injections of morphine and atropine may be given to relieve colic. Hegler<sup>5</sup> recommends the administration of calcium chloride or slow intravenous injection of from 8 to 10 c.c. of a ten per cent solution of calcium bromide for the treatment of colic. Give alkaline purgatives or wash out the bowels by high enemata. Give calcium salts and an alkaline diet consisting of milk, vegetables and potatoes to favour the deposit of lead in the bone marrow. Leschke<sup>6</sup> recommends the administration of calcium gluconate in doses of 0.5 grammes with milk five to six times a day.

Intravenous injections of sodium thiosulphate are considered beneficial in the treatment of acute and subacute poisoning. In mild cases it is advisable to begin with the intravenous injection of 0.6 gramme of sodium thiosulphate dissolved in from 10 to 20 c.c. of distilled water. This dose may be increased gradually to 1 gramme. In severe cases the initial dose may be 1 gramme.

**Post mortem Appearances**—The signs of acute gastro enteritis are present. The mucous membrane of the stomach may be thickened and softened with eroded patches, and may be covered with a whitish grey deposit. The same appearances may be observed in the duodenum.

**Chronic Poisoning (Plumbism, Saturnism or Saturnine Poisoning)**—This occurs among persons employed in factories and industries in which lead and its salts are used, thus it occurs among painters, compositors, plumbers, pewters, enamel workers, glass blowers, electric light workers, glaziers, lace workers, lead smelters, card players, etc. It may also result from tinned foods contaminated with lead, from drinking water or cider stored in leaden cisterns and from the constant use of hair dyes and cosmetics containing lead. M. Bodron,<sup>7</sup> Public Health Commissioner, Brest, describes in the *Presse Medicale* an epidemic of lead poisoning in which thirty three persons were affected after eating bread baked in an oven, which was heated with wood that had been obtained by breaking old boats. The wood was found covered with paint that was rich in lead salts. Clayton<sup>8</sup> describes an outbreak of chronic lead poisoning amongst yarn workers at Accrington involving nine women, thus proving greater susceptibility of women to lead poisoning. Children are less susceptible.

Chronic lead poisoning occurs in India from the use of *ghee* (clarified butter) stored in brass or copper vessels lined inside with tin. *Ghee* becomes impregnated with lead derived from the tin which, sometimes, contains it as an impurity, and

<sup>1</sup> Lesser, *3ter Jahrschrift f. ger. Med.* 1885, Dixonmann, *Foris Med. and Toxic.*, *J. F. I.*, p. 30<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *Thunes C. H. Clinical Toxicol.* 1940 p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> *Bengal Chem. Examiner's Annual Rep.* 1936, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Collis Harry *Lea Med. and Toxic.* 3rd Ed., p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> *Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift* Leipzig April 11, 1933 p. 570. *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, July 1, 1933 p. 97.

<sup>6</sup> *Clin. Toxicol. Eng. Transl.*, by Stewart and Dorrier 1934 p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, Nov. 25 1933 p. 1081.

<sup>8</sup> *Brit. Med. Jour.*, Feb. 10, 1906 p. 311.

forms a poisonous salt, oleate of lead. The poison may also be conveyed into the system by taking the food cooked in tinned vessels—the common practice in India. Candy<sup>1</sup> quotes the cases of chronic lead poisoning observed by Mankad and Fozdar in Ahmedabad.

Chronic lead poisoning may occur from absorption of lead through the raw or intact skin. Gottheil<sup>2</sup> reports that a patient suffered from chronic lead poisoning after local applications to extensive burns of dilute Burow's solution of aluminium acetate holding in suspension lead sulphate, and died after eight weeks. Bagchi<sup>3</sup> has shown that in Bengal, Hindu married women who are in the habit of applying vermillion to the scalp above the middle of the forehead where the hair is usually parted, often suffer from chronic lead poisoning as the vermillion which contains red lead mixed with a red synthetic dye is absorbed through the scalp. The use of hair oil which is so common among women, helps to hold the lead in contact with the scalp by forming lead soap with the fatty acids of the oil, and thus favours absorption, especially if the epithelium of the scalp is damaged.

**Symptoms**—A sweetish metallic taste in the mouth, foul tongue, fetid breath, a blue line on the gums, especially of the upper jaw, but it is absent if there are no teeth or if they are kept clean. This is due to the decomposed food in the mouth forming hydrogen sulphide which forms sulphide of lead. The patient complains of dyspepsia, becomes emaciated and anaemic, and has a sallow earthy complexion. The pulse is slow and of high tension, the blood pressure being greatly increased. The blood shows the presence of punctate bisophilia among the red corpuscles and diminution of the haemoglobin content. The red corpuscles and polymorphonuclears are diminished, while the lymphocytes, large mononuclears and eosinophils are increased in numbers. Interstitial nephritis and general arteriosclerosis are often present. The urine contains albumin, lead and haematoxypyrin. Menstrual derangements and miscarriages are common in women, while sterility is noticed in both men and women.

The chief prominent symptoms are colic and constipation, arthralgia, encephalopathy and paralysis.

**1 Colic and Constipation (Dry Belly ache)**—Colicky pain felt round the umbilicus is very intense, but is relieved by pressure. The abdominal muscles are retracted though hard and tense. There is obstinate constipation. Tenesmus is usually present, but diarrhoea is very rare.

**2 Arthralgia**—The patient complains of rheumatic pain of a shooting nature in the bones and large joints, such as the knees, elbows and shoulders, but the small joints are not affected. Contractions and twitchings of the muscles may be present.

**3 Encephalopathy**—This involves cerebral and psychical affections such as intense headache, dizziness, insomnia, anaesthesia, optic neuritis, amaurosis, convulsions, hallucinations, delirium, insanity, clampsia and coma. Besides these, there are other symptoms viz., vaginismus, abortion in pregnant women and loss of sexual power in men.

**4 Paralysis**—Paralysis first affects the extensor muscles of the forearm and fingers except the supinator longus and causes "wrist drop" and "claw-shaped hand". It then spreads to the extensors of the foot resulting in "dropped foot". The tibialis anterior is generally not affected. The muscles begin to waste, and the condition resembles that of acute anterior poliomyelitis.

<sup>1</sup> Ind. Med. Gazette March 1933 p. 136 see also Ind. Med. Gaz. Oct., 1937, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc. 1910, 54, p. 1036

<sup>3</sup> Ind. Med. Gaz. Jan., 1911, p. 3.

Tremors, which are increased by movements, are observed in the muscles before paralysis sets in.

**Treatment.**—This consists in the removal of the patient from the influence of the poison. Medicinal doses of potassium or sodium iodide, parathyroid and parathormone should be administered to assist the elimination of lead through the kidneys. Sodium bicarbonate should be given in large doses of 20 to 30 grammes a day divided in four or five portions, as it increases the output of lead owing to the transformation of the insoluble tribasic lead phosphate to the soluble dibasic phosphate through the liberated carbonic acid.<sup>1</sup> Saline purgatives, such as magnesium sulphate and sodium sulphate should be given to remove lead from the bowels. An acid diet deficient in calcium, vitamin C, hot baths, sulphur baths, galvanism and massage should also be tried for removing the poison from the system. Hypodermic injections of strichnine hydrochloride may be administered for paralysis.

Adequate exhaust ventilation in lead manufactories, scrupulous personal cleanliness and periodic medical examination of the workers by a factory surgeon to detect the earliest signs of lead poisoning are the chief measures which are recommended to prevent chronic lead poisoning. Every day the workers should take a diet rich in calcium together with a lot of milk and should drink water containing minute doses of sulphuric acid. They should be given four drachms of magnesium or sodium sulphate as a saline purgative once a week.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—Not constant. A blue line along the margin of the gums. The paralysed muscles are flaccid, and show fatty degeneration. The intestines are contracted and thickened. The liver and kidneys are found hard and contracted, the seat of granular degeneration. The heart may be hypertrophied, and there may be atheroma of the aorta and aortic valves.

**Detection of Lead in Urine.**—In impending or doubtful cases of plumbism it is necessary to analyse urine and faeces for the presence of lead. Merely detection of lead is not sufficient for a positive diagnosis of lead poisoning, but the actual quantity should be determined, inasmuch as traces of lead may be found in the urine and faeces of healthy people owing to the fact that small quantities of lead are ingested with such articles of food, as sausages, meat, beans, cherries, apples and other fruits. It has been estimated that the average American excretes from 0.02 to 0.08 mg. of lead per litre of urine and from 0.03 to 0.1 mg. per gramme ash of faeces.<sup>2</sup> From investigations carried out in Calcutta, Bagchi and Ganguli<sup>3</sup> have shown that the average lead content per litre of normal urine is 0.008 mg. in Hindus, 0.014 mg. in Mahomedans and 0.031 mg. in Anglo-Indians, while the average lead content per litre of normal faeces is about ten times the amount eliminated in the urine of Hindus and Mahomedans and about five times the amount excreted in the urine of Anglo-Indians. The difference in the lead content of the excreta appears to be due to the difference in the lead content of the common food stuffs taken by different communities.

The quantitative method of determining lead in urine devised by Francis, Harvey and Buchan<sup>4</sup> and modified by Roche Lynch, Slater and Osler<sup>5</sup> is as follows —

Five hundred cubic centimetres of urine are measured out of a 24 hour sample and evaporated to about 25 c.c. and transferred to a silica flask, all the residue being washed out from the

<sup>1</sup> Lub and his collaborators, *Lead Poisoning*, Baltimore, 1926, Lescher, *Clinic. Toxic.*, Eng. Transl., by Stewart and Dorner, 1934, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Kehoe and his colleagues, *Jour. of Industr. Hygiene*, Sept., 1933, *Brit. Med. Jour.*, April 24, 1934, p. 716.

<sup>3</sup> *Ind. Jour. of Med. Res.*, Vol. XXV, No. 1, July, 1937, p. 171, see also Roy and Ganguli, *Ind. Jour. of Med. Res.*, Vol. XX, 1932, p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> *Analyst*, Dec., 1929, p. 725.

<sup>5</sup> *Analyst*, Dec., 1934, p. 787.

evaporating basin with about 20 c.c. of concentrated nitric acid and dissolved by gentle heating. After cooling about 6 c.c. of concentrated sulphuric acid are added and heated with further addition of nitric acid drop by drop until complete oxidation takes place which is indicated by the absence of charring on further heating. The free nitric acid present in the solution is driven off by boiling strongly after diluting with about 40 c.c. of water and adding about 20 c.c. of a saturated solution of ammonium oxalate. The heating is continued for some time more till it is reduced to a small bulk by the decomposition of excess of sulphuric acid indicated by white fumes of sulphur trioxide.

To the oxidation product 2 c.c. of 10 per cent ammonium acetate and ammonium citrate solutions are added and the mixture is rendered alkaline with ammonia. It is then treated with 2 c.c. of 5 per cent sodium cyanide solution and transferred to a 150 c.c. separating funnel and extracted with these portions of 0.1 per cent solution of diphenylthiocarbazone in chloroform (about 20 c.c. in all) and three or four times again with pure chloroform (about 30 c.c. in all) until the last traces of the dye are completely removed from the aqueous mixture. The combined extracts are washed with water and distilled to drive off chloroform. The residue is oxidized by heating with 1 c.c. of concentrated nitric acid and a small crystal of potassium sulphate in a boiling water bath for about thirty minutes after which 0.5 c.c. of concentrated sulphuric acid is added and the heating is continued over a low flame adding nitric acid drop by drop as required. When oxidation is complete the free nitric acid is driven off by boiling strongly with water. After cooling it is diluted with 20 c.c. of water and transferred to a 50 c.c. Nessler cylinder. An exactly similar cylinder is selected for the standard lead solution a known amount of which (0.01 mg. of lead per c.c. of the solution) is carefully measured from a burette and run in the cylinder. Five cubic centimetres of acetate solution are measured in both the cylinders. To each cylinder are then added 2 c.c. of 5 per cent sodium cyanide and 2 drops of 6% (api rox.) ammonia water to the 50 c.c. mark and finally 2 drops of 4 per cent sodium sulphide with constant stirring. The brown colour developed in the first cylinder is matched against the standard with the known amount of lead in the second cylinder. By repeating the process of final matching with different amounts of standard solutions an accurate comparison can be made to a limit of 0.005 mg. of lead.

In these experiments the glassware reagents and distilled water must be free from lead or contain such small amounts of lead that they may be neglected. Blank determinations should always be made to see if lead is taken up from the apparatus or any other source during the course of the experiments.

**Chemical Tests—1** Hydrochloric acid produces a white precipitate, soluble in boiling water, and crystallizing on cooling.

**2** Hydrogen sulphide produces a dark brown or black precipitate insoluble in ammonium sulphide but soluble in dilute nitric acid.

**3** Potassium iodide solution gives a bright yellow precipitate soluble in boiling water, and crystallizing on cooling into golden yellow spangles.

**4** Potassium chromate gives a yellow precipitate of lead chromate which is insoluble in dilute but soluble in concentrated nitric acid.

**5** A drop each of a 1 per cent solution of pyridine in water and of a mixture of 0.1 per cent gallocyanine and sodium bicarbonate added to a drop of lead solution on a filter paper produces a deep violet colour.

**Medico Legal Points—1** Lead in the metallic form is not poisonous, but it is probably acted upon by the secretion of the intestine, and may act as a poison after it is absorbed into the system as a salt. Lead missiles remaining embedded in the tissues owing to gun shot injuries have produced poisonous symptoms within a few weeks or even after years.

Compounds of lead are poisonous, provided that they are in a condition fit for absorption, either by the skin, gastric mucous membrane or lungs.

In the absence of air, pure water has no action upon lead but in the presence of air slightly soluble lead hydroxide is formed. Moreover the solvent action of water upon lead is greatly influenced by the presence of chlorides, nitrates, and carbon dioxide dissolved under pressure. Water containing carbonates, sulphates and phosphates has no action on lead.

**2** Acute lead poisoning is very rare, and usually terminates in recovery. Hence it has very little toxicological importance but chronic poisoning is more common, and is very interesting from a hygienic point of view, as it is regarded as an industrial disease.

Cases of chronic lead poisoning may be referred to a medical practitioner under the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923, for the workmen who contract the disease in the course of and by reason of their employment are entitled to compensation from their employer during such time as they are incapacitated from earning their living, or if death occurs from the disease, the dependants of the deceased are entitled to compensation.

The chief compounds of lead which produce poisonous symptoms are acetate, carbonate, chromate and oxides of lead. The chloride and nitrate do not figure so much in medico legal work, as they are not easily obtainable by the public.

#### Homicidal poisoning by lead salts is a rare occurrence

In Landberg a town in Brandenburg a woman gave her husband a powder containing white lead in a glass of beer. Soon after taking it the husband was taken ill with severe colic. As the symptoms recurred repeatedly a doctor was consulted who found the patient with a livid complexion and suffering from spasmodic contraction of the intestine, severe constipation which could in no way be overcome and retention of urine. His condition grew worse, and he died about a month later. On the examination of the body the stomach and the intestines were shown to form a dark mass containing sulphide of lead, which was detected in nearly every organ of the body the total quantity being 19 grains.<sup>1</sup>

Lead is used criminally as an abortifacient. It acts by producing tonic contractions of the uterus and by causing degeneration of embryonic cells and the chorionic epithelium. A woman is reported to have successfully aborted after having taken half an ounce of a solution of lead acetate (70 grains to a pint of boiling water) three times a day for about a month. She also suffered from symptoms of chronic lead poisoning.<sup>2</sup>

The paste used for anointing "abortion sticks" often contains red lead as the chief ingredient. The use of diachylon or lead paste as an abortifacient had been so common that on the recommendation of the Pharmaceutical Society the Privy Council of England ordained in May, 1917, that the substance should be included in the first part of the schedule of poisons.

Red lead is occasionally used as a cattle poison either alone or mixed with white arsenic. A case<sup>3</sup> is recorded in which a young woman gave red lead to her husband in food, but without any ill effects. It is also used to adulterate snuff to improve its colour.

Most of the accidental cases have occurred from administering a large dose of lead acetate in mistake.

Accidental chronic poisoning has occurred from the use of litharge or lead monoxide (*Mudrasang*) as a remedy for syphilis by quacks.

Chevers<sup>4</sup> reports three cases of chronic poisoning from the use of litharge as a remedy for syphilis. In one case a man took twenty five grains of litharge mixed with white sugar continuously for five days and died on the forty ninth day. In the other two cases the patients were sepoys (cavaliere men) who swallowed on three successive days a powder containing two drachms of litharge and one drachm of balslochan. Both of them suffered from lead colic, but recovered. In September 1923 a young Mahomedan male was admitted into the King George's Hospital Lucknow with distension of the abdomen, persistent constipation, severe abdominal colic and muscular weakness as a result of litharge having been administered to him by a quack for the treatment of a syphilitic sore on the penis. He recovered after twenty days' stay in the hospital.

A woman in the third month of pregnancy, ingested 50 grammes of lead monoxide a little at a time with the aim of inducing abortion. Four days after the first dose she had the symptoms of bilateral puerperal neuritis. Abortion took place spontaneously twenty three days later. She recovered from the abortion and from the lead poisoning.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lancet* Jan 7 1923 p 48

<sup>2</sup> J. V. Marshall Chalmers and Sidney Lionel Thompson, *Lancet*, April 30, 1908 p 291

<sup>3</sup> *L P Chem Examiner's Annual Rep.* 1923, p 4

<sup>4</sup> *Med Juris Ed III* p 204-05.

<sup>5</sup> *Acta Sanitatis Zentralblatt fur Gesundheitswesen*, Leipzig Jan 8 1927, p 102; *Jour Amer Med Assoc* June 11, 1927, p 1941

3 Lead is normally present in almost all human tissues. Recent researches carried out by Bagchi, Ganguli and Sardar<sup>1</sup> have shown that the amount of lead present in individual cases varies according to the difference in the lead content of the food ingested. Lead is retained in large quantities in bone, tooth, hair, and nails. The maximum amount of lead is found in hair, especially the black hair of Indian women. The skin is very poor in lead. The ovary is free from lead, while the testicle contains quite an appreciable amount. The foetal tissues do not show any affinity for lead although it is believed otherwise.

4 Lead may be absorbed into the system from the respiratory tract, from the alimentary canal or from the skin. Absorption from the respiratory tract is a common form of industrial poisoning and produces symptoms of lead poisoning very rapidly. The other routes take longer time and require larger doses to produce the same effect. In fact the damage caused by inhalation is much more severe than that caused by swallowing and it is stated that plumbism is ten times more liable to occur when lead compounds are inhaled as fine dust than when they enter the system by the skin or by the digestive tract.<sup>2</sup> It must be borne in mind that the solubility of a lead compound in water is not the criterion of its solubility in the body fluids as is evident from the following table<sup>3</sup> —

*Solubility of Lead Compounds*

Lead Compounds	In blood serum at 25°C mg in one litre	In water at 25°C mg in one litre
Lead (metallic)	578.0	—
Lead monoxide	1152.0	17.1
Lead carbonate	33.3	1.7
Lead sulphate	43.7	44.0

5 Lead is eliminated largely in the faeces, and to a small extent in the urine. It is also slowly excreted in the bile, saliva, milk and hair. However, being a cumulative poison, lead tends to accumulate in the system. Chuni Lal Bose<sup>4</sup> reports that lead was detected in the urine of a man about six weeks after he was poisoned by white lead taken in mistake for betel lime.

6 Idiosyncrasy plays a great part in the effects of the poison. Some people, even though exposed to the action of lead salts, may not be affected. Persons addicted to alcohol are more prone to the attack of chronic poisoning. Gouty persons are soon affected, it should however, be remembered that chronic poisoning develops gout and granular kidneys.

7 Not only does abortion occur in a pregnant woman suffering from chronic lead poisoning usually between the 3rd and 6th months, but a healthy woman, if impregnated by a man suffering from chronic lead poisoning, is likely to abort.

If a woman suffering from lead poisoning suckles her infant, she is likely to transmit lead through her milk, which will set up slow and progressive poisoning in the infant.<sup>5</sup>

8 Blair Bell Williams and Cunningham<sup>6</sup> have carried out investigations on the toxic effects in the human subject of lead administered intravenously.

<sup>1</sup> *Ind Jour Med Res*, XXVI, 4 April 1939 p 93. *Ibid.* XXII 3 Jan 1940 p 77

<sup>2</sup> Bagchi K. *Ind Jour of Pediatrics* April, 1942, p 69 Jacobs M B, *Analytical Chemistry of Industrial Poisons Hazards and Solvents* New York, 1941

<sup>3</sup> Jacobs, M B, *Analytical Chemistry of Industrial Poisons Hazards and Solvents* New York 1941

<sup>4</sup> *Calcutta Med Jour* Feb 1916

<sup>5</sup> Brondum Occupation and Health, Vol II 1934, p 121 Bagchi *Ind Med Gaz*, Jan, 1941, p 23

<sup>6</sup> *Lancet* Oct 17, 1923, p 793

The lead used was metallic lead in colloidal form for the treatment of malignant neoplasms. They have shown that there is great difference in individual tolerance to lead, and that the male is more tolerant than the female to the toxic effects of lead, as the following figures tend to demonstrate —

*Maximum and Minimum amount of Lead required to produce Toxic Symptoms Average for all ages*

Maximum		Minimum	
Males 0.34 g	Females 0.29 g	Males 0.1 g	Females 0.04 g

### THALLIUM

Thallium is a soft heavy metal having a tin white lustrous colour but, on exposure to the air tarnishes upon its surface owing to the formation of black thallous oxide. It is chiefly used in the dye and glass industries.

The chief salts of thallium which are of value from a toxicological point of view are thallium acetate and thallium sulphate.

Thallium acetate was used as a remedy for the night sweats of phthisis, but is now used only as a depilatory in the treatment of ringworm of the scalp. It is administered to children under ten years of age in the dose of 8 to 15 mg per kilogramme of body weight. The hair of the head begins to loosen about the seventh day and falls off from the fourteenth to the nineteenth day. Thallium acetate is also used for removing the superfluous hair, and is a constituent of some proprietary depilatory creams.

Thallium sulphate is used for killing rats. It is a constituent of rat poison pastes known as Zeho paste and Zeho grains (corn), which are used in Germany and other countries.

Thallium is a highly poisonous substance resembling lead in all its characters. Taken in a large dose, it acts as an irritant to the stomach and has a selective action on highly specialized cells of the body, causing marked fatty degeneration in the heart and liver and necrosis in the kidneys. Taken in small doses for a prolonged period thallium has a cumulative effect.

**Acute Poisoning** — The symptoms of acute poisoning occur from a few hours to fourteen days after the administration of a therapeutic dose of thallium acetate due to a personal idiosyncrasy or an overdose through an error of the dispenser. In mild cases the symptoms are joint pains in the legs and feet, loss of appetite, drowsiness, and hypochlorhydria. These generally pass off in a few days.

In severe cases the symptoms are dryness in the mouth, difficulty in swallowing, colic, vomiting, diarrhea, pains in the muscles, joints and nerves, albuminuria, delirium, convulsions, collapse and death. There may be drowsiness followed by coma. After recovery, the patient may suffer from peripheral neuritis, optic atrophy, loss of sight and hearing and mental disorders.

**Chronic Poisoning** — This occurs among workmen employed in a chemical factory where thallium is isolated from pyrites residues. Chronic poisoning also occurs among the persons who use a depilatory cream containing thallium acetate for a prolonged period.

The symptoms consist of restlessness, insomnia, fatigue, loss of appetite, abdominal colic, pains in the lower limbs, tachycardia, epilation, marked eosinophilia, lymphocytosis, sometimes optic atrophy, loss of knee jerks and injury to the endocrine glands. Changes similar to those observed in arsenical poisoning are, sometimes, noticed in the nails.

The falling out of the hair of the head is the most striking and important clinical diagnostic symptom of poisoning by thallium.

#### Fatal Dose—Uncertain

**Fatal Period**—The average fatal period is twenty-four to thirty hours, although death occurred in twenty-four hours after ten times the normal dose of thallium acetate.<sup>1</sup> Death has also occurred from the second to the sixteenth day after the administration of therapeutic doses.<sup>2</sup> Two boys, each aged 3 years, died in five days from the effects of 5 grammes of thallium acetate wrongly prescribed for 0.5 gramme.<sup>3</sup>

**Treatment**—Wash out the stomach and give large quantities of milk. Administer intravenously 20 c.c. of a 3 per cent solution of sodium thiosulphate per day. Administer potassium iodide and saline purgatives to aid the elimination of thallium from the system. Keep the patient warm and administer hypodermically heart stimulants for shock.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—In the case of three children aged 10 years, 7 years and 5 years who died after they had been given by mistake ten times the normal doses of thallium acetate viz., 30, 36 and 28 grains respectively, the post mortem examination showed that the stomach contained little mucus and showed submucous petechial haemorrhage. The heart showed a remarkable degree of fatty degeneration. The spleen was congested. The kidneys were congested, the glomeruli were swollen and severe cloudy swelling and necrosis of the cells were also seen in the convoluted tubules. The degenerative changes were more marked in the body of the youngest child who lived for three days.<sup>4</sup>

**Chemical Analysis**—The detection of thallium in viscera or urine is carried out as follows<sup>5</sup>:

A weighed quantity of the material is broken up with hydrochloric acid and potassium chlorate by Fresenius and Babo method and, when solution of all the material except fat has been achieved the liquid is filtered (well washing the precipitate), and the filtrate boiled until practically all the excess of chlorine has been driven off or removed by the sulphur dioxide method. If necessary it is filtered again, discarding the precipitate. To the filtrate ammonium chloride and ammonia are added and it is then boiled. The precipitate which consists of iron, calcium and magnesium chiefly in the form of phosphates is filtered off and discarded. It may be advisable to add a small amount of calcium chloride solution to the liquid before the ammonia to ensure complete removal of phosphate.

The filtrate is then saturated with sulphuretted hydrogen or an excess of freshly prepared ammonium sulphide is added, a black precipitate is then formed. The precipitate is filtered off, well washed with dilute ammonium sulphide, and finally with distilled water. It consists of thallium sulphide together with traces of other metals which precipitate with sulphuretted hydrogen in an alkaline solution, but so far as toxicological analyses are concerned the only likely metal to be present—and then only in traces—is copper. When the precipitate is completely washed it is dissolved off the paper with hot dilute hydrochloric acid. The thallium is converted into thallous chloride and any trace of the copper which was present is the sulphide remains behind for this sulphide is insoluble in dilute hydrochloric acid. To the solution ammonia is added in slight excess and the liquid is boiled. If the process of separation has been completed no precipitate should occur at

<sup>1</sup> Roche Lynch and Scovell *Lancet* Dec. 20, 1930 p. 1340

<sup>2</sup> *Brit. Med. Jour.* Jan. 6, 1934 p. 26

<sup>3</sup> *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.* June 7, 1915 p. 2280

<sup>4</sup> Roche Lynch and Scovell *Lancet* Dec. 20, 1930, p. 1342

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1342

thus stage. Any precipitate should be filtered off and discarded. This filtrate is then made very faintly acid and excess of potassium iodide solution is added. An immediate yellow precipitate of thallous iodide forms. As there is some tendency for thallous iodide to come down in colloidal form, the liquid should be boiled and allowed to stand for twelve hours.

The precipitate is then collected in a weighed Gooch crucible and is well washed first with potassium iodide solution and subsequently with alcohol until the washings give no reaction for an iodide. The crucible is then dried at 1-0°C until constant weight is obtained. Although thallous iodide is very slightly soluble in water (1 : 17,000) it is almost completely insoluble in potassium iodide solution and in alcohol, so that filtration in the cold and washing with these reagents will give an accurate estimate of the amount present. The iodide after weighing may be confirmed as thallium by dissolving it in a solution of sodium thiosulphate, in which it is only dissolved with difficulty, whereas lead iodide is readily soluble.

Finally some of the iodide may be heated in a Bunsen flame on a platinum wire and the characteristic green line in the spectrum obtained.

**Medico Legal Points**—Poisoning by thallium is rare as contrasted with that by lead or mercury owing probably to the relatively infrequent use of the former in medicine and industry. A few accidental cases of poisoning have occurred from the internal administration of thallium acetate or from the external application of depilatory creams containing thallium acetate. Ramond<sup>1</sup> reports the case of a young girl who suffered from abdominal pain, paralysis of the lower limbs and alopecia after she had used on her face a depilatory cream containing 2.5 per cent of thallium acetate for three months. Mahoney<sup>2</sup> also describes three cases in which three young women suffered from retro bulbar neuritis from the application of the proprietary depilatory, Koremlu Cream containing 7.18 per cent of thallium acetate over their faces, arms and legs for a period of one year and a half.

Suicidal and homicidal cases of poisoning are reported to have occurred from the internal use of a rat poison paste containing thallium sulphate. Greving and Gagel<sup>3</sup> describe a case in which a woman aged 30 years who attempted to commit suicide by eating half a tube of Zeho paste suffered from great pain, albuminuria, achlorhydria, alopecia, peripheral neuritis, rapid loss of weight, angina pectoris, tachycardia, incontinence of urine and faeces and amenorrhoea.

Two interesting cases<sup>4</sup> of murder by thallium are recorded. Zeho-paste, a rat poison was administered in both cases in the liquid drunk by the victim. In the first case a woman aged 48 drank about 0.33 to 2.78 grammes of thallium sulphate in three months. The symptoms were partly gastric and partly of a nervous nature which simulated typhoid fever and later progressive paralysis of the insane. Eight months after burial the body was exhumed and was found to be well preserved. On analysis 1.6-1.8 grammes of thallium sulphate were detected in the body. In the second case a man aged 40 years drank 1 to 3 tubes of Zeho paste in his wine and coffee. Polyarthritis was diagnosed as the patient complained of pains in the feet, but later gastro-intestinal symptoms supervened, the hair fell off, and the patient died. At the post mortem examination 1.332 grammes of thallium sulphate were detected in the body. From

<sup>1</sup> *Fresse Medicale* 1899, VIII, 1, 631; also see *Brit. Med. Jour.* Feb. 1, 1931, p. 3-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Jour. Inter. Med. Soc.* Feb. 19, 1931, p. 618; also see *Jour. Inter. Med. Soc.*, 1931, pp. 1866-1868.

<sup>3</sup> *Klin. Woch.* 1931, 15, 1323; *Lesczke Clinic Toxic Eng. Transl.* by Stewart and Dorr, 1934, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> *Krak. H. Cas. iek. cesk.* 40 (Czech) *Med. Leg. and Crim. of Rev.* Oct. 1934, 3, 4 II, Part II, p. 3-1.

these cases it is evident that gastro intestinal and polyneuritic symptoms together with trophic disturbances of the hair should lead to suspicion of thallium poisonin,

A case<sup>1</sup> is recorded in which thallium was detected in the corpse which was exhumed five years after burial. The fact that the corpse had been in a dry grave might have helped the preservation.

### ZINC (LAS II)

The salts of zinc which are important from a toxicological point of view are—

**1 Zinc Chloride, ZnCl.** —It occurs as colourless opaque deliquescent rods or masses freely soluble in alcohol, ether and water. It is used in medicine as a caustic. It is contained in the proportion of about 3.0 grains to the ounce of water in Burnett's fluid which is used as a disinfectant and is a soldering fluid. It is also used to load textile fibres. Clothes made with these fibres when worn produce ulcers and sloughs of the skin, with which they come into contact.

**2 Zinc Sulphate (White Vitriol White Copperas *Sulfat tutia*) ZnSO<sub>4</sub>. 7H<sub>2</sub>O** —It is a colourless crystalline salt closely resembling magnesium sulphate and oxalic acid, but having a strong metallic styptic taste. It is extremely soluble in water, but insoluble in alcohol. The pharmacopelial dose is 10 to 30 grains as an emetic. It occurs in *Unguentum zinc oleatis* (Zinc ointment).

**3 Zinc Oxide (*Jasat bhashm*), ZnO** —This is a soft white tasteless odourless powder commercially known as Zinc White, it becomes yellow on heating. The oxide is insoluble in water, but dissolves in acids forming the zinc salts. It is largely used as a pigment in place of white lead, which becomes blackened by hydrogen sulphide present in the atmosphere.

Zinc oxide is a pharmacopelial preparation and is present in the official preparations of *Gelatinum zinci* (Unna's paste), *Pasta zinci oxidii composita* (compound paste of zinc oxide), *Suppositoria hamamelidis et zinci oxidii*, *Unguentum zinci oxidii* and *Unguentum zinci oxidii aquosum*. Zinc oxide is also an ingredient of *I otio calaminae*. Mixed with zinc chloride in the form of a paste, zinc oxide is used for filling or stopping carious teeth.

**Zinc Stearate** —This is prepared by precipitating a curd soap solution with zinc sulphate. It is a white amorphous powder, insoluble in water and yields 13 to 15 per cent of zinc oxide. It is used as a dusting powder and may produce poisonous effects from its inhalation.

**Acute Poisoning—Symptoms** — A metallic styptic taste, salivation, vomiting pain in the stomach and abdomen severe purging convulsions collapse and death.

Guilbert and Tardieu<sup>2</sup> report the following rare case of perforation of the stomach resulting from the ingestion of zinc sulphate —

A man aged 33 swallowed 1. grammes of zinc sulphate in mistake for sodium sulphate, and suffered immediately from severe burning in his mouth tongue, oesophagus and stomach followed by salivation, nausea and abdominal pains with vomiting. In an hour haematemesis occurred and frequent diarrhoea, with ultimately profuse sweats and collapse. Twelve hours later he suffered from painful incontinence polyuria but no haematuria. About two months after the accident he complained of severe pain in the pyloric and duodenal region on palpation. The X-ray examination revealed perforation of the stomach which had led to a diverticulum around the pylorus and the duodenum and produced chronic duodenitis.

<sup>1</sup> K. Holmer, *Deut Gesell ger soz Med u Kriminal*, p. n, Sept., 1918. *Deut z. ges. ger Med Jan 1939* **VIII** 2<sup>o</sup> *Med Leg and Crimnol Rev*, April 1939 p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> *Riv de Med 1932* **XLI**, pp 242-250. *Med Leg and Crimnol Review* April, 1933 p 164.

If zinc chloride is taken, the corrosive symptoms are more prominent and aggravated. These are burning pain in the mouth, throat, gullet and stomach immediately after swallowing the poison, profuse salivation, dysphagia, metallic taste in the mouth, persistent vomiting tinged with blood and traces of mucous membrane, profuse diarrhoea with blood and tenesmus, great prostration, collapse and death. In prolonged cases aphonia, perversions of the special senses, tetanic spasms of groups of muscles and muscular weakness are usually observed. The local action may lead to severe contraction of the internal organs with which it comes into contact, and may cause stricture of the oesophagus or pylorus.

A girl 2 years old drank a spoonful (2 grammes) of a 50 per cent solution of zinc chloride ordered for her mother's endometritis just after a meal when the stomach was full. The child vomited at once. Gastro-enterostomy was performed when the stomach was found shrunken and its walls were like leather.<sup>1</sup>

A female 23 years old, drank 500 ccm. of a 20 per cent solution of zinc chloride intended for a vaginal douche. Soon afterwards she suffered from pain on swallowing and also in the stomach and vomiting and for many days she vomited all her food. The pharynx was red but not corroded and the stomach was painful on pressure. A tube could at first be passed into the stomach but later could not pass beyond the cardiae opening. Three weeks later, the stomach was removed and found to be only 10 cm. long and two fingers in breadth and was completely occluded at the cardiae and pyloric ends with signs of necrosis and with enormous secondary cicatrical contraction. The patient died after three days of purulent peritonitis.

**Fatal Dose**—The smallest fatal dose of zinc sulphate is half an ounce,<sup>2</sup> though recovery has occurred after a dose of two ounces. The smallest fatal dose of the solid zinc chloride that has been recorded is six grains, but recovery has followed a dose of two hundred grains.<sup>3</sup> Two drachms of Burnett's fluid is the smallest quantity known that has caused the death of an adult.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, recovery has followed a dose of three ounces.<sup>5</sup>

**Fatal Period**—Death from zinc sulphate poisoning, though rare, has occurred in 2 hours after taking 3 ounces of zinc sulphate,<sup>6</sup> and on the 5th day after taking half an ounce as mentioned in the above case.

Death occurs within a few hours from primary shock and collapse caused by the chloride. Thus, a girl, aged 17 years, died in less than two hours after having swallowed half a wine glassful of Burnett's fluid, and a woman, aged 28 years, died in four hours after she had taken an ounce of a strong solution of zinc chloride.<sup>7</sup> A man of 62 years died in 4½ hours after having taken 2 ounces of soldering liquid made by adding zinc to hydrochloric acid.<sup>8</sup>

In some cases the primary effects may be recovered from and the patient may die weeks or months afterwards from inanition or perforation. Tuckwell<sup>9</sup> reports a case in which death occurred from the secondary effects of disorganization of the stomach and stricture of the oesophagus one hundred and sixteen days after a dose of 4 ounces of Burnett's fluid.

**Treatment**—Laxatives need not be given as zinc sulphate produces vomiting. If necessary, vomiting should be promoted by giving warm water or warm milk and by tickling the fauces. Wash out the stomach with warm water containing

1 T. J. Cosansky *Jahrbuch für Kinderärzte* Berlin, 1871, 9, No. 5-6, p. 330. *Jour Inter Med Assoc* Nov. 1871, p. 1332.

2 Pfeiffer, *Deuts Zeits f d ges gesetzl Med* 1862, VII, 1, p. 1-3. *Med Leg and Criminol Jour* Jan. 1863, p. 80.

3 Marsh *Med Times and Gaz* Sep. 6, 1862, p. 252.

4 Holland *Med Chem and Toxic* Ed. I, p. 35.

5 Cousins, *Med Times and Ga* 1861, Vol. II, p. 401.

6 Hossall, *Lancet* Vol. II, 1863, p. 209.

7 Buechner *Freundreich's Bl J ger Med*, 1862, XXVIII, p. 222. *Willibaus Med Juris ad Toxic* Vol. II, p. 285.

8 Taylor, *On Poisons* Ed. III, p. 450.

9 Crosse *Brit Med Jour* 1863, Vol. II, p. 520.

10 *Brit Med Jour* 1874, Vol. II, p. 207.

sodium or potassium carbonate except when zinc chloride has been taken. Give freely eggs, milk and vegetable astringents containing tannin, such as strong decoctions of green tea. Treat the symptoms as they arise. For instance, give morphine to relieve pain, and warmth and stimulants to combat collapse.

**Post-mortem Appearances** —The usual appearances of irritant poisoning, viz., redness, congestion and inflammation of the mucous membranes of the throat, oesophagus, stomach, and intestine, are seen, when zinc sulphate has been taken. In the case<sup>1</sup> of a widow, aged 53, who died in twenty four hours after taking at least an ounce of zinc sulphate, the mucous membrane of the stomach showed patches of intense inflammation, but this was more marked in the small intestine, which was inflamed throughout. So vivid was the congestion of the small intestine that it was plainly visible from the outside before it was slit up. The large intestine was also inflamed in patches.

When zinc chloride has been used, the mucous membranes of the mouth, throat, oesophagus, stomach and intestines are whitened, detached and corroded. There may be ulceration and even perforation of the stomach.

**Chronic Poisoning** —This occurs among zinc smelters who inhale the fumes. It has also resulted from drinking water or milk stored in zinc vessels. Gimlette<sup>2</sup> describes an epidemic of zinc poisoning through drinking contaminated water among Sikh and Pathan soldiers stationed in Pahang in the Malay States. The water supply was obtained from the rainfall collected from the galvanized iron roofs of the barracks by means of zinc gutters and down spouts leading into galvanized iron tanks.

**Symptoms** —Digestive disturbances, dyspepsia, colic with constipation but more often diarrhoea, anaemia, peripheral neuritis leading to paralysis.

**Chemical Tests** —1. Hydrogen sulphide in the presence of ammonia and ammonium chloride gives a white precipitate, soluble in mineral acids, but insoluble in acetic acid and sodium acetate.

2. Potassium ferrocyanide gives a white, gelatinous precipitate of zinc ferrocyanide, insoluble in hydrochloric acid. A few drops of bromine water added to the precipitate produces a greenish yellow or yellow colour which, on boiling, forms a green or bluish green precipitate.

3. A drop of a neutral solution of a zinc salt is placed on a glass slide and evaporated to dryness. Characteristic feathery crystals of zinc sulphocyanide and mercuric sulphocyanide will be seen under the microscope on the addition of a drop of mercury thiocyanate solution.

Mercury thiocyanate solution is prepared by dissolving 40 g. of mercuric chloride and 33 g. of ammonium thiocyanate in 50 c.c. of water at room temperature.

**Medico-Legal Points** —Zinc is soluble in the weak acids of food, hence acute poisoning may occur accidentally from eating food cooked in zinc lined vessels.

A sudden outbreak<sup>3</sup> of zinc poisoning occurred amongst the inmates of a large institution near London. About 400 persons were served at tea with stewed apples cooked in galvanized iron vessels. Within a few minutes more than 100 of those who partook of the stew complained of dizziness, colic and tightness in the throat. There was some diarrhoea. Only ten persons were at all seriously ill and all of them were able to carry out their ordinary work next day so that obviously the effects of the poisoning soon passed off. The chemical examination of some of the stewed apples remaining from the meal showed that they contained 7 grains of zinc, expressed as zinc oxide, in the pound. This is equivalent to 25 grains of hydrated zinc sulphate to the pound.

1. Mackintosh Brit. Med. Jour., Vol. II, 1900 p. 176.

2. Brit. Med. Jour., Sep. 7, 1901 p. 815.

3. Brit. Med. Jour., Feb. 3, 1923, p. 201.

Poisoning by zinc salts is very rare indeed. Accidental poisoning has occurred from zinc sulphate having been taken in mistake for magnesium sulphate. Cases are recorded in which it was taken with intent to commit suicide or to procure abortion. It has been very rarely administered homicidally. Zinc chloride has been used suicidally, but rarely for homicidal purposes. Poisoning by this salt has occurred from its application to a wound or to a raw cancerous surface, from injection of a 50 per cent solution into the rectum in mistake for glycerol<sup>1</sup> is also from vaginal douching with a solution of 1 drachm to 1 litre of water.<sup>2</sup> Burnett's fluid has caused poisonous symptoms through being mistaken for fluid magnesiæ.

Zinc oxide is not, as a rule, poisonous, but its fumes, when inhaled, are highly poisonous. Zinc stearate causes poisonous symptoms in children from accidental inhalation of the powder, and produces interstitial pneumonitis and peribronchial inflammation. Schalepfer<sup>3</sup> reports the case of a child, aged 7½ months, who died thirty four hours after inhaling zinc stearate. Cyanosis and dyspnoea were the principal symptoms, and a state of "acidosis" was noted twelve hours before death. At the necropsy the lungs were found voluminous. The bronchioles contained plugs of zinc stearate and mucus which appeared as wormlike masses. Extensive areas of emphysema were separated from each other by small scattered, atelectatic zones.

The salts of zinc are eliminated from the system chiefly by the bowels and to a slight extent by the kidneys. Zinc may be found in a small amount in the body after death owing to its absorption by food kept in zinc or galvanized iron vessels.

#### BISMUTH

The salts of bismuth which are commonly used in medicine are—

1. **Bismuth Carbonate (Bismuth Oxy-carbonate or Bismuth Subcarbonate),**  $(\text{Bi}_2\text{O}_3\text{CO}_3)\text{H}_2\text{O}$ —It is a heavy white, odourless tasteless powder insoluble in water but soluble with effervescence in nitric acid and in hydrochloric acid. It is a pharmacopeial preparation the dose being 10 to 30 grains. It occurs in the composition of *Trochiscus bismuthi compositus* 21 grains being contained in each.

2. **Bismuth Subnitrate (Bismuth Oxynitrate)**  $\text{BiONO}_3 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ —It is a heavy, white powder in minute crystalline scales. It is insoluble in water and alcohol but soluble in dilute nitric acid. It is known as *magenta of bismuth*, and is sometimes, used as a cosmetic under the name of *pearl white*. It is a non-official preparation the dose being 5 to 20 grains.

3. **Bismuth Salicylate (Bismuth Oxy-salicylate)**  $\text{BiOC}_6\text{H}_5\text{O}_2$ —It is a heavy white amorphous powder having neither taste nor odour. It is insoluble in water, alcohol and glycerin. It is an official preparation the dose being 10 to 30 grains orally and 1 to 3 grains intramuscularly. It is a constituent of *Injectis bismuthi salicylatis* in the proportion of 3 grains in 20 minims. The dose is 10 to 20 minims intramuscularly.

4. **Precipitated Bismuth.**—It is prepared by the reduction of a solution of bismuth trichloride in hydrochloric acid by means of hypophosphorous acid. It is a grey insoluble powder easily dissolvable in water and contains 88.8 per cent of metallic bismuth. It is an official preparation the dose being 1 to 3 grains intramuscularly. It is contained in *Injectis bismuthi* (*Bismostab*) the dose of which is 8 to 15 minims intramuscularly.

The organic salts of bismuth which have recently come into use in medicine are bismuth sul-gallate (dermatol), bismuth oxydoggallate (fairel), bismuth ate-benamine sulphonate (bimarsen), bismuth stovarsol (bistoval) and certain other preparations, popularly known by the trade names of trepol, neotropol, muthanol, etc.

**Symptoms**—A metallic taste, salivation, pain in the throat and abdomen, sore mouth, vomiting, purging the stools being greyish black, a violet black line is formed on the gum which may be inflamed, ulcerated or even gangrenous, the garlic-like odour (bismuth breath) probably due to the presence of tellurium as an impurity, the weak and feeble pulse, pain over the precordial region, suppressed or scanty urine which is dark and contains albumin and casts, collapse and lastly death.

<sup>1</sup> *Withaus Med Juris and Toxicol* Vol II, p 713.

<sup>2</sup> *Brit Med Jour Dec - 1922 Ep* p 79.

<sup>3</sup> *Am Jour of Diseases of Children Chicago April 1926 p 474*

W H Resnik<sup>1</sup> reports a case of bismuth poisoning in a woman, suffering from diabetes after she had taken internally 5 to 7 ounces of bismuth subnitrate in a fortnight. The symptoms comprised a bluish black discoloration of the gums, which were swollen and inflamed, a similar discoloration of the tongue, most noticeable at the apex of the papillae and arranged in vertical striations along the lateral margins, a patchy diffuse discolouration of the buccal mucosa, swelling and tenderness of the parotid glands, moderate anaemia and basophilic stippling of the red cells. Bismuth was detected in the urine. Recovery followed the withdrawal of the salt.<sup>2</sup>

Paul Blum<sup>3</sup> observes that in cases of syphilis treated by intravenous injections of bismuth salts stomatitis appears to have been most frequently observed, although gastro-intestinal, renal and hepatic lesions have been described. Cases have been reported in which patients under treatment of intravenous injections of bismuth salts developed quite suddenly severe albuminuria, followed by the passage of epithelial, granular and hyaline casts. He emphasizes the point that the lesions in the mouth and intestine are the first signs of bismuth poisoning—they are the danger signals which indicate the necessity for a systematic examination of the urine.

**Fatal Dose**—A dose of two drachms of bismuth subnitrate has caused the death of an adult.<sup>4</sup> Recovery<sup>4</sup> has however, occurred after a dose of one ounce given in milk for X-ray examination of the stomach.

**Fatal Period**—Nine days in the above case. A man died within less than five minutes after an intravenous injection of 15 mg. of bismuth tartrate suspended in 3 c.c. of sterile distilled water.<sup>5</sup> A Hindu male died within two hours after the intramuscular injection of neotrepel into the gluteal region.<sup>6</sup> A case is cited in which the injection of bismuth paste into the left knee joint was followed by death in about six weeks.<sup>7</sup>

**Treatment**—Use the stomach tube or emetics. Give intravenous injection of 0.5 grammes of sodium thiosulphate in a 10 per cent solution. Administer demulcents. Give ice to relieve vomiting and morphine to relieve pain. Give purgatives and clear the bowel by high enemata.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—Those of acute gastritis. In the case mentioned above the throat, larynx and oesophagus were inflamed and there was inflammatory redness in the stomach and throughout the intestinal canal.

In the case of a male infant, 1 month old, who died within 44 hours after having been administered 190 grains of bismuth subnitrate as a remedy for diarrhoea, the skin was grey and cyanotic as also the viscera. The bowels were moderately distended with gas. A very small quantity of green watery faecal matter was found in the large bowel but no blood or pus was seen and no inflammation or ulcerations were present. The blood was of a dark chocolate brown colour, typical of methaemoglobin, and spectroscopically it gave a very positive reaction for methaemoglobin.<sup>8</sup>

**Tests**—1. Hydrogen sulphide in a weak acid solution gives a black precipitate, insoluble in ammonia, but soluble in strong nitric acid.

2. Potassium iodide yields a brown precipitate, soluble in excess to an orange solution.

3. **Water Test**—Hydrochloric acid gives a white precipitate soluble in excess. To the solution thus obtained if a large quantity of water is added, a white precipitate insoluble in tartaric acid, is obtained. The same test is applicable in the case of antimony, but the white precipitate is soluble in tartaric acid.

4. A piece of filter paper is soaked in a solution prepared by dissolving 1 g. of cinchonine in 100 c.c. of water acidified with nitric acid, and adding 2 g. of potassium iodide when the solution is cold. A drop of bismuth solution free from acid placed on the paper will show an orange red coloured ring. In place of a bismuth salt a mercury salt will form a white central ring, lead iodide will form a yellow ring and a cupric salt will form an outermost brown ring due to the liberation of iodine.

**Medico-Legal Points**—The salts of bismuth are ordinarily non-poisonous. Large quantities (1 to 4 ounces) especially of the carbonate and subnitrate, mixed with gruel of bread and milk, are used as a bismuth meal for the X-ray examination of the oesophagus, stomach and intestines as they obstruct the passage of the X-rays. These salts are more readily absorbed by abraded surfaces, and poisonous cases have resulted from the use of bismuth paste for the treatment of sinuses, abscesses, cavities and burns.

<sup>1</sup> Bull John Hopkins, Hospital, May 1926 p 323, Brit Med Jour., June 26, 1926 Fp., p 107

<sup>2</sup> Presse Medicale, July 29 1922 p 105, Brit. Med Jour Oct 28, 1922, Ep. p 48

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, On Poisons 1d III, p 197

<sup>4</sup> Phillips, Cleveland Med Jour., June, 1917, p 419

<sup>5</sup> Stephen H Curtis Jour Amer Med Assoc., Nov 22 1930, p 1588

<sup>6</sup> Cheney Ind Med Ga., May, 1926 p 234

<sup>7</sup> Phillips, Cleveland Med Jour., June 1917 p 419

<sup>8</sup> Harold F Roe Jour Amer Med Assoc., July 29, 1933, p 322

Taken internally, bismuth carbonate has produced poisoning in some instances owing to its conversion into soluble chloride. Bismuth subnitrate has produced poisonous symptoms possibly owing to the presence of the nitrate. It has produced fatal poisoning in children from its reduction to nitrite by the action of putrefactive faecal bacteria in the large intestine. The symptoms exhibited in such cases are cyanosis, diarrhea, methæmoglobinæmia, dyspænia, collapse and death from failure of respiration.

Bismuth subnitrate is more soluble in the stomach of a dyspeptic patient owing to the presence of butyric and lactic acids. It should, therefore, be prescribed with caution in such cases, lest toxic effects be produced.

Bismuth is eliminated from the system in the faeces, urine and saliva. Like lead, the greater portion of it passes out either unaltered from the bowels, or becomes converted into bismuth sulphide imparting a black or dark brown colour to the faeces.

### SILVER (CHINDI)

The only salt that has any toxicological value is silver nitrate ( $\text{AgNO}_3$ ), also known as *lunar caustic* or *lapis infernalis*. It is administered internally in pill form in  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  grain doses. It occurs as large colourless rhombic crystals. Mixed with potassium nitrate it is moulded into white or greyish white cylindrical rods or cones, and is known as *toughened caustic* or *argentum nitras induratus*. It is freely soluble in distilled water. Its solution has a styptic metallic taste and acid reaction.

Silver nitrate is used externally as a styptic and as a destroyer of exuberant granulations and warts. It is also used in photography, and constitutes the chief ingredient of indelible ink and hair dyes.

Argyrol (silver vitellin) and Protargol (silver protein), which are the organic preparations of silver are largely used in ophthalmic practice. Collargol (silver in a colloid state) is opaque to the X rays and is therefore used in a 20 per cent solution for injecting into the ureter and renal pelvis for the purposes of diagnosis.

**Acute Poisoning** — Cases of acute poisoning have occurred from the accidental slipping of lunar caustic while applying it to the throat. When thus swallowed, it acts as a corrosive poison.

**Symptoms** — Severe pain in the throat and stomach and vomiting. The vomited matter is at first flaky white but becomes black on exposure to light and may contain blood. These are followed by frequent motions, the stools, sometimes, containing blood. Cramps, convulsions and collapse precede death.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period** — Uncertain. Thirty grains of silver nitrate have caused the death of an adult. A woman aged 51 years died in three days, after she took, in divided doses, 50 grains contained in a mixture of 6 ounces.<sup>1</sup> A child 18 months old, died in violent convulsions in 6 hours when a piece of lunar caustic slipped down his throat.<sup>2</sup> A case of recovery is recorded in which an old man swallowed 45 grains of silver nitrate in three doses of 15 grains each within two hours.<sup>3</sup> Recovery has also occurred after swallowing one ounce with the intent of committing suicide.<sup>4</sup>

**Treatment** — Wash out the stomach with 2 ounces of sodium chloride dissolved in 2 gallons of water or give half an ounce of sodium chlorite dissolved in a pint of milk or water as an antidote to form insoluble silver chloride. Produce vomiting by administering ipecacuanha powder, or hypodermic injection of apomorphine hydrochloride. Give demulcent drinks, eggs and milk. Give morphine and stimulants.

**Post-mortem Appearances** — The local action of the caustic will be evident by stains, at first white but becoming black on exposure to light. These stains are noticed on the mouth and lips, on the mucous membrane of the alimentary canal touched by the poison, as also on the white clothing. The signs of gastro-intestinal inflammation are present.

In the case<sup>5</sup> of an insane patient, aged 31, who died on the fourth day after swallowing one stick of silver nitrate with suicidal intent, the stomach and duodenum showed inflammation of the mucous membrane, and the internal organs showed slight parenchymatous changes.

**Chronic Poisoning** — This results from the long continued use of an organic or inorganic silver salt as a medicine or from its long applications to the granulations of wounds and ulcers. It also affects those who constantly come in contact with silver salts owing to their occupations.

1 Taylor, *On Poisons*, Ed. III, p. 193.

2 Scattergood, *Brit. Med. Jour.* May 27, 1871, p. 527.

3 Chatterjee, *Ind. Med. Gaz.* March 1894, p. 61.

4 Orfila, *Toxic.*, Vol II p. 22. Hithaus, *Med. Juris.*, Vol IV, p. 20.

5 *Jour. Amer. Med. Socie.*, Jan. 21, 1924, p. 213.

**Symptoms**—These are a black line on the gums and a general discoloration of the skin (*argyria*) due to the deposition of minute silver particles in the cutaneous tissues. This discolouration is permanent, greyish blue or dark grey in colour and first affects the lips, inside of the cheeks, gums, nostrils, eyelids and lastly the chin. It also affects the viscera, chiefly along the walls of the smaller blood vessels. Albuminuria and paralysis of the extensor muscles common in lead poisoning are also met with.

Smith records the case of a patient who took silver nitrate in ½-grain doses three times daily for three months for nasal catarrh, when the skin of the face and hands—the exposed surfaces—assumed a darker colour.<sup>1</sup>

Olson<sup>2</sup> cites a case of argyria following the local use of argyrol. A woman sustained a fracture of the nose, the laceration of the soft parts extending to the right lower eyelid. In addition to other measures argyrol was dropped into her right eye. The argyrol made its way to the lacerated tissue of the right lower eyelid, nose and cheek, and caused bluish green and slate grey pigmentation. Goldstein<sup>3</sup> reports a case in which the face, lips and hands became of a peculiar slate-blue colour from the local application of argyrol to the throat twice daily for a year.

**Treatment**.—No treatment of any kind is available for the removal of argyria although the intradermal injection of equal parts of 12 per cent sodium thiosulphate solution and 2 per cent potassium ferrocyanide solution has been recommended,<sup>4</sup> but Dr Acharya, late Professor of Ophthalmology, did not find this method successful in the King George's Hospital, Lucknow.

In the case cited by Olson five grains of hexamethylamine were given three times a day when argyria improved to some extent. The dose was then increased to ten grains when after six weeks the signs of irritation in the stomach and kidneys were evident.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Pigmentation in the corium, liver and kidneys. Dark colouration of serous and mucous membranes.

**Chemical Tests**—1. Hydrochloric acid gives a white, curdy precipitate of silver chloride insoluble in nitric acid but readily soluble in ammonium hydrate or sodium thiosulphate solution and also on boiling with concentrated sulphuric acid.

2. Potassium chromate gives a red precipitate of silver chromate soluble in mineral acids, but insoluble in cold acetic acid.

3. Ammonium hydrate added slowly drop by drop to neutral silver solution gives a greyish precipitate of silver oxide, soluble in excess of ammonium hydrate.

4. If a little solid hexamethylene tetramine (hexamine) be added to a drop of neutral silver solution taken on a glass slide, monoclinic plates or needles are visible under the microscope.

**Medico Legal Points**—Cases of poisoning by silver are mostly accidental. Of the suicidal cases one was that of an halt male who recovered after swallowing about an ounce of silver nitrate, and the other was that of an insane person who died after swallowing a stick of silver nitrate. A case is also recorded in which a soldier applied lunar caustic to his corner to evade military duty.<sup>5</sup>

Silver is partly eliminated in the urine and faeces, but a great deal is retained in the system, and deposited in the tissues.

### IRON (FERRI)

The pharmacopoeial preparations of iron salts which are largely used in medicine are mostly prepared from sulphate and perchloride of iron. These two salts produce poisonous symptoms when administered in large doses.

**Iron Sulphate (Ferrous Sulphate), FeSO<sub>4</sub>, 7H<sub>2</sub>O**—This is commercially known as green vitriol or copperas, and is called *Ausas* in Hindustani and *Hirakashi* in Gujarati. It forms green monosymmetric crystals efflorescing on exposure to the atmosphere. It has a metallic astringent taste and is freely soluble in water. The official dose is 3 to 5 grains. It is used in making blue black ink and dyes.

**Perchloride of Iron (Ferric Chloride), Fe<sub>3</sub>Cl<sub>7</sub>, 12H<sub>2</sub>O**—This is an extremely deliquescent salt, rapidly soluble in water. When its watery solution is slowly evaporated, yellow crystals are formed. When dissolved in alcohol, it forms a non official preparation, called *Tinctura ferris perchloridi* (tincture of iron). The watery solution is a pharmacopoeial preparation known as *Liquor ferris perchlorati*. The doses of both these preparations are five to fifteen minims.

1 Illinois Med Jour., Dec., 1920, p. 517.

2 Jour Amer Med Assoc., July 14, 1917, p. 87.

3 Ibid., Nov 5 1921, p. 1514.

4 Heymann Jour Amer Med Assoc., Nov 18 1920, p. 1307.

5 Willhaus Med Juris et Toxic., Vol IV, p. 302, Berl. k. Wehnsehr., 1891, XXVIII,

**Symptoms.**—An inky, metallic taste in the mouth; violent pain in the stomach and abdomen, vomiting, purging with black motions : suppression of urine, collapse and death. Sometimes, there are convulsions and paralysis of the extremities.

**Fatal Dose.**—The fatal dose of ferrous sulphate is not known. A girl, who swallowed an ounce of the salt, recovered, though she suffered for some hours from violent pain, vomiting and purging.<sup>1</sup> One ounce and-a-half of ferric chloride tincture has proved fatal,<sup>2</sup> though recovery has followed a dose of 3 ounces.<sup>3</sup>

**Fatal Period.**—Uncertain. Five weeks after a dose of one ounce and a-half of the tincture of ferric chloride was taken. Three minims of the tincture injected into the nevus of a child, 9 months old, caused death in 5 minutes.<sup>4</sup>

**Treatment.**—Wash out the stomach with the stomach tube, or administer emetics. Give sodium carbonate or bicarbonate dissolved in a large amount of water or milk, demulcent drinks, opium and stimulants, if necessary.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—Appearances as those of acute gastro-enteritis. The mucous membrane of the stomach is inflamed, and thickened towards its pyloric end.

**Chemical Tests**—1. Ammonium sulphide gives a black precipitate, soluble in dilute hydrochloric acid with both ferrous and ferric salts.

2. Potassium ferrocyanide with ferrous salts produces a white precipitate, which turns immediately blue and with ferric salts a blue precipitate (Prussian blue).

3. Potassium ferricyanide gives a blue precipitate (Turnbull's blue) with ferric salts and a brown colouration with ferrous salts.

4. Potassium sulphocyanide produces no change with ferrous salts and a blood red colouration with ferric salts.

**Medico-Legal Points.**—1. Iron is a normal constituent of the body, it being present in the colouring matter of the blood. It is also present in food and is often a constituent of tonic medicines.

2. Ferrous sulphate seems rarely to have proved fatal to adults, but it has produced fatal poisoning in children from accidental ingestion of large doses. A male child, 3½ years old, died in 33 hours after taking 50 tablets each containing 3 grains of ferrous sulphate, 1/25th grain of copper sulphate and 1/25th grain of manganese sulphate. A child, aged 1 year, died in 30 hours after swallowing 30 to 35 similar tablets.<sup>5</sup>

A homicidal case<sup>6</sup> has been recorded where a man killed his wife and son by administering ferrous sulphate in coffee. Ferrous sulphate has also been used as a cattle poison, especially to kill sheep.

Perchloride of iron has been given for homicidal purposes to persons in an intoxicated condition. Poisonous, irritant symptoms have followed the use of iron chloride as an injection into the uterus. Both the sulphate and the chloride have been used in poisonous doses to procure abortion.

3. Iron is eliminated in the faeces and urine.

## MANGANESE

Of the compounds of manganese, potassium permanganate and manganese dioxide are of toxicological interest.

**Potassium Permanganate.**  $KMnO_4$ .—This is prepared by heating potassium hydroxide with manganese dioxide and potassium chlorate. It occurs as dark purple, slender, iridescent prisms, and has a sweet astringent taste. It dissolves in 20 parts of water, forming a purple-coloured solution. It is a pharmacopelial preparation, known as *potassii permanganat*, the dose being 1 to 3 grains.

Potassium permanganate is a powerful oxidizing agent, and is largely used as a disinfectant. In the solid form or in strong solution, potassium permanganate is a powerful corrosive, and in dilute solution it acts as an irritant.

**Manganese Dioxide.**  $MoO_3$ .—This is the common black ore of manganese, which is called pyrolusite. It serves as the source of nearly all the manganese salts, and is largely used for the manufacture of chlorine.

1. *Christison, On Poisons*, p. 506; *Hall, New York Med. Jour.*, 1843, *XXII* III, p. 401.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Dubin, Med. Press*, Feb. 21, 1849.

4. *Lancet*, Feb. 7, 1874.

5. *Forbes, G., Brit. Med. Jour.*, 1, 1847, p. 317; see also *Thomson, J., Ibid.*, p. 610, *Lancet*,

2, 1847, p. 514.

6. *Bouchardet, Ann. de Therap.*, 1872, p. 146.

**Acute Poisoning**—Acute poisoning occurs when a large quantity of a salt of manganese, especially potassium permanganate, is taken internally.

**Symptoms**—These are burning pain in the mouth, throat and stomach spreading over the whole abdomen, intense thirst, difficulty in swallowing, almost continuous vomiting and difficult breathing. The salt corrodes the tongue and pharynx, and stains the parts black or dark brown. Death occurs from paralysis of the heart.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period**.—One and two grains of potassium permanganate have respectively caused alarming symptoms. A married woman, aged 36 years, who took pills containing 22 grains of potassium permanganate during a period of four days with a view to curing amenorrhoea, suffered from poisonous symptoms but recovered in a week<sup>1</sup>.

A handful of the crystals of potassium permanganate taken in beer caused the death of a woman 47 years old, in thirty five minutes.<sup>2</sup> Thompson<sup>3</sup> reports the case of a woman who swallowed 15 to 20 grammes of potassium permanganate and died in five hours. A single woman aged about 67 years, swallowed about 1½ ounces of a strong solution of potassium permanganate and died in about five hours.<sup>4</sup> A female child, aged 2 years who swallowed about half a tea spoonful of potassium permanganate and was treated in the King George's Hospital Lucknow died in twenty seven hours from suffocation due to oedema glottidis. A mechanic died four days after he had irrigated his urethra for two days with 20 grammes of potassium permanganate dissolved in a tea cupful of water.<sup>5</sup> A woman 37 years old took 10 grammes of potassium permanganate with intent to commit suicide and died from pneumonia on the fourth day.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, a youth 17 years old who with a view to committing suicide swallowed the mercury from a thermometer and then a table spoonful of potassium permanganate in some water, recovered under prompt treatment.<sup>7</sup>

**Treatment**—Lavage the stomach carefully with charcoal. Give white of egg and milk. Administer intravenous injections of calcium bromide and intramuscular injections of calcium gluconate. Treat the symptoms on general lines.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Signs of corrosion if a strongly concentrated solution or the solid form of potassium permanganate is taken. The mouth, pharynx and oesophagus are often corroded and blackened. The parts that escape corrosion are usually congested and inflamed. Oedema of the glottis and inflammation of the larynx and trachea have been observed.

**Chronic Poisoning**—This occurs in workers who constantly inhale the fine dust of manganese dioxide in manganese mines or in factories where manganese salts and manganese steel are manufactured.

**Symptoms**—These resemble very much the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. They are muscular weakness with marked tonicity and rigidity, difficulty in walking with a spastic gait, intentional tremors, cramps in the legs with muscular twitches, increased tendon reflexes, languor, sleepiness, monotonous scanning speech, stolid mask like face and emotional disturbances, such as purposeless crying and laughing. Memory and sexual power are diminished. Progressive bulbar palsy and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis are also observed in chronic poisoning.

**Treatment**—Chronic poisoning by manganese like Parkinson's disease is difficult to be cured but the best way is to remove the patient from the source of danger and to adopt hygienic measures.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Cirrhosis of the liver is often found.<sup>8</sup> The lungs are frequently edematous or pneumonic. grave degenerative changes are present in the brain with atrophy of ganglion cells, especially in the globus pallidus, putamen and nucleus caudatus and with degeneration of Forel's bundle.<sup>9</sup>

**Chemical Tests**—1. A solution of ammonium chloride ammonia and ammonium sulphide gives a salmon-coloured precipitate with a solution of a manganese salt. Caustic soda or potash, when added to a solution of a salt of manganese yields a white precipitate which becomes brown when shaken. A solution of bleaching powder produces a black precipitate with a solution of a salt of manganese.

1 *Hawthorne Lancet*, Nov 25, 1899 p 1467

2 *Bax, Lancet* Aug 12, 1895 p 411

3 Petersb Med Wochenschr, 1885 Dixomann, Foren Med and Toxic, Bd II, p 414

4 A Douglas Cowburn, Transactions, Med Leg Soc, Vol III p 17

5 Willmott and Freeman, Brit Med Jour Jan 11 1906 p 38

6 Adler Med Klinik, Berlin, Aug 16, 1914 p 33; Peterson, Haines and Webster Leg

Med and Toxic, Vol II p 160

7 Holle and Wachter, Med Klin 1932, XXI III, p 1538, Med Legal and Criminolog Rev April, 1933 p 158

8 Hanulovský, Arch Exp Path Phar, 1926 110 p 263 Analyst, 1926, 51 p 362

9 Leschi, Clinic Toxicology, Eng Transl by Stewart and Dorrer, 1934, p 81

2 When fused with sodium carbonate and potassium nitrate, manganese compounds yield a green mass of manganese. The green mass dissolves in a small quantity of cold water, forming a dark green solution. If this solution is poured into a large volume of water, a purple solution of permanganate and a brown precipitate of hydrated manganese dioxide are formed.

3 A borax bead, dipped in a solution of a manganese compound, imparts an amethyst colour in the oxidizing flame but it becomes colourless in the reducing flame.

4 A solution of potassium permanganate is decolorized when it is heated with dilute sulphuric acid and oxalic acid.

**Medico Legal Points** — Acute poisoning by potassium permanganate is rare, although a few accidental and suicidal cases have occurred.

Chronic poisoning by manganese occurs only when the concentration of manganese in the working atmosphere exceeds 50 mg per cubic metre.<sup>1</sup> Chronic poisoning is regarded as an industrial disease in European countries, but it is not included in the list of occupational diseases in India under the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923.

Manganese is not an essential constituent of the human body, but it is found in minute traces in the human blood and tissues, and it is taken into the system with the food in which it is present in traces.

Manganese is excreted mainly in the feces, bile and to a small extent in the urine.

### 11N (KAL II)

The only salts that are of any toxicological interest are stannous and stannic chloride. They occur as whitish yellow crystals but being deliquescent, are met with in liquid water solutions. A mixture of these two chlorides in solution is known as *Dyer's Spirit* and is used as a mordant in calico-printing.

**Symptoms** — A metallic taste in the mouth, nausea accompanied by vomiting, pain in the abdomen, purging, feeble irregular pulse, cyanosis, headache, great depression, collapse, unconsciousness or drowsiness.

**Fatal Dose** — Not known. Half a drachm of tin chloride solution has caused death. Four to ten grains of muriate of tin have proved fatal in children.

**Fatal Period** — Not known.

**Treatment** — Emetics or the stomach tube should be used. Eggs, bland demulcent drinks, stimulants and anodynes should be next administered.

**Post mortem Appearances** — Not known, probably those of gastro-enteritis.

**Chemical Tests** — 1 Sulphuretted hydrogen yields with stannous solutions a dark brown precipitate and with stannic solutions a yellow precipitate. Both precipitates are soluble in ammonium sulphide.

2 Mercuric chloride gives a white precipitate with a stannous salt, which turns grey and lastly black on boiling with excess of the reagent.

3 Gold chloride produces a purple precipitate with a stannous salt, but none with a stannic salt.

**Medico Legal Points** — 1 Poisoning by tin salts is very rare in lead. Accidental cases occur from the use of tinned fruits owing to the malic acid of fruits acting on tin and forming muriate of tin.

Poisonous symptoms may arise from wearing silk articles of clothing, such as silk stockings, which are sometimes impregnated with tin chloride. A Jolles<sup>2</sup> reports the case of a young woman who developed poisonous symptoms from wearing yellow silk stockings heavily impregnated with tin chloride. She complained of motor and sensory disturbances in the lower extremities which were stained yellow. The urine was albuminous and marked nervous symptoms like ataxia were noted a few weeks later. She became anaemic, but recovered in a few months after the stockings had been discarded.

A fatal case<sup>3</sup> of poisoning has occurred from the accidental use of jeweller's powder, a higher oxide of tin, which is used for polishing silver vessels.

2 Tin is eliminated in the urine and faeces.

1 M. B. Jacobs, *Analytical Chemistry of Industrial Poisons, Hazards and Solvents*, 1961.

2 Munch Med Wechschr 1907, 48 p 327. Bein Med Presse, 1101, 12 p 480.

3 Med Press and Crit., 1894, V 5 no 5 p 450.

## CHROMIUM

The following preparations of chromium are important from a toxicological point of view —

**Chromic Acid (Chromic Anhydride, Chromium Trioxide), CrO<sub>3</sub>.** —This occurs as crimson, needle-shaped crystals. It is deliquescent and readily soluble in water and may explode when brought into contact with glycerin, ether or alcohol. It is a powerful oxidizing agent and is used in preparing *Liquor acidis chromic*. It is prepared by the action of strong sulphuric acid on a cold saturated solution of potassium bichromate and, therefore exists in battery fluids used in bichromate cells. It is a powerful corrosive, and is used as a caustic in medicine.

**Potassium Chromate, K<sub>2</sub>CrO<sub>4</sub>.** —This is a yellow crystalline salt with a disagreeable bitter taste, and readily soluble in water, the solution being alkaline in reaction. It is chiefly used in manufacturing chrome yellow (lead chromate), a very poisonous salt.

**Potassium Dichromate (Red Chromate), K<sub>2</sub>Cr<sub>2</sub>O<sub>7</sub>.** —This is also known as potassium bichromate. It is an orange red, crystalline salt, having a bitter and metallic taste. It is soluble in ten parts of water, forming an acid solution which is highly poisonous having a special action on the nervous system. It is insoluble in alcohol. It is used by dyers, furniture stainners and photographers.

**Acute Poisoning** —Toxic effects appear within a few minutes say 3 minutes or less after swallowing the poison, usually potassium dichromate or chromic acid. The symptoms are a bitter metallic taste, intense pain in the stomach vomiting and diarrhoea. The vomited matter is yellow, and sometimes tinged with bile and blood. The stools are yellow owing to the reduction of the salt, and may contain blood. The urine is suppressed or is passed in small quantity and contains blood and albumin. The pupils are dilated and do not react to light. The respirations are very slow and gasping. The pulse is feeble and almost imperceptible. These are followed by muscular cramps, collapse unconsciousness and death. Convulsions may occur in some cases.

**Fatal Dose** —Two drachms of potassium bichromate have proved fatal to an adult woman<sup>1</sup> but the smallest dose is 30 to 40 grains (2 to 3 grammes) which killed a man aged 43 years, in ten days,<sup>2</sup> while 10 grains have killed a child of twenty months.<sup>3</sup> Recovery has followed a dose of 273 grains taken in a solution in mistake for tea<sup>4</sup> and a dose of half an ounce in the case of two individuals who attempted to commit suicide.<sup>5</sup> In the third case a man recovered at the end of a week after he had swallowed, with suicidal intent, about two ounces of the bichromate in a solution, mixed with pearl ash.<sup>6</sup> Death has occurred in 12 hours after swallowing a table spoonful of chromate of potassium in place of Glauber's salt,<sup>7</sup> as also from a table spoonful of a 50 per cent solution of chromic acid.<sup>8</sup> Six grammes of chromic acid have also proved fatal.<sup>9</sup>

**Fatal Period** —The shortest period is 40 minutes from a dose of one ounce of bichromate of potassium.<sup>10</sup> A woman died in four hours after she had taken two drachms of this salt.<sup>11</sup> The average is 8 hours. A woman<sup>12</sup> 21 years old, died on the tenth day after swallowing 15 grammes of potassium bichromate with intent to commit suicide.

**Treatment** —Empty the stomach by emetics, or wash it out with warm water. The stomach may then be washed out with a weak solution of silver nitrate. Give solutions of magnesium or calcium carbonate in water or in milk and administer demulcents as well as stimulants.

**Post mortem Appearances** —The mucous membrane of the stomach is inflamed and corroded in patches, and coloured olive green or purple due to the conversion of the salt into an oxide. The duodenum also shows the same appearances. The blood is chocolate coloured and shows the spectrum of methaemoglobin. Fatty degeneration of the liver and heart, and acute inflammation of the kidneys. In the case of death from potassium bichromate reported

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *On Poisons*, Ed III, p 489

<sup>2</sup> Klimesch, *Wien Ak Wochenschr*, 1889 II, p 732, Wuthaus, *Med Juris and Toxic*, Vol IV, p 703

<sup>3</sup> Mc Crie, *Glas Med Jour*, 1881, IV, p 378

<sup>4</sup> Philipson, *Lancet*, Jan 16, 1892 p 138

<sup>5</sup> Waruel, *Lancet* 1880, Vol I, p 167, Haugh, *Ibid*, 1885, Vol II, p 1133

<sup>6</sup> Taylor, *On Poisons*, Ed III, p 480

<sup>7</sup> Neese, *Phar Ztschr f Russl*, 1862 No 7, Wuthaus *Loc Cit*, p 702

<sup>8</sup> Burghart, *Charite Ann*, 1896 7, XXIII, 190, *Ibid*, p 313

<sup>9</sup> Gadamer, *Lehrbuch der Chemischen Toxikologie*, 1924 p 244, Webster, *Leg Met and Toxicol*, 1930 p 422

<sup>10</sup> Stewart, *Brd Med Jour* 1898, Vol II, p 420

<sup>11</sup> Taylor, *On Poisons* L I III p 489

<sup>12</sup> Leschle, *Clin Toxic*, Ling Transl by Stewart and Dorset, 1934, p 85

A case<sup>1</sup> is recorded in which several persons were poisoned through the application of an ointment in which potassium chromate was used by mistake instead of sulphur ordered for the treatment of scabies. Of these twelve died.

### POTASSIUM

The following salts of potassium have caused poisonous symptoms :—

**Potassium Nitrate (Salmepetre, Nitre, Sal Prunelle), KNO<sub>3</sub>.**—In the vernacular, the salt is called *Sorakhar* or *Kalmi Sora*. It exists as colourless, rhombic crystals. It has a cool, saline taste, and is soluble in water. Its solubility increases with the rise of temperature. It is chiefly used in the manufacture of gunpowder and in pyrotechny. The dose is 3 to 15 grains.

**Symptoms.**—Nausea, pain in the stomach and epigastrum, vomiting and purging. The vomited matters and stools may contain blood. The urine may also contain blood. Dyspnoea, weak, irregular pulse, convulsions, collapse and death. Coma may precede death. Recovery from large doses is slow, and gastric disturbances, paraesthesia, cramps and muscular twitchings or paralyses may persist for two or three months.

**Fatal Dose.**—The smallest is 2 drachms.<sup>2</sup> The usual fatal dose is an ounce, though recovery has occurred even after 5 ounces taken in mistake for magnesium sulphate.<sup>3</sup>

**Fatal Period.**—The shortest recorded fatal period is 45 minutes and the longest is 60 hours, the average being 13 hours.<sup>4</sup>

**Treatment.**—Wash out the stomach with the stomach tube. Give stimulants by hypodermic injection. Apply mustard plaster on the epigastrum and warmth to the body. Administer mucilaginous drinks and treat the prominent symptoms.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—The mucous membrane of the stomach is stained bright red or brownish red, inflamed and detached in various parts. A small perforation at the fundus of the stomach has been observed in one case.<sup>5</sup> The small intestine is acutely inflamed. The blood is liquid.

**Medico-Legal Points.**—Accidental poisoning by potassium nitrate, though rare, has sometimes occurred from its use in mistake for sugar, magnesium sulphate or sodium sulphate. In his annual report for the year 1939, the Chemical Examiner, Bengal, describes a case, in which a female child, about 10 months old, was given one morning by her mother a feed of milk mixed with some potassium nitrate which was mistaken for sugar. The child died in the afternoon. In the annual report of the Chemical Examiner of the United and Central Provinces for the year 1921, a case is recorded where potassium nitrate was given as a purgative by mistake for magnesium sulphate with a fatal result.

Potassium nitrate has been used for suicidal purpose and also for the purpose of procuring criminal abortion. Used as an enema containing 12½ grains, it has caused death.<sup>6</sup>

Potassium nitrate is eliminated largely by the kidneys and to a slight extent by the intestine. A small portion may be reduced to nitrite.

**Potassium Chlorate, KClO<sub>3</sub>.**—This is a colourless, crystalline salt with a cool, saline taste, soluble in 16 parts of cold water and in 3 parts of boiling water, but almost insoluble in alcohol. Potassium chlorate is a pharmacopoeial preparation, the dose being 3 to 10 grains.

**Symptoms.**—When swallowed in large doses, it causes pain in the stomach and abdomen, severe vomiting, diarrhoea, giddiness, headache and muscular weakness. When absorbed, it breaks up the red blood corpuscles, converting haemoglobin into methaemoglobin and setting up secondary symptoms, such as pain in the livers, haemoglobinuria, partial suppression of urine, the urine being dark in colour and containing albumin and bloody tube-casts, cyanosis of the skin, jaundice, drowsiness, delirium, coma and death.

**Fatal Dose.**—According to Wittius,<sup>7</sup> the smallest fatal dose is 3 drachms for an adult, 7½ grains for a child and 15 grains for an infant. A man, aged 41, took 60 lozenges (each containing 5 grains) in two doses morning and evening for sore throat and influenza and died from the symptoms of caustic poisoning.<sup>8</sup> Fountain, experimenting upon himself, took about 3 drachms and died in seven days from nephritis.<sup>9</sup> It should, however, be remembered that a quantity taken in divided doses is more apt to cause death than when taken in a single dose.

1. *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, Nov. 21, 1919, p. 1590.

2. *Dizraermann, Forens. Med. and Toxic.*, Ed. VI., p. 366.

3. *Bailey, Phila. Med. and Surg. Reporter*, 1872, Vol. 26, p. 76.

4. *Wittius, Med. Juris. and Toxic.*, Vol. IV., Ed. II., p. 306.

5. *Souville: Orfila, Toxic.*, Vol. I., p. 354.

6. *Orfila, Toxic.*, Ed. V., Vol. I., pp. 351, 356; Wittius, *Med. Juris. and Toxic.*, Vol. IV.,

p. 305.

7. *Manual of Toxic.*, Ed. II., p. 691.

8. *Brit. Med. Jour.*, Jan. 12, 1907, p. 110.

9. *Amer. Med. Times*, 1860.

**Post mortem Appearances**—The body surface is livid. Redness of the stomach and duodenum with a deposit of sulphur. The lungs are gorged with dark blood.

**Chemical Tests**—1. A solution of silver nitrate gives a black precipitate with sulphides.

2. If the solution be heated after adding an acid, hydrogen sulphide will be evolved, shown from its turning white paper black, when moistened with lead acetate solution.

### ALUMINIUM

**Alum (Phalkari)**—This is a double salt of sulphate of aluminium and potassium (potash alum)  $\text{Al}_2(\text{SO}_4)_3 \cdot \text{K}_2\text{SO}_4 \cdot 24\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , or sulphate of aluminium and ammonium (ammonia alum),  $\text{Al}_2(\text{SO}_4)_3 \cdot (\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4 \cdot 24\text{H}_2\text{O}$ . It occurs as transparent, colourless and octahedral crystals or as a white powder, having a sweetish, astrigent taste. It is soluble in water and glycerin but insoluble in alcohol. It is largely used as a mordant for dyeing, as a constituent of certain baking powders to whiten bread, and for purifying water before filtering it.

**Symptoms**—Burning pain in the mouth, throat and stomach, vomiting mixed with blood dyspnoea, frequent pulse, subnormal temperature, loss of co-ordination convulsions of a clonic nature, death. In the solid form it acts as corrosive in the mouth and throat.

**Fatal Dose**—Half an ounce to an ounce of alum. One drachm given in syrup killed a child, aged 3 years, who was suffering from diphtheria.<sup>1</sup> Recovery has occurred after much larger doses.

**Fatal Period**—Twenty four hours.

**Treatment**—Emetics, lime water, sodium carbonate in large quantities of milk.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—The tongue, mouth and oesophagus are oedematous and corroded. The mucous membrane of the stomach is corrugated, loosened or hardened, and is stained red or velvety. The intestines are inflamed.

**Chemical Tests**—1. An alkaline solution with ammonia and ammonium sulphide gives a gelatinous, white precipitate, soluble in caustic potash.

2. Ammonia gives a white, gelatinous precipitate, insoluble in excess of the reagent, but soluble in dilute hydrochloric acid.

3. Caustic potash gives a white precipitate, soluble in excess, which reappears on adding ammonium chloride, but not on adding hydrogen sulphide.

4. Ammonium carbonate gives a white, flocculent precipitate.

5. A blue incrustation is formed on charcoal when heated with a solution of cobalt nitrate.

**Medico-Legal Points**—Aluminium is present in many vegetables, in many fruits, in milk, in eggs, and in sea food and probably in the tissues of the human and animal bodies. Aluminium vessels used for cooking purposes are regarded as quite harmless.

It is possible that slow poisoning may occur among aluminium workers. A case<sup>2</sup> is recorded in which a man working with the metal suffered from loss of memory, tremors, jerky movements, impaired co-ordination, chronic constipation and incontinence of urine.

### MAGNESIUM

**Magnesium Sulphate (Epsom Salt),  $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$** —This forms small colourless, rhombic prisms and dissolves readily in water. Its solution has a saline, bitter taste and acts as a purgative. The pharmacopeial dose is 30 to 240 grains. When taken in excess it acts as an irritant poison. It is contained in the official preparation of *Mistura senae composita* (Black draught), dose, 1 to 2 fluid ounces and is an ingredient of *mistura magnas hydratidis* (Cream of magnesia), dose, 60 to 240 minims.

**Symptoms**—These commence in less than half an hour after swallowing a poisonous dose. They are burning pain in the stomach and intestines, nausea, vomiting, purging, dilated pupils, paralysis of the lower limbs, tetanic spasms, suppression of urine, collapse and death from respiratory failure.

Sometimes, after swallowing a large dose, the patient becomes pale, feels giddy, falls down and dies from syncope. A Christian boy, 7 years old was given in the early morning 2 ounces of magnesium sulphate as an aperient and had vomited it up. He had again been given another dose of 2 ounces about 2 hours later and had again vomited but one hour later he became unconscious and was removed to the J J Hospital, Bombay, where he was found unconscious and cyanosed with dilated pupils reacting sluggishly, shallow respirations, and a feeble pulse. He died in less than an hour. A case occurred to Dr Jhambolja of Rander in which a woman, about 60 years old, felt giddy soon after swallowing a dose of 1½ ounces of magnesium sulphate.

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *Princ and Pract of Med Juris*, Vol II, Ld A, p 341.

<sup>2</sup> J Spiersforth, *Lancet*, 1921, Vol I, p 1301.

<sup>3</sup> *Bombay Chem Analyst's Annual Report*, 1930, p 4.

in the morning of the first October, 1948 became unconscious and died within two hours. The Chemical Analyser, Bombay, detected magnesium sulphate in the viscera usually preserved for chemical analysis.

When injected into the blood, magnesium sulphate depresses the heart, paralyses the central nervous system and causes death from paralysis of respiration.

**Fatal Dose**—One ounce has caused death,<sup>1</sup> though the same quantity may be given as a purgative. Two ounces have caused the death of a boy, ten years old.<sup>2</sup>

**Fatal Period**—Forty minutes after a fatal dose of 2 ounces as mentioned above. Eighty minutes after swallowing 1 ounce.<sup>3</sup> Death occurred in 60 hours in a case where 310 cc. of a ½ per cent solution of magnesium sulphate had been injected subcutaneously.<sup>4</sup>

**Treatment**.—Empty the stomach, give stimulants and treat the symptoms. Subcutaneous or intravenous administration of calcium salts has been recommended, as calcium salts have an antagonistic action on the inhibitory effect of magnesium sulphate.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—Signs of irritation of the gastro-intestinal tract may be present. In a case<sup>5</sup> in which a young farmer died in one hour and ten minutes after taking a solution of magnesium sulphate the post mortem examination showed that the stomach contained approximately a litre of yellowish brown liquid, and its lining membrane had a dark red hemorrhage appearance. There were recent hemorrhages throughout the small intestine and considerable blood was mixed with the contents. The hemorrhages averaged 5 mm. in their largest dimensions. There were a few hemorrhages in the region of the cecum. There was marked congestion of the lungs, trachea and main bronchi, and of the heart, liver and kidneys. There was also acute splenic hyperplasia. The chemist reported 883½ grains of magnesium sulphate in the contents of the stomach.

forcible and intermittent heart beats with rise of blood pressure, convulsions, paralysis, collapse or coma and death.

**Fatal Dose.**—Two and a quarter grains of barium chloride given to a woman in 1/12-grain doses produced severe symptoms of poisoning<sup>1</sup>. Two and a quarter grammes of barium chloride taken on two consecutive nights in mistake for chloral hydrate killed a 35-year-old man suffering from asthma on the third day<sup>2</sup>. A mouthful of a solution containing 170 grains of the chloride proved fatal to a man<sup>3</sup>. Less than a tea-spoonful (100 grains) of the chloride caused the death of a woman aged 3 years<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, recovery has followed a dose of 370 grains of the chloride<sup>5</sup>. Four drachms of barium nitrate have killed a man, aged 46 years<sup>6</sup>. Sixty grains of barium carbonate have destroyed life in two cases<sup>7</sup>. A young woman recovered after having swallowed half a tea-cupful of the powdered carbonate mixed with water on an empty stomach<sup>8</sup>. Thirty-eight grammes of barium sulphide have caused death<sup>9</sup>.

**Fatal Period.**—Uncertain. The shortest period is 10 minutes in a case where 40 grammes of barium sulphide had been taken by mistake for barium sulphate<sup>10</sup>. One hour<sup>11</sup> in another case. A woman died in 19 hours after swallowing by mistake half of a solution containing 30 grammes of barium chloride instead of sodium sulphate<sup>12</sup>. A man who was given a powder containing barium carbonate and barium sulphide in soup by his wife died on the third day<sup>13</sup>. The longest period is 7 days<sup>14</sup>.

**Treatment.**—Give one-ounce doses of sodium or magnesium sulphate to form an insoluble salt of barium sulphate and then give emetics or wash out the stomach with milk and water. Use morphine to relieve pain and stimulants to combat collapse. Give nitro-glycerin or amyl-nitrite to reduce the blood pressure.

**Postmortem Appearances.**—Reddening, congestion and inflammation of the mucous membrane of the stomach and duodenum sometimes erosions of the mucous membrane. In the case of a woman who died in about 2 hours after taking half an-ounce of powdered barium chloride the stomach was found perforated posteriorly in the lesser curvature near the cardiac end but the perforation was due to disease and not to the poison taken<sup>15</sup>. The heart is large and flabby. The lungs and brain are congested.

**Chemical Tests.—1.** Dilute sulphuric acid gives a white precipitate of barium sulphate, insoluble in hydrochloric and nitric acids.

**2.** A solution of potassium chromate added to a neutral solution of a barium salt produces a yellow precipitate of barium chromate, soluble in nitric acid and in hydrochloric acid, but insoluble in acetic acid.

**3.** A few drops of a 5 per cent solution of the sodium salt of chloronitrotoluene-sulphonic acid added to a neutral or faintly acid solution of a barium salt produces a crystalline precipitate even in a dilution of 1 in 2,000. It gives no precipitate to calcium or strontium salts.

**4. Feigl's Test.**—If a drop of a neutral solution of a barium salt is placed on a piece of filter paper which has been soaked in a freshly prepared solution of sodium thiodizonate and dried a reddish stain or precipitate is formed which when moistened with hydrochloric acid, changes to scarlet.

**5.** Barium salts moistened with hydrochloric acid impart a greenish-yellow colour to flame.

**Medico-Legal Points.**—The soluble salts of barium are highly poisonous. They have locally an irritant action and remotely have a depressant action on the heart.

Most of the cases of poisoning by barium salts are accidental, taken in mistake for poisons or other salts. A few are suicidal.

1 Ferguson *Med Times*, March 28, 1841, p. 508.

2 Jähner *Sammlung von Erfahrungen* fallen 1830, Vol. I, *Leschke Clin Toxic*, Ing. Transl. by Stewart and Dorer 1944, p. 58.

3 Sterne *Zeitschrift f. Med Beiträge* 1800, IV, p. 181.

4 Walsh *Lancet* Feb. 26, 1849 p. 11.

5 Wolf *Wochenschr f. d. ges. Heilk.* 1850, No. 77, R. Willhaus, *Med Juris and Toxic*, Vol. IV, p. 683.

6 Phar. Jour. June 1872 p. 1021.

7 Taylor, *On Poisons* Ed. III p. 74.

8 Wilson, *Med Gaz*, Vol. VI, p. 448.

9 Webster, *Leg. Med. and Toxic*, 1930 p. 510.

10 Bensaude and Inborne, *Bull. Soc. Med. des Hop. Paris* 1919, LIII, p. 15 Peterson, Haines and Webster, *Leg. Med. and Toxic*, Ed. II, Vol. II p. 28.

11 Ann. d'Hyg. 1841, Pt. 2, p. 217.

12 R. Gili, *Archivio di Antropologie Criminale, etc.*, Turin, Jan.-June, 1937, p. 24, *Jour. Amer. Med Assoc.*, Oct. 25, 1947, p. 540.

13 Madras Chem. Examiner & Annual Rep. 1943 p. 1.

14 Dixonmann, *Forens. Med. and Toxic* Ed. I p. 369.

15 Wilder, quoted by Taylor, *Poisons* Ed. III, p. 273.

A family in Hisar District ate *chapatis* made with *atta* (wheat flour) mixed with pills of barium carbonate used for destroying rats. Soon afterwards all of them began to vomit and purge, exhibiting the symptoms of an irritant poison.<sup>1</sup> Morton<sup>2</sup> describes two outbreaks of food poisoning affecting 85 British soldiers of the Persian Iraq command. The poisoning was caused by barium carbonate contaminating by mistake the flour used in preparing marmalade tart and treacle tart. All of them suffered from symptoms of gastro-enteritis with tingling of the face and neck followed by loss of tendon reflexes, disordered action of the heart and muscle paralysis. Recovery was rapid and there was no death.

An accidental fatal case<sup>3</sup> of poisoning by barium sulphide occurred under tragic circumstances in the Sassoon Hospital at Poona on April 3, 1923. His Highness the Rajasahib of Walkot had some stomach trouble and went to the hospital by appointment to consult the X-ray specialist. It was arranged to X-ray the stomach and in order to note the process of food digestion a meal of barium sulphate mixed with porridge had to be given. There being no barium sulphate in the hospital, an order for the drug was sent to the Poona Drug Stores which unfortunately supplied barium sulphide instead of barium sulphate. About two table-spoonfuls of this were mixed up with a bowlful of porridge and about two or three mouthfuls of the mixture of barium sulphide were taken which probably contained about a tea-spoonful of the salt. The Raja could not take any more on account of the offensive odour of the mixture and started vomiting immediately afterwards. He then complained of a burning pain at the pit of the stomach. In spite of prompt treatment the patient collapsed and died within two hours after having taken the drug. There was no post mortem examination. The chemist who dispensed the drug and the X-ray specialist who administered it were both convicted by the Assistant Collector for causing death by a rash and negligent act.

A Hindu male,<sup>4</sup> aged 55, took about 1½ drachms of a depilatory powder containing 1 part barium sulphide and 8 parts washing earth or *botni mithi* in mistake for a laxative powder at 4 a.m. on April 14, 1929. Vomiting commenced soon afterwards and was persistent, he had 3 motions in the course of the next four hours. At 10 a.m. he noticed difficulty in lifting the arms and extending the legs and could not close the fist tightly. At 5 p.m. his tongue was found coated and dry, and the pulse slow, full and intermittent. The heart sounds were booming, the second heart sound being markedly accentuated and intermittent with a beat missing after every five or six beats. There was paresis of the arms and legs, and the grip was very weak. The deep reflexes were absent. There was no sensory disturbance. The brain was absolutely clear. He was given one drachm of magnesium sulphate in solution every two hours, and he recovered after he had taken altogether six doses. He had 5 thin watery motions in the night.

**Fatal Dose**—From experiments conducted on frogs and dogs the Chemical Examiner, Madras has calculated that about 30 grains of sodium nitrite would probably prove fatal to the average adult man.<sup>1</sup>

**Fatal Period**—Three members of a family died in 2 hours after taking sodium nitrite in mistake for common salt<sup>2</sup>

**Treatment**—Use the stomach tube or give emetics. Keep the patient warm in bed. Use artificial respiration, and give oxygen inhalations alone or with 5 per cent carbon dioxide.

**Post mortem Appearances**—The brain is oedematous. The lungs are oedematous. There may be degenerative changes in the kidneys. The blood is chocolate coloured owing to the conversion of haemoglobin into methaemoglobin.

**Medico Legal Points**—Sodium nitrite along with potassium nitrite is extensively used by weavers in the dyeing of cloths in villages and is sold without restrictions so that cases of nitrite poisoning have become frequent in recent years. The following two cases of poisoning by sodium nitrite are reported to the author by the Chemical Examiner, Hyderabad Deccan —

1 In June, 1940 a Hindu male aged 22 years and of Nalgonda District committed suicide by taking sodium nitrite. An hour later he was trembling all over, with fists clenched and shouting incoherently. He vomited once and passed two stools. He was partly unconscious and died in six hours.

2 In September, 1940, a woman of Nalgonda District gave to her co-wife half an-ounce of sodium nitrite mixed in a decoction of anisi seeds. Soon afterwards she vomited once and passed one liquid motion. She then became unconscious and died in three hours.

In his private communication to the author the Chemical Examiner Bengal reports the following accidental case of poisoning which occurred in the year 1940.—A Mahomedan girl 9 years old died after eating some vegetable cooked with nitrates of sodium and potassium in mistake for common salt.

## CADMUM

This is a white metal, closely resembling zinc in its chemical reactions but its compounds are more poisonous.

Poisoning may arise from the inhalation of cadmium dust or fumes or from the ingestion of a cadmium salt.

**Symptoms**—The symptoms develop usually within four to eight hours after the inhalation of the dust or fumes, and are characterized by sneezing, sore throat, irritant cough, headache and a metallic taste in the mouth. After a latent period of twenty to thirty-six hours dyspnoea, severe pain in the chest, tachycardia, fever, vomiting diarrhoea and occasionally salivation occur. Dizziness, loss of consciousness and death may occur in rare cases.

The symptoms occur within an hour after ingestion. They are cough, headache, dryness of the mouth and throat, nausea, severe vomiting, colicky pain in the abdomen, diarrhoea, pain in the lower limbs, collapse and rarely death.

**Fatal Dose**—From his experiments on animals Blyth<sup>3</sup> considers 1 grammes to be a larger dose of a soluble salt of cadmium for adults. A Mahomedan lad about 14 years of age, died after swallowing 2 drachms and 10 grains of cadmium chloride in a decoction of senna leaves.<sup>4</sup>

**Fatal Period**—One hour and a half in the above recorded case. The usual period is 5 to 7 days.

**Treatment**—Evacuate the stomach contents by emetics or wash out the stomach with the stomach tube. Treat the symptoms. Preventive measures in factories must consist of proper ventilation and wearing of respirators by workmen.

**Post mortem Appearances**—These are congestion and inflammation of the mucous membrane of the throat, oesophagus, stomach and intestine. The brain and lungs are congested. There may be fatty degeneration of the heart and liver. The kidneys may be inflamed.

**Chemical Tests**—Hydrogen sulphide gives a yellow precipitate of cadmium sulphide, soluble in hydrochloric acid but insoluble in ammonia.

If a drop of cadmium salt solution is treated with a drop of a solution containing 10 per cent caustic soda and 10 per cent potassium cyanide, a drop of a 0.1 per cent alcoholic solution of dimethyl-diphenyl carbazole and 2 drops of 40 per cent formaldehyde solution a bluish green precipitate or colour is formed.

1 Annual Report 1929, p. 7.

2 Phar Jour., Vol II 1936, p. 214.

3 Poisons Id. V, p. 630.

4 Hinder, Ind. Med Ga., June, 1860, p. 156.

A cadmium salt forms a brown incrustation, if heated in the reducing flame of a blow pipe on a piece of charcoal

**Medico Legal Points**—Poisoning by cadmium is extremely rare, but may occur as an industrial disease, as it is used in smelting

A case<sup>1</sup> is recorded in which 62 airmen suffered from cadmium poisoning by drinking fruit juice prepared by dissolving 6 oz. of dehydrated lemon powder and 40 oz. of canned grape fruit juice in 8 gallons of water and ice contained in a galvanized metal vessel. The fruit juice was contaminated by cadmium which was present in the zinc used for galvanizing the inner lining of the vessel and was dissolved by the high acidity of the mixture. Each patient must have ingested about 56 mg. A case is also reported where 300 persons developed food poisoning after eating in a workers' canteen. The poisoning was caused by wine which had been kept for several hours in cadmium lined containers. The wine was found to contain 100 to 160 mg. of cadmium per litre.<sup>2</sup>

After absorption cadmium is mainly found in the lungs, liver and kidneys.

### GOLD (SOV 1)

**Gold Chloride (Auric Chloride) AuCl.**—This occurs as soluble deliquescent, brown crystals and is used in photography

**Gold and Sodium Chloride**—This is a non-official preparation, known as *Tum et Sod i Chloridum*. It consists of equal parts of anhydrous gold chloride and anhydrous sodium chloride and contains about 50 per cent of gold. It is an odourless, orange yellow powder, soluble in water and having a saline metallic taste. The dose 1/30 to 1/12 grain increased to 1 - grain in a pill with kaolin ointment

**Sodium Aurothiosulphate (Sanocrysin, Aurobin or Crisalbine)**—This is a double thiosulphate of gold and sodium occurring in odourless colourless crystals and having a sweet taste. It is freely soluble in water, but insoluble in alcohol. It contains about 17 per cent of gold. It is a J P C preparation and is recommended in phthisis in doses of 0.025 to 1 G in 1 per cent solutions in distilled water intravenously at intervals of a week.

The other proprietary compounds of gold are allochrysine, lojon myoerisin, neomuganal, solganal, etc., which are used intramuscularly in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.

**Symptoms**—The lips, tongue, teeth and the inside of the cheeks are purple exfoliated followed by tenderness of the epigastrium, salivation, persistent vomiting, diarrhoea, fever, albuminuria, and collapse.

after 8 days a man was treated with sanocrysin in April 1934. The first injection of 0.05 G was followed by urticaria of the trunk and arms, so that the doses were decreased to 0.025 G and given once a week. The last injection which was given on November 2, was followed by a papular eruption over the right shoulder and upper arm as well as by diffuse polyneuritis which increased until complete paraplegia was developed. Death occurred on November 17, with symptoms of asphyxia of bulbar origin. The total quantity of sanocrysin injected was in all 5.4 G. Six grains of gold fulminate caused death, the prominent symptoms being salivation, vomiting and convulsions.\*

**Treatment.**—Administer at first 10 c.c. of a 10 per cent solution of calcium gluconate and then give eggs and other albuminous substances. Sodium thiosulphate may be given orally or intravenously. BAL has been recommended as an effective form of treatment in poisoning by gold.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Irritation of the alimentary canal. Capillary haemorrhages in the brain and other organs. Fatty degeneration of the liver.

**Chemical Tests**—1 Hydrogen sulphide produces a black precipitate, soluble in ammonium sulphide.

2 Ammonia yields a reddish yellow precipitate.

3 Stannous chloride gives a purple precipitate.

#### PLATINUM

The soluble salts of platinum are poisonous and act as irritant poisons, the chief symptoms being burning pain in the mouth, salivation, nausea, vomiting, pain in the abdomen, diarrhoea with bloody motions, headache and slight jaundice.

A double chloride salt of platinum and potassium is used in photography. Hence it is liable to cause poisonous symptoms from its accidental internal use. Hardman and Wright<sup>2</sup> report a case in which a woman gave to her infant 8 grains of potassium chloroplatinate in mistake for a teething powder. The infant suffered from the symptoms of gastro-intestinal irritation and died from cardiac failure in 5 hours. On post mortem examination there was a brownish yellow patch on the posterior wall of the stomach otherwise the mucous membrane was pale. The spleen was enlarged. The kidneys were congested and showed punctiform haemorrhages. Platinum was found in the stomach and intestines. A chronic intussusception was also present.

**Chemical Tests**—Hydrogen sulphide gives a dark brown precipitate insoluble in hydrochloric acid. A concentrated solution of potassium or ammonium salts in presence of hydrochloric acid gives a yellow crystalline precipitate of the double chloride.

#### NICKEL AND COBALT

Poisoning by the salts of these metals is exceedingly rare. The chief salts that are likely to produce poisonous symptoms are carbonyl of nickel and cobalt. Nickel carbonyl Ni(CO)<sub>4</sub> which is a colourless mobile, highly refractive liquid has produced fatal symptoms among workmen employed in nickel work. Toxic symptoms are also produced by the inhalation of air charged with the vapours of nickel carbonyl which is converted into a gaseous condition it '01%\*

In 1903 two of the men employed at Mond's Chemical Works, Clydach who had been exposed to the vapours of nickel carbonyl died and their deaths were found to be due to the inhalation of this substance. Dr Jones reported that there had been twenty six cases of slight poisoning under his care last summer in chemical workers. The post mortem examination of both the bodies showed that the lungs were oedematous and intensely congested and the heart was in a state of degeneration and loaded with fat. The other organs including the brain were congested. Dr Yott further examined the brain of one of the deceased and found capillary haemorrhages in its substance and chromatolytic changes in the nerve cells of the medulla and pons, especially of the cardio respiratory centres.\*

## CHAPTER XXX

### IRRITANT POISONS—(*Contd.*)

#### B—ORGANIC POISONS

##### I. VEGETABLE POISONS

Vegetable purgatives, when given in large doses, act as irritant poisons and their action is due to an active principle acrid oil or resin residing in them. When applied externally to the skin, they produce inflammation, pustular eruptions or vesications, and unhealthy callous sores or ulcers. When taken internally the symptoms of gastro intestinal irritation are more marked while the nervous and cerebral symptoms are mostly absent. Death generally results from exhaustion.

The post mortem appearances are the signs of irritation and inflammation of the alimentary canal.

submucous hemorrhages. Fragments of the seeds may be found in the stomach and intestines. The blood is usually seen in the serous cavities.

**Detection of the Seeds** — There are two varieties of the seeds, viz., a large red seed with brown blotches yielding 40 per cent of oil which is largely used for illumination, and a small grey seed having bright, polished, brown spots and yielding 37 per cent of oil, the better quality of which is used for medicinal purposes.

**Medico-Legal Points** — Accidental cases occur among children from eating the seeds in mistake. The seeds have been criminally administered in food.

A case is recorded in which a *Khidmatgar* (servant) out of spite, gave castor oil in some tea to his master and his wife. Both of them were taken ill. Castor oil was detected in the vomit.<sup>1</sup>

The powder of the seeds causes conjunctivitis when applied to the eye, and causes irritation of the nose and throat when inhaled.

Although non poisonous castor oil may act as an irritant poison to infants, a newly born infant died of inflammation of the intestines after the administration of castor oil.<sup>2</sup>

Ricin acts much more powerfully when injected into the blood than when taken by the mouth, as it is destroyed mostly by the digestive ferment. When small non toxic doses are injected subcutaneously for some time, immunity is produced antiricin being formed.

Ricin is excreted by the intestinal epithelium.

### CROTON TIGI ILM (CROTON, JAM ILGOT I OR NATP ILA)

This plant belongs to N.O. 1 uphorbiaceæ, and grows all over India. Its seeds are very poisonous, and contain *crotonin*, a toxalbumin, similar to ricin, but less poisonous and *crotonoside*, a recently isolated glycoside. The oil (croton oil) expressed from the seeds contains a powerful vesicating resin composed chiefly of crotonoleic acid, tiglic or methyl crotonic acid, crotonol and several volatile and fatty acids. It is brownish yellow to dark reddish brown in colour, and has a disagreeable odour and an acrid, burning taste. It dissolves freely in alcohol, ether, chloroform or olive oil. It is a non oily preparation, known as *Oleum crotonis* (*Oleum tiglii*) and is given as a drastic purgative in  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 minims doses.

When dropped on the skin, croton oil produces burning redness and vesication, the vesicles may later suppurate and cause scarring. When swallowed, it acts on the stomach and intestines and produces gastro-intestinal irritation.

**Symptoms** — Hot burning pain in the mouth and throat extending to the abdomen, salivation, vomiting, purging with severe griping pain and bloody stools, vertigo, great prostration, collapse and death.

**Fatal Dose** — A single seed is said to have produced severe symptoms of poisoning, and four seeds<sup>3</sup> have caused death. Three minims of the oil<sup>4</sup> proved fatal to a child, 13 months old. Twenty and thirty minims respectively have proved fatal to adults, while recovery has followed half an ounce of the impure oil.<sup>5</sup>

**Fatal Period** — A man died in four hours after swallowing two drachms and 1 half of croton oil.<sup>6</sup> A child who was given three minims of the oil by

1 Sind Chemical Analysts Annual Rep. of 1940 p. 22.

2 *Pharm. Jour.* Sep. 25, 1943 Vol. CII p. 118.

3 *Dietemann's Med. and Toxic. F.I. II* p. 307.

4 *Met. Times and Gaz.* 1870 Vol. II p. 466.

5 *Dietemann's Loc. Cit.*

6 *Orfila, Toxic.*, Vol. I, p. 108 *Taylor On Poisons Ed. III* p. 301.

mistake died in six hours. An aged woman died in convulsions in three days from a tea spoonful of croton oil embrocation.<sup>1</sup>

**Treatment**—Wash out the stomach, administer demulcent drinks and morphine to allay pain, and spirit of camphor and other stimulants to combat collapse.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—Inflammation of the alimentary canal is usually found, but in the case of a man who died from a dose of two drachms and a half of croton oil no marked change was found in the mucous membrane of the stomach.

**Tests**—The oil should be extracted from the contents of the stomach or other substances by means of ether after they have been slightly acidulated with tartaric acid. After evaporation of the ether the residue will produce irritation or vesication if a drop is rubbed on the inside of the arm.



Fig. 152 — A Castor oil seeds (large variety)  
B Castor oil seeds (small variety)  
C Croton seeds

The following chemical test is at times done in the Chemical Examiner's Laboratory at Agra —

Treat the oil with twice its volume of absolute alcohol, pour the clear alcoholic solution into a concentrated solution of caustic soda or caustic potash (up to 40 per cent). A brilliant brownish red or reddish violet ring according to the age or origin of the oil indicates the presence of croton oil.

Burnford<sup>2</sup> recommends the following chemical test —

If an acidified alcoholic solution of p dimethylamino benzaldehyde is added drop by drop to the residue (ether extract) a transient red colour may be seen in the cold. On adding one or two more drops of the reagent a transient pale blue colour is noticed. On evaporating to dryness the residue assumes a brownish purple colour which changes to pale blue on adding a little more of the reagent.

**Detection of the Seeds**—Croton seeds are  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long,  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch broad oval or oval oblong, odourless and about the size of a grain of coffee. They are covered with a dark brown or brownish grey shell which on scraping becomes black.

<sup>1</sup> Med. Ga. Vol. VIII p. 41

<sup>2</sup> Poison & Their Isolation and Detection Ld. II p. 50

Croton seeds are poisonous to fish and a case is recorded where croton oil was used for poisoning fish in a tank in Contai Midnapur<sup>1</sup>. In his annual report for the year 1938, the Chemical Examiner of Bengal describes a case in which croton seeds were mixed with beef for poisoning a tiger belonging to a circus party. A timely warning saved the tiger.

The root of the plant is used as an abortifacient in Malabar Peninsula and the fruit is, sometimes, boiled in water and added to food with homicidal intent<sup>2</sup>.

Croton oil is, sometimes employed by wild tribes to poison their arrows, but Windsor found that the arrow poison used by the Abor tribe of the North East Frontier of India was a paste made by pounding the soft parts of croton tiglium, and not obtained from the seeds<sup>3</sup>.

When applied to the skin croton oil may produce watery and bloody stools owing to the excretion of crotonoleic acid into the intestines.

### ABRUS PRECATORIUS (JLQUIRITY INDIAN LIQUORICE GUANCHI OR RATTI)

This is a beautiful climbing plant belonging to N.O. Leguminosae and found all over India. Its seeds are egg shaped and scarlet in colour with a black spot at one end and are each about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long and  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch broad having an average weight of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  grains. They are used by Indian goldsmiths for weighing silver and gold. White seeds are also met with.

The seeds contain an active principle, abrin a toxic albumin similar in action to ricin extracted from castor oil seeds. In addition to this the seeds<sup>4</sup> contain poisonous proteins a fat splitting enzyme abruccic acid hemagglutinin and a quantity of urease. The shell of the seeds contains a red colouring matter.

Abrin is a tasteless amorphous solid having a pale grey colour. It dissolves readily in cold water with the exception of a few flocks and the solution, which is of a faintly yellow colour, froths on agitation. It is also soluble in glycerin<sup>5</sup>. The root and the stems also contain an active principle glycyrrhizin. Abrin loses its activity when boiled and therefore the seeds when cooked may be used without any harmful effects. The seeds are powdered boiled with milk and are then used as a nerve tonic in 1 to 3 grain doses. If administered uncooked they produce vomiting and diarrhoea. A decoction of the decorticated seeds if instilled into the eyes, will produce purulent ophthalmia and may cause fatal poisoning due to its absorption through the conjunctive.

**Symptoms**—In a few hours after an extract of the seeds is injected under the skin of an animal inflammation, oedema and possibly necrosis surrounding the site of the injection occur. The animal is disinclined to take food and three or four days later it drops down and is unable to move. It then gets tetanic convulsions or becomes cold, drowsy and comatose, and dies in twenty-four to forty-eight hours.

The symptoms are very much like those of snake poisoning. Hence the peasants think that the animal died from the effects of a snake bite.

In human poisoning a painful swelling with ecchymosis occurs near the seat of injection which becomes painful. The swelling rapidly increases and inflammation and necrosis supervene. The patient suffers from faintness, vertigo, vomiting, dyspnoea and general prostration with cold clammy skin and small frequent

<sup>1</sup> Beng Chem Expt Rep 1916 Ind Med Ga 1 fig 101

<sup>2</sup> Gmelin Med Po's and Clay Cures p 146

<sup>3</sup> Ind Med Ga Jan 1912 p 11

<sup>4</sup> Cloper Jt Igeous Drugs of India 1931 p 63

<sup>5</sup> Ward & Ball The Non-bacterial and Viral Diseases Calcutta 1884 Ind Med Ga July 1884 p 184

irregular pulse. Convulsions may precede death which occurs from cardiac paralysis within three to five days.

In a case<sup>1</sup> of attempted suicide where the powdered seeds of *Abrus precatorius* were taken with ground nut oil, the symptoms were vomiting, feeble pulse, cold clammy skin and sunken eyes with normal pupils. No deep sleep, no tingling of the skin or throat, no convulsions or twitchings or no delirium was noticed.

**Fatal Dose**—One and a half to two grains. Half a grain of the powdered seeds rubbed up with ten minims of distilled water and injected subcutaneously into cats killed them in 19½ to 40 hours.<sup>2</sup>

Doses<sup>3</sup> of about 0.0005 mg to 0.001 mg of abrin per kilogramme of body weight injected subcutaneously are said to be poisonous.

**Fatal Period**—The average fatal period is 3 to 5 days. The shortest is 24 hours.

**Treatment**—Anti abrin can be produced by repeated, small and gradually increasing doses which can be used curatively in abrus poisoning. It is possible for recovery to occur if the seed is dissected out soon after it is inserted. In his annual report for the year 1939, the Chenucal Examiner, Bengal mentions a case in which a brownish powder was injected by a *chamar* into the upper part of the jaw of a buffalo and as the result of this the jaw and the mouth of the buffalo became inflamed and swollen accompanied with shivering. The pusclust was detected early and the powder was dissected out from the site, when the buffalo made an uninterrupted recovery. On analysis, the powder was found to contain

If a drop of abrin solution mixed with a drop of desibrinated blood is placed on a microscopic slide, agglutination of the red blood corpuscles will also be visible under the microscope.

**Medico-Legal Points** —The seeds of Abrus precatorius are usually employed munitally for destroying cattle, and occasionally for homicidal purposes. The seeds alone, or mixed with *datura*, opium and onion, are worked with a small quantity of spirits into a paste, which is made into spikes or "suis", and then hardened in the sun. These spikes which weigh, on an average,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 grains, are then placed in a wooden handle, and thrust with great force into the skin of the animal intended to be killed. For homicidal purposes the spike is kept between two fingers, and is pushed into the skin while slapping a person.

The spikes thus prepared are less active than the freshly powdered seeds. One spike weighing two grains on being rubbed up with water and injected subcutaneously into a chicken does not usually produce a fatal result till after the lapse of thirty six hours, whilst half a grain of the freshly powdered seed produces death in about eighteen hours<sup>1</sup>.

Cases of human poisoning by "sui" pricking, though very few, have occurred especially in the district of Drug, C P, and in the districts of Bareilly, Pilibhit and Shahajahanpur, U P. In his annual report for the year 1908, the Chemical Examiner of the United Provinces mentions the following case of human "sui" poisoning, which occurred in the district of Drug —

\* The deceased was sleeping on a *charpoy*. Some one came into the room and gave him a slap on his right cheek. A wound was found in this position, in which were pieces of the foreign substance. More pieces of the foreign body were found on the *charpoy*. These pieces were found to be fragments of a "sui" as used in "sui" poisoning of cattle, and contained ground up seeds of Abrus precatorius. Death occurred in two days and thirteen hours after the symptoms of inflammation in the chest, eyes, neck and mouth.

The Chemical Examiner of Bengal also describes the following two homicidal cases of "sui" poisoning --

A Santalim widow had some property and her husband's younger brother who was likely to inherit the property after her death, was not on good terms with her. So she had executed a deed adopting her brother's son. While asleep one night, an unknown person came at midnight and gave a *chat* or slap of *bish* (poison) on her chest. She extricated the thorn like substance from her chest and kept it. Next morning she went to her brother's house in another village. On the fifth day after the injury she felt serious pain in the chest and a local doctor was called in. She could then speak with great difficulty. She died on the seventh day after the injury. Abrus precatorius was detected in the thorn like substance.\*

A Hindu woman was attacked by her nephews one night while sleeping and severely handled by them. They then ran away, and she felt a burning sensation over her body and found some broken pieces of a conical shaped substance stuck near her breast and other similar fragments in her bed. The woman did not die. Abrus precatorius was detected in the fragments.\*

According to Rai Bahadur Bagchi, Chemical Examiner to the Government of Bengal, malingerers use the powdered seeds of Abrus precatorius to produce conjunctivitis. They take a little of the powder on the index finger and rub it gently on the inside of the lower eyelid and allow it to remain till they count ten. If the powder is kept longer, purulent ophthalmia may result.

When taken internally by women, the seeds of Abrus precatorius disturb the uterine function and prevent conception.<sup>4</sup> Hence they are, sometimes, made into pills and are sold as birth control pills.

1. Warden and Waddell, *Loc Cit*, *Ind Med Gaz*, July, 1884, p 189

2. *Annual Report*, 1929, p 14

3. *Annual Report*, 1930 p 10

4. Kirtikar and Basu, *Indian Medicinal Plants*, *Bombay Chem Analysts Annual Rep*, 1939, p 6

less active in producing gangrene when administered for a prolonged period and that its use is not followed by nausea headache and depression.

Ergometrine maleate or ergonovine maleate obtained from ergometrine is a pharmacopoeial preparation, known as *Ergometrine maleate*. It occurs as an odourless, white or faintly yellow, microcrystalline powder, and is insoluble in ether and in chloroform, but soluble in 100 parts of alcohol (90 per cent) and in about 30 parts of water with a blue fluorescence. The dose is orally 1/100 to 1/50 grain intramuscularly 1/20 to 1/10 grain and intravenously 1/50 to 1/20 grain.

Ergot is contained in *Lactarium ergotae liquidum*, the dose of which is 10 to 20 minims. When powdered and deprived of its fat ergot forms *Ergota preparata* (Prepared ergot), the dose being 2½ to 8 grains. Ergotamine tartrate (*Ergotaminac tartras*) is an official preparation the dose being 1/60 to 1/30 grain by mouth and 1/210 to 1/120 grain by subcutaneous injection. It occurs as a white crystalline powder or in colourless crystals, and dissolves readily in water.

**Acute Poisoning—Symptoms**—Dryness and irritation of the throat, thirst, nausea, vomiting, burning pain in the stomach, colic, slight diarrhoea, giddiness, paresthesia, numbness, disturbances of vision, weak rapid pulse, dyspnoea, muscular weakness, painful cramps, convulsions, subnormal temperature, suppression of the urine, delirium, stupor, coma and death.

Ipsaxis, haematemesis, haematuria, uterine haemorrhage followed by abortion, and jaundice may, sometimes, be found.

**Chronic Poisoning (Ergotism)**—This occurs among those who take ergot as a medicine for a long continued period or among people who eat bread made of rye flour infested with the ergot fungus.

**Symptoms**—The symptoms are those of *gastro-intestinal catarrh* followed by a convulsive or gangrenous form. In the convulsive form the patient complains of itching, tingling, sensation of insects creeping over the skin and numbness of the hands and feet which soon spread over the whole body. He then gets violent and painful tonic contractions of various muscles especially those of the extremities. Dimness of vision, loss of hearing, ataxia, epileptiform convulsions and dementia are the next symptoms from which the patient suffers. Death occurs from asphyxia due to spasm and weakness of the respiratory muscles.

In the gangrenous form there is general lassitude with vague pains in the limbs often accompanied by an alternate feeling of cold and heat or a sensation of tingling and numbness. Later, the limbs become swollen and the skin is covered with red patches and blisters, followed by gangrene due to constriction and closure of the blood vessels. The gangrene which is usually of the dry type affects the fingers and toes and may extend up to the elbow or knee. Sometimes, gangrene may occur in the nose, ears and even internal organs.

Stewart McKay<sup>1</sup> reports the case of a married woman aged 30 years, who suffered from gangrene of the fingers following the administration of liquid ergot. She purchased from a chemist a twelve-ounce bottle containing ergot and finished it in one week with the idea of inducing abortion. But having had no desired effect in three days she obtained a seven-lb bottle containing the stronger medicine which she finished in seven days. However before she had finished the mixture she noticed that her arms began to ache, her skin was itching and her fingers were swollen, which slowly became gangrenous though she did not abort.

Drs. Robertson and Ashby<sup>2</sup> describe an outbreak of chronic ergot poisoning among the Jewish population of Manchester which used black bread made from rye flour as an article of diet. The general symptoms complained of were weakness in the extremities, numbness, and lack of sensation in the fingers—a sensation like an insect crawling over the skin—heaviness, drowsiness,

1 Brit Med Jour August 18 1906 p 365.

2 Brit Med Jour, Feb 25 1928 p 302.

**Medico-Legal Points.**—Ergot is largely used as an abortifacient. Its action is more effective on the uterus, which is already contracting. It fails in the early pregnancies. Fatal cases do not seem to occur from a single large dose, but from small or medicinal doses administered for a long time.

### CAPSICUM ANNUUM AND CAPSICUM FRUTESCENS (CHILLIES, RED PEPPER, CAYENNE PEPPER, LALMIRCH)

These plants belong to N. O. Solanaceæ. Capsicum fruits are powdered and are then universally employed in India as a principal condiment in preparing various chutneys and curries. The chief constituents to which capsicum fruits owe their pungency and irritancy are capsaicin, capsicin (a crystallizable substance), a volatile alkaloid smelling like coniine, a volatile oil, a resin and fatty matter. The dried ripe fruit of *capsicum minimum* is known as capsicum and is used in medicine as a pungent stomachic and carminative in doses of  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 grains. Capsicum also occurs in the official preparations of *Tinctura capsici* (dose, 5 to 15 minims) and *Unguentum capsici*.

**Symptoms**—In large doses capsicum acts as an irritant poison and causes difficulty of swallowing, pain in the stomach and inflammation of the oesophagus and stomach. Locally applied, it produces irritation of the skin.

**Medico-Legal Points**—Chillies are used in India for the purpose of torture, when money or confession of some guilt has to be extorted. They are either introduced into the vagina, rectum or urethra, or rubbed on the breasts of females. The "Pindaris" used to torture their victims by covering their heads with nose bags containing chillies. Well pounded chillies are, sometimes, thrown into the eyes to facilitate robbery. A peon in Calcutta cashed a cheque for four thousand rupees, and while he was passing through Dalhousie Square a man threw a quantity of well pounded chillies into his eyes and blinded him for the time being. When the peon was in agony the man relieved him of his money and tried to make good his escape, but was arrested.<sup>1</sup>

The fumes arising from burning chillies are very irritating, and are used by superstitious people to scare away devils and ghosts.

A boy, 15 years old, who was suffering from hip joint disease, died after swallowing medicine containing cayenne pepper prescribed by a medical botanist. On post mortem examination the stomach was found red and inflamed in patches. The botanist was charged with having caused the death of the boy, but was acquitted.<sup>2</sup>

The seeds which are contained in a capsule, resemble *datura* seeds.

### SEMILCARPUS ANACARDIUM (MARKING NUT TREE)

This tree belongs to N. O. Anacardiaceæ. Its fruit, called marking nut (*Bhulan*), weighs 25 to 55 grains, and has a hard, black rind within which is a thick pericarp. The pericarp or fleshy pulp of the fruit or seed abounds in a brownish, oily, acid juice, which turns black when mixed with lime and exposed

<sup>1</sup> Leader, Aug 27, 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Reg v. Stevens, C.C.C., May 1864, Taylor, *On Poisons*, Ed. III, p. 503.

preparation of marking nut<sup>1</sup>. A Hindu male of Angul took some milk boiled with marking nuts for relief of pain in the chest and had vomiting and purging and died after a few hours<sup>2</sup>.

Homicidal poisoning by the internal administration of marking nut juice, though rare, has been recorded. In his letter dated 6th June, 1942, the Chemical Examiner of Hyderabad, Deccan, reported to the author the following two cases —

1. A Hindu female of District Warangal gave to her husband a drink containing ground marking nut. The man suffered from symptoms of severe gastro intestinal irritation and died within 12 hours.

2. A Hindu female of District Raichur administered with her finger ground marking nut to a child 7 months old. The child started vomiting and diarrhoea soon afterwards. There were blisters on the tongue. A blister appeared on the chest which was touched by the woman with her soiled finger. The child died within 24 hours.

Criminally, the juice is introduced into the vagina as a punishment for infidelity, is applied to the skin to produce a bruise to support a false charge of assault, or is thrown over the body of an enemy out of revenge. Some twigs imbued with marking nut juice were thrown into the bed of a man and when his feet touched them, they produced severe vesication. The juice of marking nut was detected on the twigs<sup>3</sup>. During his wife's absence a man had been carrying on with a woman, but on his wife's return he stopped visiting the woman. The woman was very much annoyed with the wife of her lover and as a punishment for alienating his love, she poured some juice of marking nut mixed with oil on the private parts of the wife when she was asleep and her husband was not at home. The woman was charged with having voluntarily caused grievous hurt by means of a poison under section 326 I P C.<sup>4</sup>

The bruised nut is sometimes, applied locally to the os uteri for inducing criminal abortion. It is also instilled into the eyes by malingerers to produce ophthalmia.

**Chemical Analysis** — The vesicating principle of marking nut juice is extracted from an organic mixture or stained cloth by the Stas Otto process up to the stage of the evaporation of the alcoholic extract. The alcoholic residue is then taken up in hot water acidified with dilute sulphuric acid and extracted with petroleum ether. After evaporation of the solvent to dryness, the residuum is identified by the following tests —

1. If a portion of the residue is dissolved in a little alcohol and a few drops of an alcoholic solution of caustic potash are added, a bluish green or green colour develops.

2. If another portion of the residue is dissolved in a little alcohol and a few drops of basic lead acetate solution are added, a greenish black precipitate is produced.

3. When a small portion of the residue is mixed with a drop or two of olive oil, and a drop of the mixture is rubbed on the skin, it produces after an interval of about one or two days a painful and irritating blister which spreads over the surrounding area.

1. *Bombay Crim. Analyst's Annual Report*, 1925 p. 6.

2. *Hydral Crim. Examiner's Annual Report*, 1923 p. 13.

3. *Madras Chemical Examiner's Annual Report* 1924.

4. *Beng. Chem. Exam. in Rep.* 1927 p. 11.

It must be remembered that the vesicating action of the active principle of marking nut juice is destroyed by caustic potash. If the petroleum ether residue is mixed with cold caustic potash solution, allowed to stand overnight, re-acidified with dilute hydrochloric acid and then re-extracted with petroleum ether, the residue will not produce a blister, if applied to the skin. This property is not found in other vesicating principles.

4 To find out whether a vesicle on the skin is produced by marking nut juice, remove the epidermis of the vesicle and extract it with absolute alcohol, or apply lint soaked in absolute alcohol under gutta percha tissue over the vesicle. The alcoholic extract with a few drops of an alcoholic solution of caustic potash assumes a bluish green colour.

#### **CALOTROPIS GIGANTEA AND PROCLERA (MUD IR, AKDO)**

*Calotropis gigantea* has purple flowers, and grows wild in waste lands throughout India. *Calotropis procera* has white flowers and grows generally in deserts. Both these plants belong to N.O. Asclepiadaceæ, and closely resemble each other in chemical and physiological actions. These plants yield three active principles, *uscharin*, *calotoxin* and *calactin* according to Hesse, Reichender and Lysenbach<sup>1</sup> and *calotropin*, *calotoxin* and *uscharin* according to Chen, Bliss and Robbins<sup>2</sup>.

The fresh leaves and stalks of these plants, when crushed, exude a thick, acrid, milky juice which, according to Rajgopal Naidu,<sup>3</sup> has a specific gravity of 1.021, is acid in reaction and contains 14.8 per cent of solids. The juice forms into a white clot or coagulum leaving a clear, straw coloured serum after it is heated or allowed to stand for some time. The coagulum yields a yellowish brown resin and a snow white, crystalline substance, having the formula C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. The resin is slightly poisonous, about eight milligrammes being necessary to kill a frog, weighing about 20 grammes, while the white crystalline substance is insoluble in water and is non poisonous, but it is soluble in most of the organic solvents such as alcohol, acetone, ether and petroleum ether, and still more soluble in chloroform and carbon tetrachloride.



Fig 104.—*Calotropis G gigantea*

When used in the form of snuff the powdered *madar* root may cause death. In his annual report for the year 1938 the Chemical Examiner Bengal mentions a case in which a man, about 44 years old who had been suffering from chronic pain in the lumbar region for about a year was given by a village herbalist powdered *madar* root in mistake for powdered *madrajan* (cocoynth) root to be used as snuff. After about half-an-hour he developed symptoms of poisoning, gradually became unconscious and died soon afterwards. The rapid death was probably due to the patient's idiosyncrasy to the drug.

**Symptoms**—When taken internally *madar* juice gives rise to an acrid bitter taste and a burning pain in the throat and stomach. These are followed by salivation, stomatitis, vomiting, diarrhoea, dilated pupils, tetanic convulsions, collapse and death. Sometimes there may be delirium.

**Fatal Dose**—Not determined.

**Fatal Period**—This is usually a few hours varying from half an hour to eight hours.

**Treatment**—Lavage the stomach cautiously. Administer demulcent drinks. Give morphine hypodermically to relieve pain and to prevent convulsions. Administer diffusible stimulants to combat collapse.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Signs of irritation in the stomach and intestines. In a case from Tonk where *madar* juice was found in the viscera of a baby three months old the post mortem appearances were the signs of stomatitis in the mouth, the stomach was perforated in a few places and milk was found on the surface of the intestines.<sup>1</sup> In the case of a woman<sup>2</sup> who died within one hour after *madar* juice had been swallowed the post mortem examination showed bloody discharges in the nostrils and mouth. The stomach was congested and contained about 2 ounces of chyme like fluid. The small intestine was congested. The liver, spleen and kidneys were congested. The trachea was injected. The heart was empty. The brain and its membranes were congested.

**Tests**—Col. Black, late Chemical Examiner for the Punjab recommended to Mr Chitterji late Chemical Examiner for the Central and the United Provinces, the following test as successfully employed by him—

The material under examination is heated for a sufficiently long time with absolute alcohol under a reflux condenser. If now the alcoholic extract is allowed to evaporate spontaneously characteristic cauliflower like masses separate out and are readily identified. But Mr Chitterji has found the masses which

<sup>1</sup> U P Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1932 p 3  
<sup>2</sup> Beng Chem Examiners Annual Rep 1936 p 12

It is occasionally mixed with lead oxide. A case<sup>1</sup> is described where death occurred from the internal administration of *madar* juice with intent to procure criminal abortion. The juice was detected in the viscera. A case<sup>2</sup> is reported where two pieces of sticks with some brownish sticky substance adhering at their ends were removed from the uterus of a female 32 years old alleged to have died as a result of criminal abortion. The sticks were found to be of *madar*. A case<sup>3</sup> is also recorded where a woman introduced into her uterus pieces of cloth smeared with *madar* juice with a view to procuring abortion in the sixth or seventh month of pregnancy. As she could not bear the pain caused by the insertion, she committed suicide by falling into a well.

*Madar* juice is occasionally used for purposes of suicide, infanticide and homicide. A case of infanticide is reported from Fawah in which *madar* juice was found in the organs of a new born female child.<sup>4</sup> In the district of Manbhumi a young woman was killed by the administration of *madar* juice and her body was hanged with a rope loosely tied round her neck. At the autopsy a faint haemato-makr round the neck was found to be post mortem, but on the other hand there were patches of inflammation in the mucous membrane of the stomach. The viscera, on analysis showed the presence of *madar* juice.<sup>5</sup>

Smeared on a ring *madar* juice is sometimes used as a cattle poison. It is either given with fodder or introduced into the rectum of the animal intended to be killed. A case occurred at Ghazipur where a she-goat after return from grazing died with symptoms of pain and convulsions. A cloth ball found in the rectum of the animal and the viscera removed from the body revealed the presence of *madar* juice.<sup>6</sup>

When applied to the skin in the form of a paste, the root of plumbago rosea or zeylanica produces a reddish brown mark, which simulates a bruise.

Walsh<sup>1</sup> records a case where one Jitan Ali Mir of Murshidabad reported to the police on the morning of August 22nd 1898 that some eighteen or nineteen men armed with *lathes*, torches, lanterns, etc., had entered his house on the previous night, and carried away his valuables after having beaten and branded him with torches. Upon examination twenty seven trifling injuries were found on several parts of his body which he could easily reach with his hand. These appeared to have been self inflicted, and caused by the application of plumbago rosea to the skin. Of these injuries only one showed a slight abrasion due to destruction of the cuticle. The stains were of a reddish brown colour and without raised or inflamed margins. The hair stood on them unscathed or uninjured. The man was found guilty of bringing a false charge of dacoity with self inflicted injuries, and sentenced to four years' imprisonment.

### VERATRUM

There are three species of veratrum belonging to *O. Melanthaceæ*. These are Veratrum album (white hellebore), Veratrum viride (green hellebore) and Veratrum officinale (sabadilla). Several alkaloids have been obtained from these plants the chief of which are veratrime, jervine, pseudo-jervine and cevadine. From among these veratrime is a non-official preparation, having the dose of 1/64 to 1/16 grain to be given in pill form.

**Veratrime**—Veratrime is a white amorphous inodorous powder having an acrid bitter taste, feebly soluble in water but readily soluble in acids, alcohol and ether. Pure veratrime is crystalline in character. It resembles acetone in its action.

**Symptoms**—A tingling sensation followed by numbness in the mouth tongue throat and oesophagus and gradually spreading to other parts of the body, salivation, sneezing and running of the nose and eyes, nausea, persistent vomiting, diarrhoea accompanied by abdominal colicky pain and tenesmus, itching of the skin which becomes reddened and is covered with perspiration, dilated pupils, giddiness, feeble pulse, slow and gasping respirations, muscular spasms, convulsions, collapse, death from respiratory failure.

**Fatal Dose**—Uncertain. Three grains of veratrime have produced poisonous symptoms.<sup>2</sup> Eighteen grains of powdered white hellebore have caused death<sup>3</sup> while half an-ounce of the powder taken by mistake for cream of tartar has been recovered from.<sup>4</sup> Seventy minims of the fluid extract (U.S.P.) have proved fatal to a woman, aged 50 years in 4 weeks.<sup>5</sup>

**Fatal Period**—Uncertain. Death occurred in the case of an old peasant in "5 minutes, after he had taken hellebore by mistake for liquorice powder.<sup>6</sup> Death has also occurred in 2 and 4 hours but it may be delayed for several weeks.<sup>7</sup>

**Treatment**—Administer emetics or wash out the stomach thoroughly with warm water. Tannic acid or vegetable astringents will precipitate the alkaloid. Give spirit ammonia aromatic and other stimulants, such as digitalis and strichnine. Keep the patient flat on the back, and start artificial respiration, if necessary. Morphine may be given to check pain and diarrhoea.

**Post mortem Appearances**—These are not characteristic. The marks of acute inflammation may be found in the alimentary canal, and haemorrhage of the brain and its membranes may, sometimes, be present.

**Tests**—Strong sulphuric acid gives a play of colours viz. yellow, orange and lastly red. On heating the colour becomes red at once, or the red colour is developed on adding bromine water.

Concentrated hydrochloric acid has no action in the cold, but on boiling the solution for a minute or two, it acquires a permanent bright red colour.

**Happens Reaction**—One part of veratrime rubbed with six parts of cane sugar is moistened with a few drops of concentrated sulphuric acid. The colour developed is first yellow, dark green, then blue and lastly dirty violet.

**Medico-Legal Points**—All parts of the veratrum plants are poisonous but the chief source of poison is their root. It has been taken with a view to causing abortion. Powdered white hellebore has been mistaken for cream of tartar as stated in the case mentioned above.

1 *Ind. Med. Gaz.* Jan., 1900, p. 8, see also *Eng. Chem. Fam. Ann. Rep.*, 1939, p. 18.

2 *Black St. Geo. Hosp. Rep.* 1870.

3 *Ducommun & Fourn's Med. and Toxic.*, Ed. V.I., p. 22.

4 *Giles Lancet* Vol. II, 1827, p. 9.

5 *Johnson, Buff. Med. and Surg. Jour.*, Nov. 1866, p. 133.

6 *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.* May 6, 1922, p. 1403.

7 *Willms, Med. Juris and Toxic.*, I of II, p. 1075.

## CLEISTANTHUS COLLINUS

This plant belongs to N.O. Euphorbiaceæ and grows on dry hills in various parts of India. It is known as *Karajuri* or *Pasu* in Bengal and Bihar, and as *Oduvan* in Madras. Na lu and his associates<sup>1</sup> have isolated a glucoside, called *Oduvin*,  $C_{11}H_{14}O_5$ , to which the plant owes its poisonous properties. *Oduvin* is a yellowish white crystalline substance, melting at 192 to 194°C., and dissolving freely in alcohol and chloroform, but only sparingly in water or ether.



FIG. 158.—*Cleistanthus collinus*

In large doses squill or any of its preparations acts as a powerful gastro-intestinal irritant, and produces nausea, vomiting, purging, strangury, bloody urine and cardiac depression. Twenty-four grains of the powdered root have proved fatal.<sup>1</sup> Seventy-five grains of its alcoholic extract have also caused death in two days.<sup>2</sup>

The treatment consists in the administration of emetics or washing out of the stomach. The patient should be kept in a recumbent posture and should be treated symptomatically.

The post mortem appearances may be inflammation of the alimentary canal and of the kidneys.

Squill owes its toxic properties to scillatoxin and scillaren, both glucosides, which are readily broken down by the digestive juices.

An Indian variety, called *urginea Indica* (*Jangli piaz*) is used as a substitute for squill.

#### GLORIOSA SUPERBA (*CARIJHARI, KHADIYANAG*)

This belongs to N. O. Liliaceæ. It is an elegant, climbing hedge plant growing in Bengal and in low jungles throughout India, and flowers about the end of the rains. Its root contains an active bitter principle, *superbine*, a glucoside. It is used as a tonic, stomachic and anti-periodic in 5 to 10-grain doses. Upto 12 grains it is not poisonous, but beyond that it has possibly the same poisonous action as squill. It is said to be used in India as an adulterant of aconite.

**Symptoms.**—Nausea, violent vomiting, purging, spasms, convulsions, profuse sweating and collapse with heart-failure. Cheviers<sup>3</sup> mentions two fatal cases of poisoning by this plant. In one case a woman committed suicide by swallowing a *masha* of the fresh root, stalk and leaves. In the other about 2 *tolas* of the root were given with salt and red lead to a woman. A third case is recorded in which a female, 18 years old, took a quantity of the powdered root and died in 4 hours. The post mortem appearances were inflammation of the gastric mucous membrane and congestion of the liver, kidneys, lungs and brain.<sup>4</sup>

A case<sup>5</sup> is recorded of a man, aged 45 years, who ate the root of gloriosa superba in order to commit suicide, suffered from violent gastro intestinal symptoms and died within twelve hours.

**Chemical Analysis.**—On extracting the root of gloriosa superba with rectified spirit under a soxhlet and adding ether to the alcoholic solution a whitish precipitate is obtained which, on separation and injection into frogs, proves fatal to them.<sup>6</sup> The precipitate is freely soluble in water but insoluble in absolute alcohol, ether, chloroform or amyl alcohol. Yellow oleander seeds, when treated in the same manner, yield a similar poisonous precipitate which, however, is soluble in absolute alcohol as well as in amyl alcohol. Further, the precipitate from yellow oleander seeds yields a blue colour on boiling with dilute hydrochloric acid, but the precipitate from gloriosa superba does not yield any colour with hydrochloric acid.

#### ARUM MACULATUM (LORDS AND LADIES, CUCKOO PINT, WAKE-ROBIN, THE PARSON IN THE PULPIT)

This plant belongs to N. O. Araceæ, Sub Order, Aroideæ. Its root, if eaten raw, produces irritant symptoms in addition to swelling of the tongue, salivation and dilatation of the pupils, convulsions, insensibility, coma and death. It loses its poisonous properties by soaking it in water, and then baking it. It is thus used as an article of food, constituting the Portland sago.

The treatment consists in the administration of emetics or in the washing out of the stomach. Castor oil may afterwards be given followed by strong coffee.

Cases of accidental poisoning have occurred among children from eating the leaves or berries which are bright red and succulent. Three children ate some leaves of the plant. Two of them died in 12 and 16 days respectively, and the third recovered.<sup>7</sup> The root has caused death in 9 hours.<sup>8</sup>

The other arum varieties are *Amorphophallus Campanulatus* (*Sutan*) and *Arum Colocasia* (*Kachu*).

#### CRINUM DEFLLEXUM OR ASIATICUM (*SUKHADURSILIN, N.GDOWN*)

This is a large plant belonging to N. O. Amaryllidæ and much cultivated in Indian gardens. Its root and leaves are used as substitutes for specacuanha, and produce vesication if applied externally. They cause irritant symptoms if administered internally in large doses.

1. Lyon, *Med. Juris*, Ed. IX, p. 569.
2. *J. de Chim. Med.*, 1842, p. 651.
3. *Med. Juris*, pp. 284-85.
4. *Ind. Med. Gaz.*, 1872, p. 153.
5. *Madras Chem. Exam.'s Ann. Rept.*, 1934, p.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
7. *Guy and Ferrier, Forens. Med.*, Ed. VI, p. :
8. *Brit. Med. Jour.*, June 23, 1861.

**Fatal Period**—Thirty minutes to three hours. A child, aged 6 years, died in about six hours after an alcoholic infusion of the berries was applied to the head<sup>1</sup>. Death may, sometimes, be delayed for days.

**Treatment**.—Administer intravenously a soluble barbiturate or by inhalation an anaesthetic to check spasms, and then wash out the stomach. Avoid chloral hydrate or chloroform. Give intravenous injections of a 25 per cent solution of glucose, and start artificial respiration, when necessary.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—Not characteristic. Congestion of the stomach, lungs and brain. There may be peritonitis in cases of delayed death.

**Chemical Analysis**—Picrotoxin may be extracted from acidulated organic mixtures by ether. It is dissolved by strong sulphuric acid producing a yellow colour, which changes to violet on the addition of a trace of potassium bichromate and becomes brown on further adding the same. Picrotoxin may be mistaken for sugar as it reduces Iehling's solution. If picrotoxin is mixed with about three times the quantity of potassium nitrate, and the mixture is moistened with the smallest quantity of concentrated sulphuric acid, and then a strong solution of sodium or potassium hydroxide is added in excess, an intense red colour will appear.

**Medico-Legal Points**—The powdered berries are used for poisoning fish in rivers. For this purpose the berries are mixed with flour and a little tobacco, made into a dough, and small pellets are thrown into water. They are also used for poisoning cattle. A decoction or extract of the berries is, sometimes used to facilitate theft or rape and to adulterate country liquor to increase its intoxicating effect. An ointment of picrotoxin is employed to destroy pediculi but care must be taken in its application as it is absorbed through the abraded skin. A girl, about 2 years old, died in about three hours from the application of about 2½ ounces of a pediculicide called 'Kulie', containing picrotoxin and veratrine.<sup>2</sup>

#### MORINGA PTERYGOSPERMA (SH IJN 1, SH IRIG II 1)

This tree belongs to N.O. Moringaceae and grows wild in the Sub Himalayan range. The fresh root of this tree closely resembles the common horse radish in taste, smell and general appearances. The pods are used as a vegetable, and are considered preventive against intestinal worms. The root acts as a vesicant, if applied externally. The bark contains small quantities of an essential oil having a very pungent odour. It also contains 0.105 per cent of alkaloidal bases, which closely resemble ephedrine in action. One of them is crystalline and is less active than the other which is amorphous. Both have a stimulant action on the heart, constrict the blood vessels and produce a marked and persistent rise of blood pressure. They relax the bronchioles, inhibit the tone and movements of the intestines and produce contraction of the virgin as well as the pregnant uterus of guinea-pigs and rabbits.<sup>3</sup> The powdered bark is largely used as an abortifacient in Bengal, and has produced fatal results.

#### RUTA GRACIOSA L. (S IT IP)

This plant belongs to N.O. Rutaceae and is commonly cultivated in Indian gardens. It yields on distillation a volatile oil which is acrid bitter in taste and is a valuable diuretic and emmenagogue in 2 to 5 minum doses. In large doses it acts as an abortifacient and produces irritant symptoms.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### IRRITANT POISONS—(Contd.)

#### II ANIMAL POISONS

##### CANTHARIDES

The Spanish fly (*Cantharis vesicatoria*) or blister beetle is  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 inch long and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch broad and is distinguished by the shining, metallic green colour of the head, legs and wing sheaths. Under these sheaths there are two thin brownish transparent membranous wings. The powder of its dried body is greyish brown and contains shining green particles. The active principle is cantharidin  $C_8H_{12}O(CO_2)O$  the anhydride or lactone of cantharidic acid which is a crystalline body very slightly soluble in water, but freely soluble in alcohol ether chloroform acetone and fixed oils. It is a powerful vesicant. The non official preparations made from it are *Emplastrum cantharidini* (Blistering plaster) and *Ichor epispasticus* (Blistering Liquid) containing 0.2 and 0.4 per cent of cantharidin respectively.

The Indian fly (beetle) which yields cantharidin is known as *Mylabris eichorn* occurring abundantly in the rainy season in certain parts of North India and Kashmir. It is 1 inch long and about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch broad. Its wing sheaths are black marked with three broad, transverse orange yellow wavy bands which contain scattered black bristly hairs when viewed under the microscope<sup>1</sup>. *Mylabris pustulata* is another species which yields cantharidin. It is found in the fields of cereals and vegetables in the neighbourhood of Bangalore<sup>2</sup>.

**Symptoms**—Locally applied to the skin cantharides or cantharidin does not show any sign for two or three hours and then produces redness and burning pain followed soon by small vesicles which later run together to form one large blister. It may be absorbed by the skin and cause poisoning.

Given internally, this substance produces an intense burning pain in the mouth and throat quickly extending to the stomach and the whole of the abdomen and accompanied by difficulty in swallowing intense thirst salivation due to the inflammation of the salivary glands nausea vomiting containing mucus blood and shreds of mucous membrane mixed with shining green particles and diarrhea of bloody stools with tenesmus. These are followed by pain in the loins distressing strangury passage of scanty urine containing blood and albumin painful priapism in the male with swelling and inflammation of the genital organs and frequent seminal emissions and abortion in pregnant women. The patient becomes extremely restless with laborious respirations and a hard quick pulse. In severe cases, headaches, delirium, convulsions and coma usually precede death.

Occasionally blisters occur in the mouth and other parts of the digestive tract with which it comes into contact. There are also redness of the eyes and lacrimation.

**Fatal Dose**—Twenty four grains<sup>3</sup> of powdered cantharides (non official dose, 1/16 to  $\frac{1}{4}$  grain) have caused the death of a young woman although 12 grains<sup>4</sup> and 2 drachms<sup>5</sup> have been recovered from an ounce<sup>6</sup> of the non official tincture (tinctura cantharidini) dose, 2 to 5 minims has caused the death of a boy.

1 *Dutta Ind. Med. Ca.* March 1922 p 92

2 *Jherard Guha Jour. India's Industrial Science Vol. VI, Part III 1931 p 31*

3 *Taylor On Poiso Is Ld III p 5-8*

4 *Beck North Amer Practitioner 1891 3 p 522*

5 *Med Gazette Vol 42 p 8-3*

6 *Taylor O Poisons Ed III p 59*

The colubridæ or colubrine snakes lay eggs. Their head is of about the same width as that of the neck, and the pupils of their eyes are circular. They are subdivided into the elapidae (land or terrestrial snakes) and the hydrophidæ (sea snakes).

The elapidae or land snakes have a round tail, and include the cobra (*Naja tripudians*), the king cobra or hamadryad (*Naja bungarus*), the common krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*) and the banded krait (*Bungarus fasciatus*).

**Cobra**—This snake is known in the vernacular as *Nag* or *Kala Samp* and occurs throughout India. It grows to a length of five to six feet, and has a variable colour but is usually black. It is provided with a well marked hood, which often bears a double or single spectacle mark, but it has sometimes an oval spot surrounded by an ellipse. The portion of the neck surrounding the spectacle mark is darker than the rest of the back, and is often speckled with small golden spots. Besides the hood the dark coloured belly plates under and below the neck are quite sufficient to identify a cobra.

**King Cobra**—This is known in the vernacular as *Nag Raj* or *Raj Samp* and is met with in the Himalayas, Lower Bengal, Assam and Burma and in the hills and forests of Southern India. It is bigger than a common cobra and grows to a length of eight to twelve feet or even fifteen feet. It is provided with a hood which does not bear a spectacle mark. The shields under the tail are entire while those towards the extremity are divided. The vertebral row of scales is similar in size and shape to the adjacent rows.

The young king cobra is jet black in colour, and is provided with white or yellow cross bars on the body and tail and four similar bars on the head. The adult king cobra varies a good deal in colour, and may be yellow, green brown or black, and is usually provided with more or less distinct white or yellowish cross bars or chevrons on the body. The belly may be nearly uniform mottled or variegated with bars, while the throat is usually light yellow or cream coloured.

**Common Krait**—This occurs throughout India, and is called *Mangar* in Bombay and the Deccan, *Chitti* in Bengal and *Kaanya* or *Chit Kateria* in the Punjab. It varies from three to four feet or even five feet in length. It has generally a shining steel black colour, and has narrow single or double white arches across the back. These arches begin at some distance from the head and extend up to the tip of the tail. It has a central row of hexagonal scales down the back. Its belly has a creamy white colour.

**Banded Krait**—This is larger than the common krait and grows to a length of six feet and rarely seven feet. It occurs in India in the north-east as far south as the basin of the Mahanadi river. In addition to the distinguishing characteristic marks of the common krait, the banded krait has alternate black and yellow bands across the back.

The hydrophidæ or sea snakes are found in the vicinity of the sea coasts. Their eyes are very small and their tails are flattened. Their nostrils are situated on the top of the snout so as to enable them to breathe freely while swimming or in the air. Their belly plates are not broad and the scales on their backs are dull and tuberculated. Although poisonous, they are inoffensive by nature and do not as a rule bite man. The commonest species of these snakes is *Letharchus valisa* Linne.

The viperidæ or viperine snakes have a peculiar broad lozenge shaped head usually covered with small scales, a narrow neck and a short tail. The pupils of their eyes are vertical slits. The females give birth to living young. These snakes are divided into two main classes viz. pit vipers and pitless vipers. Pit vipers are those which have a pit on the head between the nose and the eye and usually occur in hills. Their bites are seldom fatal to man. Pitless vipers are those which have no pit on the head. They have broad plates on the belly extending

cells of the vessels, nerve cells, and the cells of various other tissues. Hence in bites by vipersines there is much haemorrhage and sloughing.

### 5 Igglutinin — This is for the red blood cells

6 Neurotoxins — These attach themselves to all the nerve cells and especially the cells of the respiratory centre. These are the chief constituents of the colubrine venom. Hence paralysis especially of respiration is a marked symptom. These substances vary greatly in different specimens.

7 A substance, which acts directly on the heart muscle stimulating it and increasing its tone. This is also more marked in the colubrine venom.

**Non-Poisonous Snakes** — There are several species of non poisonous snakes inhabiting India. Their tails are not markedly compressed and in most of the varieties their belly is covered with transverse plates, which, however do not extend completely across it. They possess several small teeth attached to a short maxillary bone, and have no long and grooved fangs like the poisonous variety.

**Symptoms of Snake Poisoning (Ophitoxæmia)** — These vary according to the variety of the snake. In the case of a bite from a colubrine snake such as a cobra or krait the immediate local effects are a burning or tingling pain, irritation, redness, swelling and inflammation at the seat of injection of the venom. These are followed after an interval varying from fifteen minutes to one to two hours by drowsiness, lethargy, muscular weakness and a feeling of intoxication. Nausea and vomiting are, sometimes, the early symptoms. Weakness of the muscles increases and develops into paralysis of the lower limbs so that the victim staggers or falls if he attempts to stand or walk and lies down. Paralysis then spreads to the trunk and affects the head which droops. The muscles of the lips, tongue and throat become gradually paralysed. As a result speech and swallowing become difficult, and saliva collects in the mouth. The victim is often seen trying to remove the viscid saliva from his mouth with his fingers. Breathing becomes slow and laboured, until it stops altogether the heart continuing to beat for some minutes. Consciousness is retained till the end. Sometimes convulsions may precede death.

If recovery occurs, the skin and subjacent cellular tissues surrounding the bitten area die and lead to the formation of a slough. Later, the slough separates and leaves a big ulcer.

In the case of a bite from a viper such as a daboia or echis the local signs are a good deal of pain, swelling, discolouration and ecchymosis in the immediate neighbourhood of the seat of the bite and oozing of a bloody serum from the apertures caused by the bite. Within a few seconds to fifteen minutes after the bite nausea, vomiting and the signs of collapse supervene with the cold, clammy skin, a small thready, imperceptible pulse, and dilated pupils which are insensible to light. These are followed by complete unconsciousness. In a case reported by Captain Coffin, R.A.M.C., 36 hours elapsed before the symptoms appeared. If the patient recovers from these effects, haemorrhages occur from the mucous membranes of the rectum and other orifices of the body. Extensive local suppuration, sloughing and gangrene, and malignant oedema or tetanus may supervene or death may occur from septicaemia.

In some cases of snake bite death occurs from shock due to fright before the poisonous symptoms commence.

Snake venom whether colubrine or viperine, has a haemolytic action on the blood, and reduces the power of its coagulability with the result that a bloody serum continues to ooze out from the wound for many hours. This oozing is more pronounced in viperine poisoning than in colubrine poisoning. The absence of the oozing of the bloody serum shows that the venom has not been injected into the wound.

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**Symptoms of Snake Poisoning (Ophitoxæmia)** —These vary according to the variety of the snake In the case of a bite from a colubrine snake such as a cobra or krait the immediate local effects are a burning or tingling pain irritation redness swelling and inflammation at the seat of injection of the venom These are followed after an interval varying from fifteen minutes to one to two hours by giddiness lethargy muscular weakness and a feeling of intoxication Nausea and vomiting are sometimes the early symptoms Weakness of the muscles increases and develops into paralysis of the lower limbs so that the victim staggers or falls if he attempts to stand or walk and lies down Paralysis then spreads to the trunk and affects the head which droops The muscles of the lips tongue and throat become gradually paralysed As a result speech and swallowing become difficult, and saliva collects in the mouth The victim is often seen trying to remove the viscid saliva from his mouth with his fingers Breathing becomes slow and laboured until it stops altogether the heart continuing to beat for some minutes Consciousness is retained till the end Sometimes, convulsions may precede death

If recovery occurs the skin and subjacent cellular tissues surrounding the bitten area die and lead to the formation of a slough Later, the slough separates and leaves a big ulcer

In the case of a bite from a viper such as a daboia or cchis the local signs are a good deal of pain swelling, discoloration and ecchymosis in the immediate neighbourhood of the seat of the bite and oozing of a bloody serum from the apertures caused by the bite Within a few seconds to fifteen minutes after the bite nausea, vomiting and the signs of collapse supervene with the cold clammy skin a small thready, imperceptible pulse, and dilated pupils which are insensible to light These are followed by complete unconsciousness In a case reported by Captain Coffin R A M C , 36 hours elapsed before the symptoms appeared If the patient recovers from these effects, haemorrhages occur from the mucous membranes of the rectum and other orifices of the body Intensive local suppuration, sloughing and gangrene and malignant oedema or tetanus may supervene or death may occur from septæmia.

In some cases of snake bite death occurs from shock due to fright before the poisonous symptoms commence

Snake venom whether colubrine or viperine, has a haemolytic action on the blood and reduces the power of its coagulability with the result that a bloody serum continues to ooze out from the wound for many hours This oozing is more pronounced in viperine poisoning than in colubrine poisoning The absence of the oozing of the bloody serum shows that the venom has not been injected into the wound

bite of either. Antivenene has also been found to neutralize the haemorrhagin but not the other fractions of the Echis venom.<sup>1</sup>

5. Administer morphine, veronal or aspirin to relieve pain and nervousness in cases of bites from Russell's viper and Phoorsa (Echis). They should be used with care in cobra and Krait bites.

6. Inject hypodermically strichnine, pituitrin, or adrenaline chloride, and intramuscularly 0.9 grain of calcium chloride in 20 minims of water.

7. Avoid alcohol if antivenene has been used but give hot coffee or tea.

8. Promote warmth of the body by hot water bottles, and by friction with ginger or mustard.

9. Administer intravenously normal saline or transfuse blood or plasma

10. Start artificial respiration, when necessary.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—Lesions resulting from snake bite are as a rule, two lacerated punctures about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch deep in the case of colubrines and about 1 inch deep in the case of vipers. They may be so minute that they may not be visible to the naked eye, but may be seen with a lens. There is a good deal of swelling and cellulitis about the bitten part and haemorrhage from the punctures as well as from the mucous membranes of the body orifices. The areolar tissue round about the punctures is purple and infiltrated. The blood is extremely fluid and purple in colour. In cases of viperine bites solid clots may occur in the veins due to the fibrin ferment.

**Chemical Analysis.**—The following serum test,<sup>2</sup> as employed by Dr. Hankin, is used in the Government Laboratories, United Provinces, Agra.—

Make an aqueous solution or extract from a suspected rag, and inject it into a frog. If the frog dies, find out the lethal dose. Then take two more weighed frogs and inject into them their lethal dose, as follows.—

(a) The extract mixed with double the volume of freshly obtained antivenene (serum immunized against cobra and Russell's viper venom) after incubation for an hour.

(b) The extract under similar condition, but untreated with antivenene.

Presence of snake venom is indicated by frog (a) being killed, and (b) remaining unaffected.

**Medico-Legal Points.**—Snake poisoning has not much medico-legal value except that in some cases of suicidal or homicidal deaths the alleged cause of death given by the relatives is snake bite.

On the 28th August, 1919, the body of Musammat Kausala, 20 years old, of Police Station Malihabad, was brought to the King George's Medical College Mortuary with a report that the deceased had been bitten by a snake. Upon examination of the body I found that the death was due to hanging. In another case, where a Hindu girl of 15 years was alleged to have died from snake-bite on the 23rd July, 1922, dissection revealed rupture of the internal surface of the enlarged spleen.

Snake venom is seldom used for homicidal or suicidal purposes. A case<sup>3</sup> is recorded where an attempt at homicidal poisoning was made. A man attempted to throw some poison on the open wound of another, but missed the mark. The suspected poison was found to be cobra venom.

A case of suicide<sup>4</sup> by the injection of dried snake venom into a small wound is recorded. A man murdered his wife and to avoid the charge of murder attempted

1. Taylor and Mallick, *Ind. Jour. Med. Res.*, XXIII, 1, July, 1935, p. 141.

2. Chatterji, *The Analyst*, Nov., 1930

3. *Madras Chemical Examiner's Annual Report*, 1929, p. 6

4. *Madras Chemical Examiner's Annual Report*, 1933, p. 4

**Scorpions.**—These possess a hollow sting in the last joint of their tail, communicating by means of a duct with the poisonous glands, which secrete poison on stinging. The poison consists of (1) neurotoxin which acts on the respiratory and vasomotor centres, nerve terminals and endplates of both striped and unstriped muscles and (2) haemolysins, agglutinins, haemorrhagins, leucocytolysin, coagulins, ferment, lecithin and cholesterol.

**Symptoms.**—The symptoms produced by the sting are severe local irritation and burning pain radiating from the site. Sometimes, there may be giddiness, faintness, muscular weakness, vomiting, diarrhoea, convulsions and mental disturbances. A girl, about 17 years old, was stung by a scorpion on the tip of her right ring finger, which became dry and gangrenous.<sup>1</sup> Rarely death may occur, especially in the old and feeble. William O'Hara<sup>2</sup> reports two fatal cases of scorpion sting at Nellore. In one case, a cart driver, 10 years old, was stung in the finger, and died in three hours and a half. In the other, a Hindu lascar, 35 years old, was stung by a dark scorpion, about three inches long, in the great toe, and he died in four days. Sundaram<sup>3</sup> reports the case of a boy, 18 years old, who was stung by a scorpion on the left index finger on March 2, 1930 and died of acute pulmonary oedema on March 14, 1930. Dey also records a case in which a girl, aged 11 years, was stung by a black scorpion on the upper part of her left nipple and on her clitoris and died in a few hours.<sup>4</sup>

**Treatment.**—Apply a ligature above the site of the sting and incise it. Wash the wound with a weak solution of ammonia, borax or potassium permanganate or apply 5 to 10 minims of a 5 per cent solution of cocaine around the site of the wound. In cases of shock give hypodermic injections of caffeine and atropine sulphate, and administer subcutaneously or intravenously normal saline.

### FOOD POISONING

Food poisoning occurs occasionally as an acute illness in a number of individuals shortly after the consumption of the same food. It is due to infection of the food with living bacteria of the *Salmonella* group, e.g., the *Bacillus enteritidis* of Gaertner and the *Bacillus acrylique*. These bacteria are destroyed in the process of cooking but the toxins generated by them are resistant to heat and may be present in food even after boiling it for one hour.

Hæmolytic streptococci and staphylococci are reported to have produced outbreaks of food poisoning.

The foodstuffs which are responsible for causing this kind of poisoning are diseased meats, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, ice-creams, and tinned foods. Such foods often appear quite fresh and do not show any alteration in taste or smell to arouse one's suspicion of their poisonous nature.

Outbreaks of food poisoning were formerly described as cases of ptomaine poisoning on the assumption that the poisoning was caused by ptomaines produced by putrefactive changes occurring in meat or other food, but there is no evidence to show that these substances are the causative agents of food poisoning. Moreover, ptomaines are late degradation products and are never found until the food has become too nasty to be eaten.

**Symptoms.**—These usually commence soon after the ingestion of the food, when the toxins are the causative agents but they may be delayed for six to twelve or even twenty-four hours in cases where the living bacteria are the causative agents. The chief symptoms are headache, giddiness, intense thirst, acute vomiting, diarrhoea with colicky pain in the abdomen, dilatation of the pupils, ptosis, cold, clammy skin, rise of temperature to 101° and 103° or 104° F. with rigors, muscular weakness, cramps and paralysis of the lower limbs. The pulse becomes slow, weak and finally imperceptible. Death occurs from failure of the heart.

**Diagnosis.**—This is made by isolating the bacteria from the vomit, urine or faeces and the suspected foods or from the bowels and solid organs of the sufferer after death and identifying them by cultural characteristics and agglutination tests.

**Treatment.**—Wash out the stomach and give brisk saline purgatives to empty the bowels. Give saline infusions to promote elimination of the toxins from the system. Use stimulants, if necessary.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—The mucous membrane of the alimentary canal is swollen and acutely congested with submucous petechial haemorrhages. The liver, spleen and kidneys are congested. The lungs are usually congested.

**Food Allergy.**—Owing to an inherent or acquired idiosyncrasy some individuals are hypersensitive to certain kinds of food which are ordinarily quite harmless and suffer from gastro-enteritis, local urticarial rashes or asthmatic attacks, whenever they take any of these articles.

1. *Angari Brit Med Jour*, Aug 21, 1948, p 355.

2. *Int Med Gaz*, March, 1884, p 73.

3. *Ind Med Gazette*, Sep., 1931, p 510.

4. *Ind Med Gazette*, July, 1930, p 102.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### IRRITANT POISONS—(Contd.)

#### C MECHANICAL (VULNIRANT) POISONS

Mechanical irritants are actually not poisons inasmuch as they do not produce any toxic symptoms by being absorbed in the blood, but they are included in the expression "unwholesome drug or other drug" of section 28 of the Indian Penal Code, as they act mechanically by a local action and cause irritation of the stomach and bowels with their angular edges or sharp points when they are swallowed. The examples are powdered glass, diamond dust pins needles nails chopped animal and vegetable hairs.

#### POWDERED GLASS

**Symptoms**—Taken internally powdered glass produces a sharp burning pain in the throat and stomach and later in the intestines. This is followed by nausea and vomiting, the vomited matter containing streaks of blood. There is generally constipation but sometimes there is diarrhoea. The motions are passed with pain and are usually mixed with blood. Death may occur from shock especially if the stomach or intestine has been perforated.

At Agra a young Mahomedan male aged 20 years was invited for breakfast at his father in law's house, where he was given powdered glass in the food. About 8 hours after the breakfast he complained of an intense burning pain in the pit of the stomach and brought up mouthfuls of blood without any nausea or pain in the throat. The vomiting of blood was so persistent that he became pale and had almost collapsed with a thready and imperceptible pulse when ergot injection and saline infusion had to be tried. The symptoms abated after three days.

**Fatal Dose**—Not known. A large teaspoonful of powdered glass proved fatal to a child 11 months old.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary from his experiments Lessau Vige<sup>2</sup> found that two and a half drachms of powdered glass given to a cat did not cause any harm and a dog took six or seven ounces in eight days without suffering the slightest inconvenience although it was administered when the animal was fasting and the fragments were frequently a line in length. He himself swallowed a considerable number of fragments of glass upto 2 m m (0.08 inch) long without producing any deleterious effects.

**Fatal Period**—Uncertain. A woman, 25 years old of Mundi State who swallowed powdered glass with the intent of committing suicide died in 2 hours.<sup>3</sup> In a fatal case reported by the Chemical Examiner of Bombay death occurred in 48 hours,<sup>4</sup> and in another case recorded by Reichardt death took place in 6 days.<sup>5</sup>

**Treatment**—Give bulky food such as a large quantity of rice and then give emetics, as well as purgatives. Give ice and morphine to relieve thirst and pain. Adopt such remedies as will combat collapse.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—Lesions may be found in the mouth pharynx, oesophagus, stomach and upper part of the small intestine. Fragments of glass may be found adherent to the mucous membrane of the stomach which is covered with tenacious mucus. The mucous membrane of the stomach and intestines is red, congested and streaked with blood.

<sup>1</sup> Hebb Midland Med and Surg Reporter 18-9 Vol I p 47

<sup>2</sup> Peterson Holmes and Webster Leg Med and Toxicol Vol II Ed II p 889

<sup>3</sup> P. J. Calcutta Medical Examiner & Judicial Report 1925 p 2

<sup>4</sup> Collis Barr Legal Met 3 Vol II p 380

<sup>5</sup> Irish J. of Pharm Second Series Vol VCI p 92, Peterson Holmes and Webster Leg Med and Toxicol Vol II Ed II p 883

Known) with a view to committing suicide. An hour later he complained of pain in the stomach and was attended to by a doctor. His stomach was washed out and he was given butter and boiled rice. The stomach wash was found to contain minute transparent particles under the microscope.

Chevers<sup>1</sup> mentions several cases of attempted suicide by swallowing a whole diamond or diamond dust and records a homicidal case in which a woman killed her paramour by administering diamond dust in milk. In a Hyderabad poisoning case it was alleged that diamond powder was administered in paneer�, but it had no effect.<sup>2</sup>

In the famous Baroda case white arsenic and a very fine powder of diamond were mixed in a sherbet drink.

### NEEDLES

These have been swallowed for suicidal purposes, and are known to have caused death.

### CHOPPED ANIMAL HAIRS

These are supposed to be poisonous and have been given to cattle with the idea of destroying them but it should not be forgotten that, sometimes round boluses of hairs are found in the stomach and intestines of animals dead from natural causes.

Finely chopped human hair is recognized as a slow poison and given in curry or other soft food in Singapore. It is also frequently used in Turkey and produces by continued irritation a chronic disease resembling cancer.<sup>3</sup>

In his annual report for the year 1932 the Chemical Examiner of Bengal reports a case where chopped hair mixed with dry plantain leaves and dust was given to a woman for a ministration of the same to her husband with food to correct his temper and to make him love her. A case<sup>4</sup> is also recorded where a tuft of chopped hair and small fragments of human nails were administered in rice and vegetables to a Mahomedan male by his wife probably as love-philters.

Chopped human hair mixed with lime earth or powdered bone is used as a cattle poison particularly in the districts of Gaya and Hazaribagh in Bihar and in the district of Mymensingh in Bengal.<sup>5</sup>

### VEGETABLE HAIRS

Fine short hairs derived from the leaves and stalks of certain plants are called stinging hairs, and act as mechanical irritants when they come into direct contact with the skin. These hairs taper towards their apices and terminate in small bulbs which contain an irritant fluid consisting of histamine and acetylcholin.<sup>6</sup> The bulbs break off at the slightest touch and the hairs piercing the skin pour out the contents which produce severe irritation. Thus brown rigid pointed hairs covering the pods of an annual climbing plant, called *Mucuna pruriens* (*N. O. Leguminosae*) the cow itch cowpea or 'Russian fleas' (*Karak*) produce local redness with a strong burning sensation followed by intolerable itching inflammation and even blisters when applied to the skin and are liable to set up the symptoms of irritation in the mouth and throat when swallowed in water. If inhaled the dust of the powdered hairs produces pain and swelling of the respiratory tract and may cause death from suffocation.

The treatment consists in washing the part with warm water containing an alkali such as sodium carbonate, when *Mucuna pruriens* is applied to the skin and in administering olive oil or liquid paraffin when it is taken internally. Luminal may be given by the mouth to relieve intense itching and ephedrine hydrochloride may be given hypodermically if the skin rash is of an urticarial nature.

The hairs are usually scraped off from unripe pods without the stalk, and are dried and stored for criminal use. A case of torture by *Mucuna pruriens* is recorded in the annual report of the Chemical Examiner Bengal for the year 1909. A lad 12 years old, threw some powder of the burnt pods of this plant on a female relation of his on account of some quarrel between them. The woman suffered from itching and burning all over the body attended with a swelling for two days, but ultimately recovered. On analysis the partly burnt pods were found covered with fine stiff hairs.<sup>7</sup> The Chemical Examiner of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh mentions in his annual report for the year 1910 that an anonymous letter containing some of the hairs of *Mucuna pruriens* was sent. They leaked in the post office and produced irritating symptoms on the hands of post office officials. In his annual report for the year 1931, the Chemical Analyst of Bombay also reports the case of two men who had a quarrel in the temple of Shri Vitthob at Pandharpur in Sholapur District and one of them threw some powder over the other as a result of which he got almost unbearable itching of his body for which he was treated as an outpatient in the local dispensary. Some of the powder was seized by the police and sent for identification. It was found to contain numerous whitish hairs which were identified as those from the pods of the cowpea plant.

<sup>1</sup> *Med. Juris*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>2</sup> *Times of India*, Dec. 21, 1933.

<sup>3</sup> Chevers, *Med. Juris*, p. 293.

<sup>4</sup> *Beng. Chem. Exam. Ann. Rep.*, 1936, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> *Beng. Chem. Exam. Ann. Rep.*, 1937, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Ind. Med. Gaz.*, Sept., 1910, p. 242.

## **CHAPTER XXVIII**

### **NEUROTIC POISONS**

#### **POISONS AFFECTING THE BRAIN (CEREBRAL, NARCOTIC)**

##### **A. SOMNIFEROUS POISONS**

Next in importance are codeine, narcotine, papaverine and thebaine. Opium yields from 6 to 23 per cent of morphine, 0.3 to 2 per cent of codeine, 2 to 8 per cent of narcotine, 1 per cent of papaverine and 0.3 to 1 per cent of thebaine.

The Indian variety of opium which is known as the Benares opium is a mixture of opium obtained from Central India and from the districts of Benares, Ghazipur, Lucknow, Azamgarh, etc., in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. The morphine content of opium from these several places varies from 7 to 14 per cent but the Benares opium is standardized in the Government Opium Factory at Ghazipur to contain about 10 per cent of morphine. The total alkaloids of this opium usually go up to 40 per cent in which codeine is present to the extent of 1.8 and narcotine 6.4 per cent.

**Morphine C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>19</sub>O<sub>3</sub>N**—This is the principal alkaloid to which the poisonous properties of opium are chiefly due. It occurs as a white powder or in white, shining crystals, having a bitter taste and alkaline reaction. It is very sparingly soluble in cold water, but soluble in 400 to 500 parts of boiling water. It is slightly soluble in ether and alcohol but dissolves in acetic ether and amyl alcohol. It readily dissolves in dilute acids and in solutions of caustic alkalies and alkaline earths. It forms crystalline salts, of which morphine hydrochloride and morphine sulphate are pharmacopoeial preparations and morphine acetate is a non official preparation, the dose of each being  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  grain. These salts are bitter in taste, neutral in reaction and freely soluble in water.

Morphine has a specific action on the nerve cells of the brain and has a narcotic effect.

Heroin (Diacetyl morphine or Diamorphine) Dionin (Iethyl morphine) and Peronin (Benzoyl morphine) are artificial alkaloids derived from morphine and are used in medicine to allay cough in phthisis and asthma. Hydrochloride of heroin is now official under the name *Diamorphinae hydrochloridum* the dose being  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  gram. It is used sometimes by hypodermic injection and also as a narcotic snuff like cocaine. It is liable to produce a habit after continued use. It is mainly excreted by the kidneys. Medicinal doses have produced toxic symptoms and 6.9 grains have produced death in 70 hours<sup>1</sup> while recovery has occurred after 9 grains<sup>2</sup>.

Dilauidid (Dihydromorphinone hydrochloride) is an oxidation product of morphine. It is a colourless crystalline substance freely soluble in alcohol and water, but insoluble in ether. It is used as a substitute for morphine in  $\frac{1}{2}$  grain doses by mouth or in  $\frac{1}{2}$ -gram doses subcutaneously.

**Codeine C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>21</sub>O<sub>3</sub>N**—This is chemically methylmorphine and occurs in nearly colourless triclinic crystals. It is soluble in 1.0 parts of water in 2 parts of alcohol and in chloroform. It is soluble in aqueous ammonia but insoluble in excess of potash or soda solution. It dissolves easily in dilute acids and forms neutral salts. Codeine and its salt, codeine phosphate are pharmacopoeial preparations, the dose of each being  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 grain. *Tabellae colimac compositae* (Compound tablets of codeine or tablets of aspirin phenacetin and codeine) and *Tabellae codeinac phosphatis* are the official preparations of codeine phosphate.

Codeine resembles morphine in its action, although it is much less poisonous. Four grains<sup>3</sup> have caused dangerous symptoms and recovery has occurred even after 8 grains<sup>4</sup>. The symptoms produced by codeine poisoning are sometimes nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain and thus differ from those caused by morphine poisoning. Codeine is excreted unchanged by the kidneys.

<sup>1</sup> McVall, *Jour Lab and Clinic Med*, 1917 Vol II p 571  
<sup>2</sup> Martin, Dale and Westcott *Extra Pharmacopoeia* Vol I Ed VIII p 70.  
<sup>3</sup> Maitland *Brit Med Jour* 1873 Vol I p 18  
<sup>4</sup> Walsh *Ibid*, 1889 Vol II p 18

- 2 Battley's *Liquor Opii Sedativus*—Strength, 1 grain of morphine in 60 minims Dose, 5 to 10 minims
- 3 Black Drop (*Aacetum Opii Crocatum*)—Strength, 3 times as strong as laudanum
- 4 Barham's *Odontalgic Essence*—Strength, about 3 per cent of opium
- 5 Chlorodyne—Strength, about 4 grains of morphine hydrochloride to an ounce. In addition to morphine it contains chloral, chloroform, hydrocyanic acid and tincture of cannabis indica
- 6 Dalby's *Carminative*—Strength,  $\frac{1}{2}$  minims of laudanum to 1 fluid ounce
- 7 Godfrey's *Cordial*—Strength,  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  grains of opium to 1 ounce
- 8 Grimrod's *Remedy for Spasms*—Strength 1 grain of morphine hydrochloride in 5 ounces
- 9 Le Maurier's *Odontalgic Essence*—Strength, 1 grain of morphine acetate to 1 ounce of cherry laurel water
- 10 Mrs Winslow's *Soothing Syrup*—Strength 1 grain of morphine in 1 ounce
- 11 *Nepenthe*—It is also known as *anodyne tincture*, and contains 6.54 per cent of morphine
- 12 Powell's *Balsam Infused*—Strength,  $\frac{1}{2}$  grain of morphine in 1 ounce
- 13 Sydenham's *Laudanum*—This is tincture of opium flavoured with saffron, and is called *Tinctura Opii Crocata* Dose, 5 to 30 minims
- Symptoms*—These commence usually in from half an hour to an hour after the poison has been taken. The symptoms commonly take more time to appear when opium is taken in a solid form than when it is taken in solution. Cases have, however, occurred where the symptoms have appeared almost immediately or within a few minutes, especially in children and after a hypodermic injection of morphine, or have been delayed for several hours. A lady took an ounce and a half of laudanum on an empty stomach and no symptoms of narcotic poisoning appeared for four hours and a half<sup>1</sup>. A man took laudanum at 6.30 a.m. and became drowsy between 5 and 6 p.m.<sup>2</sup>. A man who took an ounce and a half of laudanum, and six drachms an hour afterwards was perfectly sensible seven hours later and only became unconscious in eighteen hours<sup>3</sup>. In a case of compound poisoning by laudanum and antipyrin no marked symptoms of opium poisoning appeared for nineteen hours and a half<sup>4</sup>.

**2 Stage of Sopor**—The nerve centres are depressed during this stage, which, sometimes, comes on quite suddenly. The symptoms are headache, giddiness, lethargic condition, drowsiness, and an uncontrollable desire to sleep, from which the patient may be roused by external stimuli. The pupils are contracted, the face and lips are cyanosed and an itching sensation is felt all over the skin. The pulse and respirations are still normal.

**3 Stage of Narcosis**—The patient now passes into deep coma from which he cannot be roused. During this stage the muscles are relaxed, and the reflexes are lost. All the secretions are almost completely suspended, except that of the skin which feels cold and clammy. The face is pale, the lips are livid and the lower jaw drops. The pupils are contracted to pin points and are insensible to light. The conjunctivæ are injected. The pulse is slow, small and compressible. The respirations are slow, laboured and stertorous.

At this stage recovery may take place by prompt and proper treatment, otherwise in the case of fatal termination lividity of the surface increases. The pulse becomes slower more irregular and imperceptible. The respirations are slower more feeble and assume the character of Cheyne Stokes death occurring from asphyxia. The heart may continue to beat for a short time after respiration has stopped. Convulsive twitchings in groups of the muscles are observed, and the pupils become widely dilated towards the end. Sometimes, death occurs from failure of the heart. The odour of opium may be present in the breath throughout the illness. This is, sometimes, masked by the injudicious administration of alcohol by relatives.

**Unusual Symptoms**—Vomiting and purging may be present in a few cases. In a case in which a sweeper in Lahore an addict to opium, died from an overdose one of the chief symptoms was vomiting. The vomited matter on chemical analysis showed the presence of opium.<sup>1</sup> A young Hindu of Pangaon in Barsi Taluka who died after taking the food prepared by his wife had symptoms of vomiting and purging. An analysis of the viscera revealed the presence of opium alone and no other poison.<sup>2</sup>

Convulsions of a tetanoid character are occasionally present, more frequent in children than in adults. In the case of a student of the Agra College who died of opium poisoning the prominent symptoms were convulsions and a rise of temperature which misled a medical attendant very much in the correct diagnosis. In the case of a private soldier in the first Yemen Infantry at Aden who died of opium poisoning the chief symptoms were remittent attacks of convulsions and a rise of temperature to 104° F before death.<sup>3</sup> In the case<sup>4</sup> of a female aged 32, who died of opium poisoning the chief symptoms were muscular rigidity, violent delirium, frequent respirations (8 per minute) and a temperature of 106° F. Opium was detected by the Chemical Analyst in the stomach and its contents and in the other viscera, viz., the liver, spleen and kidneys.

In a few cases the pupils may be found dilated in the earlier stage, especially when chlorodyne has been taken. The dilatation of the pupils is probably due to hydrocyanic acid contained in it.

Syncope may occur in some individuals after the subcutaneous administration of morphine. A case is recorded where one-sixth of a grain of morphine hydrochloride injected subcutaneously almost proved fatal to an old man.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Punjab Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1925 p 2

<sup>2</sup> Bombay Chemical Analyst's Annual Report 1928, p 4

<sup>3</sup> Bombay Chemical Analyst's Annual Report 1925 p 4

<sup>4</sup> Shah The Bombay Medical Journal Vol I No 5 p 171

<sup>5</sup> Blyth Poisons their Effects and Detection Ed 1, p 207

After an apparent remission of symptoms, sometimes it so happens that they return with more severity to end in death. This is explained by the fact that absorption is practically in abeyance during the stage of depression, and the poison is reabsorbed from the alimentary canal, when circulation has improved.

**Diagnosis**—Opium poisoning has to be diagnosed from apoplexy, uremic coma, diabetic coma, epileptic coma, hysterical coma, acute alcoholic poisoning, carbolic acid poisoning, and compression of the brain.

**Apoplexy**—In apoplexy the patient affected is usually fat and old. The onset is sudden and abrupt. The chief symptoms are a slow, full pulse and paralysis usually hemiplegia. The pupils are dilated except when the lesion is in the pons Varolii, when they are contracted but not symmetrical and the temperature is raised to  $103^{\circ}$  or  $104^{\circ}\text{F}$ . A case<sup>1</sup> is reported where encephalitis lethargica was diagnosed as opium poisoning, as the patient was semi comatose with the pupils fixed and contracted to pin points and his temperature was subnormal.

**Uremic Coma**—In uremic coma there is always the previous history of a kidney disease with the presence of albumin and casts in the urine and anaesthesia. Epileptiform convulsions generally precede coma.

**Diabetic Coma**—The onset is gradual and the skin is flushed. The respirations are slow and deep and the breath has a sweet odour of acetone. The urine contains sugar and aceto-acetic acid.

**Epileptic Coma**—This follows an epileptic fit which may affect persons of all ages. The face and lips are generally livid. The pupils are dilated. The patient is easily roused as the coma is less profound.

**Hysterical Coma**—This is commonly met with in females and rarely in males. There is a history of hysterical fits with convulsive movements. Saliva may be seen issuing from the mouth. The tongue is as a rule not bitten and the reflexes are not altered. Recovery is generally rapid.

**Acute Alcoholic Poisoning**—In acute alcoholic poisoning the chief symptoms are the congested face, injected eyes, dilated pupils, odour of alcohol in the breath and snoring respirations. The patient may be roused by loud shouts or vigorous shaking, and there is no paralysis.

**Carbolic Acid Poisoning**—The most characteristic signs are white patches on the lips and mouth, characteristic odour of the breath and green coloured urine.

treatment<sup>1</sup> The average fatal dose of morphine or its salt for a healthy non-addict is about 3 grains,<sup>2</sup> though death has occurred occasionally from the doses of 1 grain of morphine hydrochloride, while recovery has followed much larger quantities. Seventy five grains of sulphate of morphine is the largest quantity that has so far been recovered from.<sup>3</sup> One sixth of a grain of morphine hydrochloride injected subcutaneously nearly killed an old man.<sup>4</sup> Half a grain of morphine hydrochloride administered hypodermically by mistake for a hypodermic strichnine solution proved fatal in 3 hours to a man suffering from acute bronchitis.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, recovery took place after the hypodermic injection of about twelve grains of morphine.<sup>6</sup>

In infants and young children much smaller doses have proved fatal. For example, 1 grain of Dover's powder equivalent to  $\frac{1}{16}$  grain of opium has killed a child, 4 months old, and a quantity of paregoric elixir containing  $\frac{1}{16}$  grain of opium has caused the death of an infant, 4 weeks old.<sup>7</sup> One<sup>8</sup> and two minims<sup>9</sup> of the tincture have respectively killed infants of seven and five days in 18 hours. One twelfth of a grain of morphine hydrochloride has killed an infant.<sup>10</sup> Children have also recovered from the effects of very large doses, e.g.,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  grains of opium,<sup>11</sup> 3 grains of morphine sulphate,<sup>12</sup> and 2 drachms of laudanum.<sup>13</sup> I have successfully treated several infants and children who were accidentally poisoned by overdoses of opium.

**Fatal Period** — The shortest fatal period on record is 45 minutes in a woman, aged 52, from an ounce of laudanum.<sup>14</sup> The usual fatal period is 8 to 12 hours. Recovery is probable, if a patient survives 24 hours. In rare cases, however, death has been delayed for 2 to 3 days. A child of three months died in 56 hours after an opiate had been administered to it.<sup>15</sup> A girl, aged 19 years, died in 3 days after having taken 10 grains of morphine with suicidal intent.<sup>16</sup>

**Treatment** — Wash out the stomach first with warm water preserving the washing for chemical analysis, and then with a solution of potassium permanganate of the strength of 10 to 15 grains to the pint of water. This washing should not be preserved for transmission to the Chemical Examiner, as potassium permanganate oxidizes opium and its alkaloids and renders them unidentifiable. It also converts morphine into oxydymorphine, which does not satisfy any of the tests for morphine.<sup>17</sup> Moor<sup>18</sup> has shown that 1 grain of potassium permanganate in one ounce of water oxidizes 10 grains of opium or 1 grain of morphine or 1 drachm of laudanum or another preparation of the same strength. The oxidizing action is increased by the addition of dilute sulphuric acid. To continue this action it is advisable to allow about half a pint of the solution to remain in the stomach. The practical test to stop the lavage of the stomach is to find the return water of a pink colour.

1 *Lancet* March 29, 1873 p 468

2 *Sydney Smith Forens Med*, Ed V III, p 533, *Punjab Chem Examiner's Annual Kept, 1931* p 10

3 *W F Norris, Amer Jour of Med Scie*, Oct 1862 p 393

4 *Blyth Poisons Ed V* p 307

5 *Lancet* March 28 1896, *Collis Barr J Leg Med*, Vol II, p 524

6 *Pope, Ibid*, March 17 1894 p 524

7 *Taylor On Poisons*, Ed III p 558

8 *Smith Lancet* April 15 1894 p 419

9 *Proc Med and Surg Jour*, Oct 28 1846, p 519

10 *Chemical News* Aug 22 1863 p 98

11 *Amer Jour of Med Scie*, April 1854

12 *Do. o. Ia Med Monthly* 1877 78 IV, p 670

13 *Med Rec*, New York 1894 p 345

14 *Amer Jour of Med Scie*, Oct 1894 p 384

15 *Med Times and Gaz*, March 1858 p 202

16 *Med Sentinel*, 1893 Vol I p 199

17 *Henry Plant Alkaloids* Ed II p 262

18 *Med Rec*, New York, 1894, VLI, p 200, 1895, VLI II, p 266, VLI III p 611

If potassium permanganate is not available the stomach may be washed out with an infusion of tea or tannic acid or a mixture of finely powdered animal charcoal and water Mustard or zinc sulphate may be given as an emetic A prompt emetic is the hypodermic injection of apomorphine hydrochloride, but it should be administered cautiously, as it may increase asthma

Even in poisoning by the hypodermic injection of morphine the stomach should always be washed out as, after absorption in the blood morphine is excreted into the stomach from which it is again liable to be reabsorbed

The bowels should be cleared by the administration of half an-ounce of magnesium sulphate in water, and the bladder should be emptied by catheterization, if necessary

If the patient is seen in the earlier stage before coma has supervened an attempt should be made to keep him awake by licking a wet towel on the face by cold affusions on the head and by making him walk about after he is well supported by two men, one on each side, but it is no use dragging him if he cannot use his muscles

Injection of atropine sulphate in  $\frac{1}{10}$  grain doses hypodermically has been recommended as a physiological antidote to be repeated until the pupils begin to dilate, but it should be remembered that this drug paralyses the medulla oblongata, and so may aid in bringing about the fatal termination

The body heat should be maintained by hot water bottles and warm blankets The heart should be stimulated by hot applications to the precordium and by hypodermic injections of caffeine, strichnine and sulphuric ether Hot coffee or tea may be administered either by the mouth or by the rectum

A 25 per cent solution of coramine in doses of 5 to 15 c.c. may be administered intravenously or intramuscularly as a stimulant to the circulatory and respiratory systems Intramuscular or intravenous injection of lobeline and administration of oxygen with 5 to 7 per cent of carbon dioxide should also be tried to combat the respiratory failure Artificial respiration aided by the application of the faradic current should be resorted to when coma is profound and should be continued as long as the symptoms last

Charles R. Box<sup>1</sup> reports a case in which a lady who had swallowed some 6 ounces of laudanum half an hour earlier was saved by free venesection when she had got coma, stertorous breathing, deep cyanosis and commencing œdemia of the lungs Sen<sup>2</sup> also advises venesection, specially when the patient is comatose and has a feeble pulse Fifteen ounces of blood should be drawn out at once to relieve the congested heart, when blood pressure is not very low, and the loss should be replenished by normal saline or 25 per cent glucose solution given intravenously Adrenaline chloride solution should be given to guard against the fall of blood pressure

**Post-mortem Appearances** —The post mortem appearances are not very characteristic, but the signs of asphyxia are prominent. The face and the finger nails are livid Froth is seen at the mouth and nostrils The blood is usually dark and fluid

When the stomach is opened, small soft, brownish lumps of opium may be found in its contents, which may also look brown and viscid, and may give the smell of opium

The smell of opium is often noticed as soon as the chest is opened but it disappears with the setting in of putrefaction The trachea is rosy coloured congested and covered with froth, if seen after death The lungs are often en-

<sup>1</sup> *Lancet*, *1st ed.* 1927, p. 893  
<sup>2</sup> *Ind. Med. Gazette*, Dec., 1933, p. 693

gorged and oedematous and exude frothy fluid blood on section. The bronchial tubes are also congested and contain froth. The right side of the heart is full of blood and the left is empty. Sometimes both the chambers are full with venous engorgement. The brain and its membranes are congested. Similarly, the abdominal organs are largely congested and exude dark fluid blood on section. The bladder is generally full of urine.

In the case<sup>1</sup> of an adult Hindu who died of opium poisoning about four ounces of partly clotted blood were found in the pericardial cavity and the substance of the brain was found congested. There was an extravasation of blood in the skin of the neck and chest and both sides of the abdomen. On the front of the chest the haemorrhages were at intervals, while on the sides of the abdomen and neck the haemorrhages were continuous. There were haemorrhages in the skin at intervals on the face and forehead. There were also haemorrhages in the skin of the back as far as the suprascapular regions from the nape of the neck. There were a few hemorrhages in the skin on both the feet.

**Chemical Analysis**—To ascertain whether the suspected article contains opium or not it is necessary to detect the presence of meconic acid and morphine, if possible.

**Test for Meconic Acid**—A neutral solution of ferric chloride gives a blood red colour which is not destroyed by boiling or by adding hydrochloric acid (distinction from acetates and formates) or mercuric chloride solution (distinction from thiocyanates). The red colour disappears on the addition of stannous chloride but it reappears on the addition of nitrous acid.

**Tests for Morphine**—1. **Marquis's Test**—A drop of a mixture consisting of 3 c.c. of concentrated sulphuric acid and three drops of formalin (40 per cent formaldehyde solution) added to a fragment of the suspected residue produces a purple red colour which changes gradually to violet and finally to blue if morphine is present. Codeine and apomorphine produce a violet colour changing to blue but not the initial purple red. Narcotine produces a violet colour but it becomes olive green and finally yellow. Oxydumorphine gives a green colour. Dionin gives a dark blue violet colour while heroin produces the same colours as morphine.

2. One or two drops of neutral ferric chloride solution added to a neutral solution of a morphine salt produces a blue colour.

3. **Husemann's Test**—If two or three drops of concentrated sulphuric acid are added to the morphine residue, and the mixture is heated on a water bath for about half an hour a reddish or reddish brown or black colour appears. On cooling and on adding a drop or two of concentrated nitric acid or a crystal of potassium nitrate a reddish violet colour appears which changes immediately to blood red and then to reddish yellow and finally fades away.

4. **Frohde's Molybdic Test**—One or two drops of freshly prepared Frohde's reagent (0.1 g. of ammonium or sodium molybdate dissolved in 10 c.c. of concentrated sulphuric acid) added to a fragment of the dry morphine residue on a white porcelain dish produces a violet colour which changes to blue green and finally to pink or rose red.

5. **Porphyroxine Test**—The alkaline ether extract obtained by the Stas Otto process is allowed to evaporate spontaneously in a small porcelain dish. To the dry residue a few drops of hydrochloric acid are added, and the dish heated over a flame when a pink or rose red colour shows the presence of porphyroxine a neutral constituent of opium first described by Merck. This test was thought to be peculiar to Indian opium only, but Bamford has shown that at least some specimens of both Turkish and Smyrna opium respond to this test.<sup>2</sup>

1. *Bombay Chemical Analyst's Annual Report 1930 p 7*

2. *The Analyst LV, 1930 pp 445-46*

**Medico-Legal Points** —Opium is about the commonest drug selected by suicides. Young men, who have lost money in speculation or gambling, or who have been scolded by their parents for some offence, frequently resort to its use. Similarly, women who have quarrelled with their husbands or relatives, or who have been disappointed in love, take opium either to terrify their relatives or to end their imaginary worries and miseries.

Suicides usually mix opium with mustard oil or asafoetida in the belief that these substances increase its absorptive power, but there is no foundation about this belief. However, it is true that mustard oil makes it difficult to be eliminated even by washing out the stomach.

It is also believed that alcohol hastens the action of opium but it does not do so in all cases. I saw an Anglo Indian in Agra who took a bottle of beer and opium, but he developed no other symptoms except dryness of the throat and drowsiness.

Suicide by morphine is comparatively rare in India. In his annual report for the year 1927, the Chemical Analyst of Bombay reports two cases of suicide by morphine as against 73 cases by opium.

Owing to its bitter taste, its characteristic smell and its dark brown colour opium is rarely used as a homicidal poison for adults although it is, sometimes, used to destroy illegitimate infants.

A case<sup>1</sup> occurred in the District of Khulna, where a woman aged 26 years entertained a visitor who gave her alcohol to drink. She died subsequently under suspicious circumstances. Opium was detected in the viscera.

In his letter dated the twenty first November 1946 Dr Gopi Ballabh Sathy describes two homicidal cases of opium poisoning which occurred to him at Purulia. Two Santalas a boy aged 18 years, and his sister aged 16 years went to sleep after their usual meal of rice and rice water at night. In the morning they died. At the post mortem examination the face was found cyanosed the pupils were dilated and the viscera were congested. The usual viscera were preserved and forwarded to the Chemical Examiner who found 1 c. g. opium in them. The cousin of their father was suspected to have given them opium in their meals and was prosecuted under sections 328/302, I P C.

Opium is, sometimes, used as a cattle poison. In his annual report for the year 1925, the Chemical Examiner of the U P reports a case in which opium was found in a pill intended for poisoning cattle. He also mentions a case of Ballia, where an attempt was made to poison an elephant with some juar leaves mixed with gur. The substance on examination was found to contain opium.<sup>2</sup>

Cases of poisoning occur among infants and children by their accidentally swallowing crude opium or opium pills meant for their parents or grand parents who are in the habit of using the drug. They are also, sometimes, poisoned by an accidental overdose, as they are usually drugged with opium by their parents, especially of the labouring class, with a view to lulling them to unnatural sleep.

Children are extraordinarily susceptible to the influence of opium. Hence great precaution should be used in prescribing the drug for them.

Henton White<sup>3</sup> records a curious case of poisoning by opium in which a child aged 3 months was poisoned by the teat of a feeding bottle being accidentally contaminated with laudanum. The mother was in the habit of moistening the teat of the feeding bottle in her mouth before getting it to the baby, and at the time she had put a pledge of cotton wool soaked in laudanum in her tooth which was aching.

**Mode of Administration** —Cases of poisoning, sometimes attended with fatal results, have occurred when opiate or morphine preparations have gained access to the system by channels other than the mouth, e.g. application to an abraded surface, a wound or even the unabraded skin, hypodermic injection, or

1 Beng Chem Exam Annual Rep., 1931, p. 9

2 Annual Report, 1926, p. 4

3 Brit Med Jour., July 13, 1901, p. 78

introduction into the rectum or vagina. A Burmese boy, about 9 or 10 years old, received a gaping wound on the forehead, which was stuffed with about a quarter *tola* (45 grains) of opium. In about forty hours he developed the symptoms of opium poisoning, but recovered under active treatment<sup>1</sup>. An ounce of laudanum applied on a poultice to the abdomen produced death<sup>2</sup>. An injection containing thirty grains of opium administered by the rectum proved fatal to a man<sup>3</sup>. Five minims of laudanum injected into the rectum killed a child, eighteen months old<sup>4</sup>. A woman tried to commit suicide by introducing opium into her vagina<sup>5</sup>. A woman died in ten hours after the application of thirty grains of morphine to the cancerous ulcers of her breasts<sup>6</sup>. A man, 40 years old, died in sixteen hours from the effects of an enema containing three grains of morphine administered to relieve the pain caused by a fistula<sup>7</sup>.

**Elimination**—Opium is eliminated chiefly as morphine in the faeces and urine. It is, therefore, necessary to preserve urine for chemical analysis especially in non fatal cases of poisoning where the stomach wash does not give the tests for opium owing to the stomach having been washed out with a solution of potassium permanganate. Morphine is excreted by the stomach and intestines even when administered hypodermically. It is, sometimes, detected in the saliva and bile. That it is eliminated by the milk is proved by the occurrence of fatal poisoning in infants sucking their mothers, who have been poisoned by opium. A woman, aged 30 years, was admitted into the K E M Hospital, Bombay, with a history of having taken opium. Opium was detected in the stomach washings of her child, one year old, who sucked the woman and showed signs of opium poisoning<sup>8</sup>.

Elimination being very slow, a portion of opium accumulates in the system and a certain amount may be oxidized into oxydymorphine, which is found in the urine.

Opium is said to withstand putrefaction in the presence of decomposing material. Stevenson detected morphine in the viscera two months after the death of a lady doctor<sup>9</sup>. The Chemical Analyser of Bombay reports a case where opium was detected in the viscera of a body exhumed five months after death<sup>10</sup>. M Stas detected morphine in the viscera of a body after an interment of thirteen months<sup>11</sup>. Ogier<sup>12</sup> states that he has often failed to detect it in the putrefying viscera after two weeks to one month. The Chemical Examiner of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh writes in one of his letters to the author that "highly decomposed viscera, after being preserved in the usual manner, have shown evidence on analysis of the presence of morphine after 3 to 4 months. It is, however, conceivable that, under certain adverse circumstances, morphine may undergo a change beyond recognition. Cases also are known to happen where in undoubtedly opium poisoning cases no opium could be detected." A Mahomedan male child, about 5 months old, died of opium poisoning in the King George's Hospital at Lucknow on the 11th August, 1920. The post mortem examination was held on the 12th August, 1920, 25 hours after death. The viscera were preserved and forwarded to the Chemical Examiner for analysis on the 23rd August, 1920. In his letter, dated 13th September, the Chemical Examiner states that no opium

1 Chetwars, *Med Juris*, Ed III, p 228

2 Tardieu quoted by Blyth, *Poisons*, Ed III, p 554

3 Orfila quoted by Taylor, *On Poisons*, Ed III, p 554

4 Amer Jour of Med Scie, Oct, 1864

5 Bomb Chem Analyser's Annual Rep, 1939, p 5

6 Taylor On Poisons, Ed III, p 570

7 Anstie *Med Times and Gaz*, 1863, Vol I, p 134

8 Bom Chem Analyser's Annual Rep 1939, p 5

9 Brit Med Jour, 1903, Vol II, pp 1105, 1356, 1381

10 Annual Report, 1925 p 4

11 Taylor, *On Poisons*, Ed III p 33

12 Chem Tax, 1889, p 567, Wittaus, *Manual of Toxicology*, Ed II, p 819

or other poison could be detected. Haines<sup>1</sup> also reports a case in which a woman died in about eighteen hours after taking 10 to 15 grains of morphine, but the chemical analysis of the stomach immediately after death did not show the presence of morphine.

**Opium Habit (Opium Eating).**—The habit of taking opium is prevalent throughout India. Ordinarily, crude opium is used but, on special festive occasions, Kasoomba, its decoction, is offered to the guests. Opium is also smoked in the form of Madal, Chandu or opium dross.<sup>2</sup> In order to prevent the smoking of opium which is very much in vogue especially in Calcutta, the Government of Bengal passed in June, 1933, the Bengal Opium Smoking Act, which provides for the registration of the existing smokers who should obtain a permit from the Excise Department. Any one found smoking without a permit after March 1934, will be prosecuted and on conviction will have to undergo six months' imprisonment combined with a fine. As a result of the recommendation of the Opium Inquiry Committee in Bengal since January 1, 1933, the limit of the possession of opium by a person has been reduced from one *tola* to 12 grains. Any one purchasing it in excess of the quantity upto 90 grains i.e. half a *tola* must obtain a permit from the Excise Department. These permits are to be issued only on the certificate of a medical practitioner and in no case a quantity exceeding 90 grains is to be sold to any one consumer.

Similar opium smoking acts have also been passed in Bihar and the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. These acts forbid the registration of habitual opium smokers under the age of 25 years. Recently, the majority of the Provincial Governments in India have declared certain dry areas where the use of intoxicating drugs especially alcohol, opium and bhang (including ganja and charas) has been prohibited without special permits issued to the addicts on the recommendation of a registered medical practitioner.

An infusion<sup>3</sup> of poppy capsules is habitually drunk by some people in certain districts in the Punjab and parts of Rajputana States especially Jaipur. A preparation known as *Bhujni*, and made by frying green, ripe capsules in butter or *ghee* (clarified butter) is eaten by the addicts. A sweet, called *Hala* and prepared from the juice extracted from green poppy capsules, is also used.

Opium is believed to increase the duration of the sexual act. Hence it is often taken by young men, who get accustomed to the drug by constant use. It is also used to steady the nerves for doing some bold deed requiring special courage. For instance in ancient times the Rajputs used to take the drug before they took part in battles.

The morphine habit in Western countries is usually acquired by those who are advised to take the drug either by the mouth or subcutaneously as a remedy for some exacerbating pain as of sciatica. In India, the habit is acquired usually by young people of certain classes in consequence of the belief that morphine produces the sense of euphoria and that it has remarkable power as an aphrodisiac. Once the habit is formed, it is difficult to give it up. In fact the victim has to take the drug in a larger dose to combat the feelings of lethargy and mental depression, as the symptoms of the first dose wear off.

It is a well known fact that opium addicts can easily tolerate much larger quantities of the drug than an ordinary fatal dose. Chopra and Grewal ascertained in their investigations that Sikhs accustomed to opium in Calcutta took it in quantities, varying from 10 to 15 grains, in twenty four hours.<sup>4</sup> In the

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton Legal Medicine Vol I p 144.

<sup>2</sup> B. S. Chopra and G. S. Chopra Ind. Med. Ga. March 1938 p 172.

<sup>3</sup> Chopra Grewal and others Indian Jour. of Medical Research, April, 1930 p 95.

<sup>4</sup> Ind. Jour. of Med. Research July 1927, p 57.

Punjab it is not unusual for an addict to take 100 grams of opium a day and continue with it for years<sup>1</sup>. Cases are also on record in which individuals injected hypodermically 15 to 20 or more grams of morphine per day. A case<sup>2</sup> is reported from the North West Frontier Province in which 60 grams of morphine a day were taken by hypodermic injection. It should however, be remembered that the opium addict may suffer from the symptoms of poisoning by the same drug, if he exceeds his usual limit or if he loses his power of toleration owing to unusual conditions of his system.

Unlike alcohol opium does not seem to produce injurious effects on the system or to shorten life, if used in moderation, but its abuse for a prolonged period leads to the derangement of appetite and digestion, disturbance of sleep, vomiting, sluggishness of the bowels, emaciation, impotence, neurasthenic condition, mental perversion of morality, premature old age and dementia or mania. These symptoms are more evident in morphine eaters than in opium eaters, and are known as *morphinism* or *morphinomania*. The habitual is so depraved in morals that he will stoop to any mean or criminal act to obtain the drug which has become a necessity to him.

The best treatment for such a condition is the total deprivation of the drug from the patient but this cannot be achieved without great moral control over one's mind which is not possible in such persons. Moreover, the sudden deprivation of the drug produces cerebral excitement, restlessness, yawning, sneezing, excessive salivation, malaise, palpitation, cramps, vomiting, relaxation of the bowels, pain in the stomach and a burning sensation in the back due to the formation of oxymorphone an acrid irritating substance in the tissues. In order to prevent these symptoms it is advisable to administer lecithin and glucose before opium is completely withdrawn. A pill containing 10 grains of lecithin three times a day is given usually for the first five days and 20 c.c.m. of 25 per cent glucose solution are given intravenously each morning for the first three or four days. Glucose may then be administered by the mouth. In severe cases attended with cramps an addition of 10 c.c.m. of a 10 per cent solution of calcium gluconate to glucose solution given intravenously would help greatly in ameliorating this symptom. The diet should consist of fluids only for the first two or three days and then light solids rich in protein and lecithin should be added gradually.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Punjab Chem Exam Int'l Rep 1931, p 10

<sup>2</sup> R N Chopra and G S Chopra Ind Med Ga July 1933 p 363

<sup>3</sup> R N Chopra and G S Chopra Ind Med Ga May 1937 p 262, Ibid July 1940, p 388

## CHAPTER XXIX

### CEREBRAL POISONS—(Contd.)

#### B INFURIANT POISONS

##### ALCOHOL (LITHYL ALCOHOL, ALCOHOL I THYLCUM) C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub> OH

Pure ethyl alcohol is a transparent, colourless mobile and volatile liquid having a characteristic spirituous odour and a burning taste. It is very hygroscopic, boils at 78 °C (173 °F) and burns with a blue smokeless flame. It dissolves resins, fats, volatile oils, bromine, iodine etc. as also many salts and gases. When oxidized, it is converted into aldehyde and acetic acid.

Lithyl alcohol exists in alcoholic beverages in varying proportions. Absolute alcohol (Alcohol Dehydratum) contains 93-95 per cent of alcohol and is used to prepare chloroform and liquor soda ethylatis. Rectified spirit contains 30 per cent by volume of alcohol and industrial methylated spirit or denatured alcohol is a mixture consisting of alcohol 35 per cent and 5 per cent of wood naphtha. Proof spirit is defined by the Act of Parliament as being such as shall at a temperature of 51°, weigh exactly 12 13 part of in equal measure of distilled water. Weaker spirits are termed "under proof" and stronger spirits "over proof".

The following is the percentage of absolute alcohol by volume contained in various alcoholic beverages —

Whisky (Spiritus Frumenti) 32 to 40 per cent, Rum 40 per cent, Gin 33 to 40 per cent, Liquors, 13 to 54 per cent, Brandy (Spiritus Vini Gallici) 10 per cent, Port, 16 to 24 per cent, Sherry and Madeira 16 to 24 per cent, Cocktails, about 24 per cent, Hock 9 to 15 per cent, Claret, 9 to 15 per cent, Champagne 10 to 13 per cent, Cider, 5 to 9 per cent, Ale, 3 to 5 per cent or more, Beer and Porter, 3 to 5 per cent or more, Koumiss 1 to 3 per cent.

**Acute Poisoning** — This may result from inhaling the alcoholic vapours, or from swallowing the alcoholic liquid.

**Symptoms** — These are confusion of ideas, muscular inco-ordination, giddiness, staggering gait, flushed face, indistinct and foolish speech and stupor. After a time recovery may occur, accompanied by nausea and vomiting which are regarded as the early signs of recovery. These may be followed by sleep and severe headache.

If recovery does not occur, the patient passes gradually into unconsciousness and coma with slow stertorous breathing and a full rapid pulse which then becomes slow and small. The breath smells of alcohol. The patient may be roused temporarily by a loud noise or a violent shake. The pupils are generally dilated but may be contracted in exceptional cases. Their reaction to light is a hopeful sign. The temperature becomes sub-normal. Death usually occurs from asphyxia due to respiratory paralysis, but it may occur from shock due to paralysis of the abdominal nerve centre, if a very large quantity of undiluted alcohol is taken. Sometimes, convulsions precede death. In some cases the patient regains sensibility on account of partial recovery, but a relapse occurs and the patient dies suddenly in a state of coma. He may also die later of pneumonia or oedema of the lungs.

A case is recorded in which a boy 8 years old suffered from acute alcoholic poisoning due to the application of a surgical splint to the legs. His legs were shaved and washed with ether

5 On heating some of the distillate with 5 c.c. of a strong aqueous solution of potassium dichromate and 1 c.c. of strong sulphuric acid, the colour changes to green, and the vapour of aldehyde is detected by its odour

The following technique<sup>1</sup> is a simple modification of the Widmark test for determining alcohol in the blood and body fluids —

One cubic centimetre of 0.33 per cent potassium dichromate solution in sulphuric acid (made by dissolving 333 mg of potassium dichromate in 1 c.c. of water and diluting to 100 c.c. with concentrated sulphuric acid) is spread on the bottom of a 5 c.c. Erlenmeyer flask. Half a cubic centimetre of blood or other fluid supposed to contain alcohol is pipetted into a bit of filter paper and suspended over the potassium dichromate sulphuric acid solution. The flask is heated at 100°C for from fifteen to twenty minutes. After cooling the contents of the flask are made up to 3 c.c. with distilled water. This will require about 1.7 c.c. of water (1 c.c. of the potassium dichromate-sulphuric acid solution + about 0.3 c.c. extracted from the unknown solution + about 1.7 c.c. of distilled water). This mixture is placed in a test tube 6" x 1", and is compared with the standards.

*The standards are prepared as follows —*

Fifteen test tubes are taken and in each is placed 1 c.c. of the potassium dichromate sulphuric acid solution. In the first of these tubes are added 2 c.c. of distilled water. In the second is added sufficient alcohol to represent a concentration of 0.05 per cent. In the third enough alcohol to represent a concentration of 0.10 per cent. In the fourth a concentration of 0.15 per cent and so on until the last tube represents a concentration of 0.7 per cent. All the standards are brought up to a total of 3 c.c. each by the addition of distilled water. The standard tubes are now heated to 100°C for ten minutes. Now by comparing the colour of the unknown solution with the standards the concentration of the alcohol in the unknown may be determined. The standards if well sealed and protected from light will remain accurate for two weeks. The first standard tube will represent a concentration of 0 per cent alcohol and the last a concentration of 0.7 per cent with 0.05 per cent gradations lying between.

**Medico-Legal Points** — In European countries cases of alcoholic poisoning are very common and are mostly accidental. In India they are more frequent in big cities than in towns and villages, but fatal cases are very rare. I have seen only two cases of death occurring from acute alcohol poisoning among passengers who were picked up dead from railway trains at Agra Station. Whisky bottles were found in the belongings of both. Probably their death was hastened owing to the excessive heat of the summer. I had also had occasion to hold a post mortem examination on the body of a Hindu male, aged 30 years, who died from excessive drinking of alcohol in one night on or about the 2nd October, 1933. A case<sup>2</sup> occurred in Bombay where a Parsi, aged 50 years, committed suicide by taking a large quantity of alcohol.

Applied to the skin, alcohol produces redness and irritation, especially if it is prevented from evaporation. It has the power of abstracting water from the tissues and precipitating proteins.

Taken by the mouth, alcohol is quickly absorbed by the stomach and the small intestine, and circulates in the blood. The absorption of alcohol is facilitated if it is swallowed rapidly in a concentrated solution on an empty stomach, and it is delayed if a weaker solution is slowly drunk in the stomach full of food, especially bread and milk. Alcohol reaches its maximum concentration in the blood in about an hour after it is taken, and this concentration is ordinarily proportional to the amount consumed. It disappears very slowly, so that it is found in the blood for about twenty hours after it is drunk.<sup>3</sup> Over 95 per cent of the alcohol ingested is oxidized into carbonic acid and water, but the remaining portion is eliminated unchanged by the lungs and kidneys. It has been ascertained that alcohol appears in the urine within half an hour of ingestion.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Abel's Proc Soc Esper Biol and Med*, April 1936, p. 346; *Jour Amer Med Assoc*, July 24, 1937, p. 294.

<sup>2</sup> *The Free Press Jour*, April 1, 1973.

<sup>3</sup> *Mellanby Medical Research Council Special Report Series No. 31*.

<sup>4</sup> *Carter and Southgate, Transactions, Med Leg Soc Ind*, Vol. XXI, p. 44.

There is close relationship between the concentration of alcohol in the blood and the degree of alcoholic intoxication. Carter and Southgate<sup>1</sup> have also demonstrated that the concentration of alcohol in the urine is proportional to that of the blood under all conditions, and that a fairly constant ratio holds which enables them to deduce one from the other. Hence it is necessary to analyse the blood or urine for the estimation of alcohol concentration in cases where persons have been accused of being drunk while creating disturbance in streets or driving motor cars. Schweihsheimer<sup>2</sup> has shown from experiments that 0.13 per cent alcohol in the blood produces mild intoxication in man and 0.225 per cent produces alcoholic coma. It may be generally assumed that persons with 0.2 per cent alcohol in the blood show symptoms of moderate intoxication, those with from 0.2 to 0.4 per cent are probably drunk and those with more than 0.5 per cent are dead drunk or deeply comatose. When the amount of alcohol approaches 0.6 to 0.7 per cent or more in the blood death usually ensues from asphyxia.

Alcohol acts differently on different individuals and also on the same individual at different times. The action depends mostly upon the environments and temperaments of the individuals and upon the degree of dilution of the alcohol consumed.

✓ In order to ascertain whether a particular individual is drunk or not a medical practitioner should bear the following points in mind —

1. The quantity taken is no guide.
2. An aggressive odour of alcohol in the breath, unsteady gait, vacant look, dry and sticky lips, congested eyes, sluggish and dilated pupils, unsteady and thick voice, talks at random and want of perception of the passage of time are the usual signs of drunkenness.

3. Drunkenness does not come within the cognizance of the police, unless the man is dangerous to himself or to his property or that he is annoying or dangerous to others.

A special committee<sup>3</sup> of the British Medical Association was appointed to consider the question of the definition and diagnosis of drunkenness. This committee arrived at the following conclusions and recommendations in regard to persons accused of being "drunk" —

I. That the word "drunk" should always be taken to mean that the person concerned was so much under the influence of alcohol as to have lost control of his faculties to such an extent as to render him unable to execute safely the occupation on which he was engaged at the material time.<sup>4</sup>

II. That it is desirable that a medical practitioner should base his opinion on the following considerations —

- (a) Whether the person concerned has recently consumed alcohol.
- (b) Whether the person concerned is so much under the influence of alcohol as to have lost control of his faculties to such an extent as to render him unable to execute safely the occupation on which he was engaged at the material time.
- (c) Whether his state is due, wholly or partially, to a pathological condition which causes symptoms similar to those of alcoholic intoxication, irrespective of the amount of alcohol consumed.

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the Medico-Legal Society*, Vol. XX, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Deut. Arch. f. Klin. Med.*, 1913, 109, p. 271.

<sup>3</sup> *Brit. Med. Jour.*, Feb. 19, 1927, Supplement, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> Under the Road Traffic Act, 1920 the word "drunk" was substituted by the phrase "under the influence of drink or a drug to such an extent as to be incapable of having proper control of a vehicle."

**III.** That in the absence of any pathological conditions a person is definitely under the influence of alcohol if there is a smell of alcoholic liquor in the breath and/or in the vomited matter (if any) provided there is a combination of all or most of the following groups of signs or symptoms :—

- (i) A dry and furred tongue, or conversely, excessive salivation.
- (ii) Irregularities in behaviour, such as insolence, abusive language, loquacity, excitement or sullenness, and disorder of dress.
- (iii) Suffusion of the conjunctivæ and reaction of the pupils. The pupils may vary from a state of extreme dilatation to extreme contraction and may be equal or unequal.

In the opinion of many police surgeons when alcohol in toxic quantity has been consumed, the pupil reflex to *ordinary light* is absent, whereas the pupil will contract in *bright light* and remain contracted for an abnormally long time, indicating the delayed reaction of the pupil.

(iv) Loss or confusion of memory, particularly as regards recent events and appreciation of time.

(v) Hesitancy and thickness in speech and impaired articulation.

(vi) Tremors and errors of co ordination and orientation.

**IV.** That there is no single test by itself which would justify a medical practitioner in deciding that the amount of alcohol consumed had caused a person to lose control of his faculties to such an extent as to render him unable to execute safely the occupation on which he was engaged at the material time. A correct conclusion can only be arrived at by the result of the consideration of a combination of several tests or observations, such as —

General Demeanour,

State of the clothing,

Appearance of the conjunctivæ,

State of the tongue,

Smell of the breath,

Character of the speech,

Manner of walking, turning sharply, sitting down and arising, picking up a pencil or coin from the floor,

Memory of incidents within the previous few hours and estimation of their time intervals,

Reaction of the pupils;

Character of the breathing, especially in regard to hiccup

**V.** That the following are the tests, upon which taken by themselves, little stress should be laid in deciding whether or not a person is under the influence of alcohol —

Presence of tachycardia (rapid pulse);

Repetition of set words or phrases,

Character of handwriting;

Walking along a straight line;

Failure of convergence of the eyes.

**METHYL ALCOHOL (WOOD ALCOHOL OR SPIRIT, PYROXYLIC SPIRIT, MELTHANOL OR WOOD NAPHTHA),  $\text{CH}_3\text{OH}$**

This is formed by the destructive distillation of wood or molasses. It is a colourless, mobile liquid, having a peculiar, nauseating odour and a burning taste, and boiling at 64.7° C.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period**—Not certain, but death may occur in a few minutes if the air is highly concentrated with methyl chloride

**Treatment**—Remove the patient from the source of danger, and administer oxygen by inhalation Give by the mouth or rectum a solution of sodium bicarbonate with glucose as a remedy against acidosis Treat the convulsions by potassium bromide

**Post mortem Appearances**—Petechial hemorrhages in the gastric mucous membrane in the epicardium and under the pleura The blood is usually dark and fluid The lungs are congested and edematous The brain is congested and edematous The liver shows fatty degeneration The kidneys are congested and show cloudy swelling

**Medico Legal Points**—Accidental cases of poisoning may occur from the inhalation of methyl chloride used in domestic refrigerating machines which are defective or are being repaired

When inhaled for a prolonged period, methyl chloride causes fatty degeneration of the heart, liver, kidneys and central nervous system

Methyl chloride is not a cumulative poison but after absorption it is decomposed into methyl alcohol which accumulates in the system and is responsible for causing fatty degeneration of the organs Methyl chloride also splits up into hydrochloric acid and formic acid The hydrochloric acid causes acidosis and the formic acid is excreted in the urine

**Methyl Bromide**  $\text{CH}_3\text{Br}$ —This is a non inflammable, colourless gas having an ethereal odour and is easily compressible into liquid form It is employed in the manufacture of certain dyes and in the preparation of antipyrin It is also used as a refrigerant, fire extinguisher, insecticide and fumigant

When inhaled methyl bromide produces irritation of the upper respiratory tract, headache, giddiness, nausea, vomiting and disturbances of vision and speech These are followed by an interval of hours and days during which the victim is able to carry on his work without experiencing any toxic symptoms Then the symptoms suddenly appear These are inco-ordination, muscular cramps, paralysis of the limbs, delirium mania, bronchopneumonia or pulmonary oedema, cyanosis and death

Contact with liquid methyl bromide causes severe vesicular irritative dermatitis and burns of the second degree

The treatment consists in the administration of adrenaline chloride or glutathione

The post mortem appearances are congestion of the brain, lungs, liver, spleen and kidneys

#### AMYL ALCOHOL, $\text{C}_4\text{H}_{11}\text{OH}$

This is the chief constituent of fusel oil formed in the manufacture of potato brandy from which it is obtained after washing with water and subsequent purification It is a colourless liquid having a disagreeable penetrating odour and an acrid taste It is very slightly miscible with water but it mixes in all proportions with alcohol and ether It is employed in the manufacture of fruit essences, aniline dyes etc and is also used as an extraction agent

**Symptoms**—These are flushed face, contracted pupils, restlessness, loss of muscular power, unconsciousness, coma and collapse The breath may have an odour resembling amyl nitrite or jargonelle pear In acute cases the symptoms may be delayed for several hours When the vapours are inhaled the symptoms are irritation to the lungs with headache, nausea, giddiness, choking sensation and inability to stand or walk

**Treatment**—Wash out the stomach and give stimulants Give by inhalation oxygen and carbon dioxide Start artificial respiration if necessary Keep up the body heat by warm blankets etc

**Post mortem Appearances**—The smell of amyl alcohol is noticed on opening the stomach the mucous membrane of which is soft and congested The abdominal organs are congested The lungs are congested The brain is congested and the ventricles are usually full of fluid which may emit the smell of amyl alcohol

#### AMYL NITRITL, $\text{C}_4\text{H}_{11}\text{O}_2\text{NO}$

This is produced by the interaction of nitrous acid and amyl alcohol that has been distilled between  $262^\circ$  and  $270^\circ\text{F}$  It is a yellow, volatile liquid, possessing a fragrant odour and a pungent aromatic taste, and is insoluble in water but miscible with alcohol and with ether It is used as a vasodilator, the official dose for inhalation being from 2 to 5 minims

**Symptoms**—By swallowing large doses of amyl nitrite the stomach becomes eroded The patient complains of a burning pain in the stomach, nausea, vomiting and cyanosis Later his pulse becomes thready, and he gets convulsions passes into a state of coma and dies from failure of the respiratory centre When inhaled, it causes dilatation of the arteries flushing of the face and a sense of fullness about the head In toxic doses amyl nitrite converts haemoglobin into methaemoglobin, renders the blood chocolate coloured and thereby interferes with

the oxygenating function of the red blood corpuscles. A teaspoonful taken internally has caused poisonous symptoms.<sup>1</sup>

A retired medical man suffering from anginoid pain inhaled nine amyl nitrite capsules in less than an hour, and suffered from very severe symptoms, but eventually recovered.<sup>2</sup> Cadwallader<sup>3</sup> reports a case in which the inhalation of half an-ounce of amyl nitrite proved fatal.

**Treatment.**—Wash out the stomach. Inject adrenaline or ephedrine hypodermically. Start artificial respiration, if necessary and give oxygen inhalation with or without carbon dioxide.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—If administered quickly, the lungs and other organs are found blanched and free from blood. The right chamber of the heart is gorged with blood and the left empty. The brain is pale. If administered slowly, the brain is congested and both the chambers of the heart contain blood.<sup>4</sup>

**Test.**—Heated with caustic potash, amyl nitrite forms amyl alcohol and potassium nitrite.

**Medico-Legal Points**—Poisoning by amyl nitrite is mostly accidental, and rarely suicidal.

Amyl nitrite taken by the mouth is much less active than when inhaled, as the nitrous acid which is set free by the gastric juice is immediately decomposed. After absorption in the blood amyl nitrite undergoes partial oxidation, and appears in the urine as nitrates and nitrites of the alkalies.

### FORMALDEHYDE, II CHO

This is formed when methyl alcohol vapour and air are passed over a red hot spiral of platinum wire. It is a colourless gas possessing a strong pungent odour. It is soluble in water, a 37 to 41 per cent solution being a pharmacopœial preparation *Liquor Formaldehyde*, commercially known as formalin or formol. It is used as a disinfectant for the fumigation of rooms as a preservative for pathological specimens, and in the preparation of artificial ivory, celluloid, and horn. It is also frequently used as a preservative for food, especially milk.

**Symptoms**—The vapour when inhaled irritates the eyes and air passages and causes painful irritation when it comes in contact with the skin. The liquid solution when swallowed, produces a burning pain in the mouth, throat and abdomen, vomiting containing blood and mucus, contracted pupils, flushed face and painful stools. The vomited matter and stools have the strong odour of formaldehyde. There may be suppression of urine. If urine is passed it contains formic acid. Death may occur from dyspnoea and heart failure. In some cases the narcotic symptoms : giddiness, unconsciousness and stertorous breathing are more prominent and supervene soon after the solution is swallowed. In a case reported by Moorhead unconsciousness supervened in three minutes after about 3 ounces of 4 per cent formalin were taken.<sup>1</sup>

March<sup>2</sup> reports a case in which a boy aged 7 years drank half an-ounce of commercial formalin in mistake for lemonade. In about 15 minutes he was somewhat collapsed though quite sensible. He complained of a burning pain in his throat and epigastrum. His pulse was rapid and weak. He had vomited once bringing up a quantity of clear greenish fluid and he was gasping for breath. He improved under the usual treatment and on the following day he was in his usual health except that he complained of slight pain in the throat and made an uneventful recovery some time later.

**Fatal Dose**—Half an-ounce of formalin may be regarded as a dangerous dose while one to three ounces have proved fatal. On the other hand recovery has occurred from a dose of four fluid ounces of formaldehyde.<sup>3</sup>

**Fatal Period**—The shortest period is 20 minutes in a case where a man aged 16 years died after taking two to three ounces of commercial formalin.<sup>4</sup> In another case death occurred in less than 4 hours after a dose of an ounce of formalin containing 34 per cent of formaldehyde.<sup>5</sup> An Anglo Indian male, 47 years old, died about 18 hours after swallowing about 3 ounces of 40 per cent formalin solution in a drunken state.<sup>6</sup>

**Treatment**.—Wash out the stomach and administer a dilute solution of ammonia or liquor ammonii acetatis as a direct antidote. These unite with formaldehyde and form a non-poisonous compound hexamethylenetetramine popularly known as methenamine urotropine or hexamine. Inject hypodermically strichnine. It may be necessary to resort to artificial respiration.

## ETHER (ETHER, SULPHURIC ETHER, ETHYLIC ETHER OR ETHYL OXIDE), C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub>O

This is diethyl ether and is prepared from ethyl alcohol by interaction with concentrated sulphuric acid. It is a colourless, mobile liquid having a peculiar penetrating odour, and a sweetish pungent taste. It dissolves freely in alcohol, chloroform and fixed and volatile oils but sparingly in water. It is very volatile and highly inflammable and its vapour forms an explosive mixture with air oxygen or nitrous oxide in certain proportions. The presence in air of ether varying from 1.8 to 6 per cent by volume renders the mixture explosive. It is therefore dangerous to employ ether as an anaesthetic in operations where a naked flame is required or an actual cautery is to be used. An unusual case<sup>1</sup> occurred at the Queen Mary's Hospital Stratford where a lad aged 16 had a cycling accident resulting in fracture of the jaw and an operation was performed under the anaesthetic of ether and oxygen. In the course of the operation warm air had to be used to keep the patient's teeth dry. It was applied with a dental syringe. On the third application of the syringe an explosion occurred at the back of the lad's throat. Acute haemorrhage followed and he died within ten minutes. At the autopsy death was found to be due to rupture of the bronchi and collapse of the lungs, there was no sign of burning in the mouth. At the coroner's inquest it was stated in evidence that the light at which the syringe was warmed was fully six feet away from the operating table, and there was no naked flame near.

There is a pharmacopoeial preparation known as *Aether anaestheticus* and is used for inhalation as an anaesthetic. It is contained in the preparation of *Spiritus aetheris*, dose 15 to 60 minims. *Spiritus aetheris compositus* a non official preparation commonly known as Hoffmann's anodyne is often used in medicine in 20 to 40 minum doses. *Injectio camphoræ aethera* B.P.C. is another non official preparation called Curschmann's solution the dose of which is 4 to 15 minims.

There is sometimes taken internally as a substitute for alcoholic drinks Ether being a habit forming drug may give rise to addiction.

**Symptoms** — When swallowed ether causes a burning pain in the throat and abdomen and in intense degree of intoxication which resembles that due to alcohol but is of a shorter duration.

Persons habituated to the use of ether as an intoxicating drink may suffer from chronic gastric troubles and nervous symptoms such as trembling of the hands, muscular weakness, cramps, headache, palpitation, and ringing in the ears.

When inhaled ether acts as a general anaesthetic just like chloroform but its vapour is liable to cause more irritation of the air passages in more secretion of mucus and saliva. The pulse and breathing become slow and consciousness is soon lost. An overdose causes death by paralysis of the respiratory centre but may in some cases, cause death by failure of the heart, especially if it is diseased. Wilson<sup>2</sup> described convulsions as a new complication of ether anaesthesia in fatal and non fatal cases. He investigated these cases and came to the conclusion that the convulsions were toxic in origin and due to the presence in the ether of impurities such as acetaldehyde and peroxide. It is also suggested that these convulsions are associated with prolonged anaesthesia, high temperature of the operating room especially during summer, the previous administration of atropine and the presence of toxæmia or sepsis. On the contrary Kemp<sup>3</sup> is of the opinion that ether convulsions are due to interference with the inhibition of cerebral cell respiration.

<sup>1</sup> Brit Med J Oct 7 1942 p 713.

<sup>2</sup> Lancet May 28 1942 p 1112.

<sup>3</sup> Brit Med J Sept 1943 1 A p 447.

Delayed poisoning does not occur after the inhalation of ether.

**Fatal Dose**—Two to four fluid drachms, when taken internally, are likely to cause intoxication. One fluid ounce may prove fatal to an adult, although larger quantities can be borne by individuals accustomed to its use.

The concentration of ether necessary to produce anaesthesia reasonably quickly is about 6 per cent by volume or 15 per cent by weight in the inspired air. The concentration of ether reaching 0.14 per cent in the blood is sufficient to cause anaesthesia. When the concentration of ether reaches 11 per cent by volume in the inspired air, there is a distinct danger to life. The inhalation of two and a half ounces of ether has caused death.<sup>1</sup>

**Fatal Period**—Death may occur at any time during ether administration, or it may occur from pulmonary complications hours or days after recovery from ether anaesthesia.

**Treatment**—Lavage of the stomach and cardiac and respiratory stimulants are indicated if ether has been swallowed. Fresh air, respiratory stimulants, such as ammonia, artificial respiration, inhalation of oxygen combined with carbon dioxide, and strychnine hypodermically are indicated in cases where respiration or the heart's action stops during ether anaesthesia. Sodium amyta and glucose in saline may be administered to control the convulsions.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—The brain is pinker than normal and is slightly oedematous. The strong smell of ether is noticed on opening the thoracic cavity. The trachea contains a little frothy mucus. The lungs are congested, and exude a good deal of oedematous fluid smelling strongly of ether.<sup>2</sup>

In the case of a man who died in about ten minutes from the effects of the vapour the brain, lungs, heart, kidneys and spleen, on section, emitted the strong odour of ether at the post mortem examination held twenty-two hours after death. The blood was dark, liquid and of a viscid character. The lungs were posteriorly congested, but in the anterior portion the air tubes were found full of frothy mucus.<sup>3</sup>

**Medico-Legal Points**—Accidental poisoning occurs from ether employed as an anaesthetic for general surgery. Ether is, sometimes, swallowed or inhaled for suicidal purposes. It is rarely used for homicidal purposes.

Ether is excreted largely through the lungs and partly through the kidneys.

#### ETHYL CHLORIDE, C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub>Cl

This is prepared by warming a saturated solution of hydrochloric acid in ethyl alcohol in the presence of anhydrous zinc chloride. It occurs as a gas at the ordinary temperature and pressure, but is usually condensed into a colourless, mobile, inflammable and volatile liquid possessing a pleasant ether-like odour and a burning taste. It boils at 12.5° C. It is a pharmaceutical preparation known as *ether plus chloridum*, the non-official dose being 15 to 30 minims by inhalation for adults and 15 to 40 minims by inhalation for children.

When used as a spray, ethyl chloride freezes the skin and surrounding tissues owing to its rapid volatility and produces local anaesthesia for minor surgical work. Its prolonged use may cause local sloughing of the tissues. It is administered by inhalation as a general anaesthetic for performing operations of short duration. It is sometimes used to induce anaesthesia previous to the administration of ether or chloroform.

Ethyl chloride causes poisonous symptoms when it is inhaled in the concentrated form. It depresses the central nervous system and the respiratory centre and produces myocardial weakness. A man, aged 40 years, with a diseased heart died after 90 drops of ethyl chloride had been inhaled.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Holland *Med. Clin. and Toxic.* Ed. I, p. 406.

<sup>2</sup> Gerald Slot, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* May, 1929, p. 903.

<sup>3</sup> *Med. Ga.*, Vol. 41, p. 412.

<sup>4</sup> Jaeger, *Zentralblatt für Chirurgie Leipzig*, July 30, 1921, p. 1073. *Joint Amer. Med. Assoc.*, Oct. 22, 1921, p. 1778.

**Treatment**—Stop the inhalation of the drug and hold weak ammonia vapours to the nostrils keep the patient warm and start artificial respiration if necessary. The recovery is usually rapid.

**Post mortem Appearances**—These are not characteristic. The blood is fluid and the organs are congested.

**Ethyl Bromide**  $C_2H_5Br$ —This is prepared by adding anhydrous sodium bromide to a cold mixture containing absolute alcohol and concentrated sulphuric acid and then distilling slowly. It is a colourless volatile liquid having an ethereal odour and a sweetish warm taste. It boils at 38°C. It is a B.P.C. preparation, known as *ethyl bromidum*, the dose being 1½ to 3 fluid drachms by inhalation. Used as a spray it acts as a local anaesthetic by refrigeration. If administered by inhalation, it acts as a general anaesthetic, but it is not used for this purpose, as its action is uncertain.

When inhaled in the concentrated form ethyl bromide acts as a poison irritating the air passages and producing congestion and oedema of the lungs.

### CHLOROFORM (TRICHLOROMETHANOL), $CHCl_3$

This is prepared largely by distilling ethyl alcohol, methylated spirit or acetone with bleaching powder. It is a heavy colourless volatile liquid possessing a sweet, pungent taste and a characteristic ethereal odour. When heated, it burns with a green edged flame, but it is not inflammable at the ordinary temperature. Exposed to air and light pure chloroform gradually undergoes decomposition, and produces carbonyl chloride (phosgene gas), chlorine and hydrochloric acid, which are very poisonous. The addition of about 1 per cent alcohol and keeping it in a blue or amber coloured well stoppered bottle prevents such decomposition.

Chloroform is soluble in 200 parts of water, and mixes in all proportions with absolute alcohol, ether, benzene and petroleum spirit. It dissolves fats, caoutchouc, resins, sulphur, phosphorus, iodine, various alkaloids and many other organic compounds. It is a pharmacopoeial preparation the dose being 1 to 5 minims. Its official preparations are—

- 1 *Aqua Chloroformi*—1 in 400 of water Dose, ½ to 1 fluid ounce
- 2 *Emulsio Chloroformi*—1 in 20 of water Dose, 5 to 30 minims
- 3 *Spiritus Chloroformi (Chloric ether or Spirit of Chloric ether)*—1 to 20 of rectified spirit Dose, 5 to 30 minims

*Tinctura chloroformi et morphinae composita* is a non official preparation, and is intended to be a substitute for a proprietary medicine, chlorodyne. It contains 2 minims of chloroform, 1/11 grain of morphine hydrochloride, and ½ minim of dilute hydrocyanic acid in ten minims. The dose is 5 to 15 minims.

Chloroform produces poisonous symptoms, when it is inhaled as a vapour, and also when it is swallowed as a liquid.

**Symptoms when inhaled as a Vapour**—For convenience of description the symptoms are divided into the following three more or less distinct stages—

- 1 Stage of Excitement
- 2 Stage of Depression (Anaesthesia)
- 3 Stage of Paralysis

**1 Stage of Excitement**—As soon as a few whiffs of the vapour are inhaled, the patient experiences a sense of irritation in the throat and fauces, and a burning sensation in the eyes. The face becomes flushed and a sense of warmth is felt over the whole body, with a creeping sensation in the skin. All the senses except those of sight and hearing are dulled and the mind becomes confused. At this stage the patient gets delirious, begins to sing, laugh, cry or use abusive and profane language. Sometimes, he struggles so violently that he is required to be held down by the assistants. The pupils are first dilated but become contracted as in natural sleep. Frequently there is a tendency to vomit. The pulse and

respirations are increased in frequency. This stage lasts rarely for more than four minutes.

**2 Stage of Depression (Anæsthesia)**—During this stage the patient becomes completely unconscious and loses all sensibility. The corneal and other reflexes are lost. The pulse and respirations become slow and feeble. The pupils are contracted. The temperature is sub normal and the skin is cold and moist. All the muscles are relaxed, and the limbs can be bent in any direction. Surgical operations are performed during this stage, which can be maintained for hours. If the inhalation is stopped, the condition may ordinarily last for twenty to forty minutes, although it may last for a much longer period in some cases. Sometimes, fatal results occur after the withdrawal of the inhalation.

**3 Stage of Paralysis**—If the inhalation be still continued, the patient passes into the stage of paralysis. The muscular tone is abolished, and consequently the muscles become quite flaccid. The urine and faeces are passed in voluntarily. The lips become blue. The surface is cyanosed and bathed in cold perspiration. The pupils are widely dilated. The respirations become slow and irregular with a long pause. The pulse is weak and irregular. Death occurs from stoppage of the heart's action or from respiratory paralysis. It may also occur at any stage when it may be due to the heart's paralysis or asphyxia brought about by the passage of vomited matter or blood into the air passages, or by the closure of the glottis from the pressure of the tongue, or possibly by status lymphaticus in the case of children.

Delayed chloroform poisoning occurs about ten hours to six days after recovery from anaesthesia especially if the quantity administered was large and continued for a long time. It is more common in persons suffering from acetonuria, rickets, hepatic disorders, and wasting diseases, and is especially frequent in children. The symptoms, which resemble those of phosphorus poisoning, are restlessness, violent and persistent vomiting, jaundice, tenderness over the liver, frequent pulse, delirium, coma and death. Sometimes, there may be cutaneous haemorrhages. The urine contains acetone and diacetic acid. The post mortem examination shows fatty degeneration of the liver, heart and kidneys.

Reichl<sup>1</sup> reports seven cases of late deaths from chloroform which occurred in his clinic in the course of nine days in May 1825. After a so called incubation period of 24 to 76 hours the patients became restless with a frequent pulse, somnolence, subicteric discolouration of the sclerotics and skin, delirium and a rise of temperature often as high as 104° F. They rapidly grew weaker and death followed in 2 to 3 days in children and in 4 or 5 days in adults. At the necropsy acute yellow atrophy of the liver was found in all the seven cases. The principal post mortem finding was severe degeneration of the liver, shown by fatty degeneration of the liver cells with necrosis of the centre of the acini.

**Fatal Dose**—It is difficult to ascertain the exact lethal dose. Large quantities have been inhaled during surgical operations without any deleterious effects. A concentration of two to three per cent of chloroform in air is the limit of safety for inducing surgical anaesthesia, whereas a concentration of five per cent or more is considered dangerous. A concentration of 0.035 per cent by weight of chloroform in the blood produces anaesthesia, while a concentration of 0.06 per cent by weight in the blood causes death.<sup>2</sup>

The inhalation of 15 or 20 drops of concentrated chloroform has caused death.<sup>3</sup> This was in all probability due to the idiosyncrasy of the patient for chloroform vapour.

**Fatal Period**—The usual fatal period is less than ten minutes. The shortest fatal period recorded is one minute after inhalation of thirty drops of chloroform.<sup>4</sup>

1 Med Klin June 4 1926 p 893 Brit Med Jour, Aug 14, 1926 Flitstone, p 23

2 Clark Applied Pharmacol by Id I p 164

3 Taylor On Poisons Ed III p 55

4 Husband, Forens Med, Ed VI p 330

Death from delayed poisoning occurs from ten hours to twenty days, the average period being four to five days.

**Treatment.**—Stop inhalation lower the head and pull the tongue forward either with a pair of forceps or by carrying the lower jaw forward with the hand. Start artificial respiration and apply the faradic current or use oxygen inhalation. Administer hypodermic injections of strychnine, caffeine or ether, and start cardiac massage by the sub-diaphragmatic route. Injection of adrenaline directly into the heart muscle often induces recovery.

The treatment of delayed chloroform poisoning consists in the administration of subcutaneous or intravenous injections of normal saline. Glucose may be administered by the mouth or per rectum to combat the acidosis. A light nutritious diet consisting of sugar and carbohydrates should be given as a prophylactic measure four or five hours before chloroform inhalation.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Not characteristic. The brain is usually congested. The lungs are congested and emit the smell of chloroform. Gas bubbles may be found in the blood which is as a rule dark and fluid. The heart is often dilated. The liver, spleen and kidneys are sometimes congested.

**Symptoms when swallowed as a Liquid**—First of all the symptoms of irritation appear and then coma supervenes. The patient complains of a burning pain in the mouth, throat and stomach; this is followed by vomiting and purging. The vomited matter gives the smell of chloroform and may contain blood. These symptoms are followed within ten minutes or so by unconsciousness and coma. The pupils are dilated. The surface is evanescing. The skin is cold and bathed in perspiration. The pulse is feeble, frequent and irregular. The respirations are slow and stertorous. Death occurs from paralysis of the heart's action or respiration. It may sometimes occur from pulmonary oedema or gastritis. Cases that recover may show jaundice and enlargement of the liver.

**Fatal Dose**—Uncertain. The smallest recorded fatal dose is one drachm in a boy four years old<sup>1</sup>. Four drachms<sup>2</sup> as also six drachms<sup>3</sup> have respectively proved fatal to adults. Recovery has occurred even after five ounces<sup>4</sup> swallowed with suicidal intent.

**Fatal Period**—The usual fatal period is 3 or 6 hours. In one case death occurred in ten minutes<sup>5</sup> and in two other cases life was prolonged to the eighth day<sup>6</sup>.

**Treatment**—Empty the stomach and wash it out with warm water and milk. Give demulcent drinks and administer hypodermic injections of strychnine, digitalis, caffeine, atropine, brandy or ether. Give an enema containing whisky. Keep up the body heat by warmth and mustard plaster. Resort to artificial respiration and galvanism.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—The mucous membrane of the pharynx and gullet is congested and inflamed. The stomach contents may give off the odour of chloroform. The gastric mucous membrane is red, softened and inflamed and may show patches of erosion. The lungs are intensely congested. The heart, liver and kidneys may show fatty degeneration.

<sup>1</sup> Taylor *Ori Progr* Ed III p 648

<sup>2</sup> J ff Foyes Med Ed I p 40 quoted by Collis Barry in *Lond Med* Ed II p 473

<sup>3</sup> Fox Tr Louria: Med Soc 1899 p 123

<sup>4</sup> Bus Glaz Med Jour 1898 p 33

<sup>5</sup> H berg Scien Ber Jol 1886 CXII, p 230 *Wiedens Med Juris et Toxic.*, Ed II p 116<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ba's La set 1899 Ed I p 400 *Wiedens Id d.*

It must be remembered that in cases of suspected chloroform poisoning the brain and lungs in addition to the stomach and liver should be preserved for chemical analysis.

**Chemical Analysis**—Chloroform is easily separated from organic mixtures by distillation with steam. In fatal cases of chloroform poisoning an examination of the blood is very necessary as chloroform passes rapidly into the circulation.

**Tests**—1. The vapour of chloroform when passed through a red hot exit tube is split up into chlorine and hydrochloric acid. Chlorine is known by its turning blue a piece of blotting paper moistened with starch and iodide of potassium. Hydrochloric acid gives a white precipitate to a solution of silver nitrite.

2. If  $\beta$ -naphthol dissolved in a small quantity of strong sodium hydroxide solution be added to a solution containing chloroform and heated, a blue colour is produced which becomes green and finally brown.

3. Add an alcoholic solution of caustic potash and a drop of aniline to a mixture containing chloroform and heat. A disagreeable odour is given off due to the formation of phenylsoeyanide or phenylcarbylamine. The equation representing the result is  $\text{CHCl}_3 + 3\text{KOH} + \text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{NH}_2 = \text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{NC} + 3\text{KCl} + 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$ . The odour is perceptible when chloroform is present in the proportion of 1 : 5000.

**Medico Legal Points**—Accidental deaths occurring during chloroform anaesthesia must at once be reported to the police who should investigate into the cause of death for the satisfaction of the public and for exonerating the medical man from any fault or misadventure on his part. The law is not clear as regards the legal responsibility of the anaesthetist or surgeon in such accidental deaths. At any rate the surgeon is certainly responsible if the anaesthetist happens to be non-qualified. Unfortunately this is usually the case in outlandish branch dispensaries in India.

Chloroform inhalation is occasionally used for suicidal purposes but more often such deaths are accidental owing to its having been inhaled to relieve pain or to produce sleep. In his annual report for the year 1907 Rai Bahadur Chooni Lal Bose Chemical Examiner of Bengal mentions a case in which an Anglo-Indian woman committed suicide by inhaling chloroform.

Chloroform inhalation has been rarely used as a homicidal agent. Casper records only two cases. In March 1856 a Berlin dentist killed his wife, his two children and himself by chloroform. In the second case a quack dentist killed his pregnant sweetheart by chloroform and then shot himself. In April 1904, G. Hallam was tried at the Central Criminal Court in London for having administered chloroform by inhalation to his two children with intent to murder or do them bodily harm. He was convicted and sentenced to penal servitude for life. It has been frequently reported in the secular press that chloroform vapour is used to facilitate theft or rape but it is doubtful if any authentic cases have occurred. However in such cases two questions of medico legal importance are likely to arise viz. (1) whether an individual can be rendered insensible all at once by chloroform inhalation and (2) whether a sleeping person can be anaesthetized without awaking.

**1. Whether an individual can be rendered insensible all at once by chloroform inhalation**—In ordinary circumstances it requires from two to ten minutes to anaesthetize a person with chloroform properly diluted with air. Hence a person may resist if an attempt is made to chloroform him against his will unless he is much weaker than his assailant or is overpowered by several assailants and rendered unfit to struggle. On the contrary death is likely to result if an attempt

is made to render a person suddenly unconscious by the concentrated vapour of chloroform.

*2. Whether a sleeping person can be anaesthetized without a waking* — It is a fact that operations have been performed on sleeping children after bringing them under chloroform anaesthesia without awaking them but in the case of adults, it is possible to do so only by skilled and experienced anaesthetists but that too in a very few cases.

In addition to the patient suffering from toxic symptoms the anaesthetist and other attendants may be affected by poisonous symptoms resulting in death if chloroform was used for a long time in an ill ventilated room lighted by gas burners or lamps.

Owing to its taste and smell, liquid chloroform is rarely given by the mouth as a homicidal poison, though it is sometimes taken for suicidal purposes but more often it is swallowed accidentally.

The Chemical Examiner of Bengal<sup>1</sup> reports the case of a prostitute who was drugged with chloroform by two persons on the night of the 14th December 1914. The history of the case showed that she drank liquor with these persons and shortly afterwards fell asleep. When she woke up she found that the visitors had gone and her ornaments were missing. A bottle left in the room was found to contain a small quantity of chloroform scented with essence of roses. In his annual report for 1938 the Chemical Examiner of Madras reports a case where a young man committed suicide by swallowing chloroform. About fifty-seven grains of chloroform were detected in his viscera.

Chloroform is not infrequently swallowed as an intoxicant and Hofman Heberda<sup>2</sup> reports that several cases of poisoning occurred among the Russian prisoners during the first Great War by drinking chloroform as a substitute for alcohol. In his letter dated the 26th September 1916 addressed to the author the Chemical Analyst, Bombay, describes two cases, where two Hindu men died after taking chloroform in place of alcohol.

*Elimination* — Chloroform is eliminated mainly by the lungs and may be detected there some days after death. A small quantity may be excreted in the urine, perspiration and milk. Chloroform may be resecreted in the stomach even if introduced hyadermically into the system.

chloroform, but has twice its toxicity. It is a pharmacopoeial preparation, called *Carbonis tetrachloridum*, and is largely used as an anthelmintic in ankylostomiasis in 30 to 60-minim doses. Poisoning has resulted from the inhalation and the internal administration of this drug.

**Symptoms**—When inhaled, it causes burning pain in the eyes and throat, headache, nausea, sometimes vomiting, mental confusion, loss of consciousness and convulsions. Death occurs from failure of the circulatory and respiratory centres.

Persons employed in rubber works, where carbon tetrachloride is used as a solvent for rubber may suffer from chronic poisoning which is characterized by irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, dermatitis, nausea and loss of appetite and weight. They also suffer from jaundice, acute nephritis and anaemia.

When taken by the mouth, it causes nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fine tremors, convulsions, coma and death. Gastric or intestinal haemorrhages frequently occur.

The symptoms of poisoning are usually delayed for twenty to thirty six hours after the ingestion of this drug, but Mitra<sup>1</sup> reports a case in which a prisoner aged 30 years, and of good health, felt nausea one hour after the administration of a medicinal dose of 45 minims, and commenced vomiting in a few minutes. He was seized soon afterwards with colicky pains in the abdomen and was restless. The perspiration started on the forehead, the pulse was soft and slow and the respiration was laboured. An urticarial rash which soon became confluent appeared on the body. Recovery followed a hypodermic injection of 0.5 c.c. of pituitrin.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period**—Uncertain. A young woman, who used it as a hair wash, collapsed and died in a few minutes.<sup>2</sup> A dose of 1.5 c.c. has killed adults, and the administration of 0.18 to 0.92 c.c. has proved fatal to children.<sup>3</sup> A dose of 4 c.c. caused death in 27 hours,<sup>4</sup> and a dose of 3 c.c. in 10 hours.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, a case is recorded in which a man took 40 c.c. without any symptoms whatever.<sup>6</sup>

**Treatment.**—If carbon tetrachloride has been inhaled, the patient must be removed at once into the open air and artificial respiration must be started. Oxygen should be administered by inhalation. Later hot tea or coffee may be given as a stimulant. In cases where the drug has been swallowed the stomach should be washed out, and a saline purgative should be given immediately. Alcohol, fats or oils should be avoided, but calcium salts should be administered. A case is recorded in which a man who took 30 to 40 c.c. of carbon tetrachloride was successfully treated by casein digest and dl methionine administered partly orally and partly intravenously.<sup>7</sup>

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—On opening the body the smell of carbon tetrachloride may be perceptible in the thorax and abdomen. There may be small haemorrhagic patches in the kidneys and in the gastro-intestinal tract. There may also be inflammation of the small bronchial tubes and necrosis of the liver.

**Chemical Analysis**—Like chloroform, carbon tetrachloride is separated from organic mixtures by distillation. It responds to the phenylisoecanide test, but not to the  $\beta$ -naphthol test. If it is heated with an alcoholic solution of potassium hydroxide, it forms potassium chloride and potassium carbonate. If chloroform is similarly treated, it forms potassium chloride and potassium formate.

**Medico Legal Points**—Cases of poisoning by carbon tetrachloride are mostly accidental. Dingley<sup>8</sup> reports a case of poisoning due to the bursting of a patent fire extinguisher. A portion of the chemical came up into the face of the patient who first noticed burning of the eyes, and became unconscious in 45 minutes. The pulse was imperceptible and respiration was suspended. Artificial respiration was carried on for 20 to 25 minutes when the patient again need to breathe with faint and shallow respirations. He was then given a few ounces of strong tea. His consciousness was uneventful.

When fire extinguishers of carbon tetrachloride are used in a closed room with a high temperature highly poisonous phosgene gas is formed. It is, therefore, dangerous to use such fire extinguishers in closed rooms.

Jahad<sup>9</sup> has demonstrated that the toxicity of the drug is due to impurities, probably sulphur compounds, which can be got rid of by fractionating the carbon tetrachloride and throwing away the first portion of the distillate (about 1 per cent of the total quantity). Lamson and his co-

1. *Ind. Med. Gaz.* Nov. 1928, p. 637.

2. *Lancet*, Lancet 1928, 1 of II, p. 1162.

3. *Lamson, Minot and Robbins, Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, Feb. 4, 1928, p. 415.

4. *Sydney Smith, Forensic Med. Ed. III*, p. 513.

5. *Phelps and Hu, Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, 1928, 1 of 82, p. 1254.

6. *Lamson, Minot and Robbins, Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, Feb. 4, 1928, p. 315.

7. *Brallie Herbert, Weichert and Steele, Brit. Med. Jour.*, Feb. 12, 1934, p. 209.

8. *Lancet*, May 1926, p. 1066.

9. *Lancet*, March 13, 1926, p. 547.

workers<sup>1</sup> have shown that alcohol and fatty substances should not be given before or soon after the administration of this drug either by mouth or by inhalation, as they greatly increase the rapidity of its absorption and its toxicity. They have also proved experimentally that calcium deficiency in the organism causes its increased toxicity.

### TETRACHLORETHANE (ACETYLLENE TETRACHLORIDI), C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>4</sub>

This substance is a colourless, volatile liquid, having a penetrating odour and boiling at 146°-147°C. It is used as a solvent for varnishes especially cellulose acetate as a constituent of the varnish or dope applied to the canvas wings of aeroplanes and in the manufacture of artificial silk, artificial pearls and non inflammable cinema films. It is also used as an insecticide for weevils and for white fly on tomato plants.

Tetrachlorethane is a powerful liver poison and may cause acute and chronic poisoning. Acute poisoning occurs from ingestion of liquid tetrachlorethane and is rare. Gilbert Forbes records the case of a labourer, aged 33 years, who died about six hours after drinking the liquid. Chronic poisoning is caused by inhalation of the vapours of tetrachlorethane and occurs mostly among workers in factories where it is used.

**Acute Poisoning—Symptoms**—When liquid tetrachlorethane is taken internally the chief symptoms are a sweetish smell like that of chloroform from the breath, frothy fluid at the mouth and nostrils, cyanosis, shallow respiration, coma and death.

**Treatment**—Eliminate the poison by washing out the stomach and treat coma and other symptoms as they arise.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Hyperaemia of the mucous membrane of the stomach with small superficial erosions at its cardiac and pyloric ends, cloudy swelling and congestion of the liver and congestion of the kidneys and lungs.

**Chronic Poisoning—Symptoms**—When the vapours of tetrachlorethane are inhaled the symptoms are malaise, loss of appetite, nausea, headache, drowsiness and constipation. After a few days vomiting and jaundice develop. These are followed by stupor, convulsions, delirium, coma and death. Occasionally there may be emaciation, anaemia, haemoglobinuria and haemolysis.

**Treatment**—Remove the patient from the source of danger and give complete rest. Ad minister oxygen by inhalation and give internally sodium carbonate and sodium citrate in water and also saline purgatives.

**Post mortem Appearances**—acute yellow atrophy of the liver is often seen in death from inhalation of the vapours. There may also be fatty degenerative changes in the kidneys.

**Trichlorethylene (Chloroilen), C<sub>2</sub>HCl<sub>3</sub>**.—This is a colourless, volatile liquid having a pleasant, sweetish odour and boiling at 87°C. It is used as a solvent for fat, tar, rubber and for dry cleaning. It is used as a general anaesthetic and is also employed in the treatment of trigeminal neuralgia and migraine in doses of 10 to 20 minims to be inhaled from cotton wool. It has a powerful narcotic effect. Chronic exposure to the fumes causes headache, giddiness, paralysis of the sensory fibres of the fifth nerve, retrobulbar neuritis, optic atrophy, jaundice, albuminuria, coma and death.

Locally applied, trichlorethylene causes blisters of the skin after an interval of about twenty-four hours.

The drug is likely to be decomposed into dichloroacetylene, a toxic product, which can probably cause nerve palsies when mixed with soda lime.

Jensenius<sup>2</sup> reports the case of a widow, 72 years old, who took 15 c.c. of trichlorethylene in mistake for castor oil. She spat a little of the trichlorethylene but most of it was retained. She drank two glasses of milk but ate nothing. A few hours later she became giddy with ear-disease, drowsiness and coma. The temperature was subnormal with pulse 92 per minute, rigidity of the muscles of the extremities and increased tendon reflexes. She became unconscious but paresthesia of the limbs set in which gradually passed off.

### D D T (DICHLORODIMETHYL-TRICHLOROETHANE, 1,1,2,2-TETRACHLORO-2,2-DIMETHYL-1,1,2,2-ETHANE, P,P'D D T)

Pure DDT is a white crystalline solid substance insoluble in water but soluble in hot alcohol, ethyl acetate, chloroform, benzene, kerosene and many other organic solvents. It is used as an insecticide. A 1 per cent solution of this solid in kerosene is used as a spray for destroying bed bugs and lice. A 2 per cent solution may act as a poison to man beings and its solution in fatty acid is stated to increase its toxicity.

<sup>1</sup> Jour Amer Med Assoc Feb 3 1948 p 315

<sup>2</sup> Brit Med Jour, March 20 1943 p 315

<sup>3</sup> Med Leg and Crim Re, Vol III, Part II, 1948, p 202. See also Stephen Brit. Med Jour, Aug 18, 1945 p 218

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to seventy five grains would produce dangerous symptoms in an adult. On the other hand recoveries have followed much larger doses. In one instance recovery occurred after a dose of 430 grains<sup>1</sup>. In another case, a woman, aged thirty four, recovered after she had taken an ounce of chloral hydrate dissolved in 2 ounces of water<sup>2</sup>. A man, about 35 years old, swallowed no less than 535 grains dissolved in lemon syrup, but recovered in about 3 days<sup>3</sup>.

**Fatal Period**—The average fatal period is 8 to 12 hours. The shortest recorded fatal period is 15 minutes after the last of two doses of ten grains was taken<sup>4</sup>. Thirty minutes is the shortest fatal period recorded after a single dose of 20 grains<sup>5</sup>. Death may be delayed for two to three days.

**Treatment**—Give emetics or wash out the stomach with warm water. Alkalies may be given to decompose chloral hydrate remaining in the stomach. Keep up the body heat by the use of hot water bottles, blankets, massage, friction and galvanism. Keep the patient awake by licking the face with wet towels by shouting at him, or by administering strong coffee by the mouth or by the rectum. Give hypodermic injections of strichnine, caffeine, ether, etc. Perform artificial respiration and administer by inhalation oxygen with carbon dioxide, if necessary.

In chronic poisoning, the drug should be withdrawn, and tonics with a liberal diet should be prescribed. It may be necessary to give stimulants such as strichnine and digitalis.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—Softening, reddening and erosion of the mucous membrane of the stomach. The lungs, as well as the brain, are congested and gorged with dark fluid blood. Early degeneration of the heart, liver and kidneys may be detected in chronic poisoning.

**Chemical Analysis**—The finely minced tissues are distilled with steam in a 10 per cent solution of phosphoric acid. The distillate will give the following tests for chloral hydrate—

1 Nessler's reagent added to a few drops of the distillate produces a yellow to reddish brown precipitate changing to grey or black.

2 Four drops of saturated phloroglucinol solution and 1 c.c. of 20 per cent sodium carbonate solution are added to 1 c.c. of the distillate. About half an hour later the colour changes from pinkish violet to orange, red and deep red. Chloroform and carbon tetrachloride do not give this reaction.

3 About 0.1 g. of resorcinol and 1 c.c. of 15 per cent caustic soda solution are mixed with 2 to 3 c.c. of the distillate and the mixture is boiled. A yellowish red to red colour develops.

4 Heated with caustic potash solution chloral hydrate is decomposed into chloroform and potassium formate. Chloroform is known by its odour and potassium formate by boiling it in solution with silver nitrate, which it reduces to the metallic state.

**Medico Legal Points**—Chloral hydrate is often used as a hypnotic in medicine, hence accidental poisoning, followed by death in some cases, has resulted from its internal administration in too large doses. In 1925 a man aged 32 who was a victim to the opium habit, went to Lahore from Jullundur and bought

1 Stone Louisville Med News 1883 vi p 173

2 Colenso Lancet 1894 vol II p 1031

3 Daley Ind Med Ga. Oct., 1905 p 101

4 1st bough Chicago Med Jour 1877 VIII, p 234

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some drug in the hope of curing himself of the habit. He took some of the drug and died immediately. The remaining portion of the medicine and the viscera removed from his body showed the presence of chloral hydrate<sup>1</sup>.

Accidental death resulted in one case in three hours after the introduction of 5.86 grammes of chloral hydrate into the rectum and in another case in six minutes after the injection of 6 grammes into a vein for the purpose of procuring surgical anaesthesia<sup>2</sup>.

Chloral hydrate has been used in a few cases for suicidal purposes. It has not been employed criminally with the intent of causing death but it has been administered with a view to stupefying the victim so as to facilitate the commission of rape or robbery, and has, sometimes caused death. The smell and taste of chloral hydrate are greatly masked by beer, hence it is easy to administer it with beer or some other foreign liquor. A woman<sup>3</sup> was offered beer one evening by two of her visitors. After the second bout of drinking she was made to leave the room for a couple of minutes on the pretext of getting some pins (betel leaves) when chloral hydrate was surreptitiously mixed with the remaining beer. After the third glass of this beer the woman became drowsy and fell asleep when her visitors snatched away her gold ornaments and then tried to throttle her. In October, 1911, a case came to my notice in which an Anglo Indian administered chloral hydrate in an alcoholic drink to an Indian and robbed him of his wrist watch and some cash when he became unconscious. The chemical examiner detected 35.9 grains of chloral hydrate in 1 fluid ounce of an orange coloured liquid left in a phial found with the accused.

Chloral hydrate is known in certain districts of the Punjab as "Sukhi sharab" or dry wine and is often added to liquor to increase its potency. A party of two died together as the result of a drinking bout. Four deaths from Ludhiana District were recorded in which chloral hydrate was detected in the viscera<sup>4</sup>.

Chloral hydrate is rapidly absorbed from the alimentary canal and is carried to the central nervous system where it has a depressing and eventually a paralysing effect. It is also absorbed from the skin. In the tissues chloral hydrate is converted into trichlorethyl alcohol which, combining with glycuronic acid forms non-poisonous urochloralic acid and is eliminated in this form in the urine. It is eliminated partly unchanged by the kidneys and to a small extent by the lungs. Traces are also excreted by the skin.

**Bromidol**—This is an official preparation a fluid drachm containing 15 grains each of chloral hydrate and potassium bromide the dose is  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 drachms. It is synonymous with *Liquor Bromo-chloral Compositus* of the B. P. C. It is used for procuring sleep and soothing the nervous system.

Accidental poisoning has occurred from its overdose, the toxic effects being chiefly due to chloral hydrate contained in it. Cases of suicidal poisoning have also been recorded. Chronic poisoning has also occurred from its continued use for a long time. A woman of 70 years took one-half to one ounce of bromidol for nervousness, sleeplessness and pain for 38 months. She was confused, disoriented as to time, showed loss of memory for recent events and could not fix her attention. She answered to yes and felt that people called her had names and that they were trying to kill her father and brother<sup>5</sup>.

#### PARALDEHYDE ( $C_4H_6O_2$ )

This is a clear colourless liquid having an oily odour and an acrid, nauseating taste. It dissolves in 9 parts of water and is miscible in ether, chloroform, alcohol and volatile oils. It is an official preparation known as Paralde plum, the dose of which is 10 to 15 minims by mouth and  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 fluid ounce by rectal injection as a basal anaesthetic.

1 Punjab Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1912 p 11.

2 Blith, Poisons Their Effects and Detection Ed 1 p 167.

3 Bengal Chem Examiner's Annual Rep., 1912 p 11.

4 Punjab Chem Examiner's Annual Rep. 1912 p 9.

5 Bennett Jour. Inter Med. Issue Sept 23 1912 p 1045.

This drug acts chiefly on the cerebrum inducing light and natural sleep within ten to fifteen minutes and is used as a hypnotic in the insomnia of cardiac and respiratory diseases and also in mental diseases. It is also administered per rectum or intravenously as a basal anaesthetic about one hour and a half before operation. When administered in excess it may produce acute poisoning.

**Symptoms**—These are nausea, vomiting, headache, giddiness, contracted pupils, rapid pulse, unconsciousness, deepening into coma and death from respiratory failure.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period**—Uncertain. In one case<sup>1</sup> six to seven tea-spoonfuls of the drug killed a patient suffering from typhoid fever in four hours and in another case 2 ounces proved fatal. A case<sup>2</sup> is also recorded where a man aged 41 who was in the habit of taking one to two tea-spoonfuls of the drug took between 2½ to 3 ounces and went to bed at 11 p.m. and was found dead at 8 a.m. On the other hand recoveries have followed the ingestion of ½ ounce and even larger doses.<sup>3</sup>

Nine ounces of paraldehyde given per rectum in mistake for nine drachms for dental extraction caused death in five hours.<sup>4</sup>

**Treatment**—Give emetics or wash out the stomach. Administer stimulants such as caffeine, strychnine and digitalis. Resort to artificial respiration and oxygen and carbon dioxide inhalation if necessary. Employ high rectal or colonic lavage with sodium bicarbonate solution if paraldehyde has been administered by the rectum.

**Post mortem Appearances**—The mucous membrane of the stomach is hyperæmic and may be slightly inflamed. The other viscera are usually congested. There is generally a characteristic odour of paraldehyde when the cavities are opened.

**Medico Legal Points**—Accidental and suicidal cases of acute poisoning by paraldehyde, though rare, have been recorded. A case<sup>5</sup> is recorded where a rectal injection of half an ounce of paraldehyde with three or four times its volume of water caused considerable sloughing of the rectal mucous membrane. A case is also recorded in which a woman who was given a dose<sup>6</sup> of 31 c.c. of paraldehyde per rectum died in 8 hours and 20 minutes. It appears that the woman had idiosyncrasy for the drug.

Persons who take paraldehyde for a prolonged period become addicted to its use and suffer from the symptoms of chronic poisoning similar to those seen in chronic alcoholism. These are digestive disturbances, muscular weakness, tremors, disturbance of speech, insomnia, emaciation, anaemia, hallucinations, delusions and delirium.

Paraldehyde is eliminated in the breath and urine to which it imparts its unpleasant, ethereal odour.

#### SULPHONAL (DIETHYL SULPHONE DIMETHYL-METHANE OR SULPHON METHANE) ( $\text{CH}_3$ )<sub>2</sub>C(SO<sub>2</sub>C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub>)<sub>2</sub>

This occurs in tasteless, odourless, colourless prismatic crystals or powder soluble in 4.0 parts of cold water in 1.5 parts of hot water in 80 parts of 90 per cent alcohol in 90 parts of ether and in 3 parts of chloroform. It is used in medicine as a hypnotic in 5 to 20-grain doses.

**Symptoms**—The symptoms of acute poisoning caused by excessive doses are giddiness, headache, mental confusion with ataxic gait and thick speech, stupor, insensibility, sometimes convulsions, feeble pulse, irregular and stertorous breathing, subnormal or elevated temperature, marked cyanosis and coma. Broncho-pneumonia may develop in case coma is prolonged. Death may occur from failure of respiration or the urine is sometimes suppressed, and death may result from anuria. Eruptions may be noticed on the skin after a single large dose.

Sulphonal is excreted slowly in the urine as sulphonal and ethylsulphonic acid. It may produce chronic poisoning by cumulative effects even if administered in small quantities for a prolonged period.

Chronic poisoning is characterized by pain in the stomach region, vomiting, constipation, erythematous rashes, headache, muscular weakness, ataxia, confusion of thought and hallucinations. The urine is reddish brown or port wine coloured, and contains haematoxylon, unchanged sulphonal and albumin.

<sup>1</sup> *Lancet Vol II* 1890 p 423.

<sup>2</sup> *J F W MacCall Brit Med Jour Aug 8 1923 p 250.*

<sup>3</sup> *Mackenzie Brit Med Jour Vol II, 1891 p 1-34.*

<sup>4</sup> *Lancet Vol I* 19-9 p 247.

<sup>5</sup> *Robert Hutchison Brit Med Jour April 12 1930 p 718.*

<sup>6</sup> *Jacob Kotz, George B Roth and W T Lyon Jour Amer Med Assoc June 22 1929.*

**Fatal Dose**—Uncertain. Seventy-five grains may be considered to be fatal to adults. Thirty grains is the smallest quantity that has caused death. On the other hand recovery has followed a dose of 3 ounces.

**Fatal Period**—Uncertain. Seventy hours in one case and thirteen days in another.<sup>1</sup>

**Treatment**—Elimination and washing out of the stomach, administration of sodium bicarbonate in dilute solution and stimulants, infusion of normal saline, or transfusion of blood.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—Reddening and oedema of the stomach and duodenum. Congestion of the liver and other internal organs. Fatty degeneration of the heart, liver and kidneys.

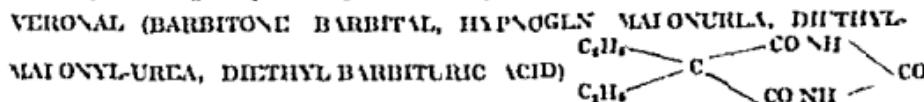
**Chemical Tests**—1. Hydrogen sulphide is liberated if sulphonal be heated after adding iron powder and hydrochloric acid.

2. Sulphonal gives off a garlic-like odour of mercaptan, if it is heated with charcoal in a test tube.

**Medico-Legal Points**—Accidental cases of poisoning by sulphonal have occurred from large doses, or from the impudent use of the drug by patients themselves without consulting their physician. A few suicidal cases have also occurred.

**Trional** (Methyl-ethyl-methane-diethyl sulphone or Methyl sulphonal)—It occurs as a white crystalline powder with a slightly bitter taste. It is soluble in 20 parts of water and more soluble in dilute alcohol. It melts at 76°C. It is given as a hypnotic in 5 to 20-grain doses. It is similar in action to sulphonal but acts more rapidly and induces sleep in from thirty to sixty minutes. It has a cumulative action and produces toxic symptoms when taken for a long time. The symptoms and treatment are similar to those of sulphonal poisoning.

**Fetronal** (Diethylmethane diethylsulphone or Ethyl sulphonal)—It occurs in powder or in white crystals having a camphoraceous bitter taste. It dissolves in 550 parts of water and 12 parts of alcohol. It melts at 85°C. It is used as a hypnotic in 10 to 20-grain doses. It is a dangerous drug and produces poisonous symptoms like sulphonal.



This is a white, crystalline powder, having no odour, but a faintly bitter taste. It is slightly soluble in cold water, more soluble in hot water and in 90 per cent alcohol and freely in aqueous alkaline solutions. The official dose is 5 to 10 grains.

**Symptoms**—Nausea, vomiting, headache, drowsiness, ataxic gait, stupor deepening into coma, stertorous breathing and rise of temperature. In a case of fatal poisoning recorded by Russell and Parker the temperature rose to 107.2°F., and was brought down to 104.5°F. by cold packs.<sup>2</sup> Death occurs from respiratory failure. The lungs may exhibit signs of acute congestion, oedema or broncho-pneumonia. Frequently a severe erythematous rash appears on the skin and the face is cyanosed. The urine may be suppressed or scanty, showing the presence of albumin and haematoxyporphyrin. The pupils are usually contracted and insensible to light, but may be dilated. Sometimes, the pupils may be found contracting and dilating alternately at brief intervals.<sup>3</sup> If recovery occurs, headache, dizziness, somnolence, diplopia, ptosis, ataxia and low blood pressure may be observed for several days.

ten whisky glasses except on the last day when he took only one glass. He suffered from headache, vertigo, marked inco-ordination and nystagmoid movements of the eyeballs. The right pupil was larger than the left, both were slightly irregular, but responsive to light and accommodation. He recovered completely in 17 days.<sup>1</sup>

**Fatal Period**—Death occurred in four hours and a half from a dose of 90 to 105 grains.<sup>2</sup> Death has also occurred in twenty hours and has been delayed for six to seven days.

**Treatment.**—Eliminate the poison from the stomach by washing it out with warm water, and then introduce castor oil and hot coffee. Use hypodermic injections of cardiac stimulants, such as strychnine, digitalis, camphor, and caffeine. Inject subcutaneously warm normal saline and give rectal injections of 15 ounces of normal saline containing 4 per cent glucose. In a case of attempted suicide by 200 grains of barbital recovery ensued after the intravenous injection of 800 c.c. of 20 per cent dextrose.<sup>3</sup>

Strychnine may be given intravenously, the initial dose being 10 mg. The subsequent dosage must depend on the behaviour of the reflexes, notably the jaw reflex. The injections should be repeated even oftener than once an hour. A man of 63 took about 8 grammes of veronal and recovered after he had been given 170 mg. of strychnine intravenously in several doses, 160 mg. having been given in the course of the first twenty-four hours.<sup>4</sup>

The most effective remedy that has recently been recommended is the intravenous injection of an ampoule of 5.5 c.c. of a 25 per cent solution of coramine; this should be followed by an intramuscular injection of another ampoule half to one hour later.<sup>5</sup> An intravenous injection of at least 30 per cent alcohol has also been recommended as an antidote to the barbiturate group of drugs.<sup>6</sup>

In respiratory failure intravenous injections of lobeline and inhalations of oxygen with 5 per cent carbon dioxide are indicated. Frequent catheterization must not be neglected. The cerebro-spinal fluid is usually under raised pressure. Hence lumbar puncture should be performed and the fluid allowed to escape until the rate of flow—drop by drop—is almost normal. Intravenous injections of 2½ c.c. of a 0.2 aqueous solution of picrotoxin have been recommended in the treatment of barbiturate poisoning. Owing to its poisonous effects picrotoxin should be used very cautiously and only when a patient is comatose and possibly flaccid.<sup>7</sup>

**Post-mortem Appearances**—Externally, there is cyanosis. Internally, the mucous membrane of the alimentary canal is congested. The kidneys show degeneration of the convoluted tubules. The lungs are congested and oedematous and are usually in a pneumonic condition. The other organs are congested.

Besides the stomach, liver, spleen and kidneys, the brain should be preserved for chemical analysis, as veronal is retained in the brain.

**Chemical Analysis**—1. A few drops of Millon's reagent in a small amount of warm water added to a solution of veronal gives a white, gelatinous precipitate, insoluble in excess of the reagent.

2. Pure veronal melts at 191° C.

3. A solution of veronal is rendered alkaline by adding a drop or two of ammonia, and then a few drops of an alcoholic solution of cobalt nitrate are added. A violet colour is produced.

4. A small piece of caustic soda is added to veronal and fused. Ammonia is evolved. The residue dissolved in water gives a blue colour with ferrous sulphate solution and a purple colour with copper sulphate solution.

**Medico-Legal Points.**—Veronal is a powerful hypnotic, and in medicinal doses it produces quiet and restful sleep without any ill-effects. It is largely used by patients as a remedy for insomnia without seeking medical advice. Richards<sup>8</sup> suggests that the drug produces mental confusion and affects the memory so much that the patient does not realize that he has already satisfied the need, and automatically repeats the dose at intervals. The result is accidental poisoning from large doses. Sometimes, it has been taken for suicidal purposes. In one case it was accidentally taken in mistake for Kamala.

Veronal should be prescribed with great caution in renal diseases. Constipation must always be avoided when the drug is being administered, so that the poisonous symptoms may

1. Jerome Fittel, *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, Oct. 22, 1921, p. 1333.

2. D. R. S., *Brit. Med. Jour.*, Oct. 16, 1909, p. 1154.

3. Sanderson, *California and Western Medicine*, San Francisco, Dec., 1930, p. 877, *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, Feb. 21, 1931, p. 642.

4. Hansen, *Nord. Med. Tidsskrift*, Sep. 1, 1934, p. 1118, *Brit. Med. Jour. Sup.*, Dec. 22, 1934, p. 94; also vide Haggard and Greenberg, *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, April 2, 1932, p. 1131.

5. *Munchener Medizinische Wochenschrift*, Sept. 2, 1932, p. 1430, *Practitioner*, Oct., 1932, p. 513.

6. Carrier, Huriez and Willioquet, *Bull. de l'Acad. de Med.*, 1934, No. 18; *Lancet*, June 9, 1934, p. 1243.

7. Murphy, Connerty, Connolly and Kopanyi, *Jour. Lab. and Clin. Med.*, Jan., 1937, p. 350.

8. *Brit. Med. Jour.*, Vol. I, 1934, p. 331.

not develop. It is slowly eliminated mostly unchanged by the kidneys, so that it may be found in the urine for the first four or five days, but has usually disappeared before ten days have elapsed. It has a cumulative action, and may lead to chronic poisoning if administered for a long time. There is also danger of possible addiction from the prolonged daily use of drugs of the veronal group.

**Chronic Poisoning.**—The symptoms of chronic poisoning are foul breath, ataxia, tremors, thick and difficult speech, skin rashes, loss of memory, mental deterioration, delusions, visual hallucinations and delirium. Sometimes, there may be symptoms of gastro-intestinal irritation, anæmia and albuminuria.

**Medinal (Barbitonum Solubile, Soluble Barbitone, Barbital Sodium or Sodium Barbitone).**—This is a mono-sodium salt of diethyl barbituric acid. It is a white, crystalline powder, soluble in 6 parts of water and possessing a bitter taste. The dose is 5 to 10 grains. It is similar in action to veronal, and produces fatal poisoning in the same way as veronal. The cumulative toxic effects of medicinal are the same as those of veronal. The medicinal habit (chronic medicinal poisoning or medicinalism) has the same toxic action and produces the same after-effects on the physical health and mental condition of the patients as chronic veronal poisoning. In his annual report for the year 1933, the Chemical Examiner of Bengal reports the case of a medical practitioner, who took medicinal with intent to commit suicide and died on the third day. E. Stoklund<sup>1</sup> describes the case of a man who died thirty hours after taking medicinal. The symptoms were smaller pupils not reacting to light, absence of corneal reflex, cyanosed lips, large amount of mucus in the mouth and moist skin, but the extremities were not cold. Breathing was stertorous, and the respirations were at first 24 per minute, and then became 15 per minute. The pulse was weak and regular but became frequent, the number being 150 per minute. The temperature was normal. The patient was in a comatose condition. At the post mortem examination the lower lobes of the lungs were deeply congested and edematous, and the spleen was soft.

**Chemical Analysis—Antifebrin.**—This may be extracted with ether or chloroform from the aqueous solution in the Stas Otto process. On evaporating the solvent the residue may be tested for antifebrin as follows—

1. *Indophenol Test*—A portion of the residue is boiled with 4 c.c. of hydrochloric acid in a test tube until it is reduced to 1 c.c. After cooling, 2 to 4 c.c. of a saturated aqueous solution of phenol are added. A freshly prepared aqueous solution of calcium hypochlorite is added drop by drop when a dirty red colour is produced, which deepens on shaking. Then ammonium hydroxide solution is carefully added to float over the surface of the mixture. An indigo-blue colour occurs in the upper layer of ammonium hydroxide.

2. *Phenyl Isocyanide Test*—If another portion of the residue is boiled with a few cubic centimetres of alcoholic or aqueous sodium or potassium hydroxide solution the odour of aniline is noticed. If a few drops of chloroform are added after cooling, and the solution warmed the offensive smell of phenyl isocyanide is perceived.

3. Potassium bichromate dissolved in strong sulphuric acid produces a red colour which changes to blue and blue-green and then disappears.

**Antipyrin**—This may be recovered by extracting the tissues with chloroform from alkaline solution. The residue is diluted with distilled water and filtered. The filtrate contains antipyrin which may be identified by the following tests—

1. A few drops of ferric chloride solution added to an aqueous solution of the residue produce a deep red colour which becomes pale yellow on the addition of dilute sulphuric acid.

2. If strong sulphuric acid is added to a little potassium nitrite dissolved in water, nitrous acid is evolved, which gives a green colour with antipyrin.

3. Heated with a solution of calcium hypochlorite antipyrin gives a brick red precipitate.

**Phenacetin**—Like antifebrin, phenacetin may be separated from the aqueous acid solution and the residue may be detected by applying the following tests—

1. *Oxidation Test*—A portion of the residue is boiled with 3 c.c. of concentrated hydrochloric acid for three or more minutes diluted with water to about 10 c.c., cooled and filtered. If a few drops of 3 per cent chrome acid solution, 8 per cent potassium bichromate solution or strong chlorine water are added to the filtrate, a violet colour changing rapidly to ruby red develops.

2. Another portion of the residue is heated to boiling with a few cubic centimetres of 10 per cent nitric acid. A yellow or orange red coloured solution is formed. If the solution is sufficiently concentrated long, yellow needle like crystals of nitrophenacetin will separate out on cooling.

**Medico Legal Points**—Most of the poisonous cases have been accidental from overdoses or even from medicinal doses, especially if the heart happens to be diseased.

Antifebrin has produced fatal symptoms from its application as an antiseptic dressing to raw surfaces. Snow mentions the case of an infant who was thus poisoned after the drug had been used as a dusting powder for the unhealed umbilicus.<sup>1</sup>

It is reported that four drachms of antipyrin were used subcutaneously as a last resort by Clark of Agra to murder Fulham after he had been unsuccessfully drugged with arsenic, gelsemine and probably cocaine and belladonna.

**Amidopyrine (Pyramidon or Aminopyrine)**—This occurs in small colourless crystals or as a white crystalline powder and is soluble in 18 parts of water and readily soluble in alcohol or ether. It is largely used as an analgesic and antipyretic, the dose being 5 to 10 grains. Certain proprietary drugs contain amidopyrine as the chief ingredient. For instance Compral consists of amidopyrine, phenacetin, caffeine and dry hyoscyamus extract. Gardan is composed of amidopyrine and novalgin. Alonal, ubigin and veramon contain amidopyrine in combination with a barbiturate.

The long continued use of amidopyrine or its use in susceptible individuals may cause agranulocytosis which is characterized by marked leucopenia almost complete absence of polymorphonuclear cells, fever, malaise, ulceration and even sloughing of the mouth and throat, irritation and death. The maximum fatal dose is considered to be about 1.0 to 1.5 grains.

The treatment is the same as in poisoning by antifebrin. Pentnucleotide intravenously is recommended as a treatment for agranulocytosis.

**Chemical Tests**—Ferric chloride solution gives a bluish violet colour with amidopyrine solution. If a few drops of potassium nitrite solution are added to an aqueous solution of amidopyrine acidified with dilute hydrochloric acid a violet blue colour is produced, which gradually fades.

### CINCHOPHEN (PHENYLQUINOLINE CARBOXYLIC ACID)

This occurs as a white or yellowish powder or in crystals, being insoluble in water and slightly bitter in taste. It is a pharmacopelial preparation and is known as atophan, phenoquin, agotan, atocin, nylofanol, quinophan etc., and is given in 5 to 10-grain doses as an analgesic in lumbago and sciatica. It is also said to increase the elimination of uric acid from the blood in gout and rheumatic affections.

The drug is a dangerous poison and should be used with great care. Small doses administered for a prolonged period may produce chronic degenerative changes in the liver, while large doses may cause acute fatty degeneration, or even acute yellow atrophy, of the liver.

The symptoms of poisoning are malaise, headache, gastro intestinal disturbance, jaundice, skin eruptions, palpitation, tachycardia and cyanosis. The urine is coloured dark and contains albumin. Death has occurred in some cases from necrosis of the liver. In a case<sup>1</sup> where a woman 65 years old died from cinchophen poisoning the post mortem examination showed almost complete destruction of the liver, which was reduced to less than half its normal size.

Thirty seven and a half grains of cinchophen taken in five days caused death from subacute yellow atrophy of the liver.<sup>2</sup>

The treatment consists of the withdrawal of the drug and administration of dextrose and insulin. The drug has a cumulative effect, hence there should be frequent rest periods during its administration.

### SULPHANILAMIDE (PRONTOSIL)

This is a term adopted by the American Council of Pharmacy and Chemistry as a non proprietary name for para aminobenzene-sulphonamide. It occurs in colourless crystals or as a white, crystalline substance, is odourless and slightly bitter with a sweetish after taste and is but slightly soluble in water and alcohol. It is a chemotherapeutic agent and was originally intended for use in haemolytic streptococcal infections, but is now largely used in the treatment of croupy croup, puerperal sepsis, tonsillitis, peritonitis, meningitis, gonorrhoea, pneumonia, otitis media and osteomyelitis.

The derivatives of sulphanilamide are sold under different proprietary names, such as Prontosil Soluble, Prontosil Album, Proseptasine, Soluseptasine, V and B 693 (Sulphapyridine), Sulphathiazole, Sulphamethylthiazole, Bacteramide, Streptoicide, Sulphonamide-P, Consulanyd, etc.

Sulphanilamide is a pharmacopelial preparation, and is generally administered by the mouth, the initial dose being 30 grains and subsequent doses being 15 grains every four hours. The drug may be administered hypodermically or intramuscularly. It may also be given per rectum or intrathecally in a 0.8 per cent solution in normal saline. The treatment should be continued only for two to three weeks and the dose should be reduced as the condition improves.

The administration of the drug for a prolonged period or in fevers of uncertain nature usually gives rise to toxic effects and may cause death. Owing to idiosyncrasy, poisonous symptoms may appear in some cases after the administration of an ordinary therapeutic dose. It should be remembered that children bear it well.

**Treatment**—Sodium bicarbonate should be given to prevent acidosis. Methylene blue in doses of 1.2 mg per kilogramme of the body weight should be given intravenously in cases of cyanosis. It also prevents the formation of met haemoglobinæma when administered with sulphanilamide.<sup>1</sup> Large quantities of water should be administered to eliminate the drug. Pentnucleotide should be given intravenously for agranulocytosis. Blood transfusion is recommended when there is danger to life.

Patients should be kept in bed during the course of sulphanilamide therapy and should be watched daily by their physician, who should do the white blood cell count at frequent intervals. It is suggested that magnesium or sodium sulphate should be avoided as its administration concurrently with, or within two or three days preceding the administration of sulphanilamide gives rise to sulph haemoglobinæma<sup>2</sup> but, from investigations carried out on mice, Richardson<sup>3</sup> has come to the conclusion that magnesium or sodium sulphate does not produce sulph haemoglobinæma while sulphides or compounds which are readily converted into sulphides, must be avoided as they are most effective in the formation of sulph haemoglobinæma. Coal tar derivatives should also be avoided during the treatment with this drug. Low residue diet should be prescribed and liquid paraffin should be administered daily to keep the bowels free.<sup>4</sup>

**Post Mortem Appearances**—The stomach is congested. The spleen is congested and may be enlarged. The liver is congested and shows fatty degeneration. The kidneys are congested. The lungs are congested and edematous. The brain and its membranes are congested. The bone marrow is aplastic in acute agranulocytosis.

**Chemical Analysis**—The sulphanilamide group of drugs may be extracted with acetone from neutral aqueous solutions in the Stas Otto process. Several extractions should be made, filtered and evaporated to a syrupy consistency. The filtrates should be collected together, washed with acetone several times and evaporated to dryness. The residue should be dissolved in water, heated and filtered. The filtrate should be saturated with sodium chloride and treated with acetone. On evaporation to dryness, sulphanilamide with some sodium chloride is obtained as a residue and can be distinguished by the following tests—

1 A few drops of p dimethylamino benzaldehyde solution (made by dissolving the substance in water acidified by strong sulphuric acid) added to a small fragment of the residue or a few drops of its solution produce immediately a yellow colour or orange precipitate.

2 A portion of the residue is dissolved in warm dilute hydrochloric acid, cooled in ice and mixed with 2 c.c. of 1 per cent sodium nitrite solution. Two cubic centimetres of water and 1 c.c. of 5 per cent  $\beta$  naphthol solution are added to the whole mixture, when an orange coloured solution or precipitate is formed.

3 Heated in a dry test tube, sulphanilamide produces an intense violet colour and emits the odours of ammonia and aniline on further heating.

**Medico-Legal Points**—Poisoning by sulphanilamide is mostly accidental.

Sulphanilamide, when given by the mouth, is rapidly absorbed from the small intestine and is found in the blood, cerebro spinal fluid and all the secretions and tissues of the body except bone and fat. It is excreted in the urine partly unchanged and partly as acetyl sulphanilamide.

#### ANILINE (PHENYLAMINE OR ANILINE OIL), $C_6H_5NH_2$ .

This is a coal tar derivative and is prepared by reducing nitrobenzene by means of nascent hydrogen. It is a colourless, oily liquid becoming brown on exposure to air and light. It has a peculiar aromatic odour and a burning taste. It is soluble with difficulty in water, but freely in alcohol, ether and chloroform. It is chiefly used in the arts for making several aniline dyes. It is also a basis of some synthetic drugs such as acetanilide or antifebrin and exalgyn. Commercial aniline contains aniline, toluidine, nitrobenzene, and other benzene derivatives.

**Symptoms**—These usually appear immediately after swallowing a poisonous dose but may, sometimes, be delayed for an hour or more. The symptoms are nausea, vomiting, headache, giddiness, drowsiness soon deepening into coma, slow laboured breathing, small feeble and irregular pulse, and remarkable cyanosis of the lips, face, fingers and toes, and sometimes of the whole body, largely due to the formation of methaemoglobin. The skin is cold and clammy, the pupils are usually dilated but are contracted in some cases. Very often convulsions occur before death. In subacute cases the urine is coloured dark and diarrhoea and jaundice may occur.

**Fatal Dose**—Six drachms<sup>5</sup> have proved fatal but a smaller dose may cause death.

1 Hartmann Perley and Barnett, *J Clin Invest* 1939, 17, p. 693, *Lancet*, Feb 18, 1939,  
p. 403  
2 Paton and Eaton, *Lancet* May 15 1937, p. 1159  
3 Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, Vol. 71, No. 3, March, 1941,  
p. 203  
4 Archer and Briscoe, *Lancet*, 1937, Vol. II, p. 432  
5 Muller, *Deutsche Med Woch*, 1887, Collis Barry, *Leg Med*, Vol. II, p. 483

**Fatal Period.**—Uncertain. Seven hours in a case,<sup>1</sup> where a man had poisoned himself with aniline. Twelve hours in a second case after swallowing 3 ounces of marking ink consisting chiefly of aniline,<sup>2</sup> and 2 days in a third.<sup>3</sup>

**Treatment.**—Give emetics or wash out the stomach as quickly as possible. Administer stimulants hypodermically or per rectum. Inhalation of oxygen and artificial respiration. Venesection, saline infusion and transfusion of blood may be necessary in severe cases.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—Not characteristic. Hypertension and congestion of the bronchial tubes, as well as the stomach. The blood is chocolate coloured. There may be fatty degeneration of the liver, kidneys and heart.

**Chemical Analysis.**—Aniline may be separated from the suspected organic material by making strongly alkaline and then distilling the mixture with steam. The distillate is rendered alkaline by adding sodium hydroxide and shaken up with ether. The ether is evaporated to dryness and the residue contains aniline which may be examined by the following tests—

1. If 5 or 6 drops of strong sulphuric acid and a drop of a saturated solution of potassium bichromate are added to a little of the residue in a porcelain capsule, the edge of the mixture begins to show a pure blue colour in a few minutes. On the addition of a few drops of water the whole mixture becomes uniformly blue.

2. A few drops of sodium hypochlorite solution or a freshly prepared solution of calcium hypochlorite (bleaching powder) added to an aqueous solution of aniline produces a purple or violet blue colour, which changes to reddish brown or dirty red. If a few drops of dilute phenol solution and some ammonia are added, a blue colour is formed.

3. A few drops of bromine water added to an aqueous solution of aniline produce a flesh-coloured precipitate of tribromaniline.

4. Heated with chloroform and alcoholic potash, the offensive odour of phenylisocyanide is noticed.

**Medico-Legal Points.**—Aniline is a blood poison. It disintegrates the red blood corpuscles and causes the formation of methemoglobin, which may be readily recognized by its characteristic spectroscopic appearance. Engelhardt<sup>4</sup> has shown that aniline is partly changed in the human body into aniline black. In severe aniline poisoning fine blue-black granules may be seen in every drop of the blood and also in the urine. Aniline is oxidized in the tissues to para amino-phenyl sulphuric acid, which is then eliminated in the urine as an alkaline salt. A part of aniline may be found unchanged in the urine.

Aniline is occasionally taken internally for the purpose of committing suicide, but does not seem to have been used for homicidal purpose. Recently, a case occurred in Bombay, where a Mohammedan male killed his wife by inflicting several stab wounds on her body, and then committed suicide by taking paranntra aniline, a derivative of aniline.<sup>5</sup>

Poisoning has occurred from the absorption of aniline and its derivatives through the unbroken skin. In 1939 two coolies of Kidwai Dock rubbed paranntra aniline on their bodies, and became unconscious in about three hours. One of them died of aniline poisoning on the third day.<sup>6</sup> In January, 1944, a case occurred in a nursery in the Touro Infirmary, where 17 infants developed aniline poisoning from wearing diapers stamped with ink containing aniline dye, which had not been previously laundered.<sup>7</sup> A similar instance is quoted by Landouzy and Brouardel, where ten children suffered from poisonous symptoms after wearing boots, which had been covered with a yellow pigment containing 90 per cent of aniline.<sup>8</sup> Arthur J. Patrick<sup>9</sup> also reports three cases in which a girl, aged 13, and two brothers, aged 11 and 13, suffered from poisonous symptoms after wearing shoes dyed with a colour which contained aniline. Henry H. Haft<sup>10</sup> reports a case of poisoning by shoe dye, in which a youth, aged 19, complained of the frequency of micturition with dysuria and passage of very bloody urine.

Chronic poisoning occurs among those who are exposed to its fumes in industrial arts. The symptoms are loss of appetite, digestive disturbances, anaemia, headache, eczematous

1. Raschewskaja, *Deuts. Zeits. f. d. ges. gerichtl. Med.*, 1932, XIX, pp. 23-25; *Med. Leg. und Criminolog. Rev.*, Vol. I, Part I, 1933, p. 81.

2. Smith, *Lancet*, Jan. 13, 1894, p. 89.

3. *Ibid.*, Dec. 7, 1898.

4. Contributions to the Toxicology of Aniline, Franz. Diss. Dorpat, 1888; Warren, Tullenrich's *Detection of Poisons*, Ed. VI, p. 72.

5. Private communication dated Sep. 26, 1946 from the Chemical Analyser, Bombay.

6. Ghosh and Bagchi, *Organic and Toxicol. Chemistry*, Ed. II, p. 176.

7. Granbarth, Bloom, Coleman and Solomon, *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, Aug. 18, 1935, Vol. 122, p. 1135.

8. *Bulletin de l' Academie de Medecine*, Brit. Med. Jour., Sep. 29, 1960, p. 916.

9. *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, March 27, 1926, p. 944.

10. *Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, March 10, 1928, p. 742.

ulcerations, cough, nervous symptoms and blindness. Carcinomatous tumours of the bladder are sometimes found in those who work continuously for a long time in the aniline industry.

**Phenylenediamines**—These are used as fur and hair dyes, and may produce poisoning especially in hypersensitive individuals. The symptoms are dermatitis, conjunctivitis, giddiness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, cardiac weakness, cyanosis of the lips and face, toxic jaundice, convulsions, coma and death. Autopsy shows atrophy of the liver with necrosis of its cells. Workers engaged in the manufacture of these substances may sometimes get asthmatic attacks by inhaling them. In his letter dated September 26, 1946 the Chemical Analyser, Bombay, describes the case of a woman, who committed suicide by taking paraphenylenediamine, a hair dye.

**Pyridine**—This coal tar derivative is a volatile liquid having a penetrating and nauseating odour and taste and is used for mixing with alcohol to render it undrinkable. It is an irritant poison and depresses the cardiac and respiratory centres in the medulla. The symptoms are nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, cyanosis, dyspnoea, quick pulse, rise in temperature, prostration, oedema of the lungs, delirium, coma and death from asphyxia.

Pyridine is contained in the fumes of tobacco smoke and is responsible for irritation of the mouth, throat, nose, eyes and lungs.

### COAL TAR NAPHTHA

Coal tar naphtha is a term generally applied to the first distillates when coal tar is distilled. It is inflammable and has the most disagreeable smell.

**Symptoms**—Inhaled as a vapour, coal tar naphtha produces headache, giddiness, difficulty in speech, irritation of the respiratory tract and bronchopneumonia.

Taken internally, it produces burning pain in the mouth, throat and stomach, vomiting, thirst, colic, restlessness, shallow respirations, weak pulse, insensibility, collapse and death.

**Treatment**—Emetics or washing out of the stomach with warm water, purgatives, especially magnesium sulphate, stimulants and artificial respiration, if necessary.

### NAPHTHALENE (NAPHTHALINE, TAR CAMPHOR), $C_{10}H_8$

This is a hydrocarbon contained in the middle oil distillate of coal tar. It occurs in large lustrous crystalline plates having a persistent odour. It melts at 80°C, boils at 218°C and sublimates at a lower temperature. It is insoluble in water but dissolves freely in ether, chloroform, alcohol and oils.

Naphthalene is chiefly used in the manufacture of indigo and certain azo-dyes as a repellent to moths and as a deodorant in closets. It is used in medicine as an intestinal disinfectant and as a vermifuge, the dose being 3 to 12 grams.

**Symptoms**—Taken internally, naphthalene produces headache, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, staggering gait, pain on micturition with dark brown urine containing albumin and haemoglobin, drowsiness, muscular twitchings, cyanosis, coma and death. Jaundice and acute nephritis may be present.

A Mahomedan male who took some naphthalene in place of an Indian sweet suffered from severe jaundice, marked anaemia, hyperthermia, hemiplegia and coma. He died three days after swallowing the poison. It is possible that in the metabolism of naphthalene, naphthalamine (an amino derivative) was formed and was responsible for the rise of temperature to 103°F.<sup>1</sup>

Inhaled as a vapour, naphthalene causes chiefly malaise, headache and vomiting. Inhalation of the vapour for a prolonged period may produce chronic poisoning. Every<sup>2</sup> records a case where persons sleeping under bedclothing dusted over with naphthalene as a moth powder suffered from loss of appetite, headache and eczema of both legs.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period**—Not known. Seven grams<sup>3</sup> of naphthalene have produced severe symptoms of poisoning. A boy 6 years old died in two days after taking 170 grammes of naphthalene in seven doses as an anthelmintic. A case occurred to Dr. Vyas in which a boy of 2 years died on the third day after he had swallowed a naphthalene ball (moth ball) weighing about 40 grams. In this case the symptoms supervened two days after swallowing the ball when castor oil was administered. The patient soon collapsed and became comatose with dilated pupils. The urine contained albumin, blood and hyaline and epithelial casts. A boy 12 years old who had eaten two naphthalene camphor tablets ('bon bons') each containing 2 grammes of pure naphthalene suffered from the symptoms much resembling those of alcoholic intoxication. Recovery occurred on the fifth day.

<sup>1</sup> N. R. Konar, H. K. Roy and M. V. De, *Ind. Med. Ga.* Dec 1939, p. 723.

<sup>2</sup> Berliner *Klin. Wochenschr.*, 1884, Vol. II, p. 333.

<sup>3</sup> Dixonmann and Brend *Forens. Med. and Toxic.*, Ed. II, p. 477.

<sup>4</sup> Prochownik *Therap. Monatsh.* 1911, 23, p. 489.

<sup>5</sup> Zangerle, *Therap. Monatsh.*, Feb 1899, 13, p. 122.

**Chronic Poisoning**—This may occur among workers who are directly or indirectly exposed to the fumes of benzene in factories. The symptoms are headache, excessive fatigue, dizziness, nausea, loss of appetite, weakness, nervousness, disturbances of sensation, such as numbness and tingling in the extremities, bleeding from the gums and nose, disturbed sleep, menstrual irregularities among women, indigestion, frequent urination, leucopenia, and a tendency towards a diminution in the polymorphonuclear leucocytes<sup>1</sup>. Aplasia of the granulocytes of the osseum medulla is a frequent and constant symptom. The post-mortem examination will show submucous haemorrhages, aplasia of the bone marrow and fatty degeneration of the heart and liver.

A case<sup>2</sup> is recorded where fifty cases of poisoning by benzene occurred among young women within a few weeks of their employment in a rubber goods factory. Of these seven died. The treatment consisted of blood transfusion, ingestion of fresh liver or liver extract and large quantities of fresh air. In severe cases extirpation of the spleen was tried with success. Heliotherapy, natural or artificial, is often effective.

**Detection**—Benzene is separated from organic mixtures by distillation and may be recognized from its odour and from its boiling point, which is 80.5°C.

**Medico-Legal Points**—Poisoning by this drug is mostly accidental. A few cases are recorded where it was taken with a view to committing suicide.

Benzene is oxidized in the body to phenol and dihydroxybenzenes, and is excreted partly by the kidneys in combination with sulphuric and glycuronic acids and partly unchanged by the lungs. Taken internally, it causes a marked fall in the number of the leucocytes of the blood, and is, therefore recommended in the treatment of some forms of leukaemia.

#### NITROBENZENE (NITROBENZOL), C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>NO.

This substance is formed by the action of strong nitric acid on benzene. It is a yellow, oily liquid having a pleasant odour like that of oil of bitter almonds. It is insoluble in water but freely soluble in alcohol. It is commercially known as artificial oil of bitter almonds, or oil or essence of mirbane. It is largely used in the manufacture of aniline and explosives, in the preparation of perfumery, and for making boot polish, scenting soaps and flavouring confectionery. The liquid as well as its vapour are poisonous. When applied to the skin, nitrobenzene is absorbed rapidly and produces toxic symptoms.

**Symptoms**—The symptoms are usually delayed from one to three hours or even longer after swallowing the poison. These are a burning taste in the mouth, numbness of the tongue, salivation, nausea, vomiting, giddiness, headache, cyanosis, cold and moist skin, weak and rapid pulse, hurried breathing, drowsiness and coma. The pupils are contracted first and then dilated. The urine is dark coloured. Convulsions may occur before death.

The symptoms produced by inhalation of its vapours are almost precisely the same as those produced when swallowed. A man, aged 43, spilled a quantity of nitrobenzene over his clothes and went about several hours breathing an atmosphere saturated with nitrobenzene. After some time he became drowsy, his expression was stupid, and his gait unsteady; he had the appearance of a person who had been drinking. In four hours the stupor gradually deepened into profound coma which ended in death after five hours.<sup>3</sup>

**Fatal Dose**—Eight to nine minims have caused death.<sup>4</sup> Twenty drops have also proved fatal. On the other hand, recovery has occurred, under prompt and efficient treatment, from one ounce<sup>5</sup> as also from three and a half ounces.<sup>6</sup>

**Fatal Period**—The average fatal period is 7 hours. Death occurred in 70 minutes when a woman swallowed less than half an-ounce of oil of mirbane.<sup>7</sup> Death may be delayed for 2 or 3 days.

**Treatment.**—Use emetics or the stomach tube. Give stimulants, such as strichnine or digitalin, but avoid alcohol, oils and milk. Use oxygen inhalation, saline infusion, venesection and blood transfusion.

**Post mortem Appearances**—The smell of nitrobenzene is discernible on the cavities being opened. All the organs are greatly congested. The mucous membrane of the stomach and duodenum is diffusely reddened and occasionally shows patches of ecchymoses. The blood is fluid, chocolate coloured and shows the spectrum of methaemoglobin and an absorption band between the yellow and the red, which does not correspond to any of the haemoglobin products.

1 *H R Smith, Jour of Industrial Hygiene* March 1928 p 73

2 *Correspondent of Vienna, Jour Amer Med Assoc* July 19 1930 p 215

3 *Lethaby, London Hosp Rep* 1865, Vol II, p 34, *Taylor, On Poisons, Ed III*, p 660, vide also *Hamilton, Jour Industr Hyg*, 1, 1919, p 200

4 *Lond Hosp Rep*, 1865

5 *Dixonmann Forensic Medicine and Toxic*, Ed VI, p 469

6 *Cissel abs, Lancet* 1894 Vol I p 121

7 *Graham Grant, Brit Med Jour*, April 12, 1913, p 778

**Chronic Poisoning.**—This occurs in persons working in factories where nitrobenzene is used. It is characterized by languor, anaemia with the red blood corpuscles reduced to less than half the normal, dyspnoea and jaundice with superimposed cyanosis producing a yellowish colour and even a blue-black colour in severe cases. The liver is damaged and resembles that of acute yellow atrophy in appearance. Nodular skin eruptions appear in some cases.

**Chemical Analysis.**—Nitrobenzene may be obtained by distilling the organic mixture undiluted with sulphuric acid. The distillate is extracted with ether. The ether is evaporated and the residue contains nitrobenzene which may be distinguished by the following tests—

1. Two drops of phenol, three drops of water and a small piece of potassium hydroxide are mixed in a porcelain dish and heated to boiling. A few drops of the liquid residue are added and the heating is continued. A red colour appears, if nitrobenzene is present. The colour changes to green on the addition of a few drops of a concentrated solution of calcium hypochlorite.

2. Nitrobenzene is converted into aniline by reduction with nascent hydrogen generated by the action of dilute hydrochloric acid on zinc according to the following equation—



The aniline boiled with caustic potash with the addition of a few drops of chloroform gives the characteristic unpleasant smell of phenylisocyanide.

**Medico-Legal Points.**—Accidental cases of poisoning have occurred from application to the skin of an ointment containing nitrobenzene, from wearing shoes freshly polished with a blacking containing it, from washing in hot water with soap scented with it, and from inhalation of its vapour. Accidental poisoning has also happened when nitrobenzene is swallowed in mistake for spirit or for some medicine. A man, aged 45 years, suffered from poisoning after swallowing a quantity of furniture cream containing 4 to 5 per cent of nitrobenzene in mistake for an alkaline mixture.<sup>1</sup>

Suicidal cases of poisoning have occurred from ingestion of nitrobenzene. The drug does not appear to have been used for homicidal purpose, although it has been used as an abortifacient.

Nitrobenzene stimulates, then paralyses, the central nervous system. It also acts upon the blood, deforming or destroying some of the red blood corpuscles and converting haemoglobin into methaemoglobin. The blood loses the power of carrying and imparting oxygen to the tissues and contains a much smaller amount of oxygen than normally. In some cases it may contain but 1 per cent of oxygen instead of the normal 17 per cent. These changes in the blood lead to a diminution of the oxidation of the tissues and to the appearance of abnormal products in the urine. Some part of the nitrobenzene is reduced in the system to aniline, which in turn is oxidized to paraminophenol, which appears in the urine. A portion of the nitrobenzene is also eliminated by the lungs.

#### DINITROBENZENE (DINITROBENZOL), $\text{C}_6\text{H}_4(\text{NO}_2)_2$ .

This occurs in three forms, viz., ortho-, meta-, and para-dinitrobenzene. It is a yellow, crystalline solid, and is used in the manufacture of the explosives, rohrite, bellite and sicherite, employed for blasting in coal mines. Symptoms of acute or chronic poisoning may be produced among workmen employed in factories where it is used, either by inhaling its vapours or by absorption through the skin by handling it.

**Acute Poisoning**—The symptoms are similar to those produced by nitrobenzene poisoning.

**Chronic Poisoning.**—The symptoms are pain in the stomach, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, headache, giddiness, staggering gait, insomnia, pale face, blue lips and nails, cold, clammy and yellow skin, dark, coloured urine, amblyopia and occasionally peripheral neuritis.

**Fatal Dose.**—Unknown.

**Fatal Period.**—Unknown.

**Treatment.**—Same as in poisoning by nitrobenzene.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—Not characteristic. Congestion of the organs. Chocolate-coloured blood due to the conversion of haemoglobin into methaemoglobin.

**Chemical Test.**—In the presence of zinc and hydrochloric acid dinitrobenzene is converted into phenylene-diamine which is rendered alkaline by adding caustic soda or potash and evaporated after shaking it up with ether. The residue gives a brown colour with sodium nitrite and acetic acid.

1. Chapman and Fox, *Brit. Med. Jour.*, April 21, 1945, p. 557.

DINITROPHENOL (2-4 DINITROPHENOL), C<sub>8</sub>H<sub>6</sub>(NO<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub> OH

This is a yellow, crystalline salt, forming rhombic prisms and melting at 114°C. It is a byproduct of certain high explosives, especially trinitrotoluene. It is almost insoluble in water, but readily soluble in hot water and in ether, benzene or chloroform. Its sodium salt is soluble in water.

Dinitrophenol greatly stimulates metabolic activity and increases oxygen consumption, hence it is used as a remedy for lowering excessive body weight and reducing obesity. The dose recommended for this purpose is 3 to 5 milligrammes per kilogramme of body weight or 0.2 to 0.3 grammes (3 to 5 grains) per day for an adult.

**Symptoms**—Large doses of dinitrophenol produce headache, nausea, vomiting, flushing of the skin, marked perspiration, restlessness, dyspnoea, pain in the chest, cyanosis, rise of temperature upto 110°F., or even more, increase of lactic acid in the muscles, coma and death.

In susceptible individuals, even therapeutic doses have produced toxic symptoms such as pruritic rash preceded by intense itching, oedema, rheumatic pains in the joints and loss of the sense of taste. Occasionally there is loss of the sense of smell with some disturbances of hearing. The prolonged use of the drug has produced paresthesia, peripheral neuritis<sup>1</sup> and agranulocytosis.<sup>2</sup> Cataract<sup>3</sup> with opacity of the lens has developed in some cases some months after the stoppage of the use of the drug.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period**—Not known. Death has occurred from medicinal doses, especially among susceptible persons. Sixteen capsules of dinitrophenol, each containing 180 milligrammes, taken in five days proved fatal to a woman, aged 20 years, and weighing 66 kilogrammes within seven days of taking the drug.<sup>4</sup> Sixty two grammes and a half have also caused death.<sup>5</sup>

**Treatment**.—Wash out the stomach with large quantities of a 5 per cent solution of sodium bicarbonate and leave about a pint of the solution in the stomach. Reduce the temperature by placing the patient in an ice pack. Inject intravenously glucose in normal saline. Inject subcutaneously cardiac stimulants and administer oxygen by inhalation. Administer ascorbic acid for the treatment of neuritis and cataract.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—Rigor mortis sets in very early. In one case<sup>6</sup> it appeared within ten minutes of death. There may be petechial hemorrhages in the subserous membranes. The lungs are generally congested and oedematous. There are degenerative changes in the liver and kidneys.

**Medico Legal Points**—Symptoms of acute poisoning followed by death in some cases, occurred among workers in the factories where high explosives were manufactured during the first Great War. Accidental cases of poisoning have also occurred from the use of dinitrophenol for slimming purposes. Suicidal cases of poisoning by dinitrophenol have been reported. A girl aged 18 years took 24 capsules of this drug with suicidal intent, but she recovered under prompt treatment.<sup>7</sup>

After absorption into the system dinitrophenol is excreted in the urine.

**Dinitrocresol (4-6-Dinitro O Cresol)**—This forms long yellow crystals and melts at 86°-87°C. Heated with ammonia at 180°C, it yields dinitrotoluidine. It produces a considerable rise in the metabolic rate, and is used under the trade name of "Dekrysol" for reducing body weight and obesity, the dose being 0.5 to 1 milligramme per kilogramme of body weight or between 50 and 100 milligrammes per day for a normal adult person. It acts as a violent poison and the patient must be watched carefully, when he is advised to take this drug.

The poisonous symptoms are severe headache, vertigo, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, restlessness, lethargy, marked sweating, fever, yellow pigmentation of the skin and conjunctive unconsciousness and death.

A case<sup>8</sup> is reported in which death occurred from dinitrocresol after an illness of sixty hours. The chief post mortem appearances were early setting in of rigor mortis, marked yellow colour of the skin and mucous membrane, the hair, the mucous membrane of the mouth, the endocardium of the mitral valve and a pronounced dryness of the corpse, which was emaciated.

1 Nadler, J E, *Jour Amer Med Assoc*, July 6, 1933, p 12.

2 Silver, S, *Jour Amer Med Assoc*, Oct 6, 1934, p 1058.

3 Horner, W D, Jones, R B and Boardman, W H, *Jour Amer Med Assoc*, July 13, 1935, p 108.

4 Poole, F and Haining, R B, *Jour Amer Med Assoc*, April 7, 1934, pp 1141-1147.

5 Tander, M L and Wood, D A, *Jour Amer Med Assoc*, April 7, 1934, pp 1147-1149.

6 Ibid.

7 Geiger, *Jour Amer Med Assoc*, March 16, 1935, p 915.

8 Nordmann, W, *Arch Gerberbpath*, 1939, 8, p 441. *Deut Z ger Med*, Dec, 1938, p 305. *Medico leg and Criminol Rev*, April, 1939, Vol IV, p 201.

5 Protection of the workers by the use of special clothing such as gauntletted gloves respirators and veils

6 Thorough washing of the hands and face before leaving the factories and before taking meals

7 Liberal supply of milk.

**Post mortem Appearances** —The liver shows extensive necrosis and atrophy. The kidneys show cloudy swelling and fatty degeneration. The myocardium is soft pale and flabby. Petechial and diffuse haemorrhages are generally found beneath the endocardium pericardium and peritoneum.

**Chemical Analysis** —If the urine of a suspected case of trinitrotoluene poisoning be mixed with an equal volume of 90 per cent sulphuric acid solution and shaken out with ether the ether is separated and washed free of acid with water and then treated with alcohol & potash a pink colour will indicate the evidence of trinitrotoluene poisoning (Webster's test)

#### NITROGLYCERIN (TRINITROGLYCERIN TRINITRATED GLYCERIN OIL GLYCERYL TRINITRATE NOBEL'S BLASTING OIL) $C_3H_5(O_2N)_3$

This is a colourless odourless oily liquid with a sweet, aromatic pungent taste. It is slightly soluble in water and rapidly in alcohol ether chloroform oil and fats. It is highly explosive and is used in manufacturing explosives such as dynamite and cordite.

Pharmacologically nitroglycerin is similar in action to amyl nitrite but its effect is more lasting. It is an extremely active drug the medicinal dose being 1/130 to 1/60 grain. *Tabelle glyceryls trinitratus* is an official preparation each tablet containing 1/130 grain of nitroglycerin. A non official preparation of *Liquor glyceryls trinitratus* is a 1 per cent alcoholic solution of nitroglycerin the dose being  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 minims.

The vapours of nitroglycerin are highly poisonous.

**Symptoms** —A burning sensation in the throat nausea vomiting colicky pain in the abdomen sometimes diarrhoea painful throbbing of the arteries all over the body severe headache giddiness flushing of the face and skin perspiration oppression in the heart hurried and difficult breathing marked cyanosis complete paralysis and unconsciousness. Death occurs from respiratory paralysis. Muscular twitchings and delirium may sometimes be observed.

**Fatal Dose** —This is uncertain. Two mouthfuls of nitroglycerin swallowed in mistake proved fatal to a man<sup>1</sup> but a few drops of the undiluted drug would probably cause death. On the other hand recovery occurred after a dose of a table spoonful of dynamite to which a few drops of nitroglycerin were added.<sup>2</sup>

**Fatal Period** —Death may occur from two to six hours.

**Treatment** —Emetics or stomach tube ergotin adrenaline chloride or atropine hypodermically cold water or ice to the head and black coffee to relieve headache. Fresh air and artificial respiration in poisoning by vapour inhalation.

**Post mortem Appearances** —Ecchymosis and congestion in the stomach and intestines. The lungs are oedematous and the other organs are congested. The blood may be of a chocolate colour due to the formation of methaemoglobin.

**Chemical Analysis** —Nitroglycerin may be isolated by digesting the suspected organic material with methyl alcohol for about twenty four hours. The mixture is filtered and the filtrate is evaporated to a thick syrupy consistence and extracted with ether or chloroform. On evaporating the solvent the residue will contain nitroglycerin after it is extracted with cold alcohol.

**Tests** —1 When treated with aniline and a drop of strong sulphuric acid nitroglycerin produces a red colour. The same reaction is obtained when treated with brucine and strong sulphuric acid.

2 Nitroglycerin explodes violently when struck with a hammer.

**Medico Legal Points** —Accidental poisoning may result from an overdose of nitroglycerin administered as a remedy for angina pectoris cardiac dyspnoea etc but most of the cases of poisoning occur especially among new workmen engaged in the manufacture of nitroglycerin dynamite or other high explosives. After a few days of constant exposure the workmen acquire an immunity which is lessened by alcoholic indulgence. It must be remembered that the combination of nitroglycerin and alcohol produces a violent and serious form of intoxication and such intoxication may occur in a person who can usually tolerate large quantities of alcohol.

1 Taylor on Poisons Ed III p 671

2 Dixonmann and Brend Forens Med and Toxic Ed II p 444

without ill-effect. A case<sup>1</sup> is recorded in which a man who had worked all day with explosives developed a headache and took a very little whisky. Within a few hours he developed an acute homicidal mania, shooting and wounding one man and killing another.

Cases of homicide have been described, nitroglycerin having been administered in alcoholic drinks. A case<sup>2</sup> is also recorded where a man committed suicide by eating two bobbins of dynamite, 1" by  $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Nitroglycerin is absorbed from the skin and produces ulcers on the fingers of the workers who handle the drug during its manufacture.

*Nitroglycerin has been used by malingerers to simulate heart disease.*

Nitroglycerin is absorbed unchanged from the stomach and, on reaching the blood it is rapidly decomposed, hence the vomit or stomach contents are the most important for chemical analysis in a suspected case of poisoning by this compound.

### PETROLEUM (ROCK OIL)

This is an oily liquid found under the ground in several parts of the earth, and consists of a mixture of hydrocarbons of the paraffin series. This crude oil contains inflammable and explosive products, which are removed by distillation and purification so as to render it fit for household use. The refined oil is called kerosene. During the process of purification several other products are separated which cannot be used in lamps. Those which are lighter and boil at a lower temperature than kerosene are known as gasoline, petrol, naphtha, benzine, etc. From the heavier portions or those which boil at higher temperatures than kerosene the lubricating oils, vaseline, and paraffin are made.

**Symptoms**—The symptoms produced by inhaling the fumes are dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, cough, burning sensation in the chest, mental confusion, hallucinations, inability or disinclination to move, cyanosis, insensibility and convulsions. Death may occur from failure of the heart and respiration.

A coolie,<sup>3</sup> while working at the manhole of a large petrol tank, apparently overcome by the petrol fumes, fell into the tank, the bottom of which was covered with petrol to a depth of not more than two inches. One hour later, he was removed from the tank and was at once taken to the Indian Military Hospital, Quetta where he was found quite unconscious. His pulse was imperceptible and breathing was laboured. Blisters, most of which had burst, had already formed on every part of his body, much more than half the superficial skin area being burnt. The patient's clothes were all soaked in petrol. He was kept in the open, and oxygen inhalations with injections of strichnine and digitalis were given. Four hours after he was removed from the tank he regained consciousness, was very restless and complained of severe thirst to relieve which copious draughts of water were given. The temperature was 97°F. The pulse, 80 per minute, improved in volume and tension. The respirations were 22 per minute. The patient did not complain of pain. There were no signs of oedema of the larynx, the lungs were clear and the urine was passed freely and was free from albumin. The burns which were of the second degree were dressed with half per cent picric acid solution. On the following morning small discrete ulcers were seen to be forming on both cornea. On the third day he developed severe diarrhoea, which was readily controlled with bismuth salicylate. On the fourth day the eye condition was much worse, the eyes presenting the appearance of traumatic conjunctivitis with lacrimation and photophobia, and with superimposed dermatitis of the lids. The dull, greyish

his high temperature<sup>1</sup>. An ounce and a quarter of paraffin oil killed a child, fourteen months old in one hour and fifty minutes<sup>2</sup>. Recovery has taken place after a pint of petroleum swallowed by a woman for the purpose of suicide<sup>3</sup>.



*Fig. 1.9—Burns from petrol fumes caused by the deceased falling in a petrol tank wagon  
(From a photograph lent kindly by Dr H. S. Mehta)*

**Treatment.**—If the fumes have been inhaled the patient should at once be removed into the open air and artificial respiration should be started. The body should be kept warm.

If the poison has been swallowed emetics should be administered or the stomach should be washed out with warm water containing sodium bicarbonate. Purgatives and stimulants should then be administered and artificial respiration may be resorted to if necessary.

**Post mortem Appearances.**—The usual signs of asphyxia may be present. The smell of petroleum may be noticed in the lungs, stomach, intestines and in the urine. The stomach and the duodenum may be acutely inflamed with submucous hemorrhages.

In the case of death by inhalation the lungs and brain together with the other viscera should be preserved for chemical analysis.

**Chemical Analysis.**—From the suspected material petroleum or kero-ene may be separated by distillation with steam. The distillate is extracted in the usual manner after adding excess of benzene. On evaporating the solvent on a water bath, the residue may be examined for this substance by applying the following tests:

1. Its characteristic odour and inflammability. 2. Its oily feeling when rubbed between the fingers. 3. The boiling point ranges between  $150^{\circ}$  to  $309^{\circ}\text{C}$ . 4. Treated with alcoholic potash, it does not saponify a distinguishing feature from vegetable oils and animal fats.

1 Bengal Chem. Examiner's Annual Report, 1945

2 M Dougall Med Chron 1898

3 Jour Amer Med Assoc, April 1873 p 566

**Treatment.**—Give emetics or wash out the stomach. Administer demulcents and magnesium sulphate if diarrhoea has not occurred. Keep up the warmth of the body. Apply hot fomentations to the lums. Give morphine,  $\frac{1}{4}$  grain, hypodermically to relieve pain.

**Post mortem Appearances.**—The stomach usually shows haemorrhagic spots, sometimes with erosions of its mucous membrane. The stomach contents may smell strongly of turpentine. In the case<sup>1</sup> of an adult male, aged 39, who died after drinking six ounces of spirit of turpentine, the post-mortem examination showed that the stomach contained four ounces of turpentine, and its mucous membrane was completely macerated and lying in small pieces in the gastric cavity. The wall of the stomach felt like leather due to the action of the turpentine.

**Chemical Analysis.**—This substance may be separated from organic mixtures by distillation and by extracting the distillate with ether, petroleum ether, chloroform or benzol. It is recognized by its odour. With strong hydrochloric acid and ferric chloride it gives a rose colour, which changes to violet red and blue on standing.

**Medico-Legal Points.**—Oil of turpentine is not an active poison. A few accidental cases of poisoning have occurred from its medicinal use as an anthelmintic or from its administration by mistake. It has been taken to procure abortion, but has been very rarely used for homicidal purposes. A woman was charged with attempt to murder her infant by pouring oil of turpentine down its throat. She was acquitted on the plea that the oil was administered as a cure for the child's cough.<sup>2</sup> A case of attempted suicide is reported in which a large quantity of camphene was taken by a woman, aged 22 years, who recovered in 8 days.<sup>3</sup> A case<sup>4</sup> is also recorded in which a young man committed suicide by taking turpentine. About three ounces of turpentine were recovered by distillation from the viscera usually preserved for chemical analysis.

Toxic symptoms occurring from the continued inhalation of turpentine vapour are occasionally observed in painters or in persons sleeping in a newly varnished room. Reinhard describes a case where a man who was occupied in a room in filling small vessels out of a large vessel containing turpentine began to feel dizzy on the first day, dryness of the mouth and mental depression on the second day and complained of painful micturition on the third day. The urine contained blood and albumin and continued to emanate an odour of violets for 7 days after he ceased to inhale the vapour.<sup>5</sup> Seamen who were engaged in painting in enclosed spaces on one of H.M. ships suffered from turpentine poisoning by inhaling its vapour. The symptoms arose after one or two days work, seven men reporting sick within a week. They complained of scalding pain at the end of micturition, and in some cases, of frequency, the urine contained blood and had an odour of violets. They all recovered after some time.<sup>6</sup>

Turpentine is eliminated by the lungs and imparts its characteristic odour to the breath. It is eliminated by the kidneys and appears in the urine in combination with glycuronic acid. The urine acquires a smell of violets and reduces Fehling's solution. Turpentine is also excreted to some extent by the skin.

### EUCALYPTUS OIL

This is distilled from the fresh leaves of *Eucalyptus globulus*, *Eucalyptus dumosa* and other species of *Eucalyptus* (O. Myrtaceæ). It is a colourless or pale yellow, volatile oil which becomes darker and thicker by exposure. It has an aromatic, camphoraceous odour and a pungent taste, leaving a sensation of cold in the mouth. It is soluble in alcohol. It is a pharmacopœial preparation, known as *Oleum eucalypti*. The dose is 1 to 3 minims. *Lunguentum eucalypti* is a non-official preparation containing eucalyptus oil in the proportion of 1 in 10. Eucalyptol (eineole) the chief constituent of eucalyptus oil is a pharmacopœial preparation the dose being 1 to 3 minims. It is a colourless liquid, having an aromatic odour and a pungent, cooling taste. It is soluble in paraffin and fats.

**Symptoms.**—Applied to the skin eucalyptus oil is less irritant than other volatile oils but, if its vapour is confined, it will produce redness, irritation, vesication and even pustulation.

Taken by the mouth in a large dose, eucalyptus oil acts both as an irritant and as a narcotic poison and causes nausea, vomiting, purging, abdominal pain, headache, foam at the mouth, cyanosis, contracted pupils, cold, clammy skin, cramps, rapid pulse, slow, stertorous breathing, albumin and blood in urine, unconsciousness and coma. Death occurs from respiratory paralysis.

1 *Maitland Brit Med Jour*, July 11 1931 p 77.

2 *Reg & Rodanbosh C C C*, Dec 18-9, *Taylor, On Poisons*, Ed III, p 628.

3 *Horn's Vierteljahrsschrift* 1866, Vol II, p 337.

4 *Madras Chem Examiner's Annual Rep*, 1930, p 3.

5 *Deutsche Med Wochenschr* 1887 *Dixomann Foren Med. and Toxic*, Ed II, p 2-9.

6 *H Wilks, Jour Royal Vict Med Service*, Jan, 1930, p 53, *Lancet*, Feb 8, 1930 p 307.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period.**—Uncertain. Two drachms of eucalyptus oil produced toxic symptoms in a boy, aged 2½ years.<sup>1</sup> Three<sup>2</sup> and four<sup>3</sup> drachms have caused poisonous symptoms in adults. Six drachms<sup>4</sup> killed a cabdriver, aged 34 years, in 40 hours. On the other hand, recovery has followed a large dose of one ounce and a half.<sup>5</sup>

**Treatment.**—This consists in the lavage of the stomach, hypodermic administration of stimulants, such as strychnine, caffeine, etc., and inhalation of oxygen.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—The mucous membrane of the stomach is red and congested, and may, sometimes, be inflamed. The mucous membrane of the trachea and bronchi is red and congested. The lungs are congested. The kidneys are acutely congested.

**Medico-Legal Points.**—Poisoning by eucalyptus oil is not common, although a few accidental cases have occurred from it having been swallowed in mistake for some medicine. A case<sup>6</sup> is recorded where a girl, 10 years old, drank some eucalyptus oil in mistake for her fever mixture. She was taken to hospital in a drowsy condition. Her breath smelt of eucalyptus oil. She recovered after her stomach was washed out in the hospital. Eucalyptus oil was detected in the stomach wash. A case<sup>7</sup> is also recorded where a male infant, 7 weeks old, died from poisoning by eucalyptus oil administered by his sister, 6½ years old, to stop him from crying.

Rarely, suicidal cases have occurred. In his annual report for the year 1912, the Chemical Examiner of Madras reports a suspected case of suicide, where a ticket collector and a girl with whom he was living swallowed about an ounce each of eucalyptus oil. They had vomitings and purgings, but recovered under treatment in hospital. The vomitings and purgings showed eucalyptus oil on analysis.

Eucalyptus oil is excreted by the kidneys, and imparts to the urine an odour like that of violets. It is also eliminated by the skin and the lungs.

**Nutmeg (*Myristica*).**—This is known as *Jayphal* in the vernacular and is the oval, greyish-brown, and furrowed kernel of the seed of *Myristica fragrans* (N. O. Myristicaceae), which grows in Southern India, Ceylon and Malay Peninsula. It contains an active principle, Myristein, which also occurs in the oil distilled from nutmeg. Owing to its aromatic odour powdered or grated nutmeg is used as a flavouring agent and condiment for culinary purposes, and is used in medicine as a gastric stimulant in 5 to 10 grain doses. It is also used as an abortifacient. Oil of nutmeg is a pharmacopeial preparation, known as *oleum myristicæ*, the dose being 1 to 4 minims.

In large doses nutmeg acts as an irritant and narcotic poison, causing giddiness, vertigo, headache, dilated pupils, vomiting, thirst, pain in the abdomen, delirium with hallucinations, and coma. It produces symptoms similar to those of poisoning by *cannabis Indica* and is used in Egypt as a substitute for hashish. One to one and a half powdered nutmegs have produced poisonous symptoms, while two powdered nutmegs have caused death.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, recovery has followed the ingestion of five powdered nutmegs.

The treatment consists in the administration of emetics, purgatives and stimulants.

## CHAPTER XXX

### CEREBRAL POISONS—(Contd.)

#### DELIRIANT POISONS

##### Datura Fastuosa (DHATURA)

This plant belongs to the Solanaceae, and exists in two different varieties, *Datura Alba*, a white flowered plant (*Safed Dhatura*) and *Datura Niger*, a black or rather deep purple flowered plant (*Kala Dhatura*). Both these varieties grow commonly on waste places all over India, have bell-shaped flowers and have more or less spherical fruits which are covered with sharp spinous projections and contain yellowish brown seeds. *Datura Stramonium* (thorn apple) grows in India at high altitudes throughout the temperate Himalayas and in England on waste places and ditches. All parts of these plants are poisonous, but the seeds and fruit are considered to be the most noxious. They yield active principles hyoscyamine,



Fig. 160.—*Datura Alba* (Dhatura)  $\times \frac{1}{2}$

hyoscyamine and traces of atropine. It has been suggested that atropine does not exist as such in datura plants, but it is a racemic form of hyoscyamine, which is converted into atropine during the process of extraction. Two other varieties, *Datura Atroviridis* and *Datura Metel*, are met with. The former is found about the coast of Malabar, and the latter occurs in many parts of India and in Eastern and West Indian Colonies.

paralysis of the heart or respiration. In cases, which recover, stupor passes away, and secondary delirium develops, which lasts for some hours.

In some cases insensibility occurs almost immediately after the poison is administered either in solution, or in very fine powder. A man drank two mouthfuls of a liquid poisoned with datura complained of a bitter taste and fell down insensible within forty yards of the spot where he had drunk, and did not recover his senses until the third day. Another man was struck down so suddenly that his feet were scalded by some hot water which he was carrying.<sup>1</sup>

**Fatal Dose**—Uncertain Four datura fruits pounded and mixed with flour were given to six men four of whom died.<sup>2</sup> A ripe fruit weighs, on an average, about 2 drachms and contains the seeds which weigh about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  drachms. One hundred dried datura seeds weigh 20 to  $20\frac{1}{2}$  grains. A decoction of 120 seeds of datura stramonium proved fatal to a woman.<sup>3</sup> One hundred stramonium seeds weighing 16 grains killed a child, 2 years old.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand a girl, aged 18 recovered after swallowing 237 of these seeds.<sup>5</sup>

**Fatal Period**—In a majority of fatal cases death usually occurs within twenty-four hours. A boy died in three or four hours after drinking a large quantity of datura mixed in *sharbat*.<sup>6</sup> A man 22 years old died in four or five hours after datura seeds had been administered to him in sweets, known as *Peras*.<sup>7</sup> The woman who took a decoction of stramonium seeds died in seven hours.

**Treatment**<sup>8</sup>—Emetics should be given or the stomach should be washed out with a weak solution of potassium permanganate or a solution of tannic acid (20 grains in 4 ounces of water). Pilocarpine nitrate in doses of  $1/10$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  grain hypodermically is recommended as an antidote, but it is doubtful whether it can antagonize the action of datura on the brain. Morphine in  $\frac{1}{2}$  grain doses hypodermically is also regarded as a physiological antidote but it should be administered with caution, as it has a depressant action on the respiratory centre. Soporifics such as bromides and barbiturates may be given to control the delirium, but the administration of chloroform by inhalation is considered more beneficial. Cold affusions may be applied to the head. Stimulants, such as caffeine, should be given and artificial respiration and oxygen and carbon dioxide inhalations should be started when necessary. A large hot enema may be given with advantage to the patient for it acts as a stimulant and by flushing the body helps the elimination of the absorbed poison.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Datura seeds or their fragments may be found in the stomach and intestines. It is therefore, necessary to make a careful search for them in the vomited matter, stomach contents and faeces. The oesophagus, stomach, duodenum and other internal organs are mostly congested. In rare cases the mucous membrane of the stomach may be found slightly inflamed.

**Detection**—The seeds of *Datura Fastuosa* are often mistaken for those of *Capsicum*. The seeds of *Datura Fastuosa* are very hard flattened, kidney shaped and  $1/6$  inch broad and  $1/25$  inch thick. They are bitter in taste and have a double ridged convex border. The testa is dark or yellowish brown in colour, is finely pitted and reticulated. On longitudinal section the seeds show the embryo curving outwards at the hilum.

1 Chevers Med Juris Fd III p. 210

2 K E v Sumeran Das Gorakhpur District Appeal No 5-2 of 1921 Allahabad High Court

3 Taylor O Poisons Fd III p. 774

4 Ibid Duffin Lond Ga. 1834 Vol VI p. 194

5 Fried van Jalrab F Kinderh 1891 VIII III p. 354

6 Lahore High Court Criminal Appeal No 828 of 1929 31 Criminal Law Jour., Feb., 1930 p. 140

7 Allahabad High Court Criminal Appeal No 8-0 of 1930

Rub the residue with about half a drachm of distilled water acidulated with sulphuric acid and evaporate to dryness on the water bath. Take up the residue with a few drops of distilled water, and instil a drop of this into the eye of a cat. After about half-an hour the pupil will be found dilated.



*Fig. 164.—Microphotograph of Section of Capsicum seed showing embryo.*

**Medico-Legal Points.**—Datura is commonly used in India for criminal purposes. The seeds are generally used by road poisoners to stupefy travellers to facilitate robbery and theft and rarely to destroy life, although deaths have occasionally occurred from excessive quantities. A case<sup>1</sup> is recorded, in which one Musammat Maiki of District Kheri administered to Musammat Chitana, her mother-in-law, datura poison in her food. When Musammat Chitana lost her senses after taking the food the accused (Musammat Maiki) killed her by throttling her neck with her foot. These seeds are sometimes given to children with a view to kidnapping them when they become unconscious or delirious.

The seeds are given whole or more often crushed, mixed with rice, *dal*, or wheat or *bajra* flour and, sometimes, with liquor. The seeds as well as the leaves are also mixed with tobacco or ganja and smoked in a *chillum* (pipe) for the same purpose. A decoction of the seeds is at times added to liquor or toddy with a view to enhancing its intoxicating property.

Cases of suicidal poisoning by datura are rare. In his annual report for the year 1907, Rai Chooni Lal Bose Bahadur, Chemical Examiner of Bengal, mentions the case of a Hindu female, who committed suicide by taking datura seeds. In his annual report for the year 1928, the Chemical Examiner of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh reports a case from Jaunpur where a young man, 20 years old, committed suicide by taking datura and opium.

Accidental cases of poisoning occur among children, as also adults from eating raw datura fruits mistaking them as edible fruits or from eating dry datura seeds in mistake for capsicum seeds. I met with a case in which the whole family consisting of 8 members suffered from toxic symptoms after eating datura fruits but recovered the next morning. Accidental cases also occur from the injudicious

(c) A Brahmin was sentenced to five years rigorous imprisonment under section 328, I P C, for administering datura in cooked *puri* and potatoes to not less than nine persons of a family residing at Nimsar. All of them were taken ill and were unconscious, but recovered in three days—*Ind. Daily Teleg.*, Aug 10, 1923.

### ATROPA BELLADONNA 1 (DFADLY NIGHT SHADL)

This plant belongs to N O. Solanaceæ, and grows wildly in England near villages or on ruins and abundantly in India in the Himalayan ranges at an altitude of 6,000 to 12,000 feet above the sea level. *Atropa Lutescens* is often used as a substitute for Belladonna plant. All parts of these plants, i.e., the leaves, berries and root, are poisonous. They contain three alkaloids, atropine, hyoscyamine and hyoscine, but the most important of them is atropine.

Atropine,  $C_{17}H_{23}O_3N$ , crystallizes in odourless and colourless, prismatic needles and has a bitter taste. It is sparingly soluble in water (1 in 500), but freely in ether, alcohol and chloroform. Its aqueous solution has an alkaline reaction and is readily decomposed by keeping. It can be chemically split up by strong acids and alkalies into tropine and tropic acid, and may be reconstructed synthetically from these substances. The non official dose of atropine is 1/210 to 1/60 grain. Atropine sulphate (*Atropinae sulphas*) is an official preparation, the dose being 1/240 to 1/60 grain. It is odourless and occurs as colourless crystals or as a white powder, and is soluble in water and in alcohol.

The following are the pharmacopoeial preparations of belladonna —

1 *Belladonnae Folium*—Belladonna leaf. It must not yield less than 0.3 per cent of the alkaloids.

2 *Belladonna Praeparata* (*Belladonna Pulverata*)—Powdered belladonna leaf. Dose, ½ to 3 grains.

3 *Extractum Belladonnae Siccum*—It contains 1 per cent of the alkaloids. Dose, ½ to 1 grain.

4 *Tinctura Belladonnae*—It contains 0.03 per cent of the alkaloids. Dose, 5 to 30 minims.

5 *Bella ionae Radix*—Belladonna root.

6 *Belladonnae Radicis Pulvis*—Powdered belladonna root. It is grey to light brown in colour.

7 *Extractum Belladonnae Liquidum*—It contains 0.75 per cent of the alkaloids of the root.

8 *Lauumentum Belladonnae*—It contains 0.375 per cent of the alkaloids of belladonna root.

9 *Suppositoria Belladonnae*—Each contains 1.60 grain of the alkaloids.

The following official preparations are derived from atropine sulphate —

1 *Injectio Atropinae Sulphatus*—Strength, 1/100 grain of atropine sulphate in 15 minims of sterilized water. Dose, 1/240 to 1/60 grain by subcutaneous injection.

2 *Injectio Morphinae et Atropinae*—Strength 1/100 grain of atropine sulphate and about 1/6 grain of morphine sulphate in 15 minims of sterile water. Dose, 8 to 12 minims by subcutaneous injection.

3 *Lamelle Atropinae*—Each disc contains 1/5000 grain of atropine sulphate.

4 *Oculentum Atropinae*—It contains 0.25 per cent of atropine sulphate.

5 *Oculentum Atropinae cum Hydriargyrī Oxido*—It contains 0.125 per cent of atropine sulphate and 1.1 per cent of yellow mercuric oxide.

6 *Tabletae Atropinae Sulphatis*—Each tablet must contain at least 1/100 grain of atropine sulphate.

**Symptoms.**—These closely resemble those of poisoning by datura.

**Fatal Dose.**—This is variable. A decoction of 80 grains of belladonna root used as an enema caused the death of a woman, 27 years old, in 5 hours.<sup>1</sup> Three berries have proved fatal to a child, nine months old,<sup>2</sup> and 14 berries have

1 *Casper, Wochens. Feb 8, 1843, Taylor, on Poisons Ed III, p 761*

2 *Lancet, Aug 29, 1846*

caused the death of an old man<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand recovery has occurred after eating 50 berries<sup>2</sup>. A teaspoonful of belladonna liniment<sup>3</sup>, a drachm of the tincture<sup>4</sup> and the same quantity of the extract<sup>5</sup> have respectively caused death. Recovery has, however, followed the ingestion of larger doses of these pharmacoparial preparations. Two grains of atropine, taken internally may be considered a fatal dose, although half a grain of atropine has proved fatal<sup>6</sup>. The smallest quantity of atropine reported to have proved fatal is 0.006 grain. It was dropped into the eye of a child 4 years old<sup>7</sup>. One thirteenth to one-tenth grain of atropine sulphate taken in solution has caused the death of a woman 37 years old<sup>8</sup>. One twentieth grain of atropine injected hypodermically in mistake for strichnine has killed an adult<sup>9</sup>. Recoveries have however taken place after the administration of much larger doses even as much as 7 5<sup>10</sup> and 7 7<sup>11</sup> grains of atropine sulphate. An ointment containing about 3 grains of atropine applied to the abraded skin

with hydrochloric acid, it will show a minutely crystalline appearance, and when dry will appear dull and pulverulent. It has a melting point of  $137^{\circ}$   $139^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

4 An aqueous solution of hydrobromic acid saturated with bromine produces a yellow amorphous precipitate which, after a short time, forms crystals of various forms, such as spindles, crosses and stars.

5 *Physiological Test*—A portion of the purified residue is dissolved in water containing a few drops of sulphuric acid, and one or two drops of this solution are instilled into the eye of a cat. In a few minutes the pupil begins to dilate.

**Medico-Legal Points**—Poisoning by belladonna occurs accidentally from an overdose of its pharmacopeial preparations or from swallowing 'eye drops' in mistake. Sometimes children suffer from poisoning by eating accidentally the berries or seeds though they are relatively less susceptible than adults. Cases of accidental poisoning have also occurred owing to idiosyncrasy from the external application of belladonna liniment or plaster. Knight Rayson<sup>1</sup> reports a case in which poisonous symptoms appeared on the application to the lons of 3 drachms of belladonna liniment. I have seen a case in which a solution of atropine dropped into the eyes to dilate the pupils for retinoscopic examination produced mild symptoms of poisoning. George Heller<sup>2</sup> records a case in which a boy, aged 6 years, suffered from toxic symptoms after two drops of a 1 per cent aqueous solution of atropine sulphate had been dropped into each nostril at 2 p.m. and again at 6 p.m. in place of a 3 per cent aqueous solution of ephedrine sulphate. An inhabitant<sup>3</sup> of Dohud in Gujarat instilled into his ears ear drops containing belladonna. The same night he was seized with severe headache, vomiting and diarrhoea, became unconscious and died. Atropine was detected in the viscera and in the residue of the ear drops. Peter McEwan<sup>4</sup> reports a case in which an ejection containing atropine was injected by mistake in a man who was about to have a lipoma removed. He developed symptoms of belladonna poisoning, and his temperature rose to  $106^{\circ}\text{F}$ .

Birth and Bentley<sup>5</sup> report three cases of belladonna poisoning resulting from eating the flesh of a rabbit which had been feeding on belladonna leaves. Winder and Manley<sup>6</sup> also record the case of a woman aged 46 years, who suffered from symptoms of belladonna poisoning after she had taken  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce of the liquid extract of liver as well as 2 drachms of the extract as a remedy for pernicious anaemia. On analysis the liver extract showed the presence of atropine of the strength of 1/25 grain per fluid ounce. She was thus poisoned by 1/50 grain as also by 1/100 grain of the alkaloid. It appears that belladonna leaves and fruit had been eaten by the animals from whose livers the extract was manufactured.

Suicidal cases have occurred from swallowing the liniment or extract. Homicidal cases are rare. In one case a man mixed the seeds in soup, which he took to bring a false charge of poisoning against his wife.<sup>7</sup> A case is recorded in which a woman, aged 50 years, was first drugged with atropine and then murdered by her throat being cut with a sharp cutting instrument.<sup>8</sup> Atropine with cocaine was supposed to have been given by Clark of Agra to Fullham to simulate the symptoms of heat stroke.

Atropine is eliminated from the system chiefly by the kidneys. Consequently it can be detected in an unchanged condition in the urine.

1 Brit Med Jour April 25, 1908 p 987

2 Jour Amer Med Assoc, March 3 1919 p 500

3 Bomba, Clem. Alziger's Annual Report 1927, p 4

4 Brit Med Jour Nov 15 1947, p 32

5 Lancet Oct 29 1921 p 901

6 Brit Med Jour Feb 29 1936, p 413

7 Baclner, Frielech's Blatter f Ger Med 1887, Dixmann's Forensic Med and Toxic

F 11 p 504

8 Bengal Chir Exam Annual Rep, 1922 p 6

**Homatropine hydrobromide** (*Homatropinæ hydrobromidum*)—This is a salt of homatropine, an artificial or synthetic alkaloid prepared by the condensation of tropane with mandelic acid in the presence of hydrochloric acid. It is a colourless crystalline powder, sol. b/c in 6 parts of water and in 18 parts of alcohol (90%). It is a constituent of *Lamellæ homatropiae* each disc containing 1/100 grain of homatropine hydrobromide. It is largely used in ophthalmic practice, as its effects subside more quickly than those of atropine. A case occurred in the King George's Hospital Lucknow, where 20 to 25 drops of a 1 per cent solution of homatropine hydrobromide instilled into the eyes for a period of 3 hours caused some permanent symptoms.

### HYOSCYAMIS NIGER (ILNBANL, KHOR ISAMI, JH. SYAV)

This plant belongs to N.O. Solanaceæ, and grows wild throughout the Himalayan range. All parts of the plant are poisonous but the seeds are more poisonous. The seeds, leaves and green flowering tops yield three active principles, hyoscyamine, hyoscine and atropine.

Hyoscyamine occurs both as a crystalline and as an amorphous alkaloidal substance. It is slightly soluble in water but freely in alcohol (90%), chloroform and ether. It is isomeric with atropine into which it can be readily converted. It may be split up into hyoscine and hyoscinic acid. Hyoscine is a syrupy alkaloid synonymous with scopolamine. It is slightly soluble in water but readily dissolves in alcohol (90%), ether, chloroform and dilute acids. It is considered five times more powerful therapeutically than hyoscyamine. Its oilier preparation, *Hyoscinæ hydrobromidum* (Hyoscine or scopolamine hydrobromide) occurs in colourless, transparent, rhombic crystals having a slightly bitter taste. It is soluble in water and in alcohol (90%). The dose is 1/200 to 1/100 grain. It is contained in *Oculentum hyoscinæ* (strength 0.125 per cent).

2. Hycosamine forms with auric chloride solution a gold double salt, which melts at 165° and 200 C.

Hycosine treated with auric chloride solution yields a yellow precipitate which recrystallized from water forms bright yellow glistening needles, having a melting point of 198° to 200 C.

3. An alcoholic solution of bromine in hydrobromic acid forms needleshaped crystals with a solution of hycosamine but round spheres with a solution of hyoscine.

**Medico Legal Points** — An accidental fatal case has occurred in 24 hours from the root used as a vegetable in mistake for parsnip<sup>1</sup>. The seeds have been mistaken for celery seeds and have produced poisonous symptoms.

The dried leaves and flowers are smoked like ganja by depraved persons and *Fakirs* in Sind. The juice of the fresh leaves and the dried leaves are used in the treatment of irritability affections of the lungs, bowels and genito urinary organs. The juice and oil are also used for external applications. In 1910 hyoscine hydrobromide was used by Crippen an American homicidal doctor for killing his wife. Two fifth of a grain of the salt were estimated to be present in the organs submitted to Willcox for analysis. This amounted to more than half a grain in the whole body.<sup>2</sup>

Hyoscine (Scopolamine) is used in combination with morphine in producing the so-called twilight sleep. It has caused toxic effects followed by a few deaths. One-eighth grain of morphine and 1/100 grain of scopolamine hydrobromide injected hypodermically has caused death.<sup>3</sup>

Hyoscine has been recently tried under the name of 'truth serum' on persons suspected of having committed serious crimes for extorting confessions. Hyoscine is injected hypodermically in repeated doses until the stage of mild delirium is induced. When the proper point is reached the questioning begins and the patient forgets any alibi which he may have built up to cover his crime. Under such a condition he is apt to tell the truth and gives details implicating other associates if any.

The following plants belonging to N O Solanaceae have produced poisonous symptoms which are due to solanine an active principle contained in them. It is readily hydrolyzed by mineral acids into solanidine. It acts as a gastro intestinal irritant and narcotic —

1. *Solanum Dulcamara* (Woody nightshade) — The berries are known as *Itabes salis*. Two cases<sup>4</sup> of cattle poisoning by these berries are reported. In one case one foal died and in the other several cows died.

2. *Solanum Indicum* (*Bartanta Dolimoola*)

3. *Solanum Jacquinii* (*Katai Bhooiringini*)

4. *Solanum Nigrum* (*Kahruachi Hakoi*)

5. *Solanum Tuberosum* (*Alu*)

**Symptoms** — Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, colic, tenesmus, giddiness, widely dilated pupils, cramps in the legs, muscular spasms, drowsiness, delirium, coma. Death occurs from respiratory paralysis.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period** — Uncertain. Two berries of *solanum dulcamara*<sup>5</sup> have caused the death of a child four years old in thirty two hours. A girl<sup>6</sup> aged 9 years died in about five days after she had eaten berries of *solanum dulcamara*. Brown reports a case in which 5 children died after eating the berries of *solanum nigrum*<sup>7</sup>.

**Treatment** — Wash out the stomach. Give morphine hypodermically. Keep up the body warmth and use stimulants.

**Chemical Analysis** — Solanine is extracted from the viscera by the Stas Otto method, but as it is practically insoluble in ether and chloroform warm amyl alcohol is used for the final extraction from ammoniacal solution. The following are the most useful tests<sup>8</sup> —

1. A concentrated solution of the alkaloid in amyl alcohol sets to a jelly like consistency.
2. Phosphomolybdic acid gives a cream-coloured precipitate.
3. Nitric acid gives a purple colour on warming.
4. Ethyl sulphuric acid gives a red colour.
5. Concentrated sulphuric acid with bromine water gives a red colour forming in streaks.

1. *Wilmer Pois Vegetables of Great Brit*, p 3.

2. *Brit Med Jour Oct 29, 1910* p 1375.

3. *Lly New York Med Jour 1906 LXXXVII p 709*

4. *H Lanc Analyst 19-9 p 1-3, Jour of State Med June, 1929 p 363*

5. *Lancet June 28 1855*

6. *Lancet, Sep 11, 1948, p 438*

7. *Dymmock Pharmacographia Ind*, Vol II p 355

8. *H Lanc Analyst 1929 p 1-3, Jour of State Med, June, 1929, p 368*

above the sea-level. It is smoked with tobacco in a pipe or a *kulla*, and is the most potent of all the forms.

**Symptoms.**—Persons not accustomed to its use or from an overdose suffer from toxic symptoms. They appear soon after smoking *ganja* or *charas* and within half an hour after swallowing *bhang*, and are characterized by two stages. stage of intoxication and stage of narcosis.

The first stage is characterized by excitement with visual hallucinations, euphoria, laughter, talkativeness and purposeless muscular movements. The patient loses all perception of time and space, gets dreadful hallucinations, becomes wildly delirious and, sometimes, has a homicidal tendency. He feels giddy, complains of tingling and numbness of the skin, becomes drowsy, suffers from muscular weakness and then passes into the second stage of narcosis with dilated pupils. In severe poisoning there may be general anaesthesia. Recovery usually follows deep sleep. Death, although extremely rare, may occur from respiratory failure.

**Chronic Poisoning.**—This occurs from the excessive consumption of cannabis sativa in one or more of its forms for a prolonged period. The symptoms are loss of appetite, general weakness, emaciation, trembling, loss of sexual power, slothfulness, moral and mental deterioration and insanity (mania, melancholia or dementia).

In insanity caused by cannabis sativa the patient may suffer from hallucinations and delusions of a persecuting nature and sexual infidelity, which lead to crimes of violence. The patient is, sometimes, overpowered by an irresistible impulse to destroy wilfully life and property of which he has no recollection afterwards.

**Fatal Dose.**—Unknown. Seven minims of the tincture of cannabis Indiae have produced toxic symptoms in a female, aged 30 years.<sup>1</sup> Twelve pills, each containing half a grain of the extract taken by a woman to cure headache produced poisonous symptoms.<sup>2</sup> Eight ounces of Neurosine equivalent to 18 grains of cannabis sativa taken in two days and a half produced alarming symptoms in a woman.<sup>3</sup>

**Fatal Period.**—Death is very rare, but it has ensued in twelve hours. Death has also been delayed till the nineteenth day.<sup>4</sup>

**Treatment**—Evacuation of the stomach, cold affusions to the head, strichnine hypodermically and artificial respiration.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—Not characteristic.

**Chemical Analysis.**—The resin is contained in the acid ether extract of the suspected organic material obtained by the Stars Otto process, and is recognised by the following tests:—

1. *Bram's Alkaline Test.*—The extract is treated with a small quantity of animal charcoal to remove the colouring matter, especially the chlorophyll of the crude drug, and is filtered before evaporating to dryness in a small porcelain capsule. A few drops of a 5 to 10 per cent alcoholic solution of potash are added, when a violet colour gradually develops, which may be hastened by warming.

This test may also be performed by dissolving the residue in a few drops of petroleum ether and soaking a piece of filter paper in this solution. The paper is then evaporated spontaneously and moistened with a drop of the alcoholic potash, when a violet colour appears at once.

1. *Lancet*, Sep 30, 1871.

2. *Baxter-Tyre*, *Lancet*, Vol II, 1897, p 1452.

3. G Crescell Burns, *Jour Amer. Med Assoc*, April 11, 1911, p 1225.

4. Dixounmann, *Forensic Med and Toxicology*, Ed 11, p 501.

**2 Beam's Acid Test** — A few drops of absolute alcohol saturated with dry hydrochloric acid gas are added to the residue dissolved in a few drops of petroleum ether, when a red colour is produced.

The preparations of cannabis indica, such as the tincture and extract, often fail to respond to this test.

**3 Bouquet's Test** — If a few drops of a freshly prepared mixture of concentrated sulphuric acid (2 vols) and absolute alcohol (3 vols) are added to the extracted residue dissolved in a few drops of acetone after it is decolorized by animal charcoal, if necessary, a dark colour appears, which becomes cherry red in about an hour. The addition of a few drops of water renders the solution colourless but opalescent.

**4 Aldehyde Test** — A few drops of the reagent made by dissolving 1 g of para dimethyl amino benzaldehyde in 100 cc of alcohol and adding 20 drops of concentrated sulphuric acid are added to the residue in a porous basin. The mixture is then evaporated to dryness, when a bright violet colour appears.

*Bhang* and other forms of *cannabis sativa* used by addicts may be identified under the microscope by the presence of tortuous short unicellular cystoliths hours and long thin, tapering hairs, having no cystoliths. The following method is recommended for carrying out the microscopic examination —

The suspected particles are placed on a slide and a drop of dilute caustic soda solution is added. They are then covered with a cover slip and examined first under the 1/3" and then under the 1 6" objective when the morphological features of the hairs will be observed distinctly.

The *ganja* hairs appear smooth and the hairs found in *charas* are warty.

For the microscopic examination of *maju* sugar, butter and other substances should first be removed by washing successively with petroleum ether, alcohol and hot water. The residue is then treated with dilute alkali and examined.

In the case of *ganja* or *charas* mixed with tobacco or any other dry substance the suspected particles should be freed from foreign matters rubbed with a little water in a mortar and mixed with some chloral hydrate solution. The mixture is transferred to a test tube and boiled for a few seconds when the finer particles will float on the surface. A drop of the liquid containing the floating material is placed on a slide and covered with a cover slip. It is then examined under the microscope.

Fig. 166 — *Cannabis sativa* Hairs  
a Ganja Hairs b Charas Hairs.  
(From Clash and Bagel's Organic  
in Toxicological Chemistry Ed II)



**Medico Legal Points** — Poisoning by *bhang* is mostly accidental. *Maju* and *charas* have been occasionally used by road poisoners to stupefy persons to facilitate robbery. Chevrol<sup>1</sup> mentions a case in which one Luxmee of Varanasi gave *maju* to a boy aged 7 years, and then murdered him for the sake of his ornaments. A case<sup>2</sup> is recorded in which one Sankothi Thakur was sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment on the charge of administering *charas* to a fellow passenger and stealing his purse in a railway train. The accused and the complainant extramed at Howrah for their homes in Ballia and Muzaffarpur. At the complainant's request for a *biri* the accused mixed *charas* with a half burnt cigarette. He first smoked it and next the complainant. The latter felt intoxicated and

uneasy, and slept in the train by the side of the accused. Awaking at Mokameh, he found his money missing and demanded it from the accused. At Patna City railway station the accused was arrested and on a search by the police, the amount alleged to have been stolen was found on his person.

In his annual report for the year 1934 the Chemical Examiner of Madras describes a case in which cannabis sativa was administered for homicidal purpose. A father killed his son by administering a powder containing cannabis sativa leaves as there was enmity between them.

Sometimes, people take cannabis sativa to steady their nerves before committing a crime. A case is recorded in which a Mahomedan male took a pill of *bhang* or *majun* to get intoxicated and then hacked his wife to pieces with a sword.<sup>1</sup> Rarely people after the continued use of cannabis sativa run *amok*, i.e. they first kill a person or persons against whom they have entertained fancied or real enmity and then go on killing every body that comes in their way until the homicidal tendency lasts. They then commit suicide or quietly submit themselves to the police. It must be remembered that people sometimes run *amok*, even though they are not addicted to the use of cannabis sativa. The following is a typical example<sup>2</sup> of running *amok* at Allahabad where four innocent persons were murdered and several wounded in the course of about 15 minutes —

On the evening of January 29 1931 a Punjabi Muslim was selling tumblers made of sulphur, when a constable of the C I D sitting on a shop suspected him to be a person wanted in connection with a counterfeit coining case. The constable thereupon caught hold of his hand and asked him to go with him when he dropped the tumblers and whipped out a knife. Seeing the knife the constable released the accused and on the latter running away the constable shouted "chor chor". As the accused took a turn into the passage between the cloth and vegetable markets a coolie caught him when the accused struck him with the knife and the coolie left him shouting "chor chor". The coolie however escaped with a few cuts on his hands. The accused resumed the flight and near the end of the same passage he stabbed a young Hindu lad who was standing on the way, perhaps making some purchases and while taking the Garhi ki Sarai road he stabbed another Hindu youth who was going with his cycle. During his flight on this road he wounded some people and stabbed two more men who were Vaishnavaites. Proceeding further the accused was encountered by a Hindu male who managed to throw him on the ground. The accused however succeeded in getting up again and as he resumed the flight several people attacked him with *lathis*. At this stage the C I D constable who was pursuing him arrived and caught hold of the accused's hands when the accused bit the constable's nose. Eventually with the help of the public the man was secured.

A case<sup>3</sup> also occurred in Bombay where a Bhavya who was addicted to the smoking of *claras* used to squat on Hornby Road plying his trade as a pauper. On the night of December 18 1938 he had a quarrel with his client and then suddenly started running along the road with a spring knife in his hand and stabbing persons that came in his way till he was grappled, disarmed and arrested by two police constables who happened to be passing along Bori Bunder tram junction. During his mad career he stabbed ten persons one after the other four of whom died subsequently.

The resinous constituents of cannabis sativa are excreted by the kidneys and it is, therefore necessary to preserve urine for chemical analysis in a suspected case of poisoning by this drug.

**Mescal Buttons (Peyotl)** — These are the flowering tops of a cactus plant *Anhalonium Lewinii* growing in the deserts of Central America. They yield four alkaloids, of which mescaline is the most important. A decoction is made of mescal buttons and is used by addicts as an intoxicating drink like cannabis sativa. The symptoms are dilated pupils and prolonged visual hallucinations of various designs and colours accompanied by confusion of thought and disorientation particularly as to time. Three grains (0.2 grammes) of mescaline sulphate produces intoxication in about 20 minutes.<sup>4</sup> The after effects are insomnia

1 *Clevers Med Juris* p 790

2 *Leader* Feb 1 1931

3 *Times of India* Dec 19 1938 p 9

4 *Macdonald Critchley Brit Med Jour Vol II Oct 25 1930 p 690*

vertigo and headache. Large doses produce poisonous symptoms, the chief being nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea with bloody stools, shallow breathing and death from respiratory failure.

**Treatment** — Empty the stomach and treat the symptoms as they arise.

### COCAINE (METHYL BENZOYL ECgonine), $C_{17}H_{21}O_3N$

Cocaine is an alkaloid derived from the leaves of *Erythroxylum Coca* and its varieties ( $\Delta$  O Linaceæ) growing in South America but now cultivated in the tea districts of India, Ceylon and Java.

Cocaine is a colourless odourless crystalline substance and has a bitter taste, causing numbness of the tongue and mucous membrane of the mouth. It is soluble with great difficulty in water, but dissolves readily in alcohol, ether, chloroform and benzene, the solution being alk. It is a pharmaceutical preparation, known as *Cocaina*, the non official dose being  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  grain. The B.P.C. ointment, *unguentum cocainae* contains 4 per cent of cocaine.

In the form of cocaine hydrochloride it is largely used as a local anaesthetic in ophthalmic practice, and in dental and minor operative surgery. Cocaine hydrochloride exists in colourless acicular crystals. It is soluble in water, chloroform and glycerin. Its solution is neutral and decomposes in a short time, but keeps better if mixed with half a per cent solution of boric acid. The official dose is  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  grain.

Cocaine hydrochloride is contained in the official preparations of *Oculentum cocainae* (0.25 per cent), *Iamellac cocainae* (1.50 grain in each disc), *Trochisens krameriæ et cocainæ* (each containing 1.20 grain), and *Suppositoria cocainæ* (each containing  $\frac{1}{2}$  grain).

Synthetic substitutes, such as alypur, apothecin, beta eucaine, novocaine, orthocaine, pantocaine, perecaine, stovaine, tinctocaine etc., are frequently used in surgical practice as local or spinal anaesthetics, and have produced poisonous symptoms followed, sometimes, by fatal results. Recently, two accidental cases<sup>1</sup> of poisoning by perecaine occurred in Bombay. In one case a Mahomedan boy, aged 8 years, who was given about 5 grains of perecaine in mistake for calcium lactate as a pre operative treatment before removal of tonsils developed convulsions within two minutes. These were followed by dilated pupils and cyanosis, and death occurred within a few hours. In the other case a Mahomedan boy, aged 12 years, was inadvertently given a similar dose of perecaine but he recovered under treatment.

Novocaine is largely added to cocaine as an adulterant or is used as a substitute for the same. Addicts have to consume a large quantity of novocaine and suffer from its poisonous effects, as it does not produce the same effects as their usual dose of cocaine. A case occurred in Patna, where a Hindu male, aged about 30, who happened to be a cocaine eater, took a large quantity of novocaine which was sold to him as cocaine, became unconscious in half an hour and died in about four hours.<sup>2</sup>

Besides novocaine, boric acid, carbonate and bicarbonate of soda, lime chalk, aspirin, antiseptics, antipyretic, and starch are also used as adulterants of cocaine.

**Acute Poisoning** — This is marked by excitement with delirium of a noisy character, followed by depression, as cocaine, when absorbed into the blood first stimulates and then paralyses the nerve centres of the brain and spinal cord.

**Symptoms** — Dryness of the mouth and throat, dysphagia, feeling of tingling and numbness in the tongue, hands and feet, nausea but rarely vomiting.

<sup>1</sup> Private communication dated 20th Oct 1948 from the Chemical Analyst, Bombay.

<sup>2</sup> Bengal Chem. Examiner's Annual Rep. 1946, p. 13.

**Detection — 1** *Physiological Test* — Cocaine produces numbness and local anaesthesia at the point of application. The condition lasts for about half an hour.

**2 Giesel's Test** — A solution of potassium permanganate gives a fine bright violet precipitate which shows rhombic crystals arranged in rosettes when seen under the microscope.

**3 Hankin's Test** — Cocaine is dissolved in a saturated or semi-saturated solution of alum. A drop of potassium permanganate solution is spread out and dried on a glass slide. A drop of the alum solution is placed in the permanganate film and covered with a cover slip. The characteristic crystals of permanganate of cocaine form almost immediately. Under the microscope these crystals are seen to be rectangular in shape and pale pink in colour.

This test is of such delicacy that it can be used to reveal the presence of cocaine on a small piece of paper in which this substance has been wrapped. Similar but easily distinguishable crystals are also formed by Alypin, Tropococaine and Scopolamine. No crystals are formed by Beta-cocaine, Stovaine, Novocaine, Holocaine and Nirvanine.<sup>1</sup> Antipyrin which is often mixed with cocaine interferes with the test and should be removed. The powder should therefore be dissolved in water and ammonia added to it when cocaine would be precipitated. This should then be filtered and the residue should be tested.



Fig. 169.—Microphotograph of Cocaine crystals  $\times 100$   
(K. B. Dr. N. J. Faridar) (Obtained by gold  
chloride test with cocaine solution 1 in 500)

Dr Bagchi, Chemical Examiner to the Government of Bengal, has adopted the following modification in the method of this test —

If a trace of cocaine or cocaine hydrochloride is dissolved in a few drops of a saturated solution of alum and a small drop of this solution is added to a drop

of a saturated solution of potassium permanganate on a microscopic slide and the two are mixed together by gently rubbing on the slide for about a minute or two and then covered with a cover slip and examined under the microscope, small characteristic crystals of cocaine permanganate are seen. If the slide is left aside for about fifteen minutes much larger crystals are formed and are easily seen under the microscope.

If the drops of cocaine and potassium permanganate solutions are mixed gently and without rubbing and the slide is left uncovered and allowed to evaporate almost to dryness, the same crystals but of a very large size are formed.

If the solution of cocaine is very weak, rubbing on the slide helps to form the crystals within a minute, otherwise longer time is required.

This modification of Hankin's method is useful in obtaining the crystals quickly in a dilute solution of cocaine and in developing larger crystals in stronger solutions in a shorter time.

**4. Gold Chloride Test** — A 5 per cent solution of gold chloride in distilled water gives a precipitate with a solution containing cocaine. The precipitate is at first amorphous, but rapidly becomes crystalline. Viewed under the microscope, the crystals are found to be delicate rosettes, or long rods resembling fern fronds, generally with a stellate arrangement. This is a delicate test and a few crystals are formed even with a solution of 1 in 20,000.



Fig. 170.—Microphotograph of Cocaine crystals  $\times 150$   
(A. B. D. V. J. Tawdar). Obtained by gold  
chloride test with cocaine solution, 1 in 1000.

Gold chloride solution also gives a crystalline precipitate with novocaine, but the novocaine gold chloride compound is soluble in dilute hydrochloric acid, while the cocaine gold chloride compound is insoluble in the same acid.

Bagehu and his collaborators<sup>1</sup> have made use of this fact in devising a method of carrying out the determination of a small quantity of cocaine in a sample adulterated with novocaine.

<sup>1</sup> Indian Med. Gaz., Jan., 1919, p. 29.

The presence of chalk, antifebrin, aspirin, starch, etc., along with novocaine does not interfere with the determination. They are easily removed from the solution by a preliminary filtration, but the presence of alkaline carbonates and lime necessitates the use of stronger (20 per cent) hydrochloric acid. In other cases 10 per cent acid is quite good.

*3 Chromic Acid Test* — A 5 per cent solution of chromic acid or a 7.5 per cent solution of potassium bichromate, added drop by drop to a solution of cocaine hydrochloride produces a yellow precipitate which disappears immediately on shaking. If 1 c.c. of concentrated hydrochloric acid is then added to the clear solution, a more or less crystalline, orange precipitate is formed.

**Medico-Legal Points** — Accidental cases of poisoning by cocaine have occurred from internal use from hypodermic injection, and from urethral vesical and rectal injections.

A few cases of suicide have been recorded. Like opium cocaine is believed to be an aphrodisiac and to increase the duration of the sexual act by paralysing the sensory nerves of the glans penis. Hence young men indulge in its use. It may be used for this purpose by local application but it is ordinarily taken in *prepared pan*. The habit once established is difficult to be given up. About a grain of cocaine hydrochloride is first taken, but the craving for the drug soon increases and the daily ration is increased to 30 grains or even more. K. C. Bose<sup>1</sup> reports a case in which a man, aged 22 years, was taking daily a few grums less than two drachms and another case of a Mahomedan boy, 12 years old who was in the habit of taking 12 grains every day. This pernicious habit has become so common that Government forbids the possession of cocaine without a licence. When owing to the first Great War, supplies of smuggled cocaine became difficult to procure, anesthesin (ethyl ester of para amino-benzoic acid), a synthetic preparation of cocaine, was used instead. A solution of it was applied to the glans penis before intercourse. It is possible that a 5 per cent solution of this drug thus used, might be found of benefit in cases in which, owing to excessive excitability the sexual act cannot be properly performed.

Prostitutes, sometimes inject a solution of cocaine into the vagina by means of a douche can. This gives the individual a sense of local constriction and the general systemic effects appear immediately.<sup>2</sup>

In England some persons are accustomed to use cocaine hypodermically. In Paris certain classes of people use it in the form of snuff, and addicts use large quantities—about a drachm a day on an average. The snuff produces irritation of the nasal mucous membrane. The irritation causes inflammation and ulceration which may occasionally lead to perforation of the nasal septum.

Cocaine is rarely smoked with the cigarette or pipe tobacco. During the smoking one observes "a euphoric mood and an agreeable feeling of lightness and coolness in the head".<sup>3</sup>

A very small portion of cocaine is eliminated in the urine. It is largely decomposed in the human system, hence it is difficult to be detected in the viscera.

#### ARTEMISIA MARITIMA (WORM WOOD, KIRMANI GWAI)

This plant belonging to N.O. Composite grows on the coasts of England and yields an active principle santonin chiefly from santonica or wormseed, the dried unexpanded flower heads. The other varieties *Artemisia breviseta* and *Artemisia vulgaris* grow in Kashmir and the hilly tracts of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.

Santonin is a glucoside and occurs as flat, glittering prismatic crystals. It is either tasteless or faintly bitter. It is colourless but becomes yellow on exposure to sunlight. It is slightly

<sup>1</sup> Ind. Med. Ga. March 1907 pp. 86-97

<sup>2</sup> R. N. Chopra and G. S. Chopra Indian Jour. of Med. Research Jan. 1931 p. 1013

<sup>3</sup> Irish Leschke Clin. Toxic. Eng. Transl. by Stewart and Darter 1931 p. 203

soluble in water, more soluble in hot water and is easily soluble in alcohol, chloroform, ether and alkalies. The dose is 1 to 3 grains.

**Symptoms.**—Headache, giddiness, singing in the ears, pain in the stomach, nausea, vomiting, yellow vision (xanthopsia), dilated pupils, cold skin bathed in perspiration, feeble and slow pulse and respirations, convulsions, delirium, stupor, coma, and death ending the scene from failure of the heart or respiration. The urine is usually increased in quantity, and it is saffron yellow in colour. Sometimes, strangury and haematuria are observed owing to irritation of the kidneys.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period.**—One hundred and fifty-five grains of wormseed proved fatal to a girl, aged 16 years, in about three days.<sup>1</sup> Two grains of santonin administered twice killed a child, five and half years old, in twelve hours.<sup>2</sup> In his annual report for the year 1921, the Chemical Analyser, Bombay, records a case in which a girl, 4 years old, died in about 48 hours after she was given 2½ grains of santonin. A Hindu girl, aged 18 years, died in about an hour after taking an overdose of some "worm powder" containing santonin.<sup>3</sup> Recovery has taken place in the case of a child after ten grains<sup>4</sup> and in the case of an adult after an ounce.<sup>5</sup>

**Treatment.**—Give emetics or wash out the stomach and give calomel as a purgative. Give demulcent drinks, but avoid oils and fats. Administer stimulants to combat collapse and potassium bromide and chloral hydrate to control convulsions.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—Not characteristic. In a case<sup>6</sup> where a man, aged 22, died shortly after he had taken santonin as a remedy for some disease, the post mortem examination showed that the stomach was anaemic and empty, and the liver and kidneys were congested.

**Chemical Analysis.**—Santonin may be separated from an acid aqueous solution by shaking out with chloroform, and is identified by the following test:—

A little dilute sulphuric acid is added to some santonin, and gently heated until a yellow colour is produced; when cold, a few drops of a very dilute solution of ferric chloride are added, and on again warming a blue or reddish violet colour develops.

Urine containing santonin assumes a red colour on the addition of a little sodium hydroxide. Rhubarb present in the urine gives a similar colour, but if excess of lime is added after the addition of sodium hydroxide, and the urine is afterwards filtered, the filtrate is colourless if the reddening is due to rhubarb, but retains its colour if it is due to santonin.

**Medico-Legal Points.**—Cases of poisoning occur accidentally among children from an overdose given as an anthelmintic to remove worms from the intestines. A case is recorded in which a man was poisoned after taking one-fourth of a pint of the infusion as an aphrodisiac.<sup>7</sup> An adult took an ounce of santonin in mistake for Epsom salts, but recovered as mentioned above.

Santonin is eliminated slowly by the kidneys, and has a tendency to accumulate in the system. Hence it may act as a poison, if administered for a prolonged period even in medicinal doses. A boy, 11 years old, was given santonin for months, and consequently suffered from paralysis, twichings, dizziness, pain in the head, vomiting, yellow and violet vision, sparks before the eyes, and loss of speech. Under proper medical treatment he was able to walk in six weeks, but regained the power of speech after nine weeks.<sup>8</sup>

Oil of absinthe (oil of wormwood) extracted by distillation from artemisia absinthium is used as an abortifacient, sometimes with fatal results. A woman died in three-quarters of an hour after swallowing 100 grains of oil of absinthe, which she had procured for the purpose of terminating her pregnancy. A few minutes after she took the drug, she was found lying speechless.<sup>9</sup> A case is also recorded, in which a man took half an ounce probably for the cure of worms and was found perfectly insensible, convulsed and foaming at the mouth. The pulse was weak, slow and compressible. From time to time he uttered incoherent expressions and attempted to vomit. He recovered after repeated administrations of stimulants, sal volatile and water, lime water and an emetic containing mustard or zinc sulphate.<sup>10</sup>

1. Taylor, *On Poisons*, Ed. III, p. 642.
2. Dixenmann, *Forens. Med. and Toxic.*, Ed. IV, p. 536.
3. Bom. Chem. Analyser's Annual Rep., 1915, p. 3.
4. Dixenmann, *Forens. Med. and Toxic.*, Ed. VI, p. 526.
5. Ibid., *Annual Univ. di. Med.*, 1882.
6. Punjab Chem. Examiner's Annual Rep., 1914, p. 11.
7. Robinson, *Lancet*, Vol. I, 1889, p. 770.
8. Rey, *Therap. Montashefte*, 1889; Dixenmann and Breul, *Forensic Medicine and Toxicology*, Ed. VI, p. 540.
9. Brit. Med. Jour., Aug. 10, 1902, p. 504.
10. Taylor, *On Poisons*, Ed. III, p. 681.

Absinthe is a liqueur, which contains this oil with a large proportion of alcohol, and is largely used as a drink in France. When taken in excess or for a prolonged period, it produces epileptiform convulsions, and causes digestive disturbances, restlessness, giddiness, tingling in the ears, trembling of the tongue and hands and illusions of sight and hearing, followed by numbness of the limbs, loss of intellect, general paralysis and death.

### CAMPHOR (*KAMFOOR*), $C_{10}H_{16}O$

This is stearoptene obtained from the wood, twigs and leaves of *Cinnamomum camphora* (*Camphora officinarum*) belonging to N.O. Lauraceæ. It is artificially produced by the direct union of oil of turpentine and hydrochloric acid. It occurs as colourless, transparent crystals, rectangular tablets or powdery masses known as 'flowers of camphor,' having a peculiar, fragrant, penetrating odour and a pungent, bitter taste followed by a sensation of cold. It floats on water in which it is almost insoluble but it is dissolved by alcohol, ether, chloroform, milk, and oils. It is extremely volatile and inflammable burning with a bright light and much smoke. When rubbed with chloral hydrate menthol, phenol or thymol it forms a liquid. The dose is 2 to 5 grains. It is a constituent of the following official preparations —

- 1 *Aqua camphoræ* — Strength,  $\frac{1}{2}$  grain to 1 fluid ounce Dose,  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 fluid ounce
- 2 *Linimentum camphoræ* — It is commonly known as camphorated oil Strength, 20% of camphor

3 *Linimentum camphoræ ammoniatum* — It is commonly known as compound liniment of camphor. It contains 12.5 per cent of camphor

- 4 *Spiritus camphoræ* — Strength, 1 in 10 Dose, 5 to 30 minims
- 5 *Tinctura opii camphorata* — It is also called Paregoric or Tinctura camphoræ compo sita. It contains 3 parts of camphor in 1000 parts of alcohol Dose, 10 to 60 minims

Camphor is widely used as a personal disinfectant and as a preservative of clothing against an attack of moths. When rubbed into the skin camphor acts as an irritant causing redness and heat. When taken internally in poisonous doses, it acts as an irritant to the stomach, and after absorption it acts first as a stimulant and then as a depressant to the nerve centres.

*Borneo Camphor or Borneol*,  $C_{10}H_{16}O$ , is derived from *Dryobalanops aromatica* and is ordinarily met with in commerce in place of camphor, from which it can be distinguished by sinking in water.

**Symptoms** — Burning pain in the mouth and stomach, nausea, vomiting flushed face, cyanosed lips, dilated pupils, vertigo, convulsions, delirium, unconsciousness, coma and death. The breath, vomit and urine have the odour of camphor. There may be an elevation of body temperature, especially in children.

**Fatal Dose** — Twelve to thirty grains of camphor have been fatal to children. Twenty grains is the smallest quantity that has produced alarming symptoms of poisoning in an adult, and 192 grains<sup>1</sup> contained in 2 fluid ounces of camphorated oil have caused the death of a woman, aged 30 years. Recovery has followed much larger doses both in children and adults.

**Fatal Period** — Uncertain. Death has occurred in children in from 4 to 18 hours after swallowing the poison.

**Treatment**.—Evacuation of the stomach, warmth to the body, cold assuptions to the head, saline purgatives, inhalations of ether or dilute ammonia, stimulants, such as digitalin, strychnine and caffeine and sodium benzoate hypodermically and artificial respiration, if necessary.

**Post mortem Appearances** — The mucous membrane of the lips and mouth may be excoriated. The mucous membrane of the stomach and intestine may be congested or inflamed with minute submucous hemorrhages and erosion or ulceration of the stomach. The stomach contents give off the characteristic odour of camphor, and may show a solid piece of camphor. There may be small hemorrhages in the cortex under the capsule in both kidneys. The meninges are generally hyperemic. The other viscera are congested.

**Detection** — Camphor may be separated by distillation from organic fluids. The distillate is shaken out with benzene and evaporated on a warm water bath when the camphor remains as a residue. The residue is then purified by several recrystallizations from 50 per cent alcohol.

There are no chemical tests for camphor, but it can be identified by its pungent, bitter taste, characteristic odour and spontaneous volatility. It melts at 175°C.

**Medico-Legal Points.**—Accidental cases of camphor poisoning have occurred from the pharmaco-poetical preparations (liniment and spirit) having been drunk in mistake for other preparations, such as castor oil, etc. Sen<sup>1</sup> mentions a case in which a female, aged about 16 years, swallowed about a drachm or more of camphor in water and suffered from poisonous symptoms. Among others the chief symptoms were twitchings of the fingers with tingling sensation, lock-jaw and delirium. She recovered in seven or eight days. A female child, 6 years old, swallowed about four drachms of camphor oil at 7.30 p.m., on September 16, 1930, and immediately she felt nausea. Her throat was tickled to make her vomit and she brought up a little of the oil. But she became drowsy in a short time, and was removed to the King George's Hospital, Icknield, at 8 p.m. At the time of admission she was found in a drowsy condition with the eyes closed. The pupils were dilated. There were muscular twitchings all over the body. The pulse was rapid and feeble, and the respirations were slow and laboured. The stomach was first washed out with saline and then with potassium permanganate, when the twitchings became less. The pulse became very feeble, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  c.c. pituitrin was administered hypodermically. The pulse improved and the twitchings gradually subsided. Next morning the lips were found swollen and the buccal mucosa necrosed at places. Magnesium sulphite was given as a purgative, and the patient was discharged cured after 24 hours.

A case of suicide is recorded in which a European female, 39 years old, swallowed about 2 ounces of camphor liniment, but recovered under prompt treatment.<sup>2</sup> A case<sup>3</sup> is also reported where a man took camphor with a view to committing suicide and died soon afterwards.

Poisonous symptoms resulting in death in some cases have followed its use as an abortifacient.

Camphor is oxidized in the tissues to camphorol which, combining with glycuronic acid, is mostly excreted by the kidneys and traces are excreted by the lungs.

#### POISONOUS FUNGI (MUSHROOMS)

The common varieties of poisonous fungi are *Amanita muscaria* and *Amanita phalloides*. *Amanita muscaria* is known as the fly agaric, because its decoction is used for killing flies. It grows singly in sandy soil and attains a large size. It has a hollow stalk which is solid and bulbous at the base and has gills which are always of a pure white colour. The pileus varies in colour from yellow to orange and red, and is covered by warty scales.

The fungus owes its poisonous properties to an alkaloid, *muscarine*, which is a crystalline substance, soluble in water and alcohol, but insoluble in chloroform and ether. It is alkaline in reaction and decomposes in the air forming a syrupy liquid. It contracts the pupils when administered internally but dilates them when applied locally.

*Amanita phalloides* is commonly called the deadly agaric or death cap, and is white in colour, having an unpleasant taste and giving off a fetid odour when old. It grows to a height of about four to six inches in woody places. It has a hollow stalk with a prominent bulb at the base, the upper margin of which is formed into a volva or cup. The pileus is usually white but may vary in colour from pale dull yellow to olive, and has gills covered with white spores on its under surface.

The fungus is a powerful poison and contains two active principles, *amanita haemolytin* (*Phallin of Robert*) and *amanita toxin*.<sup>4</sup> *Amanita haemolytin* is a haemolytic glucoside, which is precipitated by alcohol and is completely destroyed when heated to 70°C., or when digested with pepsin as well as pancreatin. *Amanita toxin* is the chief poisonous principle which is dissolved by alcohol, but is not destroyed by heat or digestive ferments.

**Symptoms.**—These are divided into two groups, irritant and neurotic.

**I. Irritant Symptoms.**—The symptoms are usually delayed for six to ten hours or for thirty hours in some cases. These are constriction of the throat, burning pain in the stomach, nausea, painful retching, vomiting, and diarrhoea, the stools containing blood; the urine may contain blood and albumin. These are followed by cyanosis, small pulse, laboured respirations, convulsions, profuse sweating, collapse and death. Sometimes there may be anuria.

**II. Neurotic Symptoms.**—These are giddiness, headache, delirium, diplopia, contraction of the pupils, tetanic spasms, insensibility and coma.

In some cases irritant symptoms may be present, and in others neurotic only. The predominance of one or the other group of symptoms depends on the nature of the active principles present.

**Fatal Dose.**—Uncertain.

1. *Ind. Med. Gaz.*, Sep., 1917, p. 336.

2. *Ind. Med. Gaz.*, June, 1902, p. 210.

3. *Free Press Jour.*, Nov. 25, 1912.

4. *Ford, Brit. Med. Jour.*, Dec. 1, 1906, p. 1541.

**Fatal Period.**—Death usually occurs within twenty four hours. Plowright<sup>1</sup> records four fatal cases of poisoning by *Amanita phalloides* at King's Lynn. The first, a boy, aged 12, ate about a third of the uncooked pileus (top) of the fungus and died after 8½ hours. The second, a boy of 5, died 68 hours after eating an unknown quantity of the fungus. In the third case, a man, aged 32, gathered some *Amanita phalloides*, which he and his family consisting of the wife, aged 22 years, a daughter, aged 7 years, and a son, aged 22 months, ate for their tea, the total quantity being three-quarters of a pound. During the preparation of the meal the mother and the boy ate a certain quantity of the raw fungi. They all became ill. The boy died fifty-four hours after eating the mushrooms, and the mother died on the fourth day. The father and the daughter recovered.



Fig. 171.—*Amanita Muscaria*.

**Treatment.**—Evacuate the stomach by giving common salt as an emetic or by lavaging it with water containing potassium permanganate or finely powdered charcoal. Give castor oil or magnesium sulphate to clear the bowels. Atropine is considered a physiological antidote to muscarine, and should be administered hypodermically. Morphine may be administered hypodermically to relieve pain. Give stimulants and normal saline subcutaneously. Repeated intravenous infusions of 300 to 500 c.c. of 10 to 20 per cent sugar solutions with eventual addition of calcium salts are considered very useful. Antiphallinic serum should be used, if available.

Limousin and Petit<sup>2</sup> recommend the administration of the fresh stomach and brain of a rabbit in poisoning by *Amanita phalloides*. A family of four persons partook of *A. phalloides* and one died. The other three had serious symptoms. They were given each three fresh rabbit stomachs mashed and some fresh brains, and a rapid recovery ensued.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—Signs of inflammation of the mucous membrane of the alimentary canal are present, if irritant signs have been predominant. Fatty degeneration of the liver, kidneys and heart may also be found. In cases of neurotic symptoms congestion of the brain vessels, and subpleural and subpericardial hemorrhages are likely to be met with.

**Medico-Legal Points.**—Chevers<sup>3</sup> records the case of an Assistant Collector who felt drunk and laughed ludicrously in open Court after having eaten *amanita* mushrooms at his breakfast.

1. *Brit. Med. Jour.*, Sep. 9, 1905, p. 541.

2. *Bull de l' Acad. Med.*, May, 1932, p. 24. *Med. Annual*, 1933, p. 500.

3. *Med. Juris*, p. 280.

In this connection it may be mentioned that the poor people of Siberia and Kamtschatka manufacture an intoxicating beverage from the same fungus. The poison is excreted by the urine which possesses intoxicating properties and is drunk by persons to produce intoxication.

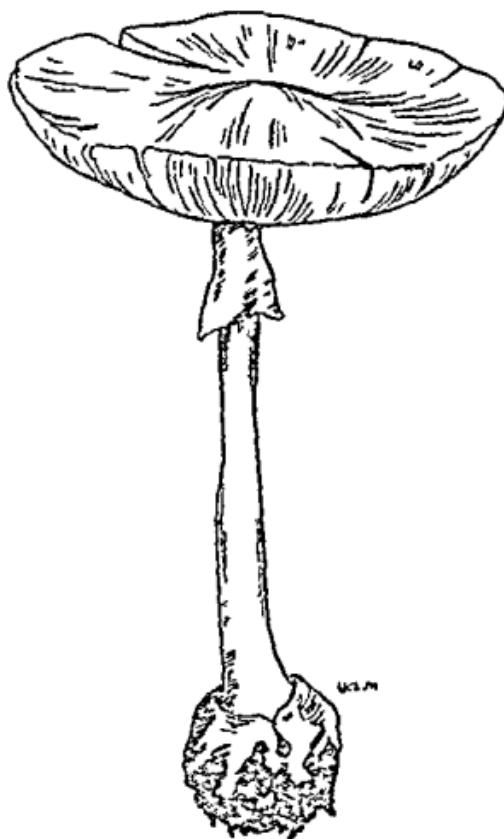


Fig. 172.—*Amanita phalloides*.

during germination of the grain<sup>1</sup>. But Anderson, Howard and Simonsen<sup>2</sup> have carried out investigations and are of opinion that *Kesari Dal* (*Lathyrus Sativus*) is by itself harmless and that the danger of the disease lies in its contamination with *Ikta* a leguminous weed called *Lata Sativa*. In this connection it may be mentioned that Acton and Chopra<sup>3</sup> have now been able to confirm the work of Anderson and his co workers by carrying out further investigations. It is also suggested that the poisonous symptoms may be due to the absence of tryptophan, an essential amino acid which is very deficient in the grains of *Lathyrus Sativus* especially when this pulse forms the bulk of the protein part of the diet<sup>4</sup>. During the investigation of an outbreak of lathyrism in Bhopal State in Central India in the year 1944-45 Dr Shourie did not find that the seeds of *Lathyrus sativus* were contaminated with the seeds of *Vicia sativa* but he thought that the disease was due to the existence in *Lathyrus sativus* of a toxin affecting the pyramidal tracts<sup>5</sup>.

**Symptoms** —The onset of the disease often comes on suddenly. On waking up in the morning or whilst working in the field the patient may notice weakness in his legs and difficulty in sitting down and getting up from a squatting position. He is then unable to walk without the aid of a stick and later assumes a spastic gait owing to the rigidity of the muscles of the calves and thighs. Lastly complete paraplegia of the lower limbs occurs. There is no atrophy or loss of the tone of the muscles and no reaction of degeneration. Sensation is normal although there is muscular pain. The knee jerks are increased, ankle clonus is well marked and Babinski's sign is present. There is no loss of consciousness, nor is there any involvement of the bladder and rectum.

**Treatment** —Stop the *dal* and administer a generous diet rich in vitamin A. Apply massage and electricity.

**Prophylaxis** —The remedy for the prevention of lathyrism is to grow *Kesari Dal* in pure culture by removing *Ikta* in the early stages so that when the crop flowers, it is practically pure.

**Post mortem Appearances** —Death in the acute stage is very rare. There may be sclerosis of the lateral columns of the spinal cord.

**Lolium Temulentum (Darnel Mochni)** —This weed belongs to *X O Gramineae* and grows in wheat fields in the Upper Gangetic Plain, the Punjab, Sind, Western Himalayas, and Kashmir State. The grains of this weed are similar to wheat grains in shape, but are much smaller in size. They owe their poisonous properties to a pyridine base, called temuline, contained in an endophytic fungus which attacks the grains<sup>6</sup>.

Accidental cases of poisoning have occurred from these grains being ground in mistake with wheat grains and then made into bread. Recently, an epidemic occurred in Aden, where some 400 people suffered from poisonous symptoms by eating wheat flour contaminated with the flour of the grains of this weed<sup>7</sup>.

**Symptoms** —Giddiness, headache, muscular weakness, tremors, symptoms of gastro-intestinal irritation, dilatation of the pupils, stupor and even coma. No case of death has yet been recorded.

**Stigmata Maides (Maize Indian Corn *Maccac* or *Butta*)** —This corn belongs to *X O Gramineae* and is cultivated everywhere. It is affected by a special kind of fungus, which causes pellagra when eaten. However pellagra is now regarded as a deficiency disease due to lack of fat soluble A vitamin in maize.

**Paspalum Scrobiculatum (Kodro or Kodon)** —The poison is supposed to reside in the husk of the grain which is often used by poor people as an article of food. The poison is removed by boiling.

**Symptoms** —These are giddiness, intoxication, dilated pupils, tremors, delirium, convulsions, stupor and coma.

A family consisting of a woman, aged 50, a man aged 22 and two boys aged 9 and 12 was attacked by vomiting and giddiness about an hour and a half after taking an evening meal consisting of bread made from some flour of *kodon*. They then became unconscious. The pulse was small and quick, and the extremities cold. They regained consciousness in about an hour, but the young man was unconscious for some time. They all had tremors, and recovered the following morning<sup>8</sup>.

1 Acton Ind Med Ga July 1922 p 241

2 Indian Jour of Med Research April 1925 p 613

3 Causation of Lathyrism by *Lata Sativa* Abstract of Papers, Far Eastern Association of Tropical Medicine 1927 p 104

4 Hoxitland Minchin R L Brit Med Jour Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, 1940 p 253

5 Ind Jour of Med Res Vol XXXIII No 2, Oct 1945 pp 239-47

6 S D S Goyal and P N Bhaduri Ind Med Gaz., Aug., 1946, p 294

7 D Brinton Proc Roy Soc of Med Vol XXXVII, Feb., 1946 p 173

8 I Scarup, Ind Med Ga., July, 1922, p 237

## CHAPTER XXXI

### SPINAL POISONS

#### STRYCHNOS NUX VOMICA (KUCHIL I)

This tree belongs to N.O. Loganiaceae and grows in the jungles of Manbhoom, in the Madras Presidency Malabar and Coromandel Coasts.

Its ripe fruit contains nux vomica seeds which are poisonous. They are flat circular discs, or slightly concave on one side and convex on the other being ½" to 1" in diameter and ¼" in thickness. They are ash grey in colour and have a shining surface with short satiny hairs. Internally they are tough horny and slightly translucent having no odour but possessing a bitter taste. They yield two principal alkaloids strychnine and brucine united with strychnic acid or citoctannic acid. Besides the seeds contain to a small extent a glucoside named loganin. The bark wood and leaves contain brucine but no strychnine. The dose of the powdered seeds (*Nux vomica pulcherrata* or *Pudis nux vomica*) is 1 to 4 grains.

The following trees belonging to N.O. Loganiaceae also contain the same alkaloids —



Fig. 173.—*Strychnos Nux Vomica*

1. *Strychnos Colubrina* (Snake wood Kuchil lata or Gogari lal di)

2. *Strychnos Ignatii* (St Ignatius Beans Papita)

3. *Strychnos Ticeana* (Lapis tree) This is used in making arrow and dart poisons by the jungle tribes of the Malabar Peninsula.

**Strychnine,  $C_{21}H_{22}O_2N_2$ .**—This crystallizes in colourless rhombic prisms having an intensely bitter taste. It dissolves very sparingly in water or ether but dissolves in alcohol (30 per cent) and in benzene and readily in chloroform. It is a B.P.C. preparation the dose being 1/2 to 1 grain.

Strychnine is very stable and does not change in the process of putrefaction if present in a dead body. Hence it can be detected some years after death.

Strychnine is used for destroying stray unclaimed dogs, rats, mice and other vermin and forms the chief ingredient of several vermin killers known as Barber's, Battle's, Butler's, Hunter's and Mursden's vermin killers and Miller's rat powders. These consist of starch and are mixed with some colouring material such as soot, indigo, Prussian blue or ultramarine. The sale of strychnine and vermin killers to the public is restricted under the rules made under the Poisons Act 1910.

**Brucine  $C_{21}H_{22}O_4N_2$ .**—This occurs in colourless prismatic crystals with an intensely bitter taste. It is slightly soluble in cold water, but more in boiling water and freely in alcohol, chloroform and amyl alcohol but not in ether. It resembles strychnine both chemically and physiologically, but its toxic effect is only about one-twelfth of that of strychnine.

Both strychnine and brucine form salts, many of which are soluble in water.

**Pharmacopœial Preparations.**—The pharmacopœial preparations of nux vomica and strychnine are—

1 *Extractum Nucis Vomicae Siccum*—Standardized to contain 5 per cent of strychnine Dose,  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 1 grain

2 *Extractum Nucis Vomicae Liquidum*—Standardized to contain 1.5 per cent of strychnine Dose, 1 to 3 minimis

3 *Tinctura Nucis Vomicae*—Standardized to contain 0.125 per cent of strychnine Dose, 10 to 30 minimis

4 *Nux Vomica Preparata*—This is also known as *Nux Vomica Pulverata* Dose, 1 to 4 grains

5 *Strychninæ Hydrochloridum*—Dose, 1/30 to  $\frac{1}{2}$  grain and 1/30 to 1/10 grain subcutaneously

6 *Liquor Strychninæ Hydrochloridi*—It contains 0.92 per cent of strychnine hydrochloride Dose, 3 to 12 minimis

7 *Injectio Strychninæ hydrochloridi*—Strength, 1/16 grain in 15 minimis of sterile water

**Symptoms**—These supervene immediately after, or within five or ten minutes after, swallowing the poison, in rare cases they may be delayed for an hour or more. An intensely bitter taste is experienced during the act of swallowing if it happens to be in solution. This is followed by a choking sensation in the throat. The most marked effects due to its direct action on the spinal cord are the convulsions affecting all the muscles at a time. These are at first clonic, but eventually become tonic, as the intervals become shorter and the paroxysms longer. During the paroxysms the face becomes cyanosed, and wears an anxious look, the eyes are staring, the eye balls prominent and the pupils are dilated. The features are drawn into a grin (the *risus sardonicus*), and the mouth is covered with froth frequently stained with blood. The body is arched back in the position of *opisthotonus*, the unfortunate patient resting on his heels and occiput. The spasms of the diaphragm drawing upon the ensiform cartilage, cause epigastric pains. The contractions of the respiratory muscles produce a sense of suffocation, which may end in asphyxia. Sometimes, the spasms of the abdominal muscles may bend the body forward (*emprosthotonus*) while, less frequently, the body may be flexed to the side (*pleurosthotonus*). The mind usually remains clear to the end of life, and the patient is conscious of the pain and impending danger of death. The reflex excitability is so great that the slightest movement of the patient, a sudden noise or the touch of a glass of water to the lips or even a flash of light is enough to induce the convulsions. Vomiting is readily induced, and persists when once excited. Death may occur from asphyxia during the first paroxysm, or any subsequent attack, or from exhaustion during the intervals as a result of painful spasms.

In cases ending in recovery, the convulsions become shorter and less active, and the period of intermissions is much longer.

**Fatal Dose**—The usual fatal dose for an adult is  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 grains of strychnine. The smallest amount of strychnine known to have proved fatal is  $\frac{1}{4}$  grain. Half-a-grain of sulphate of strychnine has proved fatal. One drachm of liquor strychnine hydrochloridi containing 0.52 grain of strychnine killed a naval officer in 45 minutes.<sup>1</sup> One or two of tabloids<sup>2</sup> of Easton's syrup killed a child, 19 months old, while two, possibly three of the tabloids, equal to 1/32 and 1/20 grain of strychnine respectively, proved fatal to a boy, three and a half years old, in about

1 Littlejohn Transactions Med Leg Soc, Vol XXI, p 13

2 Phar Jour, June 9, 1943, p 284

one and a half hours<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, recoveries after prompt treatment have ensued from large doses of 10 to 40 grains.

Thirty grains of powdered nux vomica equal to one seed in weight ( $\frac{1}{2}$  grain of strichnine) given in two doses of 15 grains each have proved fatal. Recoveries have, however, followed larger doses. Owing to the presence of the hard insoluble testa, the entire seeds may pass out of the bowel without producing poisonous symptoms. Three grains of the extract of nux vomica and 6 drachms of the tincture have respectively produced fatal results. Thirty drops of extract nux vomica liquid equivalent to  $\frac{1}{2}$  grain of strichnine administered in mistake for extract ergot liquid proved fatal to a European woman of Calcutta in 2 hours and 15 minutes on April 28, 1923.

**Fatal Period**—The usual fatal period is one to two hours. In a few cases death has occurred within five to thirty minutes after swallowing the poison and in rare cases death has been delayed six to eighteen hours. If a narcotic preparation has been taken together with strichnine death may not occur for several hours.

**Diagnosis**—Strychnine poisoning has to be diagnosed from tetanus. The chief distinguishing points between the two are as follows—

STRYCHNINE POISONING	TETANUS
1 Onset sudden	1 Onset gradual
2 All the muscles are affected at a time	2 <i>The muscles of the neck and lower jaw are affected first (Lockjaw)</i>
3 During the intervals the muscles are relaxed	3 During the intervals the muscles are rigid
4 Death takes place within a few hours. If death does not occur within four to six hours the probability of recovery is great	4 Death rarely takes place within 24 hours and may be delayed for several days

**Treatment**—Give chloroform inhalation to check the spasms and then introduce the stomach tube to wash out the stomach with warm water containing potassium permanganate, mineral charcoal, tannic acid or tannin. In the absence of the tube, evacuate the stomach contents by the hypodermic administration of 1/10 to 1/5 grain of apomorphine hydrochloride. It also tends actually to quiet and prevent the convulsions. Three cases are reported in which the hypodermic use of apomorphine hydrochloride was followed by recovery in human beings who had taken presumably lethal quantities of strichnine.<sup>2</sup>

Sodium phenobarbitone, pentobarbital sodium, sodium amytal and other barbituric acid derivatives are considered as valuable antidotes to strichnine and should be administered intravenously in doses of 5 to 10 grains dissolved in 10 c.c. of distilled water or in sufficient quantities to induce sleep or to stop convulsions.

Large doses of potassium bromide and chloral hydrate should be given internally at frequent intervals. Chloral hydrate may be given in 10 grain doses by the rectum or in 5 grain doses hypodermically. Urethane (dose 1 to 4 drachms) is considered useful in controlling convulsions. Gentle narcotics, perfect quiet and dark surroundings are very essential. Nitrite of amyl and carbon dioxide mixture of oxygen and 5% of carbon dioxide may be administered by inhalation. Artificial respiration may be attempted, if respiratory paralysis supervenes.

<sup>1</sup> Littlejohn: *Transactions Med Leg Soc Vol VI p 14*

<sup>2</sup> J. S. Martin cited by H. G. Tannenbaum: *Jour Amer Med Assoc April 2, 1923, p 1134*

**Post-mortem Appearances** —Rigor mortis sets in more rapidly and may persist for a long time. In the case of Cook, the rigidity of the body and limbs was well marked on exhumation after two months' interment<sup>1</sup>. Usually the muscles are relaxed at the time of death and soon become extremely rigid, but in some cases the tetanic spasm may pass into cadaveric rigidity without the initial stage of relaxation. Livid patches may be observed on the body, and may be mistaken for bruises caused by violence.

The mucous membrane of the stomach and duodenum occasionally shows patches of ecchymosis or congestion. The liver and kidneys are generally congested. The heart is usually empty and contracted, but its right side is, sometimes, gorged with dark fluid blood. The lungs are congested. The brain and its membranes and the upper part of the spinal cord are found congested.

In a fatal case by strychnine poisoning which occurred at Lucknow on the 11th December, 1929, I found the following post mortem appearances —

The stomach was contracted and contained about an ounce of a pinkish fluid. Some mucus was adherent to the mucous membrane of the stomach which was congested. There were some submucous haemorrhagic points along the greater curvature. The same appearances were found in the duodenum. The chambers of the heart were empty. The large vessels were gorged with blood. There were some subendothelial haemorrhagic points on the surface of the right chamber of the heart. The lungs were slightly collapsed and were congested especially towards the base. On section they exuded dark fluid blood. The lining membrane of the larynx and trachea was cyanosed, congested and covered with froth towards the lower part. The pharynx was cyanosed, and so was the oesophagus in its upper part. The brain and the upper part of the cord were congested. The vessels of the cortex were engorged with blood. The liver, spleen and kidneys were congested.

**Chemical Analysis** —Strychnine may be separated from organic matter by the Stas Otto process, in which ammonia is used for rendering it alkaline and chloroform for extracting the alkaloid. But for the quantitative extraction of strychnine from viscera Naidu and Venkatrao suggest an alternative method to the Stas Otto process, which consists in warming the minced visceral material with a few drops of strong alcoholic potassium hydroxide solution and extracting the alkaloid directly with ether<sup>2</sup>.

In cases of poisoning by *nux vomica* the extracted residue contains both strychnine and brucine, and as the presence of brucine interferes with the tests for strychnine it is necessary to separate strychnine from brucine by dissolving the residue in about 2 c.c. of dilute sulphuric acid and 2 drops of strong nitric acid and allowing it to stand for 30 to 60 minutes at 15° to 20°C. The solution is then rendered strongly alkaline by adding sodium hydroxide solution and extracted several times with chloroform. The chloroform extracts are washed and collected together. The combined extracts are evaporated to dryness, and the residue thus left is free from brucine and is tested for strychnine.

**Tests for Strychnine** —**1 Colour Test** —If a drop of strong sulphuric acid is added to a small fragment of the dry brucine free residue placed on a white porcelain slab, no colour reaction occurs, but if a small particle of potassium dichromate or manganese dioxide is drawn through the mixture with the aid of a glass rod, a play of colours will follow, from blue to dark violet to reddish purple, red or orange and finally to yellow.

**2 A bitter taste will be perceptible in a solution of 1 in 70,000 of water.**

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *On Poisons*, Ed. III, p. 707.

<sup>2</sup> *The Analyst*, Jan., 1940, Vol. 70, pp. 8-10.

**3. Physiological Test**—If an aqueous solution of the residue is injected into the dorsal lymph sac of a frog, tetanic convulsions will occur in a few minutes. After the convulsions have once occurred, they may be subsequently provoked by stimulating the frog as by gently touching it with cotton wool or by tapping the table on which it is lying.

**Tests for Brucine**—1. If a drop of strong nitric acid is added to the dry chloroform residue, a blood red colour develops which changes to reddish yellow and finally to pure yellow. If the solution is then treated with a few drops of stannous chloride solution, an intense purple colour is formed which is destroyed by the addition of a drop of strong nitric acid.

2. *Blyth's Test*—Added to an alcoholic solution of brucine methyl iodide produces in a few minutes, circular, rosette shaped crystals composed of methyl brucine iodide. Strychnine does not respond to this test, nor does it interfere with the test, if present along with brucine.

**Medico-Legal Points**—Strychnine is one of the most deadly poisons. Accidental poisoning has resulted from an overdose or from it having been dispensed in medicine in mistake for some other harmless drug such as quinine sulphate, jalapin, caffeine, etc. In 1919, a case occurred at John's Mills in Agra where strychnine was accidentally dispensed instead of quinine with the result that seven persons died within an hour. The dose taken was probably ten grams. Of those who took the doses one is said to have had vomiting and blistering on the lips and to have recovered<sup>1</sup>. A similar case<sup>2</sup> occurred in Hoshapur District, where a medical practitioner gave some tablets supposed to be of quinine to a family. The head of the family took four tablets and distributed three tablets each to four members of his family. They all became ill and suffered from convulsions. The head of the family died and the other members fortunately recovered. The viscera of the deceased revealed the presence of strychnine on analysis. The remaining tablets were examined and found to be of pure strychnine. A case<sup>3</sup> is also recorded where a man died of strychnine poisoning. It was administered to him with jiggery as a quack antidote to ring worm.

Poisonous symptoms have also occurred accidentally from incompatible prescriptions containing potassium iodide or liquor arsenicals and strychnine when the latter precipitates to the bottom of the mixture and is taken with the last dose. A lady, 30 years old consulted her medical attendant who prescribed a mixture of  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce of liquor arsenicals and  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce of liquor strychnine hydrochloride, six drops to be taken three times a day. One morning three weeks later she did not feel well, and thought a dose of the medicine would do her good. She had, however, finished the contents of the bottle but noticing a little whitish deposit at its bottom added some water and drank off the contents. About an hour afterwards she suffered from strychnine poisoning, and died in two hours and twenty minutes after taking the medicine.<sup>4</sup>

Suicidal cases are occasionally met with in England but owing to the ignorance of the people about strychnine suicidal poisoning is rare in India though a few cases have lately been reported. In the annual report for the year 1921, the Chemical Examiner, U.P., reports a case in which a woman committed suicide by taking strychnine. In his annual report for the year 1923, the Chemical Examiner of Bengal describes a case in which an Anglo Indian lady took a tea spoonful of strychnine at 5 a.m., with intent to commit suicide owing to a quarrel with her husband. She had convulsions for the first time at 6.30 a.m., and soon died. In his annual report for the year 1926, the Chemical Analyst of Sind

1. U.P. Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1919

2. Punjab Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1923 p. 10

3. U.P. Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1920 p. 6

4. Littlejohn, Transactions of the Medico-Legal Society Vol. VII 1922 p. 12.

reports the case of a woman of Shadapur who committed suicide by taking strychnine. In his annual report for the year 1927, the Chemical Analyser of Bombay cites a case in which three brothers in Malwan, District Ratnagiri, boiled nux vomica seeds in milk and took that with a view to committing suicide. Two died and one recovered. Fragments of nux vomica seeds were found in the stomach of both the deceased, and strychnine was detected on analysis of the viscera. The Chemical Examiner of Bengal<sup>1</sup> reports the case of a Hindu male, 22 years old who committed suicide by taking strychnine. He was picked up from the Eden Gardens and removed to the Medical College Hospitals, Calcutta. He seemed to be conscious but could not speak and died within fifteen minutes. This case is interesting from the fact that there was no history of spasms or convulsions. The Chemical Examiner of Madras<sup>2</sup> reports two cases of suicide. In one of these a man and his wife drank liquor strychninae hydrochloridii. In the other case a decoction of nux vomica leaves was taken. A case<sup>3</sup> is also recorded in which a European committed suicide by taking strychnine hydrochloride mixed in a glass containing whisky. Eighteen grains of strychnine hydrochloride were isolated from the glass. Strychnine was also detected in the viscera of the deceased.

Homicidal cases by the administration of strychnine are reported to have occurred in England and other western countries. Of these the most famous are those of William Palmer, a medical practitioner, who was convicted at the Central Criminal Court at London in 1856 of having murdered John Parsons Cook at Rugeley in Staffordshire by administering two pills containing strychnine and of Thomas Neill or Neill Cream, who was convicted in the same Court on October 21, 1892, of the murder of four women and the attempted murder of a fifth woman by giving strychnine.

Homicidal poisoning by strychnine is rare in India. In 1891, a case occurred in the presidency of Bombay, in which five persons were murdered by strychnine given in milk.<sup>4</sup> A case occurred in Seoni, in which a man suffered from the effects of poisoning as a result of taking betels offered to him at a singing party by two persons with whom he was not on good terms. Strychnine was detected in the washings of the stomach as well as in the scrapings of the soil in which the man had spat.<sup>5</sup> A case<sup>6</sup> is recorded in which one Singhe administered strychnine in a cup of wine to one Amrat who died in about 3 hours. A case<sup>7</sup> is also reported in which the adopted son of a Hyderabad millionaire was killed by the administration of pills containing strychnine.

Nux vomica seeds are sometimes used for suicidal purpose and also for destroying cattle.

Accidental cases of poisoning by nux vomica have occurred from an overdose, for it is largely used in medicinal practice by quacks and halims. An adult male was nearly killed by taking internally a mixture containing equal parts of the powdered root of strychnos nux vomica sugar and black pepper for the treatment of gonorrhœa.<sup>8</sup> In his annual report for the year 1927, the Chemical Examiner of Bengal also reports two cases of accidental poisoning. In one case two female children, aged 3 and 5 years respectively, were given some powder as a quack remedy for worms, and both died from convulsions within half an hour. In the other case a woman was given some stuff which was alleged to be

<sup>1</sup> Annual Report 1929 p 11

<sup>2</sup> Annual Report, 1923 p 4

<sup>3</sup> Bombay Chem. Analyst's Annual Report 1931, p 4

<sup>4</sup> R V Buchu Bom High Court, 1891, Chem and Druggist, 1891, Vol VIII II, p 380

<sup>5</sup> U P Chem Examiner's Annual Rep., 1923

<sup>6</sup> K E v Singhe III High Court Appeal No 733 of 1932

<sup>7</sup> Times of India Dec 14 1932

<sup>8</sup> J I Steam Ind Med Gaz April 1889, p 113

opium and she died. It turned out to be nux vomica as the viscera showed the presence of strychnine and brucine.

In his annual report for the year 1944, the Chemical Examiner Bengal describes a case in which nux vomica seeds acted merely as an irritant poison. In July, 1944, a boy took two seeds of nux vomica and suffered from vomiting and diarrhoea. He looked very anxious and had spasms with pain in the epigastric region. His pupils were dilated. The vomiting and diarrhoea lasted for three days.

The bark of the tree (*strychnos nux vomica*) has been mistaken for *Jurecht* bark (*holarrhena antidysenterica*) or for angostura bark.

Not only has poisoning occurred from the administration of strychnine by the mouth or hypodermic syringe, but also from its application to the eye<sup>1</sup> or from the inhalation of steam issuing from a hot mixture containing strychnine.<sup>2</sup> It has also resulted from the application of nux vomica paste to a wound.<sup>3</sup>

The poisonous effects depend upon an individual idiosyncrasy and tolerance is established by habitually taking the drug for a long time. In India, nux vomica is taken as an aphrodisiac. According to Baker those who get into the habit of taking it begin with  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of a grain morning and evening and gradually increase it to about 20 grains.<sup>4</sup>

Strychnine is eliminated unchanged mainly in the urine. Elimination begins even in the first hour of ingestion continues for two to three days and ceases entirely from three to eight days. It is excreted to some extent in the bile and saliva and possibly in the sweat. An infant may be affected by sucking its mother who has been taking medicinal doses of strychnine. Three cases have been reported in which infants were poisoned by strychnine absorbed in their mother's milk, one of them dying subsequently.<sup>5</sup> Strychnine is also said to act as a cumulative poison as it tends to stop its own elimination by contracting the renal

Richter found it in a putrid mass of the heart, lungs and liver which had been exposed in open vessels for 11 years<sup>1</sup>. It must, however, be borne in mind that in cases of death from undoubtedly strychnine poisoning the alkaloid may not be detected in the body. Haines<sup>2</sup> failed to detect the poison in the viscera of two children who died suddenly with all the symptoms of strychnine poisoning. Dr V. J. Vazdar, late Chemical Analyser of Bombay, once informed me that he failed to detect it in a case in which there was ample evidence that death occurred from poisoning by strychnine.

### PHYSOSTIGMATIC SEMIN I (CALABAR BEAN)

This is the ripe seed of *Physostigma Venenosum*, belonging to the Leguminosae. It is known as the Ordeal Bean of West Africa, as it is used there as a test in suspected witchcraft. It is blackish brown in colour and slightly kidney-shaped having a black groove along its convex border measures  $1\frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$  and weighs about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 drachms. It has no odour, nor has it any distinctive taste. If cut longitudinally it is seen to consist of a brown rind containing two hard white brittle cotyledons which adhere to the shell.

The pernicious properties are due to two alkaloids *physostigmine* or *eserine* and *calabarine*, contained in the cotyledons of the seed.

*Physostigmine (Eserine) C<sub>15</sub>H<sub>21</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>* — In the pure state this is a white, crystalline substance, but becomes yellowish on exposure to air and light. It is bitter in taste and alkaline in reaction. It is slightly soluble in water but readily dissolves in alcohol, chloroform and ether. With acids it forms salts which are soluble in water. Of these *physostigmine salicylates* (*physostigmine or eserine salicylate*) is a pharmacopoeial preparation the dose being 1/100 to 1/50 grain. It enters into the composition of the pharmacopoeial preparations of *Larillard physostigminat*, *Oculentum physostigminae* and *Injectio physostigminae salicylates*.

**Symptoms** — These are giddiness, salivation, thirst, pain in the stomach, vomiting, sometimes diarrhoea, slow feeble and irregular pulse, laboured breathing, cold clammy skin, contracted pupils, muscular twitchings and paralysis of the voluntary muscles. The intellect remains clear to the last. Death occurs from asphyxia due to paralysis of the respiratory centre.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period** — Not determined. Six seeds of beans of *Physostigma venenosum* caused the death of a child. According to Blyth 6 mg of physostigmine would be likely to be dangerous and about 20 mg or 3 grains would be much beyond the least fatal dose<sup>3</sup>. A patient was given after an operation for hernia 0.1 grammie of eserine sulphate (a non-official preparation dose being 1/64 to 1/32 grain) to stimulate peristalsis but he got convulsions, urination and died from failure of respiration and of the heart's action<sup>4</sup>. A case<sup>5</sup> is recorded in which recovery took place after the intravenous injection of  $\frac{1}{2}$  gram of eserine sulphate in 1.5 minutes of water.

**Treatment** — Give emetics or wash out the stomach with charcoal and tannic acid. Morphine and chloral hydrate are both regarded as physiological antidotes. Give stimulants and oxygen inhalation and artificial respiration may be resorted to if necessary.

**Post mortem Appearances** — Not characteristic. The mucous membrane of the stomach may be red and congested and may, sometimes, be covered with a tenacious mucus. The lungs are generally congested and oedematous. The brain is slightly hyperemic.

**Chemical Analysis** — Physostigmine may be extracted from organic matter by rendering alkaline with sodium bicarbonate and using ether or chloroform as a solvent. It is decomposed very easily hence special care must be taken not to allow excess of mineral acids, heat, or light to come into play.

**Tests** — 1. Bromine water produces a red or orange-coloured turbid solution which will clear away on heating. Strong chlorine water produces a red colour.

2. On exposure to air and light an aqueous solution of physostigmine is readily oxidized and produces rubreserine which is red in colour. The red colour is decoloured on the addition of a reducing agent such as sulphurous acid or hydrogen sulphide. If it is now shaken with excess of caustic alkali it acquires a pink red colour. The red colouring matter rubreserine is dissolved out by chloroform and colours the solution orange red.

3. Two or three drops of a very weak solution of physostigmine dropped into a cat's eye will produce contraction of the pupil.

1 *Ztschr f anal chem* 1886 VII p 400. Blyth Poisons, Ed V, p 344.

2 *Hamilton System of Legal Medicine* 1894 I, p 459.

3 *Poisons Their Effects and Detection*, Ed V, pp 422-4-3.

4 *Ars Medici Jan 1932*, p 14.

5 *Slater, Brit Med Jour Dec 9 1922* p 1120.

**Medico-Legal Points** — Accidental cases of poisoning have occurred among children from eating the seeds. Accidental poisoning has also resulted from ejective solution having been instilled into the eyes or sprayed into the nose.

Suicidal cases have occurred, but no homicidal case has yet been recorded.

Physostigmine increases the irritability of the voluntary and involuntary muscles, causing muscular twichings and peristaltic movements of the intestines. It contracts the pupils by stimulating the ends of the third nerve. It increases the secretions by stimulating the peripheral nerve endings. It augments the irritability of the peripheral terminations of the vagus in the heart and thus causes slowing of the heart beat. It depresses the motor centres in the cord and then in the brain. It causes death by failure of the respiratory centre. It is excreted in the urine, and has been found in the saliva and bile.

Calabarine acts as a stimulant to the cord, and produces convulsions just like strychnine.

#### GLASSIUM SEMPERVIRENS OR NITIDUM (YILLOW OR CAROLINA JESSAMINE OR JASMINE)

This is a plant belonging to N.O. Loganiaceae, and grows in North America. Its root is official and yields active principles, viz., gelsemine, gelseminine and gelsemic acid.

**Gelsemine** — This is a white, very bitter, inodorous, amorphous alkaloid substance sparingly soluble in water, but freely in alcohol and ether. With acids it forms crystalline salts.

**Gelseminine** — This is a highly poisonous alkaloid occurring as a yellowish brown amorphous powder, or in yellowish white minute crystals. It is slightly soluble in water, but freely soluble in alcohol and ether. Its salts are freely soluble in water. Gelsemine hydrochloride is a non-official preparation, the dose being 1/60 to 1/20 grain.

**Gelsemic Acid** — This is a colourless, tasteless odourless crystalline substance. It is slightly soluble in cold water, more in hot water and freely in ether and chloroform. It forms salts, but with few metals.

**Symptoms** — Nausea, frontal headache, giddiness, ptosis, strabismus, diplopia, dilatation of the pupils, great muscular weakness, inco-ordination, paralysis, difficulty of articulation and swallowing due to paralysis of the mouth and throat, depression of the temperature, pulse and respirations, and general prostration. Death occurs from respiratory failure the mind remaining clear. Sometimes, clonic convulsions may be seen.

**Test for Gelsemic Acid**—A drop of ammonia added to a drop of gelsemic acid dissolved in sulphuric acid produces a copious deposit of crystalline needles

**Medico Legal Points**—Poisoning by gelsemium is generally accidental. During the investigation of the Clark Fulham murder case in Agra in 1912 it was suspected that Clark had administered gelsemium to Fulham with criminal intent

Gelsemine paralyses the spinal cord and respiratory centre, but has no action on the heart and brain. Sometimes it causes tetanic spasms

Gelsemine is eliminated in the urine

**Gelsemium Elegans**—This is a creeper which contains an alkaloid gelsemine. It is frequently used in Lushai Hills in Assam as a poison for criminal purposes usually for committing suicide. It produces acute pain in the abdomen, vomiting, purging and diarrhoea.<sup>1</sup> A man drank a concoction of the root of this creeper meant for external use and died half an hour later. The post mortem examination showed that the internal walls of the stomach were blackened.<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER XXXII

### CARDIAC POISONS

#### NICOTIANA TABACUM (TOBACCO, TAMBAKU)

This belongs to N. O. Solanaceæ, and is originally a native plant of America, but is now cultivated largely all over India.

The dried leaves of tobacco are used in India as articles of luxury by almost all classes of people, who use them either in the form of smoke or snuff, or chew them with lime alone or with lime and *pan*. The leaves are manufactured as cigars (*cheroots*) in Trichinopoly and Burma.

The leaves yield two active principles, *nicotine* and *nicotianine*.

**Nicotine**,  $C_{10}H_{14}N_2$ .—This exists in all parts of the tobacco plant, but notably in the leaves, which contain from 0.6 to 6 per cent in combination with malic and citric acids. It is a colourless, volatile, oily liquid, turning brown and resinous on exposure to air. It has a burning acrid taste, and a penetrating, disagreeable odour. It is soluble in water, alcohol and ether, the solution being alkaline in reaction. It first stimulates and then depresses the vagal and vasmotor ganglia. Similarly, it first stimulates and then paralyses the cerebral and spinal centres. In smaller doses it contracts the pupils but, when toxic symptoms develop, it dilates them.

**Nicotianine**.—This is also known as tobacco camphor, and is a volatile, crystalline substance, unimportant from a medico legal point of view.

**Duboisia Hopwoodii**, belonging to N. O. Solanaceæ, and growing in Australia, contains piturine, a volatile liquid alkaloid, acting exactly like nicotine.

**Symptoms**.—These are burning, acrid sensations in the mouth and throat, which spread down the oesophagus to the stomach, and are followed by salivation, nausea, vomiting, sometimes diarrhoea, giddiness, faintness, numbness, muscular weakness, tremors, cold, clammy skin, and partial or complete unconsciousness. The pupils are at first contracted, but later on become dilated. The pulse is generally slow at first, and then becomes very rapid. After very large doses, the pulse may be first accelerated and then slow and feeble. The respirations are at first rapid and laboured, and afterwards slow and sighing. Death occurs from paralysis of the respiratory centre, the heart continuing to beat for some time afterwards. Sometimes, there may be delirium and convulsions. In some instances death may occur very rapidly, the symptoms being those of sudden paralysis of the central nervous system.

**Chronic Poisoning**.—This occurs from overindulgence in tobacco for a long time. It may also occur amongst workmen employed in tobacco factories.

**Symptoms**.—These are cough from irritation of the throat and bronchial tubes, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea, anaemia, faintness, cardiac irritability and weakness, quick, irregular pulse, tremors and impaired memory. Eye-sight may be affected, leading to amblyopia.

**Fatal Dose**.—Three to four drops of pure nicotine taken into the stomach would probably prove fatal to an adult. Recovery has, however, followed 4 grammes of pure nicotine, as most of it had been eliminated by the vomiting which occurred soon after ingestion.<sup>1</sup> Half an ounce to one ounce of crude tobacco taken by the mouth has proved fatal. An infusion of thirty grains of dry tobacco leaves given as an enemæ has resulted in death.

**Fatal Period**—Nicotine, when swallowed, may cause death almost immediately or within five to fifteen minutes. In rare cases death may be delayed for several hours.

**Treatment**—Elimination by washing out the stomach with warm water containing finely powdered charcoal, tannin, or a solution of iodine in potassium iodide. These drugs render the alkaloid insoluble. Keep the patient in a recumbent posture, apply warmth to the body and cold affusions to the head. Administer hypodermically atropine, strichnine and diffusible stimulants, such as brandy, ether, etc. Oxygen inhalation, artificial respiration and galvanism must be resorted to, when necessary.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—The odour of tobacco is usually noticed on opening the stomach, which may contain fragments of the leaves. The mucous membrane of the stomach and intestines is congested and inflamed, if death has not ensued rapidly. The brain, lungs and liver are usually congested. The blood is dark and fluid.

**Chemical Analysis**—Nicotine is separated from the organic mixture by making it distinctly alkaline with sodium hydroxide solution and distilling it with steam, the distillate being collected in 5 to 10 c.c. of 10 per cent hydrochloric acid. The distillate is made alkaline, and shaken out with ether. The ether extract is evaporated to dryness, and the residue is tested for nicotine.

**Tests**—*1 Schindelmeiser's Test*—The residue gives a rose red colour with a drop of 30 per cent chemically pure formaldehyde solution and a drop of concentrated nitric or sulphuric acid if nicotine is present. If formaldehyde solution is used in excess, a green colour is formed. Conine or aniline does not give this reaction.

*2 Roussin's Test*—A solution of iodine in ether mixed with an ethereal solution of nicotine yields an amorphous, brownish red precipitate which after standing for some hours, crystallizes into long needles of a ruby red colour. These are called "Roussin's crystals".

*3 Biological Test*—One cubic centimetre of a dilute aqueous solution of nicotine (1 : 1000) injected into the dorsal lymph sac of a frog produces fibrillary twitchings in the muscles of the hind legs within a few minutes.

**Medico Legal Points**—Poisoning by tobacco has occurred accidentally from excessive smoking, from the infusion given as an enema, or from the application of the leaves or their juice to a wound, an abraded surface or even to the unbroken skin. A small girl<sup>1</sup> suffered from symptoms of tobacco poisoning following a vigorous rubbing of her trunk and limbs with a mixture of writing ink and scarpings from an old tobacco pipe as a remedy for a very diffuse attack of ring worm. A convict admitted to Liverpool prison, who secreted an ounce of cut Cavendish tobacco in his rectum in order to convey it past searchers, suffered from very severe symptoms four hours later.<sup>2</sup> Children have sometimes been poisoned accidentally by sucking the juice of a tobacco pipe, or by drinking hookah water.

Accidental cases of poisoning have, sometimes, occurred from nicotine, which, diluted with soft soap and water, is used largely as a germicide and insecticide, especially in agricultural districts. In 1926 a labourer<sup>3</sup> of Kent, who had used nicotine as an insecticide and kept it on a shelf in the kitchen with other bottles containing non poisonous medicine, took some of the nicotine by mistake and died immediately. The following cases are the examples of severe nicotine poisoning as a result of absorption through the skin —

1. In the process of making an insecticide a girl, 22 years old, accidentally split about 2 drachms of a 95 per cent solution of nicotine on her overall sleeves

1 Jones and Morris *Brit Med Jour* April 24, 1926 p 739

2 Gill *Brit Med Jour*, Vol I 1901, p 1-44

3 f Douglas Cowburn, *Med Leg and Criminolog Rev*, April 1933, p 120

She changed the overall and washed her arm under the hot tap, dried herself, wiped her damp jumper sleeve, and went on with her job. Twenty minutes later she collapsed.<sup>1</sup>

2 A man, aged 35, sat down in a chair on the seat of which some "Nicofume Liquid" (a 4% solution of free nicotine) had been spilled. He felt the solution wet through his clothes to the skin over the left buttock, an area of about the size of a palm, and recognized what it was by its characteristic odour. In about 15 minutes he was seized with severe symptoms of poisoning and recovered in 4 days.<sup>2</sup>

Soldiers, sometimes, apply tobacco to the skin with a view to becoming sick and thus escaping military duty. The usual method of malingerer is to soak two strong cheroots in water for some hours, and to place at bed time one in each axilla, which is held in position by a bandage. The following morning poisonous symptoms supervene, so that the malingerer is unable to attend to duty. In order to ensure greater certainty of the effects, the water in which the cigars have been soaked is taken internally. Deacon<sup>3</sup> describes the case of an Italian soldier who thus suffered from tobacco poisoning at the time of expiry of his leave, so that he was reported sick.

Suicidal and homicidal cases of tobacco poisoning are rare. Douglas Cowburn<sup>4</sup> reports the case of a woman who took an insecticide consisting of a mixture of nicotine apparently with suicidal intent, and who was subsequently found dead in a field with the empty bottle by her side which had contained the poison. In the celebrated case of Count Bocarme, nicotine was administered to the brother of the Countess by force. Tobacco used to be a common agent for infanticide in the districts of Agra and Gwalior. It has also been employed to procure abortion.

In addition to nicotine, tobacco smoke emanating from cigarettes, cigars and pipe tobacco contains carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, hydrocyanic acid, hydrogen sulphide, ammonia and pyridine, which are responsible for the irritation of the throat and respiratory passages.

Nicotine is eliminated partly by the lungs but chiefly in the urine, the excretion of which it increases. It is also detected in the saliva and sweat. In nursing mothers who smoke excessively nicotine may be found in the breast milk. Lessage<sup>5</sup> asserts that wet nurses who chew or smoke tobacco can poison the babies they nurse and the symptoms produced are digestive disturbances, restlessness, dyspnoea, bradycardia, syncope, collapse and death.

A case<sup>6</sup> is recorded where a breast fed infant, six weeks old whose mother smoked twenty cigarettes a day suffered from restlessness, insomnia, spastic vomiting, diarrhoea, rapid pulse and circulatory disturbances. The infant recovered after the mother's milk was discontinued. Nicotine was detected in the mother's milk. Such a result may, however, be a great rarity.

Putrefaction has no effect on nicotine, which can be detected in the body some years after death.

A non-poisonous alkaloid resembling nicotine has been isolated from the human body, and a ptomaine similar to nicotine has been found but is not so poisonous.

1 Lockhart Brit Med Jour Feb 11 1933 p. 46

2 Faulkner Jour Amer Med Assoc May 27, 1933 p. 1604

3 Brit Med Jour July 10 1933, p. 61

4 Med Leg and Criminol g Rev April 1933 pp. 120-1-1

5 Jour Amer Med Assoc June 6, 1933 p. 1787

6 Huykerheld Rusdin Maandchrift voor kindergesondheid Leyden May, 1937 p. 322. Jour Amer Med Assoc, July 10 1937 p. 178.

### LOBELIA INFLATA (LOBELIA INDIAN TOBACCO)

This herb belongs to *N O Campanulaceæ* and grows in North America

*Lobelia inflata* folia (*Dhawal*) belonging to the same natural order grows in Southern and Western India and the mountain ranges of Ceylon. Its leaves are serrated and hairy, and are very much like tobacco leaves.

Both these plants contain an alkaloid *lobeline* and *lobelic acid*.

**Lobeline**—This is a volatile oily yellow liquid alkaloid, possessing a pungent taste and an odour like that of tobacco. It is slightly soluble in water but freely in ether. It resembles nicotine very closely in action.

The non official preparations are *Lobelia* (the dried flowering herb) dose 1 to 3 grains and *Tinctura lobeliae aetherea* (strength 1 in 5) dose 5 to 10 minims.

**Symptoms**—Burning pain in the throat oesophagus and stomach vomiting distressing nausea headache giddiness small feeble and rapid pulse pupil contracted and insensible to light muscular twichings unconsciousness collapse stupor coma and death ending the scene. Diarrhoea and dysuria are sometimes present.

**Fatal Dose**.—Uncertain A drachm of the powdered leaves has caused death.

**Fatal Period** Uncertain Death may occur within half an hour or may be delayed twenty four to thirty-six hours.

**Treatment**—Produce vomiting if it has not already set in. Wash out the stomach Recumbent posture External warmth and hypodermic stimulants such as strychnine.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Softening and inflammation of the mucous membrane of the stomach and intestines Congestion of the vessels of the brain.

**Chemical Analysis**—Lobeline is extracted with ether from an alkaline aqueous solution. On evaporation of the ether the residue gives a red colour with strong sulphuric acid and a violet colour with sulphomolybdic acid.

**Medico Legal Points**—The injudicious use of lobelia in medicine has given rise to fatal accidental poisoning. It has also proved fatal when administered as an abortifacient.

Lobeline is excreted by the kidneys salivary glands and skin.

### PILOCARPUS MICROPHYLLUS (JABORANDI)

The leaves of Pilocarpus microphyllus and other varieties of Pilocarpus (Jaborandi) *N O Rutaceæ* owe their toxic properties to the presence of the alkaloid pilocarpine which is a colourless oily liquid and forms crystalline salts with acids. Pilocarpine nitrate is a pharmacopeial preparation the dose being 1/20 to 1/5 grain by mouth or hypodermically.

Pilocarpine stimulates the nerve endings and produces profuse secretion of saliva and perspiration causes contraction of the pupils and slows the pulse rate.

**Symptoms**—Flushing of the skin salivation lachrymation perspiration secretion of mucus contract on of the pupils cardiae depress on thirst, nausea vomiting diarrhoea abdominal pain difficult breathing cyanosis convulsions collapse and death from paralysis of the respiratory centre.

**Treatment**.—Empty the stomach by emetics or by washing it out with potassium permanganate solution Inject hypodermically 1/100 grain of atropine sulphate as a physiological antidote. Later give stimulants.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Not characteristic There may be signs of asphyxia and oedema of the lungs.

**Chemical Analysis**—Pilocarpine is extracted with chloroform from the alkaline solution and evaporated.

**Tests**—1 A small crystal of potassium bichromate is placed in a test tube containing 1 to 2 c.c. of chloroform. One cubic centimetre of a 3 per cent solution of hydrogen peroxide and a fragment of the extracted residue are added and the mixture is shaken vigorously for a few minutes. The aqueous upper layer becomes dark purple in colour and the lower chloroform layer develops a dark blue colour.

2 A drop of the residue dissolved in dilute hydrochloric acid placed in the eye of a cat causes contraction of the pupil.

**Medico Legal Points**—Accidental poisoning may occur from the eating of pilocarpus or jaborandi leaves or from an overdose of a pilocarpine preparation used in medicine. Owing to its depressant action on the heart it must be used with care in cardiac diseases.

**Areca or Betel Nut (Supari)**—This is the nut or fruit of Areca catechu or betel nut palm *N O Palmae* which is cultivated in Southern India and Malaya. The nut is used as a masticatory by the people of India and Eastern Asia. It is cut into slices and is chewed alone or is

taken with betel leaves, lime and catechu with or without tobacco. The nut is also used as an anthelmintic and as an astringent.

The betel nut contains several alkaloids, the chief of which is arecoline, an oily liquid which is soluble in water and most of the organic solvents, and boils at 200°C. It is highly poisonous and resembles pilocarpine in action.

Acute poisoning may be caused by chewing unripe betel nuts, the chief symptoms being flushing of the face, profuse perspiration, bronchial spasm, contraction of the pupils, thirst, colicky pain in the abdomen, diarrhoea, tetanic spasms, difficult breathing, slow pulse and collapse.

Some individuals are very sensitive to betel nuts, and develop poisonous symptoms soon after taking even a small fragment of the betel nut. In his annual report for the year 1938 the Chemical Examiner, Bengal describes the case of a woman aged about 30 years who, soon after taking a *pan* (betel leaf) prepared with lime, catechu, tobacco and betel nut, felt giddiness and nausea, perspired profusely and died from collapse in half an hour. At the post mortem examination the mucous membrane of the stomach and the brain and its membranes were congested.

### DIGITALIS PURPURLA (DIGITALIS OR FONGLOV)

This is a poisonous plant belonging to the N.O. Scrophulariaceae and growing wild in the hedges in the South of England. It is now cultivated in India and many other parts of the world.

The root, leaves and seeds of digitalis contain as active principles several glycosides, of which digitoxin, digitalin, digitalein, and digonin are the most poisonous.

The pharmacopoeial preparations of digitalis are as follows —

1 *Digitalis Preparata* (Digitalis Pulverata, Prepared digitalis or Powdered digitalis) — Dose,  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  grains.

2 *Tablete Digitalis Preparata* (Digitalis Tablets) — Each tablet must contain one grain of prepared digitalis, if the quantity to be contained in a tablet is not stated.

3 *Tinctura Digitalis* — Dose, 5 to 15 minims.

The non official preparations of digitalis are —

1 *Digitoxinum* (B.P.C.) — A mixture of digitoxin and gitoxin, occurring in minute, white crystals with an intensely bitter taste. Dose, 1/600 to 1/60 grain.

Natrelle's digitalin granules consist mostly of digitoxin, the dose being 1/600 to 1/240 grain.

much larger doses. One fourth to half a grain of digitalin and one-sixteenth grain of digitoxin might cause the death of an adult.

**Fatal Period**—This varies from three quarters of an hour to twenty four hours but may last several days.

**Treatment**—This consists in the use of the stomach tube or emetics followed by aperients and the free use of vegetable infusions containing tannin. Tea or coffee may also be given with advantage. Keep the patient warm and in a recumbent posture administer atropine strychnine and other stimulants and apply sinapism to the chest.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Not characteristic. There may be fragments of digitalis leaves in the stomach which may be found congested and inflamed.

**Chemical Analysis**—The glycosides may be extracted with chloroform from the acidified organic material.

**Tests**—**Digitoxin**—Strong sulphuric acid produces a green colour which is not affected by bromine water.

**Digitalin**—Dissolved in strong sulphuric acid it forms a yellow colour, which rapidly changes to blood red. The addition of bromine water changes the colour to violet red. Heated gently with a few drops of a mixture containing equal parts of strong sulphuric acid and alcohol digitalin turns yellow brown. The addition of a drop of a dilute solution of ferric chloride changes the colour to bluish green.

**Digitonin**—Strong sulphuric acid produces a red colour which is intensified by adding bromine water.

**Medico Legal Points**—Poisoning by digitalis is not a frequent occurrence. A few accidental cases have occurred from an overdose of one of the medicinal preparations or from eating the leaves by mistake.

Digitalis is rarely used for suicidal purposes and has been used only once as a homicidal poison when a homœopathic physician La Pomerais killed a widow in Paris in 1864 by giving her digitalin. He had pecuniary interest in her death.

Digitalis is not excreted by the kidneys as fast as it is absorbed into the system hence it is regarded as a cumulative poison. Persons who have been taking it for a long time may suddenly develop the symptoms of poisoning without any subsequent increase in the dose. In such cases the quantity of the urine should be measured to find out if it is diminished or digitalis should be prescribed with a diuretic or should be omitted for one week in every four weeks.

**Strophanthus**—The seeds of *Strophanthus kombe*, *S. O. Apocynaceæ*, contain as the chief active principle the glycoside strophanthin (kombe strophanthin or strophanthin k) which occurs as a white or yellowish white crystalline bitter powder. It is soluble in water and in alcohol the non official dose being 1/240 to 1/60 grain by intramuscular or intravenous injection. The official preparation made from powdered strophanthus (*Strophanthus pulvis*) is *Tinctura strophanthi* the dose being 2 to 5 minims.

The seeds of *Strophanthus gratus* and the wood of *Aekanthera schimperi* contain a crystalline glycoside ouabain or strophanthin g. It is soluble in water and in dehydrated alcohol and has a bitter taste. It is a pharmacopœial preparation the dose being 1/500 to 1/240 grain by intravenous injection. It is approximately twice as toxic as strophanthin k.

*Strophanthus* resembles digitalis in its pharmacological and poisonous actions but it acts more rapidly. It is not a cumulative poison as it is excreted more rapidly.

**Chemical Analysis.**—Strophanthin may be isolated from the acidified aqueous mixture of the suspected organic material by using amyl alcohol or benzol as a solvent. On evaporating the solvent the residue is identified by the following test :—

Strong sulphuric acid produces an emerald green colour, which changes to brown.

**QUININE (QUININA),  $C_{20}H_{24}O_4N$ ,**

This is an alkaloid which exists in combination with cinchonine and other alkaloids as salts of quinic or chinic and quinotannic or cinchotannic acids in the bark of various species of cinchona plants, N. O. Rubiaceae. These plants are native to Western South America, but are now cultivated in Java and India.

Quinine occurs in white, acicular, inodorous crystals having a bitter taste. It is insoluble in water, but dissolves in alcohol, ether, chloroform, benzene and carbon disulphide. It reacts like an alkaloid, and forms neutral and acid salts with acids. Thus, quinine sulphate, quinine bisulphate, quinine hydrochloride and quinine dihydrochloride are official preparations the dose of each being 5 to 10 grains. Dissolved in water, these salts have a blue fluorescence when sulphuric acid is present.

Quinine is a protoplasmic poison and reduces the metabolism of the body. In sufficiently large doses it paralyses and destroys all forms of living matter.

**Symptoms.**—These are giddiness, headache, ringing in the ears and partial deafness, epistaxis, disorders of vision, difficulty of speech, pain in the abdomen, vomiting, diarrhoea, mental depression, confusion of thought, muscular weakness, itching, erythematous or urticarial rash on the skin, haemoglobinuria, cold, clammy skin, gasping respiration, slow and imperceptible pulse, collapse, cyanosis and death from respiratory failure. Delirium and convulsions have, sometimes, been observed.

2 If a few cubic centimetres of dilute sulphuric acid are added to a solution of a quinine salt, a distinct blue fluorescence is formed. This is a delicate test, which shows reaction in dilutions as high as 1 in 100 000.

**Medico-Legal Points**—Cases of poisoning by quinine are mostly accidental. Owing to idiosyncrasy even medicinal doses have sometimes produced poisonous symptoms. Thus Bannerji<sup>1</sup> reports the case of his younger brother who used to complain of toxic symptoms even after the administration of  $\frac{1}{4}$  grain of quinine. Krishnamurti<sup>2</sup> records the case of a male 30 years old whose face became swollen and flushed and who complained of inordinate itching all over the body within ten minutes after he had taken 3 grains of quinine. Cruikshank<sup>3</sup> also quotes the case of a woman 63 years old who nearly collapsed after an injection of 1 c.c. solution containing 0.3 grammes quinine and 0.06 grammes urethane. He suggests the following test to be performed where there is reason to suspect idiosyncrasy to quinine—

If a drop of a 1 per cent solution of quinine hydrochloride is placed on the forearm and the skin under it is scarified a definite wheal surrounded by erythema appears ten minutes later in individuals susceptible to quinine. A control of sterile water shows only slight redness.

Quinine has been taken for suicidal purposes but does not seem to have been used homicidally.

Quinine excites the pregnant uterus and occasionally causes abortion hence it is often used as an abortifacient and has sometimes produced poisonous symptoms. A married woman<sup>4</sup> 34 years old swallowed 16 pills containing 6.08 grammes of quinine sulphate or 3.04 grammes (76 grams) of the pure alkaloid with a view to procuring abortion. Within a few hours she was taken ill with headache, vomiting, pyrexia and increased pulse rate. The conjunctive showed an icteric tinge and the urine was almost black. There was abdominal pain with bleeding from the vagina and scarlet rash all over the body. The patient became restless, drowsy and later developed a hiccup before she died on the tenth day. Abortion had occurred before death.

Quinine is eliminated for the most part unchanged in the urine. It may be detected in the urine within fifteen to thirty minutes after its administration by the mouth and excretion may continue for forty eight to seventy two hours. Traces may also be found in the saliva, sweat and milk.

#### VIRIUM ODORUM (WHITE OR SWEET SCENTED OLEANDER KIRIY OR KAVFR)

This plant belongs to V.O. Apocynaceae and is grown in gardens in India for its beautiful white or pink flowers, which are given as offerings to gods by Hindu worshippers. It has lanceolate leaves and has a two follicled fruit which contains numerous seeds.

All parts of the plant are poisonous. S.R. Naidu and his co workers<sup>5</sup> have isolated from the plant an active principle, nerin ( $C_{25}H_{30}O_{10}$ ), which is a pure, white crystalline glycoside. It is sparingly soluble in water, ether, petroleum ether and benzene but dissolves readily in alcohol, acetone and chloroform, and melts at 123°C. It is highly poisonous, and when injected into the dorsal lymph sac of a frog it produces paralysis and death. The average minimum fatal dose for a frog weighing about 10 grammes is one fiftieth of a milligramme. Eight milligrammes injected into the abdomen of a dog weighing about 4.1 kilogrammes kills it within an hour, the symptoms being progressive paralysis starting from hind limbs, defecation, retching and froth at the mouth.

About one eighth of a milligramme of strychnine is about the average minimum fatal dose for a frog weighing about 10 grammes, hence nerin appears to be about six times as poisonous as strychnine to a frog.

**Symptoms**—Difficulty of swallowing and articulation, abdominal pain, vomiting, profuse frothy salivation and diarrhoea. The pulse is first slowed and later becomes rapid and weak. The respirations are hurried from the beginning.

<sup>1</sup> Ind Med Gaz Sep 1978 p 33

<sup>2</sup> Ind Med Ga March 1927 p 142

<sup>3</sup> Brit Med Jour Jan 19 1929 p 104

<sup>4</sup> C.K. Varlan and G. Discoube Brit Med Jour March 30 1940 p 525

<sup>5</sup> Madras Chem Examiner's Annual Rep 1937 p 8 Jour and Proceedings of the Institution of Chemists (India) Vol XI Dec 1943 pp 134-144

These are followed by dilated pupils, muscular twitchings, tetanic spasms, drowsiness, unconsciousness, coma and death. Lock-jaw is frequently present, while diarrhoea is occasionally absent.



Fig. 174.—*Nerium Odorum*

**Fatal Dose.**—Uncertain. More than a quarter of a *tola* (1 *tola* = 180 grams) of the fresh root bark have produced poisonous symptoms.<sup>1</sup> Two hundred and fifty grams (about half an ounce) of the root may be considered to be an average fatal dose for an adult.<sup>2</sup> Four ounces of the decoction of the root caused the death of a man, 35 years old, in five days.<sup>3</sup>

1. *Ind. Med. Gaz.*, Sep., 1866, p. 258 a.

2. *C. L. Bose, Indian Med. Gaz.*, Nov., 1901, p. 412.

3. *Murray, Ind. Med. Gaz.*, 1877, p. 319.

**Fatal Period**—Uncertain A man 50 years old who swallowed some of the root with mustard oil with intent to commit suicide died in about twenty four hours<sup>1</sup> A Hindu female aged 20 years who took oleander root as an abortifacient died in two or three hours<sup>2</sup>

**Treatment**—Evacuation by washing out the stomach Give stimulants, such as ether and treat the symptoms

**Post mortem Appearances**—Not characteristic There may be congested patches in the stomach and upper portion of the small intestine

**Tests**—When dissolved in concentrated sulphuric acid a minute fragment of the acid ether extract of the root bark or leaves of *Nerium odoratum* obtained by the Stas Otto process produces an immediate crimson colour which assumes a deeper tint on standing It also gives Keller's test—a slow green colour appearing in the acetic acid layer and an immediate crimson colour in the sulphuric acid layer Both the colours are stable for several days Keller's test is performed by dissolving the extract in 1 c.c. of glacial acetic acid containing 5 per cent ferric sulphate and floating this solution on the surface of a mixture of concentrated sulphuric acid (100 parts) and 5 per cent ferric sulphate (1 part)

This extract does not reduce Fehling's solution but after hydrolysis either with hydrochloric acid or with emulsin it reduces Fehling's solution

**Medico Legal Points**—The root is used internally by ignorant people as a remedy for venereal diseases Hence accidental poisonings sometimes with fatal consequences have occurred from the administration of the root or its decoction Two Mahomedans drank each a cupful of a strong decoction of the root as an analgesic for pain in the loins One of them died in about 36 hours and the other recovered after prolonged illness<sup>3</sup>

In the form of a paste the root is used in the treatment of cancers and ulcerations The decoction of the leaves is applied externally to reduce swellings

Criminally the root is used as an abortifacient both as a local application and as an internal administration The root and the leaves are often used as a paste or decoction for suicidal purposes especially in Western and Southern India A case is recorded in which a man first took oleander and then to hasten his death he hanged himself on the same tree of oleander<sup>4</sup> A man of Parner in Ahmednagar District committed suicide by taking the juice of *Kaner* root (*Nerium odoratum*)<sup>5</sup>

*Nerium odoratum* is not often used for homicidal purposes but it has caused death when administered as a love potion As a cattle poison the juice of the root is sometimes smeared on a rag which is then inserted into the anus of the animal intended to be killed

Oleander was detected in the viscera of the female bodies which were completely burnt externally at the cremating place in Midnapur and Bhubneshwar (Puri)<sup>6</sup>

#### CERBERA THEVETIA OR THLVEVETIA NERIIFOLIA (EXILE OR YELLOW OLEANDER PILA KIVER)

This is a plant belonging to N.O. Apocynaceæ and is widely cultivated as an ornamental shrub in gardens in the plains in India It has linear lanceolate leaves large yellow bell shaped flowers and a green globular fruit containing a single nut light brown in colour and triangular in shape with two cells each enclosing a pale yellow seed The plant is highly poisonous and contains as active principles two glucosides namely thevetin and cerberin Both these glucosides

1 Dr Greg of Sitapur quoted in Chevers Med Juris p 73  
Bengal Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1929 p 13

2 Kali Mohan Sen Jid Med Ga April 1899 p 118

3 Bengal Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1923

4 Bombay Chemical Analysts Annual Report 1927 p 5

5 Bengal Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1923

reside in the milky juice which exudes from all parts of the plant. Thivetin,  $C_{27}H_{34}O_{12}$ , is sparingly soluble in water, but dissolves readily in ether and chloroform and melts at  $178^{\circ}\text{C}$ . It is highly poisonous and, when injected into the dorsal lymph sac of a frog, produces convulsions and death. The minimum fatal dose for a frog weighing about ten grammes is one fiftieth of a milligramme. Ten milligrammes injected into a dog weighing about three kilogrammes produces defecation, vomiting with retching, frothy salivation, paresis of the hind limbs and terminal spasms and causes death in about ninety minutes. Cerberin,  $C_{29}H_{36}O_{11}$ , is freely soluble in water and alcohol but insoluble in ether, benzene or chloroform and is also toxic, the lethal dose for a frog weighing about ten grammes being about one fortieth of a milligramme. Light milligrammes injected into a dog weighing about three kilogrammes produces frothing at the mouth, retching with vomiting and collapse, and causes death within an hour. Its paralytic action is not so well marked as that of nerm or thevetin<sup>1</sup>.

Ghatak<sup>2</sup> isolated from the kernels of the seeds of yellow oleander two glucosides, thevetin and thevetoxin. The first glucoside was obtained in snow white slender needles melting at  $192^{\circ}\text{C}$  by recrystallization from dilute alcohol. The second glucoside when recrystallized twice from hot water was obtained in slender shining, silky needles melting at  $178^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Both these glucosides were thought to be highly poisonous, but Bhatri and Lal<sup>3</sup> have demonstrated from experiments that thevetoxin is less toxic than thevetin and resembles in action the glucosides of digitalis.



**Symptoms**—Burning pain in the mouth and dryness of the throat, tingling and numbness of the tongue, vomiting and often diarrhoea, headache, dizziness, dilated pupils and fainting. The pulse is soft and slow, later becomes rapid, weak and irregular. Collapse sets in, and death occurs from heart failure. Tonic convulsions are sometimes observed.

**Fatal Dose**—Uncertain. One seed killed a child, about 4 years old<sup>1</sup>. Eight to ten seeds would prove fatal to an adult.

**Fatal Period**—Uncertain. The child who ate one seed died in 2 hours. A young man died in 2 to 3 hours after he took his meal mixed with the powdered root.<sup>2</sup>

**Treatment**—Same as in white oleander poisoning.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—Not characteristic. In the case of a Hindu male who died shortly after taking some yellow oleander the mucous coat of the stomach was thrown into exaggerated folds, the general surface of which was congested, and of a deep red colour scattered about the folds were some inflammatory spots of a lighter colour than the general surface, somewhat glistening and stellate in appearance. Several irregular fragments like millet seeds were found scattered in the mucous folds of the stomach, which on analysis were found to be those of yellow oleander. The duodenum to the extent of four inches was brick red in colour and had an irregular purple patch in the centre. The liver was congested.<sup>3</sup>

**Chemical Analysis**—Cerberin is easily destroyed by hydrolysis with dilute hydrochloric acid and by the gastro intestinal secretions, hence it is rarely detected in the viscera usually preserved for chemical analysis. Thevetin is resistant to a large extent to such destruction and, is, therefore, the only glucoside available for extraction and identification in cases of poisoning by yellow oleander. Thevetin is contained in the acid ether extract obtained by submitting the visceral matter to the Stas otto process and may be recognized by the following tests—

1 If the extract is treated with concentrated sulphuric acid or syrupy phosphoric acid followed by heating on a boiling water bath for five to ten minutes, a yellowish brown colour is formed which slowly changes to a bright pink colour.

2 *Keller's Test*—The ether extract is dissolved in 1 c.c. of glacial acetic acid containing 5 per cent ferric sulphate, and this solution is allowed to float on the surface of a mixture of concentrated sulphuric acid (100 parts) and 5 per cent ferric sulphate (1 part). An immediate blue colour appears in the acetic acid layer, and a slow mauve colour in the sulphuric acid layer.

3 The ether extract, when rubbed on the tip of the tongue, produces a tingling sensation and rawness lasting for an hour or more. The sensation is restricted to the area of application, and does not extend to the other parts of the tongue or to the lips as happens in the case of aconite.

4 The dry extract dissolved in about 1 c.c. of water and injected into the dorsal lymph sac of a frog produces convulsions in a few minutes followed by paralysis and death.

The portions of yellow oleander, such as particles of the pericarp or kernels of the seeds, root bark or leaves, boiled with dilute hydrochloric acid impart a blue colour to the mixture. If an alcoholic extract of the seeds is warmed with dilute hydrochloric acid a deep bluish green colour is produced. The colour disappears on adding a solution of potassium permanganate.

1 Chevers Med Juris p 260

2 S Bannerjea Ind Med Ga., Jan 1923 p 22

3 Daley Ind Med Ga., August 1903, p 36.

**Medico-Legal Points**—The root and the seeds are often used for procuring criminal abortion, and occasionally for suicidal and homicidal purposes. In his annual report for the year 1927, the Chemical Analyst of Bombay reports a case in which the powdered seeds were given to a woman to be administered to her husband as a love philter as a result of which he would become a mere puppet in her hands. The seeds are also commonly used for poisoning cattle especially in the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras. For this purpose the seeds are powdered and are administered to an animal in the form of a paste concealed either in an ear of corn or inside a *chapati*.

In his annual report for the year 1938, the Chemical Examiner, Madras, mentions that accidental poisoning occurs in children by eating the flowers.

Jadub Kristo Sen<sup>1</sup> reports four cases of poisoning by the seeds of this plant. In one case a young Hindu widow rubbed two seeds with treacle on a mortar and swallowed them to procure abortion. She suffered from poisonous symptoms, gave birth to a healthy male child on the fourth day and ultimately recovered. In two other cases a Mahomedan female and a Hindu widow attempted to commit suicide by taking two grams of the seeds. The fourth was a case of homicidal poisoning, in which a man developed toxic symptoms after taking a meal of stale rice left in an open pot by his wife with whom he was not on good terms. S. Bannerji<sup>2</sup> also reports a case, in which a woman administered the powdered root to her husband in a meal containing *pakhal* (stale rice) and bean curry.

Bhupendra Mohan Roy<sup>3</sup> reports the case of a Hindu male aged 22, who was suffering from toxic heart block due to *Cerbera thevetia*. When he saw him on the 17th April, 1927, the patient was in a stuporous condition and could not raise or hold up his head. The arms and legs were flaccid, and saliva andropy mucus were flowing from the angles of the mouth. At intervals he tossed his head from side to side and threw up his arms and legs. He could not answer questions. The pulse was feeble, slow and 36 per minute with marked irregularity. The respiration was slow and hurried. The pupils were normal and reacted to light. The blood pressure was 120/70. After inhaling a few whiffs of ammonia the patient opened his eyes and said that in order to end his miserable existence he had taken 8 seeds of *Kaner* (yellow oleander) squashed up with one piece worth of vermilion at 9 a.m. After three hours he vomited once. After the stomach was washed out, 1/100 grain of atropine was injected hypodermically every four hours, and a dose of magnesium sulphate was given to clear the bowels. Next day the patient was spitting bilious fluid, and felt hungry. Atropine was continued for eight or nine days, until dilated pupils, dry skin and great thirst were noticed. After complete recovery on the 25th April, he was handed over to the police to take his trial in the law court.

A case is recorded where yellow oleander could be detected in the stomachs and contents of the two bodies that had been exhumed and had undergone decomposition.<sup>4</sup>

The bark is used as an antipyretic in small doses, 2 grains of the powdered bark being equivalent to an ordinary dose of cinchona. In large doses it acts as an emetic and purgative and produces toxic effects.

*Cerbera Odollam (Dabur or Dhakur)*—This plant belongs to N.O. Apocynaceae, is similar in action to *Cerbera thevetia* and grows in swamps and creeks on the coasts of India and Ceylon.

1 *Ind. Med. Gaz.*, Nov., 1901, pp. 412-13.

2 *Ind. Med. Gaz.*, Jan., 1923, p. 22.

3 *Ibid.*, August, 1927, p. 4-6.

4 *Madras Chem. Exam. Annual Rep.*, 1933, p. 2.



(strength 1 in 6), dose, 2 to 5 minims and *linimentum aconiti oleosum* containing equal parts of aconite, belladonna and chloroform liniments and popularly known as A B C liniment. *Fleming's tincture* is almost of the same strength as the liniment of aconite, and is, sometimes, known as *tinctura aconiti fortior*.

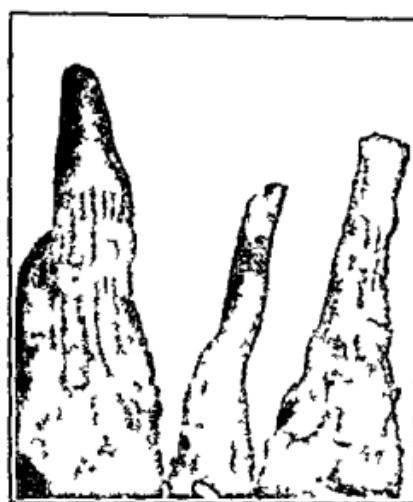


Fig. 177.—Dried Aconite Roots.

The root and other parts of *Aconitum napellus* yield aconitine (acetyl benzoylaconine), picroaconitine (benzoyl aconine), aconine and other alkaloids combined with aconitic acid. The chief of these active principles is aconitine, which forms colourless, transparent, rhombic crystals readily soluble in benzene and chloroform, less in ether and absolute alcohol and almost insoluble in water, the dose being  $\frac{1}{40}$  grain. With acids aconitine forms crystalline salts, of which the nitrate is used in medicine in  $\frac{1}{40}$  grain doses hypodermically. Aconitine splits up, on hydrolysis, into acetic acid, benzoic acid and aconine.

Aconitine first stimulates and then paralyses the peripheral terminations of the sensory and secretory nerves. It produces the same effect on the motor nerves and the centres of the medulla and cord, but it does not seem to affect the higher centres of the brain, for consciousness usually remains till the end.

The different species of aconite which grow in the temperate Himalayan region of India and are used as substitutes for the official aconite are *Aconitum baileyanum*, *Aconitum demorrhizum*, *Aconitum chasmantium* and *Aconitum spicatum*. The first two species, i.e., *Aconitum baileyanum* and *Aconitum demorrhizum*, were originally included under the name of *Aconitum serox*. They contain an alkaloid pseudaconitine (veratroyl aconine), which crystallizes in transparent needles or granular crystals, but is usually obtained as an amorphous or syrupy mass. It is slightly soluble in water, but it is more soluble than aconitine in ether and absolute alcohol. In its chemical reaction pseudaconitine presents a close analogy with aconitine, and on hydrolysis splits up into acetic acid, veratric acid and pseudaconine.

*Aconitum chasmantium* is the chief source of the aconite which is known as *Bish* or *Bilh* in the market of Calcutta. It yields an alkaloid and aconitine. *Aconitum spicatum* is often called *Aconitum serox* and contains an alkaloid, bilhaconitine.

Of these three alkaloids derived from the Indian species of aconite pseudoaconitine is the most toxic. Indaconitine and bikhaconitine are less toxic than the former, but are more poisonous than aconitine.

The root of the Indian species of aconite when dried and steeped in oil, is a black, plump, heavy tuber, 2 to 4 inches long, and has a disagreeable odour like hydraceum and a reddish brown resinous fracture. It is known in the vernacular as *Bish Telyabish* or *Bachnak*, and is extensively used both externally and internally by Vaidas and Hakims in the treatment of muscular rheumatism, neuralgia and paralysis. It is administered in  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  grain doses, after it is soaked in cow's urine for at least three days, whereby it loses much of its poisonous property.

*Aconitum heterophyllum* is a non poisonous variety of aconite, and is known in the vernacular as *Atis*. It grows in the sub Alpine and Alpine zone of the Himalayas. Its tuberous root is used in Indian medicine as a tonic and anti periodic. The root contains a non poisonous, amorphous alkaloid *atisine*, and aconitic acid.

**Symptoms** —The symptoms supervene immediately, or within a few minutes after swallowing a poisonous dose of aconite or aconitine or any of its preparations. These are severe burning and tingling of the lips, tongue, mouth and throat, followed by numbness and anaesthesia of these parts. Nausea, salivation pain in the abdomen and vomiting usually occur, but diarrhoea is rare. Later, tingling and formication spread over the whole body, causing great uneasiness to the patient. The pupils contract and dilate alternately, and vision is impaired. The patient complains of vertigo, restlessness, great prostration, and pain and weakness of the muscles with twitchings and spasms. The pulse is slow, feeble and irregular, and the respirations are first rapid, but soon become slow, laboured and shallow. The skin is cold and damp with sub normal temperature. Death occurs usually from syncope or in some cases from asphyxia. In most cases consciousness is retained till near the end but sometimes delirium or convulsions, insensibility and coma have been observed.

**Fatal Dose** —Fifteen grains of Indian aconite root would produce alarming symptoms and twenty to thirty grains would probably prove fatal. Thirty five and sixty grains of the root of *Aconitum napellus* have each caused death. One drachm of the tincture and twenty minims of the liniment have respectively proved fatal but recoveries have followed half an ounce of the tincture and two ounces of the liniment. One thirtieth to one tenth grain of pure aconitine is a fatal dose. One fifteenth grain of aconitine nitrate has produced a fatal result.

**Fatal Period** —The average fatal period is from one to five hours but may sometimes be delayed for twenty hours. A boy 12 years old, died in thirty minutes after having been given some sweet containing aconite by one of the "antiparty".<sup>1</sup> In non fatal cases the symptoms of numbness and tingling persist for a long time after the severe toxic symptoms have subsided. Thus in the case of a girl who recovered from the effects of five granules of aconitine administered for hysterical coxalgia the tingling persisted in both legs for several days and in another case for fifteen days.<sup>2</sup>

**Treatment** —Use emetics or wash out the stomach with a solution of iodine in potassium iodide or a solution containing animal charcoal or tannic acid. Maintain the recumbent posture, administer amyl nitrite by inhalation or atropine and diffusible stimulants such as digitalis, strychnine and ether hypodermically. Keep up the body heat by hot water bottles, friction and covering the patient with blankets. Artificial respiration may be resorted to, if necessary.

<sup>1</sup> Bengal Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1927 p 13

<sup>2</sup> *Jour d Med d Bordeaux* 1803 Willhaus Med Juris and Toxic, Vol II, Ed II,

Hypertonic saline may be administered intravenously to combat collapse. A woman swallowed about one ounce of A B C liniment, and suffered from symptoms of acute poisoning. She soon got into a collapsed condition but recovered after the intravenous injection of 3 pints of hypertonic saline<sup>1</sup>.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—Not characteristic. Fragments of the root may be found in the stomach contents. The mucous membrane of the stomach and small intestine may be congested and inflamed. There is usually marked general venous congestion with dark fluid blood.

**Chemical Analysis**—Aconitine is extracted from an organic material by digesting it with dilute alcohol made slightly acid with tartaric acid at first at room temperature and later at about 60°C. The fat present is separated by keeping the alcoholic filtrates in the ice-box. The fat is then removed and the filtrate is evaporated at room temperature under a vacuum. The solution is rendered alkaline by adding sodium bicarbonate, and ether and chloroform are used as solvents for the final extraction.

**Tests**—1. A few drops of a 5 per cent solution of auric chloride, added to the extracted residue dissolved in 2 or 3 drops of dilute hydrochloric acid, produce an amorphous precipitate, which shows golden yellow needles or rectangular prisms, if crystallized from alcohol.

2. *Aharz's Reaction*—Five to ten drops of pure bromine are added to a small portion of the purified residue in a porcelain dish and evaporated on a water bath. One to two cubic centimetres of concentrated nitric acid are added, and the mixture is evaporated to dryness. A few drops of bromine are again added if the solution loses its colour. One cubic centimetre of a saturated alcoholic solution of sodium hydroxide is added, and the mixture is evaporated to dryness. A red or brown residue is obtained, which is allowed to cool. Five or six drops of a 10 per cent solution of copper sulphite are added to it, when a green colour develops.

3. *Palef's Reaction*—A few drops of a mixture of 25 g. of syrupy phosphoric acid (85 per cent) and 1 g. of sodium molybdate are added to a small portion of the purified residue in a porcelain dish and heated over a flame. A violet colour develops.

4. *Physiological Test*—Tingling and numbness of the tongue and lips lasting for several hours are produced, if a small drop of a solution obtained by dissolving a fragment of the residue in very dilute hydrochloric acid is placed on the tongue or the smallest fragment of aconite root is chewed between the front teeth.

A few drops of this solution injected under the skin of a frog or mouse will produce the toxic effects and will cause the death of the animal, usually within an hour.

Pseudaconitine gives a positive reaction with Vitali's test, and melts at 211°C., while aconitine does not give this test, and melts at 198°C.

The chemical tests mentioned above are positive only if pure aconitine is available, but in actual practice it is hardly possible to obtain the pure alkaloid, hence the physiological test has to be relied upon for its identification.

**Medico-Legal Points**—Accidental poisoning by aconite is not a rare occurrence, seeing that it is largely used in Indian medicine.

On the 5th June, 1923, five persons, i.e. three males and two females, ate chutney with their breakfast, and suffered from poisonous symptoms. On admission to the King George's Hospital, Lucknow, in the afternoon the symptoms were tingling and numbness of the tongue, pain in the throat and abdomen, vomiting, weakness of the muscles and marked prostration. They all recovered on the fourth day. It appears that aconite root was powdered by mistake with mustard in preparing the chutney.

Aconite root has, sometimes, been eaten by mistake for horse radish root and has produced fatal results although the latter is cylindrical, is yellowish white or brownish white externally, whitish internally retaining its colour unchanged on exposure to air when scraped and bruised and has a very pungent taste. The tincture has been swallowed in overdoses and the liniment has been taken internally in mistake. The external application of neurline, a preparation containing Fleming's tincture, has caused death. Inhalation of its dust while powdering the root has produced toxic symptoms. A case of multiple poisoning by aconite illustrating the danger of careless labelling is reported by the Chemical Examiner of Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

A medical practitioner made up a drink supposed to contain citric acid tinctura aurantii and sugar. Eight persons including himself partook of the drink and all developed poisonous symptoms in two hours. All recovered. On examination the bottle labelled tinctura aurantii in Bengali was found to contain a tincture of aconite. A similar case of multiple poisoning occurred at Shalimar. A Khobari of the Bengal Nagpur Railway goods shed found a bottle containing tincture of aconite on the railway line and mistaking it for brandy brought it to the coolies, where his friends also thought that it contained brandy. Nine men partook of the contents of the bottle and all of them showed typical symptoms of aconite poisoning and one of them died. In a third case ten people drank some liquor mixed with soda water from a bottle labelled Beechtree Brandy which was purchased by one of them with several other empty bottles. They all felt an immediate irritation in their throat and vomited. They were removed to hospital where their stomachs were washed out. Four died and the others recovered. Aconite was detected in the viscera of two and the stomach washings of all the victims. It was also detected in the liquor contained in the bottle labelled Beechtree Brandy.<sup>2</sup>

In a case which occurred at Gorakhpur some supposed catechu served with a betel leaf was responsible for the poisoning of five persons in a marriage party. Three of them spat out the betel on experiencing some unusual sensation in their mouth but the other two ate up their shares developed the symptoms of irritant poisoning and died within ten hours. The supposed catechu on examination was found to consist of aconite root.<sup>3</sup>

A case<sup>1</sup> occurred at the Darbhanga railway station where aconite was administered apparently for the purpose of committing robbery. At a sweetmeat stall a batch of six passengers was taking their meals of curd and chura when a man belonging to another group of three became friendly with them and distributed some sugar from a packet among the six passengers. Five of them took this sugar with their meals and soon afterwards began to feel burning sensation and pain in the stomach. They all suffered from vomiting but had no purging and four of them died in a few hours.

Aconite is, sometimes, added to Indian liquors to increase the intoxicating effect, and causes poisonous symptoms followed occasionally by death. Such cases are common in the districts of Burdwan, Birbhum and Hooghly. In his annual report for the year 1940, the Chemical Examiner Bengal mentions a case in which a party of forty three men assembled to drink pachhaar (fermented rice gruel) in a liquor shop at Burdwan. Soon after, all of them developed symptoms of aconite poisoning and two of them died in 6 to 3 hours. In the district of Birbhum forty five persons suffered from the symptoms of aconite poison, after drinking pachhaar adulterated with aconite. Eleven out of them died.<sup>2</sup>

In rare instances aconite root has been used as an abortifacient. In his annual report for the year 1946 the Chemical Examiner Bengal reports the case of a widow, 35 years old who took powdered aconite root with a view to causing miscarriage. She died from the toxic symptoms after she aborted. In his annual report for the year 1934 he also describes a case in which aconite was intended to be given as an abortifacient. One aunt in law procured a few aconite pills for administration to a daughter in law in a case of illicit pregnancy. The mother in law of the girl having noticed the same in time prevented her from taking the pills and sent the same to the police for investigation.

Aconite root is occasionally used as a cattle poison. A case<sup>3</sup> occurred at Karwi in which aconite was detected in a substance found on the generative canal of a she-buffalo.<sup>4</sup> A case<sup>5</sup> occurred in the district of Bhilai, Alipore where aconite combined with datura seeds and mixed with straw was used as a cattle poison.

Aconite root is largely used as an arrow poison by the hill people of Nepal, Assam and neighbouring districts. The Lepchas of Sikkim describe the root as being useful to sportsmen for destroying elephants and tigers, useful to the rich for putting troublesome relations out of the way and useful to jealous husbands for the purpose of destroying faithless wives. In the Akha expedition of 1884, poisoned arrows were used against British soldiers. Some of these were chemically examined by Lieutenant Colonel Waddell I.M.S., and the heads were found to be smeared over with a paste containing aconite.<sup>6</sup>

Aconitine is eliminated mainly in the urine. Traces have also been found in the saliva, sweat and bile. It is therefore necessary to preserve these fluids for chemical analysis when available. In his annual report for the year 1940, the Chemical Examiner, Mysore, reports a case where he detected a poisonous alkaloid of the aconitine group in the saliva collected from a patient suffering from symptoms of aconite poisoning.

Aconitine is extremely unstable and is destroyed by destructive processes. Hence it is often difficult to detect it after death. It is also decomposed by an alkali. Wood ashes which are usually added to vomit destroy aconite owing to the presence of an alkali. Dr Hankin therefore recommends the mixing of the vomit and wood ashes with a mixture of two parts of rectified spirit and one part of acetic acid which has the power of checking this decomposition. In a criminal case<sup>7</sup> of aconite poisoning in the district of Gorakhpur the Chemical Examiner of the United

1 Bengal Chem. Exam. in val Rep. 1937, p. 13.

2 Bengal Chem. Exam. Annual Rep. 1946 see also Bengal Chem. Exam. Ann. Rep. 1946.

3 U.P. Chem. Exam. Annual Rep. 1907.

4 Bengal Chem. Examiner's Annual Rep. 1938 p. 15.

5 Bengal Chem. Exam. in val Rep. 1883.

6 A. K. v. Mathura Allahabad High Court Cr. Appeal No. 91 of 1946.

Provinces of Agra and Oudh failed to detect it in the viscera of the murdered woman or in the dejecta or guavas (in which the poison was mixed). In his letter to the Superintendent of Police he wrote that it was probable that aconite had never been detected either by him or any one else after absorption into the viscera. It might rarely be detected in the contents of the stomach before absorption and also in vomit. Aconite being a virulent poison, only small doses are used and the amount present is, therefore, very little and this fact obviously adds to the difficulty of detection. In a case where the accused had murdered her husband by administering aconite in his food on the 27th March, 1925, no aconite was detected in the viscera which were despatched to the Chemical Examiner, U.P., on the 3rd April, 1925<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, in a case where one Ali Baksh killed one Khidir by giving aconite mixed with spices in food on the night of April 15, 1924, aconite was detected by the Chemical Examiner in the viscera, vomited matter containing earth and reddish brown powder<sup>2</sup>. In another case<sup>3</sup> in which the body of a male aged about 33 years, was buried on the 4th March and disinterred on the 14th March owing to suspicion of foul play, the alkaloids of aconite were detected in the stomach and stomach contents examined together, but nothing was detected in the liver, spleen kidney. In his annual report for the year 1912 the Chemical Examiner, Bengal mentions that in a case of aconite poisoning where there is a history of vomiting, aconite is rarely detected in the viscera. However, he was able to detect it in the viscera of a woman, and a boy, who had vomited before they died in about three hours after taking the drug. A case is also recorded in which aconite was detected in the viscera of the partially burnt body of a Hindu woman<sup>4</sup>.

Hydrocyanic acid forms cyanides with metals. Of these potassium + sodium cyanide, mercuric cyanide and silver cyanide are used in phototherapy, electropathing and dyeing. These are soluble in water, alkaline in reaction and highly poisonous.

The double cyanides, such as potassium ferrocyanide and potassium ferricyanide, are practically non toxic, but they give off hydrocyanic acid under certain conditions and act as poisons. Thus, potassium ferrocyanide may produce poisonous symptoms and cause death, when it is taken in association with acids. A case is recorded where death occurred after a dose of potassium ferrocyanide and then one of tartaric acid. Another instance is also reported of the death of a man who took potassium ferrocyanide along with a mixture of equal parts of nitric and hydrochloric acids.<sup>1</sup> In his annual report for the year 1936, the Chemical Examiner, Bengal, reports that a Mahomedan male aged about 22 committed suicide by taking potassium ferrocyanide. On inspection of the body a big patch of submucous haemorrhage was noticed in the cardiac end of the stomach.

**Symptoms** — This is the most rapid of all poisons. Hence with a large dose the symptoms usually appear within a few seconds or even during the act of swallowing. They are rarely delayed beyond one or two minutes. During the interval the patient may be able to walk or speak or perform some volition at first. The first symptoms are the odour of hydrocyanic acid from the breath, loss of muscular power and giddiness. The patient staggers about, the eyes are wide open, bright and shining, and the pupils are dilated and do not react to light. Consciousness is lost. The respirations become slow and stertorous with sudden and short inspirations and prolonged expirations. Some convulsions affect the jaw rendering it stiff. The pulse is quick and feeble and later becomes imperceptible. These symptoms are followed by cyanosis, cold, clammy skin and relaxation of the sphincters. Death occurs from failure of respiration. Some say that it is due to the failure of internal tissue respiration brought on by a change of the blood due to the formation of cyanmethaemoglobin, which yields a spectrum resembling that of reduced haemoglobin, i.e., a thick band between the lines D and L.

When a small poisonous dose is taken, the patient experiences a hot, bitter taste and constriction of the throat and complains of salivation, giddiness, nausea, headache, confusion of ideas, sense of oppression in the chest, loss of muscular power and insensibility. The face is sussused or bloated, and the mouth is covered with froth, the eyes are glassy and prominent with dilated pupils, the finger nails are blue or purple. Convulsions of a tetanic character and involuntary evacuations precede death. Vomiting is occasionally observed and is sometimes, the beginning of recovery.

The spasmodic or piercing cry, which is commonly observed in cattle poisoning, is rarely met with in human poisoning.

Inhalation of the vapours of hydrocyanic acid produces a sense of constriction about the throat and chest, dizziness, vertigo, insensibility and death from respiratory failure. Tatham reports a case in which there were disturbances of vision.<sup>2</sup>

Potassium cyanide, which is strongly alkaline and frequently contains potassium carbonate as an impurity has a corrosive effect on the mouth, throat and stomach and causes epigastric pain and vomiting. The other symptoms are cyanosis of the face, neck and hands, white froth about the lips, dilated pupils, imperceptible pulse, slow and shallow respirations, incontinence of urine, coma and death. Sometimes convulsions may precede death. Williams<sup>3</sup> reports non-fatal cases of acute and severe gastro-enteritis in hotels from cyanide poisoning.

1 Blyth, Poisons, Their Effects and Detection, Ed 3 p 223

2 Brit Med Jour 1844, Vol 1 p 409

3 Jour Amer Med Assoc, March 1, 1930, p 627

apparently from silver polish containing sodium cyanide to the extent of 20-56 per cent.

Chronic poisoning occurs among photographers, gilders and workmen who are constantly engaged in preparing or handling either hydrocyanic acid or potassium cyanide. The symptoms are headache, vertigo, loss of appetite, nausea, constipation, foetid breath, dyspnoea and anaemia.

**Fatal Dose**—The smallest quantities that have proved fatal are half a drachm of dilute hydrocyanic acid and 20 minimis of Schelle's acid equivalent to 0.6 grain and 1 grain of anhydrous acid respectively. Forty-five to sixty minimis of dilute hydrocyanic acid are likely to prove fatal to an adult. Recovery has, however, occurred after taking 1 drachm of the dilute acid equivalent to 4.8 grains of the anhydrous acid. Two grains and a half of pure potassium cyanide may be regarded as a minimum fatal dose. A dose of 5 grains of potassium cyanide has proved fatal in some cases, though recovery has followed much larger doses of even 50 to 60 grains. Seventeen as well as thirty drops of oil of bitter almonds have produced fatal results, but recovery has taken place after doses of from 4 to 6 drachms in some cases. Sixty to eighty bitter almonds are sufficient to destroy the life of an adult. A handful of bitter almonds has caused death, while recovery has taken place after a dose of two handfuls. One and a half to two ounces of cherry laurel water have caused death.



Fig. 178.—Potassium Cyanide Poisoning. Staining over the upper lip and left side of face due to the corrosive action of the poison  
(From a photograph lent kindly by Dr. H. S. Mehta)

A concentration of one volume of hydrocyanic acid gas in 2,000 parts of air is generally fatal to animals. A concentration of 0.2 to 0.3 mg. of the gas per litre of air is regarded as sufficient to kill men almost immediately, while a concentration of 0.13 mg. per litre of air and an exposure of over an hour are sufficient to prove fatal to men.

**Fatal Period** — Two to ten minutes. It is possible that life may be prolonged for two to three hours, but in most cases the patient will recover if death does not occur within an hour.

In poisoning by potassium cyanide death usually occurs within thirty minutes. Powell<sup>1</sup> reports a case in which death occurred from commercial potassium cyanide in seven to twelve minutes. A student of Lucknow University died within 10 to 15 minutes after taking potassium cyanide. In a few cases death may be delayed for several hours.

**Treatment** — There is hardly time for treatment if strong hydrocyanic acid is taken. In the case of potassium cyanide or dilute hydrocyanic acid poisoning, wash out the stomach immediately with a dilute solution of hydrogen peroxide or potassium permanganate. Vinegar may be added if the poison is potassium cyanide. If the stomach tube is not available produce vomiting by mustard and water aided by tickling the fauces or by the hypodermic injection of apomorphine hydrochloride.

Cold affusions to the head and chest and inhalation of ammonia should be followed by the hypodermic injection of 1/50 grain of atropine, strichnine or camphene and sodium benzoate. Artificial respiration, and oxygen and carbon dioxide inhalation.

If death is delayed a mixture of ferrous and ferric sulphites with carbonate of potassium may be given as a chemical antidote to produce the innocuous Prussam blue. Martin and O'Brien<sup>2</sup> recommend the use of 1 ounce of a twenty-three per cent solution of ferrous sulphate, 1 ounce of a five per cent solution of caustic potash and 30 grains of powdered magnesium oxide. Intravenous injection of 1 c.c. of a ten per cent solution of sodium thiosulphate has been recommended, as it combines with hydrocyanic acid and forms non-poisonous sulphocyanate of sodium. Intravenous injections of glucose or glucose and insulin are regarded as beneficial.

In poisoning by potassium cyanide intravenous injection of 50 c.c. of a one per cent sterile aqueous solution of methylene blue (methyl thionine chloride U.S.P.) after lavaging the stomach with water containing sodium bicarbonate has been recommended as an antidote. Methylene blue converts the haemoglobin of the blood into methaemoglobin which combines with free cyanide thereby removing it from the reaction. Cases are recorded where recoveries by this method of treatment occurred after 15 and 100 grains of potassium cyanide had been taken.<sup>3</sup> Instead of methylene blue 10 to 20 c.c. of a ten per cent solution of sodium thiosulphate and 1½ grains of amyl nitrite may be injected intravenously and repeated if necessary.

In poisoning by inhalation of hydrocyanic acid gas remove the patient from the source of intoxication and start artificial respiration and give by inhalation oxygen with or without carbon dioxide. Inject coramine intermittently if the case is very serious.

<sup>1</sup> Ind. Med. Cal., Aug. 1902, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> Proc. Soc. Chem. Ind. Victoria 1901, Vol. I, p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> Zeiger Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc. Dec. 2, 1932, p. 1944. Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc., July 22, 1933, p. 269.

**Post mortem Appearances**—The skin presents a livid or violet colour. The post mortem stains are often bright red or pink due to the formation of cyanmethaemoglobin and also to the fact that the tissues cannot take up the oxygen of the blood leaving it bright red even in the veins. The fingers are clenched the finger nails are blue the jaws are firmly closed and there is froth at the mouth. The eyes may be bright glistening and prominent with dilated pupils. Rigor mortis sets in early and lasts longer.

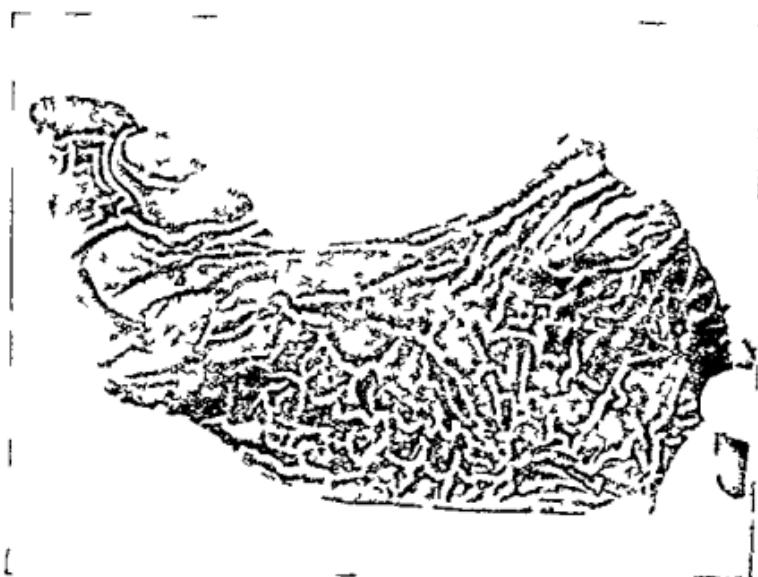


Fig. 179.—Stomach in poisoning by potassium cyanide  
(From the Pathological Museum, Grant Medical College, Bangalore)

The odour of hydrocyanic acid may be noticed on opening the body. There may be bloody froth in the trachea and bronchi. The right side of the heart is full and engorged with venous blood which is fluid and bright red. The lungs are congested. The serous cavities are eechymosed.

In poisoning by hydrocyanic acid the mucous membrane of the stomach and duodenum is often red and congested although it may be normal in some cases. In cases where potassium cyanide has been taken the lips and mouth may be corroded and the mucous membrane of the stomach and duodenum may be bright red inflamed softened and even ulcerated. At the autopsy on the body of a Hindu male 25 years old who committed suicide by taking potassium cyanide on July 13 1932 I found that the face was flushed the eyes were congested and the lips and finger nails were livid. The brain and its membranes were congested. The mucous membrane of the larynx trachea and bronchi was red congested and covered with froth. The lungs were dark red congested and exuded dark frothy blood from the cut surface. The pericardium was congested and the chambers of the heart contained blood. The mucous membrane of the oesophagus was red with injected vessels. The stomach was empty. Its mucous membrane was red inflamed and presented a velvety appearance. The stomach wall was thickened corrugated and the vessels were injected. The small intestine contained reddish liquid matter. The mucous membrane in its upper part was red and inflamed with haemorrhagic patches under it, and the vessels were injected. The lower part of the small intestine and the large intestine were normal. The

large intestine contained liquid faecal matter. The liver was dark red and congested and the spleen and kidneys were congested. The bladder was empty. Potassium cyanide was detected in the viscera usually preserved for chemical analysis.

**Chemical Analysis** — It is very necessary that the chemical analysis of the viscera should be made as soon as practicable after death, as hydrocyanic acid, being a volatile and unstable compound, is readily decomposed, especially if the conditions favouring putrefaction are present. However the acid has been detected in putrefied viscera a long time after death. Thus, Autenruth<sup>1</sup> detected its presence after 60 days when the organs were in a high state of decomposition. Jollyman<sup>2</sup> found potassium cyanide in the stomach contents of a Negro six months after death.

From organic mixtures acidified with tartaric acid, hydrocyanic acid may be separated by distillation with steam.

**Tests** — 1. If a strip of white paper is moistened with copper benzidine solution and dipped into the suspected organic mixture, the paper assumes a distinct blue colour if hydrocyanic acid is present. Copper benzidine solution is prepared by adding 1 c.c. of a 3 per cent solution of copper acetate and 5 c.c. of a saturated solution of benzidine in glacial acetic acid to 15 c.c. of water.

2. *Silver Nitrate Test* — A drop of silver nitrate solution is placed on a microscopic slide which is inverted over a wide mouthed flask containing the suspected material. On gently heating the flask on a water bath the silver nitrate solution assumes a white turbidity from the formation of silver cyanide. When examined under the microscope, the turbidity is seen to consist of needle shaped crystals.

3. *Prussian Blue Test* — A portion of the distillate is made slightly alkaline with a 5 per cent solution of sodium hydroxide and treated with a few drops of a freshly prepared 3 per cent solution of ferrous sulphite and 1 or 2 drops of a 3 per cent solution of ferric chloride. The mixture is shaken well, allowed to stand for 2 minutes, warmed gently and acidified with dilute hydrochloric acid. A precipitate of Prussian blue is formed if much hydrocyanic acid is present in the distillate, while a greenish blue colour develops if hydrocyanic acid is present in traces only.

4. *Sulphocyanide (Thiocyanate) Test* — A few cubic centimetres of the distillate are treated with a few drops of potassium hydroxide solution and a little yellow ammonium sulphide and evaporated to dryness on a water bath. The dry residue is dissolved in a small amount of water and acidified with a few drops of dilute hydrochloric acid. The solution is filtered and to the filtrate are added 5 to 10 drops of neutral ferric chloride solution. A blood red colour will develop, if hydrocyanic acid or cyanide is present. The colour will disappear on the addition of mercuric chloride solution.

**Medico-Legal Points** — Hydrocyanic acid and various cyanides are often used for suicidal purposes, as their swift and sure action is generally known.

A Bengali student who failed at the University examination swallowed the contents of a bottle of hydrocyanic acid. There was time to remove him to the Medical College Hospital where he died in about 15 minutes.<sup>3</sup> The Chemical Examiner of Madras<sup>4</sup> reports two cases of suicidal poisoning by potassium cyanide. In one a man and his wife took the poison together after going to bed and died in about 10 minutes. There was neither vomiting nor purging. On post mortem examination the mucous membranes of the stomachs were congested but not very markedly so. In the other case death was almost instantaneous. The Chemical Examiner

<sup>1</sup> *Detection of Poisons* Ed. 4, p. 36 (Eng. Transl. by Warren)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37. *Chemiker Zeitung Jahrg. 1903* 29 p. 140

<sup>3</sup> *Choonilal Rose Ind. Med. Gaz.*, Aug., 1915 p. 503

<sup>4</sup> *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 3.

of Bombay<sup>1</sup> reports a case in which two young persons a young man and his wife were lying in a room in the city of Bombay apparently in a dying condition They were removed to the JJ Hospital but expired on the way The post-mortem examination revealed an intensely congested and haemorrhagic condition of the stomachs and other viscera and white masses smelling of hydrocyanic acid were found in the stomachs Chemical analysis confirmed this finding

These preparations are rarely used with homicidal intent as they are easy of detection owing to their characteristic odour and perceptible taste

In the report of the Chemical Examiner Bengal for the year 1906 Choonial Bose<sup>2</sup> records a case of theft and murder in which a woman of the town of Calcutta was seen drinking with a stranger in her room one evening shortly afterwards she was discovered by the other inmates of the house lying on the floor and she died soon afterwards The stranger had already absconded The post mortem appearances were consistent with death from heart failure Hydrocyanic acid was detected in the viscera Hydrocyanic acid and alcohol were also detected in the viscera of a public woman aged 20 of Calcutta She entertained visitors with drink till midnight and was found dead in her room on the following morning with all her ornaments missing<sup>3</sup> The motive of the crime was apparently theft

A man aged 23 tried to poison a girl aged 18 by the contents of a so-called Indian poison bladder which contained in one 2 c.c.m ampoule 0.3 gramme of hydrocyanic acid in solution and then murdered her by hanging<sup>4</sup> A case<sup>5</sup> is also recorded in which Dr T C Oakley 47 years old murdered his daughter 4 years old by administering hydrocyanic acid and then committed suicide by taking the same acid.

A few homicidal cases of poisoning by potassium cyanide have also been recorded A Hindu female child, aged about 10 years was said to have been poisoned by her father with potassium cyanide He afterwards committed suicide by taking the same poison Two persons used to commit murders especially of prostitutes by administering potassium cyanide in liquor and then used to deprive them of the money and jewellery<sup>6</sup> In order to advance his career Lieutenant Hofrichter of Lanz sent tones containing potassium cyanide to various officers and in 1909 poisoned Captain Mader in Vienna with 2 grammes of potassium cyanide<sup>7</sup> In October 1932 the chief witness for the prosecution in an action against Communists was poisoned at Chemnitz on the day before the trial by chocolates containing potassium cyanide which were sent to him

Oil of bitter almonds and cherry laurel water (*aqua laurocerasi*) are used as flavouring agents and have caused accidental poisoning In the case of *Rex v Captain Donellan* the accused was charged with having caused the murder of his brother in law Sir T Boughton by administering two ounces of cherry laurel water in place of a purgative draught<sup>8</sup>

Accidental poisonings have occurred from the inhalation of the vapours of the acid used as a fumigating agent from the ingestion of the pharmacopoeial acid in mistake for some other drug from its application to a wound or a raw surface, and from the injection of potassium cyanide into the rectum

Cases of cattle poisoning are known to occur through eating *juar kadu* and *alsi* (linseed) plant This is due to the natural development of a cyanogenetic glucoside particularly in the young plants which under certain circumstances breaks up and yields hydrocyanic acid Bagchi and Ganguli<sup>9</sup> have demonstrated that the linseed plant (*Linum usitatissimum*) contains a cyanogenetic glucoside in all stages of its growth but the linseed flowers with immature seeds contain the maximum amount of the cyanogenetic glucoside producing as much as 0.69 per cent of free hydrocyanic acid and about half a pound of these flowers is sufficient to prove fatal to a bullock The fatal dose for a bullock is about 0 grains

<sup>1</sup> Annual Report 1928 p 6 see also C P and L P Chem Examiners Annual Rep 1949

<sup>2</sup> Ind Med Ga Oct 1907 p 394

<sup>3</sup> Bengal Chemical Examiner's Annual Report 1909 p 11

<sup>4</sup> Schaezler Beitr gerichtl Med 1931 VI 48 33 abstr Deuts Zeits f ges gerichtl Med 1932 VII 2 The Med Leg and Crimol Rev Jan 1933 p 83

<sup>5</sup> Phar Jour Jan 13 1943 p 30

<sup>6</sup> Beng Chem Exam Annual Rep 1930 pp 11 12

<sup>7</sup> Erich Leschke, Clinic Toxic Eng Transl by Stewart and Dorser 1934 p 144

<sup>8</sup> Taylor on Poisons Ed III p 620

<sup>9</sup> Ind Jour Vet Sc and Animal Husbandry Vol IX Part I March 1939 p 61

of pure hydrocyanic acid. Very dilute acids and alkalies only retard the liberation of hydrocyanic acid, but a normal acid or alkali stops it altogether. A strong solution of an alkali (sodium carbonate) is, therefore, recommended as an antidote in poisoning by the linseed plant.

Five buffaloes died after eating *juar* or young *jowara* plants which yielded hydrocyanic acid on analysis<sup>1</sup>. In Jodhpur 9 cattle and 2 goats were affected by eating from two bundles of *juar kader*. Twenty-four of the cattle and the goats died. On examination of the remnants of the two bundles of the *kader* hydrocyanic acid amounting to 0.011 and 0.0073 per cent respectively was found<sup>2</sup>. In Wasalganj Gaya 11 cattle became ill after eating the dry linseed plant and its dry fodder. Of these seven died<sup>3</sup>.

Hydrocyanic acid is rapidly absorbed from all surfaces even from the unabraded skin. Part of the acid thus absorbed is eliminated unchanged by the lungs. It is, therefore, necessary to preserve for chemical analysis one lung along with the other viscera which are usually preserved. Another part is changed in the tissues to sulphocyanides, which are excreted in the urine. It is also partly eliminated by the skin.

The toxic action of potassium cyanide depends largely upon the hydrochloric acid contents of the stomach. It is said that Rasputin was given a large amount of potassium cyanide in pastries, but he did not suffer from any ill effects as owing to alcoholic gastritis the liberation of hydrocyanic acid was inhibited by the lack of free hydrochloric acid in the stomach, and absorption was hindered by the thickening of the gastric mucous membrane<sup>4</sup>. In this connection it may be mentioned that harmless carbonate may be formed by the action of atmospheric carbon dioxide and moisture on potassium cyanide, if it is kept for a sufficiently long time. An old sample of potassium cyanide may also be converted by hydrolysis into a comparatively harmless salt potassium formate. In his annual report for the year 1930, Bagchi, Chemical Examiner, Bengal, reports the case of a man, who took a heavy dose of cyanide in mistake for sodium bicarbonate, but he was saved from the inevitable fate as the cyanide which he took was in all probability a very old sample, and was, therefore mostly converted into formate. The stomach wash was found to contain traces of hydrocyanic and formic acids.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### ASPHYXIANTS (IRRESPIRABLE GASES)

#### CARBON DIOXIDE (CARBONIC ACID GAS,

#### CARBONIC ANHYDRIDE), CO<sub>2</sub>.

This is a heavy, colourless, inodorous gas, having a slightly acid taste. It is a constituent of the atmospheric air in which it exists to an extent of 0.04 per cent and the air containing 2 per cent causes discomfort, while more than 20 per cent causes death, but if the air is contaminated with carbon dioxide from respiration or combustion 5 per cent of it may be fatal. It is given off in the process of respiration, combustion, fermentation and putrefaction of animal matter. It forms the choke damp or after damp of the coal mines. It is also evolved in the neighbourhood of lime kilns on account of decomposition of carbonates. Being heavier than air it tends to accumulate at the bottoms of old wells, damp cellars, mine shafts, brewers' vats, grain pits, etc.

Carbon dioxide (*Carbonic dioxidum*) is a pharmacopœial preparation and stimulates the respiratory centre, when administered by inhalation in dilutions of 5 to 7 per cent with oxygen. It acts as a mild rubefacient when applied externally in the form of a solution, but in the solid form it acts as a caustic.

**Symptoms**—These are heaviness in the head, throbbing of the temporal arteries, giddiness, ringing in the ears, a sensation of oppression, muscular weakness, drowsiness and insensibility passing into coma with stertorous breathing. Death occurs from asphyxia or apoplexy. Sometimes there may be convulsions and delirium.

When inhaled in concentrated form immediate insensibility occurs followed by death from spasm of the glottis causing suffocation.

**Treatment**—The patient must at once be removed into the open air, and artificial respiration should be started with inhalation of oxygen. This ought to be assisted by galvanism and friction of the extremities. After breathing is established, the body should be well covered with blankets, and coffee or brandy should be administered internally. If a patient is seen lying unconscious at the bottom of a well or pit used for storing grain, an attempt should be made to discharge oxygen from an oxygen holder into the bottom of the well or pit by means of a hose that it may not only revivify the patient but displace the carbon dioxide so that others can descend to render him help.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—The body heat is retained for a longer period. The face is usually pale and placid, but may be swollen and cyanosed. The pupils are dilated. The brain and lungs are usually congested. The right side of the heart contains dark fluid blood with venous engorgement, and the left is empty. Leechmosed patches are noticed in the small intestine.

A male child, 4 months old, was shut up in a small steel trunk on or about the 29th November, 1930, and died consequently. At the post mortem examination held by me on the next day the face was flushed, and the lips and finger nails were cyanosed. The mucous membrane of the larynx and trachea was congested and covered with froth. The lungs were congested and exuded frothy blood from the cut surfaces. The liver, spleen and kidneys were congested.

**Tests**—1 Carbon dioxide makes lime water milky.

2 A burning candle will be extinguished in the air containing more than 6 per cent of carbon dioxide.

3 Barium nitrate gives a white precipitate of barium carbonate with carbonic acid, soluble with effervescence in hydrochloric or nitric acid

4 Silver nitrate gives a white precipitate of silver carbonate

**Medico-Legal Points**—Cases of poisoning by carbon dioxide are mostly accidental. In his annual report for the year 1941, the Chemical Examiner Bengal, reports the case of two men, who died of asphyxia from the inhalation of carbon dioxide in a 36 feet deep well having 4 feet of water. One of them went down into the well to recover his bucket dropped accidentally. He was soon found in great distress at the bottom of the well, hence the other man went to his rescue, and got down promptly into the well. He felt suffocated and raised an alarm at once, but neither of them could be brought out of the well in time, and both died.

### CARBON MONOXIDE (CARBONIC OXIDL GAS) CO

This is prepared by the decomposition of certain organic substances such as oxalic and formic acids, by means of sulphuric acid, and is formed whenever carbon is burned with an insufficient supply of air or oxygen. It is found in the gaseous products from charcoal stoves, salamanders, blast furnaces, lime kilns, gas engines and burning houses. It is generated in a large amount when gunpowder or dynamite is exploded, and when explosions occur in coal mines. It is a constituent of coal gas, the amount varying from 4 to 15 per cent. It is found in the proportion of 30 to 40 per cent in water gas which is obtained by blowing steam through red hot coal or coke. It is present in quantities varying from 6 to 9 per cent in the exhaust gases of motor cars. The quantity of carbon monoxide produced per minute by a 20 horse power motor car is approximately 1 cubic foot which is enough to render the atmosphere of a small closed garage of 10 by 10 by 20 feet deadly in less than ten minutes<sup>1</sup>. Carbon monoxide also occurs in tobacco smoke.

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, tasteless, odorous gas. It is almost insoluble in water and alcohol. It burns with a blue flame, forming carbon dioxide, and explosive mixtures with air or oxygen. It combines with metals, such as nickel and iron and forms colourless liquids, known as carbonyls. Combined with chlorine, it forms carbon tetrachloride, commonly called phosgene which was used as a poisonous gas during the last Great War.

Carbon monoxide is a highly poisonous gas, as it readily combines with the haemoglobin of the red blood corpuscles to form a stable compound known as carboxyhaemoglobin, and thus reduces the oxygen carrying power of the blood. The affinity of carbon monoxide for the blood is about 200 times greater than that of oxygen, so that as long as carbon monoxide is present in the atmosphere, it becomes fixed cumulatively in the blood.

**Symptoms**—When the gas is inhaled in concentrated form, sudden insensibility supervenes immediately followed by coma and death. Coma may last for three, four or five days even after the patient has been removed from the gas. In one case a patient remained comatose for eight days and died on the twelfth day after the fatal inhalation<sup>2</sup>. In such cases there may be broncho-pneumonia or aema of the lungs.

When inhaled in dilute form, the symptoms are dizziness, headache, noises in the ears, nausea sometimes vomiting, muscular weakness, drowsiness, dilated pupils, retarded breathing, coma and death. In some cases tremors and convulsions may precede death.

<sup>1</sup> Henderson Brit Med Jour Jan 9, 1926 p 44

<sup>2</sup> Blith Poisons Ed 1, p 75

Nervous and mental symptoms are occasionally manifested after recovery from the effects of the gas. The symptoms may be cerebral haemorrhage, encephalitis, optic neuritis, chorea, spastic paraplegia, retrograde amnesia, aphasia, mental confusion, transient mania, and dementia.

It should be remembered that the symptoms are not noticeable until the haemoglobin is about 20 per cent saturated with carbon monoxide when shortness of breath is observed. When the saturation increases to 30 per cent, there is a slight increase in the rate of the pulse and respiration, followed by headache, nausea and faintness. From experiments made upon himself Haldane<sup>1</sup> has found that the loss of memory, mental confusion and inco-ordination of movement are the marked symptoms when the haemoglobin reaches a saturation of 30 to 40 per cent. Forty to fifty per cent saturation causes collapse and inability to move the limbs and 60 to 70 per cent saturation causes unconsciousness and rapid death. Haldane has also demonstrated that the haemoglobin is about 50 per cent saturated in deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning. In persons in ill health death may occur with a much lower percentage of carbon monoxide in the haemoglobin. Spilsbury<sup>2</sup> cites a case of suicide in which a young woman suffering from chronic tuberculosis of the lungs died when her blood reached a saturation of only 45 per cent. In two other cases in which the fatal percentage was about 50 one was an old feeble person and the other was suffering from cancer of the stomach.

According to Gruber<sup>3</sup> the air containing 0.02 per cent carbon monoxide is at the limit of toxicity, while the air containing 0.05 per cent causes distinct toxic symptoms. The Board of Trade reported in 1924 that in atmosphere containing 0.25 per cent carbon monoxide or 3 to 3.3 per cent coal gas would prove fatal to a healthy adult in about four hours. A smaller percentage would be fatal if the exposure was over a prolonged period. The air containing 1 per cent carbon monoxide would cause 50 per cent saturation of the blood in fifteen minutes and 80 per cent in twenty three minutes when death would result. However, if the victim exerted himself while absorbing the first part of the carbon monoxide he might be breathing four or five times as much and reach the 50 per cent saturation in five minutes.<sup>4</sup> Henderson and Haagard<sup>5</sup> from their experiments have laid down a standard for calculating the toxic action of carbon monoxide which depends upon the amount of the gas and the time of exposure. When the time of exposure in hours multiplied by the concentration of carbon monoxide in parts per 10,000 of air equals 3 there is no perceptible physiological effect. When the product equals 6 there is a just perceptible effect, perhaps a slight headache and lassitude; when it equals 1, severe headache and nausea result; when it equals 15 the condition is dangerous and when it rises above 15, the conditions are such as will be quickly fatal.

**Chronic Poisoning** — This form of poisoning is found in persons who are constantly exposed to the action of the gas in gas houses, and automobile workshops and in those inhabiting ill ventilated rooms, in which fire is burning.

**Symptoms** — These are headache, nausea, digestive disturbances, dyspnoea, dizziness, mental torpidity, loss of memory, wasting of the muscles, anaemia, and in some cases symptoms of peripheral neuritis and glycosuria.

<sup>1</sup> Brit Med Jour July 5 1930 p 16

<sup>2</sup> Brit Med Jour July 5 1930 p 16

<sup>3</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Manual for the Detection of Poisons and Pesticides Drugs (English Translation by Warren) Ed II p 3-4*

<sup>4</sup> Haldane Brit Med Jour July 5 1930 p 16

<sup>5</sup> Jour Industrial and Forensic Chem 1922 Vol 16 p 229 Brit Med Jour Jan 9, 1926 p 45

**Treatment**—Remove the patient at once into the fresh air. Commence artificial respiration and supplement it by the administration of oxygen containing 3 to 10 per cent of carbon dioxide. This mixture stimulates the respiratory centre, deepens the respirations, assists the oxygen absorption and eliminates rapidly the carbon monoxide from the haemoglobin. Inject hypodermically 0.5 to 1 c.c. of adrenaline and intravenously 5 c.c. of 20 per cent ephedrine solution and repeat them if necessary, at intervals of from half an hour to an hour. Keep the patient warm by applying hot water bottles to the extremities and by covering the body with blankets.

In severe collapse administer subcutaneously normal saline or resort to blood transfusion.

After breathing is established watch the patient carefully for the after effects of carbon monoxide poisoning, and give him hot tea or coffee when he is conscious enough to swallow.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—Externally the lips and finger-nails have a bright red colour. Irregular patches of a bright red colour are scattered over the anterior surface of the body, and the post mortem stains appearing on the dependent parts have also the same bright red colour. Internally the blood is fluid and of a bright cherry red colour due to the formation of carboxyhaemoglobin. The internal organs are hyperaemic and are bright red owing to the colour of the blood. The mucous membrane of the air passages is bright red and is often covered with froth. The lungs are congested and may occasionally be oedematous. There is serous effusion into the ventricles of the brain.

Punctiform haemorrhages and softening in the cortex and the lenticular nuclei may be found in chronic carbon monoxide poisoning. There may be fatty degeneration of the heart and kidneys.

**Tests**—**1. Spectroscopic Test**—The spectrum of the blood will show two absorption bands similar to those of oxyhaemoglobin but placed nearer the violet end. The addition of ammonium sulphide does not alter the spectrum.

**2. Happle Seyler's Test**—Caustic soda of specific gravity 1.3 produces a greenish colour if added to normal blood but retains the bright red colour if carbon monoxide is present in the blood.

**3. Kunkel's Test**—The suspected blood diluted with 4 volumes of water, is mixed with 3 times its volume of 1 per cent tannic acid solution and shaken well. Carbon monoxide blood forms a crimson red coagulum which retains its colour for several months. Normal blood forms a coagulum which is at first red, becomes brown in the course of one to two hours and then becomes grey in twenty-four to forty-eight hours. The blood saturated even with 10 per cent carbon monoxide responds to this test.

**4. Katayama's Test**—Ten cubic centimetres of the suspected blood diluted with 50 parts of distilled water are mixed with four drops of orange-red ammonium sulphide solution and 3 to 6 drops of 30 per cent acetic acid. The mixture is filtered and the filtrate of carbon monoxide blood remains red while normal blood becomes green or grey. Orange-red ammonium sulphide solution is made by adding 2 grammes of sulphur to 100 c.c. of yellow ammonium sulphide.

**5. Potassium Ferrocyanide Test**—If 15 c.c. of blood are mixed with an equal amount of 20 per cent potassium ferrocyanide solution and 12 c.c. of dilute acetic acid and shaken gently, a bright red coagulum will form if the blood contains carbon monoxide, while a dark brown coagulum will form if the blood is normal.

The Reversion Spectroscope method designed by Professor Hartree is very convenient for the quantitative determination of carbon monoxide present in blood.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For details see Sydley Smith and Glaister, *Recent Advances in Forensic Medicine*, Ed. II, p. 201.

**Medico-Legal Points** —Poisoning by carbon monoxide is mostly accidental. Accidents may occur in connection with incomplete combustion of wood char coal or coal in ill ventilated rooms, leaky gas pipes and taps in dwellings, and motor car exhausts in small garages or even in narrow streets where motor traffic is very dense.

On the night of the 10th February 1924 a family consisting of a man aged 35 years his wife aged 20 years and a son aged 10 years went to sleep in a closed room where coal was kept burning to ward off cold. Next morning the boy was found dead in bed and the man and the woman were found in a state of unconsciousness. They were immediately removed to the King George's Hospital Lucknow. On admission they were found in a comatose condition and the limbs were rigid and the reflexes were exaggerated. They gradually recovered in six or seven days. The blood of the three victims showed the presence of carbon monoxide in the spectroscope.

Sherman, Swindler and Mc Ellroy<sup>1</sup> describe three cases of collapse under the use of ethylene as an anaesthetic of which two proved fatal. The blood from the patients showed 50 to 60 per cent saturation with carbon monoxide. The cylinder of ethylene was found to contain carbon monoxide concentration of 0.7 per cent.

Suicidal poisoning by carbon monoxide frequently occurs in England and other Western countries. The victim generally shuts himself up in a room after placing smouldering fire and after closing all the doors and windows. Sometimes, a suicide sleeps in a room where a gas tap is turned on or he may attach a rubber tube to the gas tap and then put it in his mouth. In India suicide by carbon monoxide is rare. An Anglo Indian 60 years old and resident of Lucknow, was found dead on a couch in a small room of his house at about 1 p.m. on October 23 1929. The room had been closed from inside all openings to allow ventilation had been closed and charcoal had been kept burning in an *angethi* (stove). A case<sup>2</sup> also occurred in Bombay where a European committed suicide by sitting in a chair near a gas stove in his kitchen after opening the gas tap and then covering his head and the gas stove with a rug and a sheet. The door and windows of the kitchen had also been shut.

The use of carbon monoxide for homicidal poisoning is very rare, although a few cases have been recorded. A murderer may turn on a gas tap when his victim is asleep in his bed room, and thus suffocate him to death without disturbing him.

The elimination of the gas from the blood after the patient has been removed from the atmosphere containing carbon monoxide is very slight for the first hour and a half but becomes rapid after that and provided the patient lives, all the carbon monoxide would have been eliminated from five to six hours.<sup>3</sup>

A case<sup>4</sup> is recorded in which the post mortem appearances which simulated very closely those of carbon monoxide poisoning were due to the formation of nitric oxide haemoglobin (nitroxyhaemoglobin) after death. A man employed at a colliery in stoking the boiler furnaces died after an illness of nine days. At the post mortem examination held within a few hours the whole of the blood in whatever part of the body including the heart, spleen, kidneys, muscles and lungs had a bright red colour exactly similar to that seen in death from carbon monoxide. The blood also responded to the usual tests of carboxyhaemoglobin. Hence a verdict was given at the inquest that the death was due to carbon monoxide poisoning. On further investigation it was, however, found that the red colour of the blood was due to the development of nitric oxide haemoglobin probably by the action of a nitrifying infective organism in the body. A solution of the

1 *Jour Amer Med Assoc* 1926 p 176.

2 *Times of India* Dec 13 1934.

3 *Henderson Brit Med Jour* Jan 9 1926 p 4. *Douglas J Herr Ibid* March 5 1927.

p 415

4 *Ba ha n Haldane and Savage Brit Med Jour Aug 1 1925 p 187.*

blood containing nitric oxide haemoglobin can be distinguished by boiling, since it gives a pink coagulum, while the blood containing oxyhaemoglobin and carboxyhaemoglobin gives a dull grey coagulum.

Carbon monoxide retards putrefaction, and may be detected in the blood several days after death from poisoning by this gas. Autunrieth<sup>1</sup> detected carbon monoxide in the blood of an adult two months after he died from poisoning by coal gas. Ligum<sup>2</sup> describes a case in which carbon monoxide was detected chemically and spectroscopically in the fluid contents of the pleura and abdomen of a woman whose body was exhumed seven months after death which occurred suddenly from poisoning by carbon monoxide from a defective oven. On the other hand, Dr Mathur of the Physiological Department of the King George's Medical College, Lucknow, has come to the conclusion from investigations carried out on rats in January, 1933, that in cases of deaths by carbon monoxide the organs begin to decompose after the third day and the blood, after the fourth day.

#### CARBON DISULPHIDE (CARBON BISULPHIDE) CS<sub>2</sub>

This is a colourless, highly refractive volatile mobile liquid, with a disgusting odour. It boils at 46°C. Being highly inflammable it burns with a blue flame, forming carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide. It is not miscible with water, but freely dissolves in alcohol, ether, chloroform, hydrocarbons of the benzene family and most of the essential oils. It is used in the arts as a solvent for caoutchouc, India rubber, phosphorus, sulphur etc., and for extracting essential oils, spices and perfumes.

**Acute Poisoning** — This form of poisoning occurs from swallowing the liquid or from inhaling its vapour.

**Symptoms** — Intense burning pain in the throat, nausea, vomiting, headache, giddiness, drowsiness, unconsciousness, dilated pupils, cyanosed lips, cold, damp skin, laboured respiration, muscular weakness and odour of carbon disulphide in the breath, urine and faeces. These are followed by convulsions, coma and death.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period** — About a drachm of liquid carbon disulphide when taken internally, will cause serious symptoms and about half an ounce will prove fatal. Death may occur within a few hours or may be delayed for several days. It has been ascertained that a concentration of about 600 parts per million produces serious symptoms if inhaled for one hour whilst double this concentration is dangerous in thirty minutes.<sup>3</sup>

in many chemical industries, such as artificial silk works, sulphur dye works, gas works, tar distillation works, etc. It is a highly poisonous gas, acting as a local irritant and affecting the central nervous system. It causes death from asphyxia due to paralysis of the respiratory centre.

Hydrogen sulphide is not a cumulative poison. When inhaled it passes into solution in the blood where it is rapidly oxidized by the oxygen of the haemoglobin to harmless or relatively non toxic substances. It does not combine with oxyhaemoglobin, but combines with methaemoglobin and changes it to sulphohaemoglobin especially after death.

**Symptoms**—When inhaled in its pure state, this gas is almost immediately fatal causing unconsciousness at once and stoppage of respiration after a few seconds. When diluted with air, it produces irritation of the eyes, nose, throat and air passages, followed by dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, cyanosis, dilated pupils, cold extremities, muscular prostration, laboured breathing, irregular pulse, tetanic convulsions, delirium, stupor, coma and death. In some cases there may be pneumonia or oedema of the lungs. When largely diluted it gives rise to languor and sleepiness, and proves fatal without sensibility being restored. When very largely diluted, it may sometimes produce febrile symptoms somewhat resembling typhoid fever.

**Fatal Dose and Fatal Period**—A concentration of 0.02 per cent hydrogen sulphide in the air is sufficient to produce local irritation in man. 0.05 per cent gives rise to alarming symptoms if breathed for half an hour while 0.07 per cent is dangerous, 0.18 per cent proves fatal immediately.

**Chronic Poisoning**—This occurs in workmen who are exposed to the constant inhalation of this gas for a prolonged period. According to Haggard<sup>1</sup> the prolonged inhalation of a concentration of the gas even as low as 0.01 per cent is sufficient to induce symptoms of chronic poisoning.

**Symptoms**—These are conjunctivitis, headache, gastric disturbances, anaemia, and furunculosis. Nervous disturbances are also present.

**Treatment**—Fresh air inhalation of oxygen with 5 to 7 per cent of carbon dioxide, artificial respiration and warmth to the extremities. Give intravenously respiratory stimulants such as coramine (1 to 2 c.c. of a 2% per cent solution), metrazol (1½ to 6 grains) or caffeine with sodium benzoate (7½ to 15 grains).

**Post mortem Appearances**—Putrefaction sets in much more rapidly. The offensive smell is noticed on opening the body. The blood is liquid and dark brown in colour from the conversion of haemoglobin into sulphohaemoglobin which is characterized by an absorption spectrum of two bands, consisting of one band in the red between C and D and a fainter band between D and E. The lungs are congested and oedematous. The other organs are dark and congested.

**Tests**—1. Hydrogen sulphide is recognized by its offensive smell which is perceptible when one part is present in 10,000 of air.

2. A piece of white filter paper moistened with lead acetate or carbonate turns black on bringing it in contact with the stomach or other organs containing the gas.

#### NITROGEN MONOXIDE (NITROUS OXIDE OR LAUGHING GAS), N<sub>2</sub>O

This is a colourless gas obtained by heating ammonium nitrate and has a characteristic odour and faintly sweetish taste. It does not break up and give oxygen to the body. It is a pharmacopoeial preparation called *Nitro-gas monoxidum*.

**Symptoms**—When inhaled mixed with 20% of air, it produces after a few seconds a condition of hysterical excitement often accompanied by noisy laughter and gas intoxication; hence it is known as *Laughing gas*. When pushed beyond this hysterical stage, it causes anesthesia, and is used in minor surgery, especially dentistry. It is very rarely fatal. Death occurred in two cases in 60 and 7½ hours from the commencement of its inhalation<sup>2</sup>. A case of accidental death from self administration of nitrous oxide as an anaesthetic is recorded wherein a dentist was found dead in his operating chair with the mask applied to his face<sup>3</sup>. By taking occasional whiffs of the gas for a prolonged period one gets addicted to it and the habit thus formed is difficult to break.

When inhaled in the pure state, it at first causes the above-mentioned symptoms followed immediately by unconsciousness, cyanosis, cold, clammy sweat, dry nose and stertorous breathing and death from respiratory paralysis. The heart may continue to beat for some time after the stoppage of respiration.

1 *Jour. of Industrial Hygiene*, March 1925, p. 113.

2 K. Loxenberg R. Waggoner and T. Zuiden, *Ann. Surg.*, November, 1906, p. 801. *Lancet*, Jan. 16 1937, p. 158.

3 Holmes and Bristick *Lancet*, Dec. 4, 1920, p. 1167.

**Treatment.**—This consists in the inhalation of oxygen and carbon dioxide, artificial respiration and stimulants.

**Post-mortem Appearances**—There may be degenerative changes in the cortex of the brain and in the parenchyma of the basal ganglia. The blood is dark in colour.

**Tests**—The gas supports combustion, but not life. It dissolves in alcohol.

### SULPHUR DIOXIDE (SULPHUROUS ACID GAS OR SULPHUROUS ANHYDRIDE), SO<sub>2</sub>

This is formed by burning sulphur or certain metallic sulphides, such as iron pyrites, in air or oxygen, and is a by product in the manufacture of sulphuric acid. It is met with in the gaseous emanations from volcanoes. It is present in a noticeable amount in the air of towns, being derived from the combustion of the sulphur compounds present in coal.

It is a heavy, colourless gas, possessing a pungent, suffocating smell of burning sulphur, and dissolving freely in water. An aqueous solution containing 5 per cent by weight of sulphur dioxide is a B.P.C. preparation, known as *Acidum sulphuratum*, the dose being 30 minims to 60 minims.

Sulphur dioxide is a powerful antiseptic and disinfectant, being largely used for fumigating infected rooms and furniture. It is used in industry as a bleaching agent, and is also used in a very small quantity for the preservation of foods, particularly citrus fruit juices. It is very destructive to vegetable life, and intensely poisonous to mammalian and insect life.

**Symptoms.**—When inhaled in the pure state, it acts as an irritant to the air passages, causing immediately coughing and sneezing, accompanied by a feeling of suffocation, spasm of the glottis, dyspnoea, opacity of the cornea, cyanosis and convulsions. Even in dilutions of 5 parts per 10,000 of air, it produces sneezing, coughing and lachrymation. Habit produces a marked tolerance for this gas. Lehman found that air containing from 0.03 to 0.04 gramine per thousand did not affect workmen more severely than did from 0.01 to 0.02 those unaccustomed to breathing the gas.<sup>1</sup>

When an aqueous solution of sulphur dioxide is taken internally, it is easily oxidized to sulphuric acid, and has, therefore, a local corrosive action. It has also a remote action on the blood, causing its reduction and decomposition, as shown by the formation of haematin with a brown colouration.

**Treatment.**—Removal into the fresh air and artificial respiration. Masks containing a wet sponge should be used as a prophylactic measure by workmen who are exposed to the fumes of this gas. There should be proper ventilation, and mild alkalies should be used as antidotes.

**Post-mortem Appearances.**—These are chiefly due to asphyxia. The blood has a strikingly dark colour, and has an acid reaction. The lungs may be edematous.

**Tests.**—Starch paper moistened with a solution of iodic acid turns blue on exposure to sulphur dioxide. One part of the gas contained in 3,000 parts of air responds to this test.

**Medico-Legal Points**—The pungent, suffocating odour of the gas prevents the occurrence of accidental poisoning. Sulphur dioxide has been used for murder only once, and sulphurous acid only for suicidal purpose.<sup>2</sup>

### WAR GASES

The term, "gas", as used in chemical warfare, denotes a chemical compound, whether gaseous, liquid or solid, which is employed to produce poisonous or irritant effects on the enemy forces or even the civil population. The gases which are likely to be used during the time of war may be described under the following heads—

#### I. Vesicants or Blistering Gases.

#### II. Asphyxiants or Lung Irritants.

#### III. Lachrymators or Tear Gases.

#### IV. Sternutators or Nasal Irritants.

#### V. Paralysants.

**I. Vesicants or Blistering Gases.**—These are chiefly mustard gas (dichlorodisethyl sulphide) and Lewisite (chlorovinyl-dichlorarsine). Mustard gas is also known as "Yellow Cross" or "Xerite", and was largely used during the Great Wars. Mustard gas is a heavy, dark-coloured, oily liquid, having a mustard like or garlic-like odour and giving off a vapour at the ordinary temperature of the air. It is almost insoluble in water and evaporates slowly so that it

1. *Archiv. für Hygiene*, 1893, *XVIII*, p. 180, Peterson, Haines and Webster, *Eng. Med. and Toxic.*, Vol. II, p. 340.

2. *Kompendium der Toxikologie* *Fünfte Auflage*, 1912, p. 147, Peterson, Haines and Webster, *Ibid.*, p. 311.

persists for a long time after it is discharged. It dissolves freely in paraffin petrol ether benzine rubber alcohol acetone and carbon bisulphide and readily penetrates clothing, leather, wood bricks etc

Mustard gas is extremely dangerous both in the liquid and in the vaporous state. It is insidious in its onset and produces poisonous symptoms usually after the lapse of two or three hours and occasionally after twenty four or forty eight hours. It causes irritation of the eyes with profuse lacrimation and nasal secretion laryngitis involving the trachea and bronchi nausea vomiting and gastric pain. It enters deeply into the skin through the clothes and produce intense itching redness vesication and ulceration. It attacks chiefly the axilla groins perineum and scrotum which are moist due to perspiration. Owing to secondary infection these ulcers are often difficult to heal. The skin of the exposed parts such as the face, neck and hands is also affected.

In severe cases there may be oedema of the eyelids, suppuration and destruction of the conjunctiva cornea and even the eye ball. Death may occur from septic bronchitis or broncho-pneumonia.

The treatment consists in the prompt removal of contaminated clothing and washing the body with soap and water. The eyes should be washed with warm water, normal saline or 2 per cent sodium bicarbonate solution and subsequently a drop or two of castor oil containing 1 per cent atropine should be instilled into them. The nose should be irrigated with a per cent sodium bicarbonate solution. Mustard gas should be removed from the skin by applying cotton wool swabs dipped in petrol kerosene or methylated spirit and then by rubbing into the cleansed area bleach cream prepared by mixing one part of bleaching powder to two parts of water. Tannic acid jelly or solution should also be used. The respirator which will afford protection for the eyes nose face and lungs should be used. The respirator is a mask with valves for the intake of air and the escape of expired air with a container in which are activated charcoal and a filter of celluloid through which the outer air has to pass before it enters the lungs. It will also give protection against any other type of gas. Protective clothing and boots which prevent the penetration of mustard gas should be worn.

Lewisite is a heavy, oily, dark liquid having an odour of geraniums. It is insoluble in water but hydrolyzes rapidly, this action is increased by heat and alkalies. It dissolves in oil benzene and ordinary organic solvents. It is both a vesicant and an asphyxiant and is more rapid in action than mustard gas and produces more discomfort on inhalation and more irritation on coming into contact with the skin. It must be remembered that a vesicle caused by lewisite is clearly defined covers the whole erythematous area and is filled with a cloudy fluid containing arsenic and leucocytes. While a blister produced by mustard gas is surrounded by a zone of erythema and contains a clear yellow serum but does not contain mustard.<sup>1</sup>

The treatment consists in the intramuscular injections of 2 ml of a 5 per cent solution of B A L (British Anti Lewisite) in arachis oil and benzyl benzoate into the thigh and gluteal region. It is regarded as an antidote to the local and systemic damage caused by contamination of the skin or eyes with arsenical vesicant gases.

**II Asphyxiants or Lung Irritants**—These are chlorine \* phosgene (carbonyl chloride) or carbon oxychloride diphosgene (trichloromethyl chloroformate) and chloropicrin (nitro-chloroform or trichloronitromethane). They exert their main action on the pulmonary alveoli through the upper respiratory passages.

Phosgene is a colourless gas at ordinary temperature and pressure possessing a smell of musty hay. It is three times and a half as heavy as air and is decomposed by water into hydrochloric and carbonic acids. It is one of the most dangerous poison gases being practically ten times more toxic than chlorine, but owing to its poor solubility its action is very slow. Hence it may sometimes produce poisonous symptoms a few hours after exposure and during the interval the patients may be able to carry on their work.

Diphosgene is an oily liquid having a smell of phosgene. It is heavier than phosgene and is as toxic as phosgene and is intensely lacrymatory. Both phosgene and diphosgene are known as Green Cross.

Chloropicrin is a yellow, oily liquid smells like chlorine and is about four times more toxic than chlorine. It is destroyed by a solution of sodium sulphite in alcohol (50 per cent).

When inhaled these gases cause watering of the eyes coughing dyspnoea feeling of pain and constriction in the chest headache retching and vomiting. These symptoms are followed by rapid and stertorous respiration cyanosis and collapse. Death occurs from acute pulmonary oedema within twenty four to forty-eight hours or later from broncho-pneumonia.

The treatment consists in absolute rest administration of oxygen by inhalation and venous section. Codeine may be given to relieve the irritating cough and intramuscular injections of calcium gluconate may be tried to prevent pulmonary oedema.

1 E M Cowell Brit Med Jour, Oct 14, 1939 p 778

2 Vide p 474

On post mortem examination the lungs are found heavy and oedematous exuding froth, dark fluid blood on section. There are petechial haemorrhages on the upper surface of the lungs and serous effusion in the pleural cavity.

**III Lachrymators or Tear Gases**—These are chiefly chlor-acetophenone (C.A.P.), ethyl iodoacetate (E.S.I.) and bromobenzyl cyanide (B.B.C.).

Chlor acetophenone is a colourless, crystalline solid. It is very slightly soluble in water but dissolves in ether, alcohol or benzene and in a hot aqueous solution of sodium carbonate. Ethyl iodoacetate is a dark brown, oily liquid with a smell like that of 'pear drops'. Bromobenzyl cyanide is a heavy, oily, dark brown liquid, having a penetrating, bitter-sweet odour. It is very persistent.

Exposure to the vapours of any of these substances causes intense irritation of the eyes with a copious flow of tears, spasm of the eyelids and temporary blindness. When the concentration is high the vapour causes irritation of the respiratory passages and lungs, and produces a burning sensation in the throat and discomfort in the chest. In cases where the exposure is continued for a long time, there may be nausea, vomiting, tracheitis, bronchitis and blistering of the skin. In rare cases there may be keratitis and corneal opacities. The effects are as a rule, transitory, incapacitating persons for some hours only and are not dangerous to life.

The treatment consists in washing the eyes with warm normal saline and removing the patient into the fresh air. The respirator is a sufficient protector of the eyes and lungs against all tear gases of any concentration.

**IV. Sternutators or Nasal Irritants**—These are solid organic compounds of arsenic, which are dispersed by heat or detonation in the form of very fine particulate clouds or smokes. The compounds which may be used during war are—

1 Diphenylchlorarsine (D.A.), a colourless crystalline solid. It is slightly soluble in water, but dissolves in phosgene and chloropicrin.

2 Diphenylamine-chlorarsine or diphenylarsine-chlorarsine (D.M.) a yellow almost odourless, crystalline solid. It is not soluble in phosgene and tarnishes metals.

3 Diphenylcyanarsine (C.D.) a white, odourless, crystalline solid.

The vapours of these substances when inhaled cause intense pain and irritation in the nose and sinuses with excessive sneezing, malaise, headache, painful gums, salivation, nausea, vomiting, pain and tightness in the chest and temporary prostration. The effects are temporary, lasting for an hour or two, but are quite effective in destroying the morale of the enemy's troops.

Water and food contaminated by these substances may give rise to symptoms of arsenic poisoning.

The treatment is fresh air. The nose should be irrigated with a 5 per cent solution of sodium carbonate. Gargles of the same solution may be used if there is irritation of the throat. A few whiffs of chloroform inhalation may be given if there is severe pain in the sinuses.

**V Paralysants**—These are hydrocyanic acid and sulphuretted hydrogen<sup>1</sup> but they are not very useful in chemical warfare, as it is difficult to obtain them in their lethal concentrations during the time of war.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### PERIPHERAL (NEURAL) POISONS

#### CONIUM MACULATUM (COMMON OR SPOTTED HEMLOCK)

This plant belongs to N O Umbelliferae and grows generally in hedgerows and in waste places in Europe America and the temperate regions of Asia. It has a peculiar mousy odour which is intensified by rubbing the leaves or other parts of the plant in a mortar with a little solution of caustic potash or soda. The plant owes its poisonous properties to the liquid alkaloids *Conine* and *Methyl conine*. It also contains a crystalline alkaloid *Conhydrine* allied to methyl conine and *Conic acid*.

**Conine**  $C_8H_{11}N$ —This exists in all parts of the plant but is extracted chiefly from the fruit and leaves by distillation with soda. It is a colourless volatile oil but changes to brown on exposure to air. It has an acrid bitter taste and a penetrating mousy odour. It is slightly soluble in water but freely in alcohol ether and chloroform. Its salts are stable and crystalline and are soluble in water and alcohol. It paralyses the motor nerve endings and subsequently the motor centres.

**Methyl Conine**  $C_9H_{16}NCH_3$ —This is a colourless volatile oily liquid alkaloid possessing an odour similar to that of conine.

**Symptoms**—Burning sensation in the mouth constriction of the throat profuse salivation nausea vomiting dizziness headache staggering gait, weakness or paralysis of the extremities great prostration dilated pupils ptosis convulsions and coma. Death occurs from paralysis of the respiratory muscles. The intellect remains clear to the last.

**Fatal Dose**—Uncertain. Half to one grain of conine is likely to cause serious symptoms and 2 grains will probably prove fatal. A dose of 10 to 15 drops of conine (0.42 to 0.63 grammes) killed a woman in a few minutes.<sup>1</sup> One ounce of Succus Conii (a B P C preparation dose  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 drachm) has caused death.<sup>2</sup>

**Fatal Period**—Death has occurred in a few minutes. The usual fatal period is one to three hours though death may be delayed several hours.

**Treatment** Give emetics or wash out the stomach after giving tannic acid or vegetable astringents. Administer strichnine hypodermically and then give general stimulants such as strong coffee, alcohol etc. Perform artificial respiration and administer by inhalation oxygen with 7 per cent carbon dioxide if necessary.

**Post mortem Appearances**—Not characteristic. The mucous membrane of the stomach may be reddened and ecchymosed. The other organs are congested with venous engorgement and dark fluid blood. The lungs may sometimes be oedematous.

**Tests** 1. Conine is recognised by its mousy odour. A drop of conine dissolved in just sufficient cold water has a clear appearance but becomes turbid on heating and again becomes clear on cooling.

<sup>1</sup> *Herrmann De Pflanzenstoffe* p. 269 *Taylor Price and Pract of Med Juris* Vol II  
Fd I<sup>1</sup> p. 789  
<sup>2</sup> *Robt Isot Med Juris and Toxic Ed I*, 1, 396

2 Alloran produces a purple red colour, which forms white needle shaped crystals on standing. These crystals, touched with caustic potash, turn purple and give off a mousy odour.

3 Warmed with sulphuric acid and potassium bichromate, coniine produces butyric acid, which is known by its peculiar odour.

**Medico-Legal Points**—Poisoning by coniini in culatum is very rare in India. In Europe and America accidental poisoning has occurred from the leaves having been made into salad in mistake for parsley, or from the root having been used for parsley, fennel and asparagus. Children have also been poisoned from using whistles made of its stem. The seeds have been accidentally mixed with caraway, anise and dill seeds. Accidental poisoning may also occur from smelling coniine or from inhaling the vapours given off from boiling water containing a preparation of coniine.

The ancient Greeks were familiar with the toxic properties of coniini in culatum, and used its juice or an infusion of the leaves as a state poison. Socrates was put to death by drinking the infusion.

Coniine is rapidly eliminated in the urine so that its action passes off very soon, if death does not occur.

#### CURARE (CURARA, WOORARA, TRARI OR WOORALI)

This is a blackish brown resinous extract produced from various species of strychnos and other plants of N. O. Loganiaceæ. It has a bitter taste and is nearly soluble in water. The non official dose of curare is 1/20 to  $\frac{1}{3}$  grain subcutaneously.

Curare contains an active principle, curarine or curannin, which is the most powerful poison and occurs as a yellowish brown powder or in deliquescent prisms with an intensely bitter taste. It is soluble in water and alcohol.

**Symptoms**—Curare is extremely poisonous and exerts its toxic properties when injected into the blood stream by means of a hypodermic syringe or through a wound. When swallowed it is supposed to be almost inert like snake venom provided there is no abraded surface in the mouth or throat.

## APPENDIX I

### QUESTIONS TO BE PUT TO MEDICAL WITNESSES

(FROM OLDH CRIMINAL DIGEST)

#### NO I

##### QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE PUT TO A MEDICAL WITNESS IN A CASE OF SUSPECTED POISONING AFTER POST MORTEM EXAMINATION OF THE BODY

- 1 Did you examine the body of , a late resident of , and if so what did you observe ?
- 2 What do you consider to have been the cause of death ? State your reasons
- 3 Did you find any external marks of violence on the body ? If so describe them
- 4 Did you observe any unusual appearances on further examination of the body ? If so, describe them
- 5 To what do you attribute these appearances to disease poison or other cause ?
- 6 If to poison then to what class of poisons ?
- 7 Have you formed an opinion on as to what particular poison was used ?
- 8 Did you find any morbid appearances in the body besides those which are usually found in cases of poisoning by ? If so describe them
- 9 Do you know of any disease in which the post mortem appearances resemble those which you observed in this case ?
- 10 In what respect do the post-mortem appearances of that disease differ from those which you observed in the present case ?
- 11 What are the symptoms of that disease in the living ?
- 12 Are there any post mortem appearances usual in case of poisoning by but which you did not discover in this instance ?
- 13 Might not the appearances you mention have been the result of spontaneous changes in the stomach after death ?
- 14 Was the state of the stomach and bowels compatible or incompatible with vomiting and purging ?
- 15 What are the usual symptoms of poisoning by ?
- 16 What is the usual interval between the time of taking the poison and the commencement of the symptoms ?
- 17 In what time does generally prove fatal ?
- 18 Did you send the contents of the stomach and bowel (or other matters) to the Chemical Examiner ?
- 19 Were the contents of the stomach (or other matters) sealed up in your presence immediately on removal from the body ?
- 20 Describe the vessel in which they were sealed up and what impression did the seal bear ?
- 21 Have you received a reply from the Chemical Examiner ? If so is the report now produced that which you received ?
- 22 (If a female adult) what was the state of the uterus ?

#### NO II

##### QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE PUT TO A NON PROFESSIONAL WITNESS IN A CASE OF SUSPECTED POISONING

- 1 Did you know a late resident of ? If so did you see him during his last illness and previously ?
- 2 What are the symptoms from which he suffered ?
- 3 Was he in good health previous to the attack ?
- 4 Did the symptoms appear suddenly ?
- 5 What was the interval between the last time of eating or drinking and the commencement of the symptoms ?

## IF DEATH OCCURRED

- 6 What was the interval between the commencement of the symptoms and death ?  
 7 What did the last meal consist of ?  
 8 Did any one partake of this meal with ?  
 9 Were any of them affected in the same way ?  
 10 Had he ever suffered from a similar attack before ?  
 If any of the following symptoms have been omitted in answer to question 2 special questions (11-14) may be asked regarding them as follows — 11 Did vomiting occur ? 12 Was there any purging ?  
 13 Was there any pain in the stomach ? 14 Was very thirsty ?  
 15 Did he become faint ?  
 16 Did he complain of headache or giddiness ?  
 17 Did he appear to have lost the use of his limbs ?  
 18 Did he sleep heavily ?  
 19 Had he any delirium ?  
 20 Did convulsions occur ?  
 21 Did he complain of any peculiar taste in the mouth ?  
 22 Did he notice any peculiar taste in his food or water ?  
 23 Was he sensible in the intervals between the convulsions ? (This is with reference to *Nux Vomica*)  
 24 Did he complain of burning or tingling in the mouth and throat or of numbness and tingling in the limbs ? (Iaconite)

## NO IV

**QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE PUT TO A MEDICAL WITNESS IN A CASE OF  
SUPPOSED INFANTICIDE AFTER POST MORTEM EXAMINATION  
OF THE BODY**

1 Did you examine the body of a (male or female) child sent to you by the District Superintendent of Police on the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_? And if so what did you observe?

2 Can you state whether the child was completely born alive or born dead? State the reasons for your opinion

3 What do you consider to have been the cause of death? Give your reasons

4 What do you believe to have been the uterine age of the child? State your reasons

5 What do you believe to have been the extra uterine age of the child? Give reasons

6 Did you find any marks of violence or other unusual appearances externally? If so describe them accurately

7 Did you find any morbid or unusual appearances on examination of the body internally? If so describe them accurately

8 Do you believe the injuries you observed to have been inflicted before or after death? Give reasons

9 Can you state how they were inflicted? Give reasons

10 Do you consider that they were accidental or not? Give reasons

11 Had the infant respired fully partially or not at all?

12 Did you examine the person of the alleged mother of the infant? If so have you reason to suppose that she was recently delivered of a child? Can you state approximately the date of her delivery? Give reasons

## NO V

**QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE PUT TO A MEDICAL WITNESS IN A CASE OF  
SUPPOSED DEATH BY HANGING OR STRANGULATION**

1 Did you examine the body of \_\_\_\_\_, a late resident of \_\_\_\_\_ and if so what did you observe?

2 What do you consider to have been the cause of death? State reasons for your opinion

3 Did you observe any external marks of violence upon the body?

4 Did you observe any unnatural appearance on examination of the body internally?

5 Was there any rope or other such article round the neck when you saw the body?

6 Can you state whether the mark or marks you observed were caused before or after death?

7 By what sort of articles do you consider the deceased to have been hanged (or strangled)?

8 Could the marks you observed have been caused by the rope or other article now before you (No \_\_\_\_\_ of the police charge sheet)?

9 Do you think that this rope could have supported the weight of the body?

10 If strangulation would great violence be necessary to produce the injuries you describe?

11 What as far as you can ascertain were the general characteristics of his previous disposition?

12 Does he appear to have had any previous attacks of insanity?

## NO VI

**QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE PUT TO A MEDICAL WITNESS IN A CASE OF  
SUPPOSED DEATH BY DROWNING AFTER POST MORTEM EXAMINA  
TION OF THE BODY**

1 Did you examine the body of \_\_\_\_\_ a late resident of \_\_\_\_\_ and if so what did you observe?

2 What do you consider to have been the cause of death? State your reasons

3 Were there any external marks of violence upon the body? If so describe them

4 Describe any unnatural appearances which you observed on further examination of the body

5 Did you find any foreign matter such as weeds straw etc in the hair or clenched in the hands of the deceased or in the air passages or attached to any other part of the body?

6 Did you find any water in the stomach?

## NO VII

**QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE PUT TO A MEDICAL WITNESS IN A CASE OF  
ALLEGED RAPe**

1 Did you examine the person of Musannat? If so how many days after the alleged rape did you make the examination and what did you observe?

2 Did you observe any marks of violence about the vulva or adjacent parts?

- 3 Are these injuries such as might have been occasioned by the commission of rape?
- 4 Was the hymen ruptured?
- 5 ✓ II—This question is only to be asked in the case of the rape of a girl of tender years.
- 6 Did you observe any further marks of violence upon the person of the woman?
- 7 Has she passed the age of puberty?
- 8 Can you state approximately what her age is?
- 9 Did you find her to be a strong healthy woman or so weakly as to be unable to resist an attempt at rape?
- 10 Did you examine the person of the accused?
- 11 Did you observe any marks of violence upon his body?
- 12 Was he suffering from any venereal disease?
- 13 Did you find the woman to be suffering from a similar or other venereal disease?
- 14 Had a sufficient time elapsed when you examined the person of the woman for venereal disease to have made its appearance, in case of her having been infected?
- 15 Can you state approximately how long the accused had been suffering from this complaint?
- 16 Have you examined the stained articles forwarded to you and now in Court (No. 1 police charge sheet)?
- 17 What is the result of your examination?
- 18 Do you believe that rape has been committed or not? State your reasons.

NO. VIII

## NO IV

## QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE PUT TO A MEDICAL WITNESS IN A CASE OF ALLEGED CAUSING MISCARRIAGE

- 1 Did you examine the person of Musanmat—? If so, when ? What did you observe ?
- 2 Are you of opinion that a miscarriage has occurred or not ? Give your reasons
- 3 In what mode do you consider the miscarriage to have been produced, whether by violence per vaginam or by external violence, or by the use of irritants internally ? Give your reasons

4 It is alleged that a drug called \_\_\_\_\_ was used, state the symptoms and effects which the administration internally of this drug would produce Do you consider that it would produce miscarriage ?

5 Can you state whether the woman was quick with child when miscarriage was produced ? State your reasons

6 Did you see the fetus ? If so at what period of gestation do you consider the woman to have arrived ?

## NO V

## QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE PUT TO A MEDICAL WITNESS IN A CASE OF GRIEVOUS HURT

- 1 Have you examined \_\_\_\_\_ ? If so, state what you observed ?
- 2 Describe carefully the mark of violence which you observed
- 3 In what way do you consider the injuries to have been inflicted ? If by a weapon what sort of weapon do you think was used ?

4 Do you consider that the injuries inflicted could have been caused by the weapon now shown to you (No \_\_\_\_\_ of police charge sheet) ?

5 What was the direction of the wound, and can you form an opinion as to the position of the person inflicting such a wound with respect to the person receiving it ?

6 Is it possible for such a wound to have been inflicted by any one on his own person ? Give your reasons

7 Do you consider that the injuries inflicted constitute any of the forms of grievous hurt defined in s 3-0 of the Indian Penal Code ? If so, which of them ? Give your reasons The Magistrate in putting this question will show the Indian Penal Code to the witness or the Magistrate may vary the form of the question so as to elicit the required information without calling the witness's attention to the Code

8 Do you consider that the person injured is now out of danger ?

9 It is alleged that the injuries were caused by— Could they have been caused in the manner indicated ?

10 Have you chemically or otherwise examined the stains on the weapon, clothes, etc now before you (No —in the police charge sheet) ?

11 Do you believe the stains to be those of blood ?

12 B—In case of the injuries being gun shot wounds, questions 21 to 4 under the head of No III (Death by wounds) may be put to the witness

## [NO VI]

## QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE PUT TO A MEDICAL WITNESS IN A CASE OF DEATH FROM THE RUPTURE OF SPLEEN

- 1 What appearances of external violence were perceptible on the body ?
- 2 What was the size and weight of the spleen after death ?
- 3 How far did it project beyond the ribs ?
- 4 What was the consistency of the spleen—hard, firm, soft, pulpy or diffusile ?
- 5 How long after death was the body exhumed, and what was the temperature of the air ?
- 6 Was the body much putrefied ?
7. What was the position of the rupture ?
- 8 What was the length and depth of the rupture ?
- 9 Is it your opinion that rupture was caused by external violence or not ? State your reasons or your opinion
- 10 Were there any adhesions about the spleen, if so, were they older than the rupture or not ?

## APPENDIX II

### THE INDIAN EVIDENCE ACT

(ACT I OF 1872)

**SEC. 3. INTERPRETATION CLAUSE.**—In this Act the following words and expressions are used in the following senses, unless a contrary intention appears from the context —

“Court” includes all Judges and Magistrates, and all persons except arbitrators, legally authorized to take evidence.

“Fact” means and includes—(1) anything, state of things, or relation of things capable of being perceived by the senses; (2) any mental condition of which any person is conscious

“Document” means any matter expressed or described upon any substance by means of letters, figures or marks, or by more than one of those means, intended to be used, or which may be used, for the purpose of recording that matter

“Evidence” means and includes—

(1) All statements which the Court permits or requires to be made before it by witnesses in relation to matters of fact under inquiry, such statements are called oral evidence

(2) All documents produced for the inspection of the Court, such documents are called documentary evidence.

**SLC. 32. CASES IN WHICH STATEMENT OF RELEVANT FACT BY PERSON WHO IS DEAD OR CANNOT BE FOUND, ETC., IS IRRELEVANT**—Statement, written or verbal, of relevant facts made by a person who is dead, or who cannot be found, or who has become incapable of giving evidence, or whose attendance cannot be procured without an amount of delay or expense which, under the circumstances of the case, appears to the Court unreasonable are themselves relevant facts in the following cases —

When the statement is made by the person as to the cause of his death, or as to any of the circumstances of the transaction which resulted in his death, in cases in which the cause of the person's death comes into question

Such statements are relevant whether the person who made them was or was not, at the time when they were made, under expectation of death, and whatever be the nature of the proceeding in which the cause of his death comes into question.

**SEC. 33. RELEVANCY OF CERTAIN EVIDENCE FOR PROVING IN SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDING, THE TRUTH OF FACTS, THIRLAIN STATED**—Evidence given by a witness in a judicial proceeding, or before any person authorized by Law to take it, is relevant for the purpose of proving, in a subsequent judicial proceeding, or in a later stage of the same judicial proceeding, the truth of the facts which it states, when the witness is dead or cannot be found or is incapable of giving evidence, or is kept out of the way by the adverse party, or if his presence cannot be obtained without an amount of delay or expense which, under the circumstances of the case, the Court considers unreasonable,

Provided—

that the proceeding was between the same parties or their representatives in interest,  
that the adverse party in the first proceeding had the right and opportunity to cross-examine,

that the questions in issue were substantially the same in the first as in the second proceeding.

**SEC. 35. OPINIONS OF EXPERTS**—When the Court has to form an opinion upon a point of foreign law, or of science or art, or as to identity of handwriting or finger impressions the opinions upon that point of persons specially skilled in such foreign law, science or art or in questions as to identity of handwriting or finger impressions are relevant facts. Such persons are called experts.

**SEC. 40. FACTS BEARING UPON OPINIONS OF EXPERTS**—Facts, not otherwise relevant, are relevant if they support or are inconsistent with the opinions of experts, when such opinions are relevant.

**SLC. 39. PROOF OF FACTS BY ORAL EVIDENCE**—All facts, except the contents of documents, may be proved by oral evidence.

**SEC. 60. ORAL EVIDENCE MUST BE DIRECT**—Oral evidence must, in all cases whatever, be direct, that is to say—

if it refers to a fact which could be seen, it must be the evidence of a witness who says he saw it.

if it refers to a fact which could be heard, it must be the evidence of a witness who says he heard it,

if it refers to a fact which could be perceived by any other sense or in any other manner, it must be the evidence of a witness who says he perceived it by that sense or in that manner,

if it refers to an opinion or to the grounds on which that opinion is held, it must be the evidence of the person who holds that opinion on those grounds

Provided that the opinions expressed in any treatise commonly offered for sale, and the grounds on which such opinions are held, may be proved by the production of such treatises if the author is dead or cannot be found, or has become incapable of giving evidence, or cannot be called as a witness without an amount of delay or expense which the Court regards as unreasonable

Provided also that, if oral evidence refers to the existence or condition of any material thing other than a document, the Court may, if it thinks fit, require the production of such material thing for its inspection

**SEC. 61 PROOF OF CONTENTS OF DOCUMENTS**—The contents of documents may be proved either by primary or by secondary evidence

**SEC. 62 PRIMARY EVIDENCE**—Primary evidence means the document itself produced for the inspection of the Court

*Explanation 1*—Where a document is executed in several parts, each part is primary evidence of the document

Where a document is executed in counterpart, each counterpart being executed by one or some of the parties only, each counterpart is primary evidence as against the parties executing it

*Explanation 2*—Where a number of documents are all made by one uniform process, as in the case of printing, lithography, or photography, each is primary evidence of the contents of the rest, but where they are all copies of a common original, they are not primary evidence of the contents of the original

**SEC. 63 SECONDARY EVIDENCE**—Secondary evidence means and includes—

- 1 Certified copies given under the provisions hereinafter contained,
- 2 Copies made from the original by mechanical processes which in themselves insure the accuracy of the copy, and copies compared with such copies,
- 3 Copies made from or compared with the original,
- 4 Counterparts of documents as against the parties who did not execute them,
- 5 Oral accounts of the contents of a document given by some person who has himself seen it

**SEC. 107 BURDEN OF PROVING DEATH OF PERSONS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN ALIVE WITHIN THIRTY YEARS**—When the question is whether a man is alive or dead and it is shown that he was alive within thirty years, the burden of proving that he is dead is on the person who affirms it

**SEC. 108 BURDEN OF PROVING THAT PERSON IS ALIVE WHO HAS NOT BEEN HEARD OF FOR SEVEN YEARS**—[Provided that when] the question is whether a man is alive or dead, and it is proved that he has not been heard of for seven years by those who would naturally have heard of him if he had been alive, the burden of proving that he is alive is shifted to the person who affirms it

**SEC. 112 BIRTH DURING MARRIAGE CONCLUSIVE PROOF OF LEGITIMACY.**—The fact that any person was born during the continuance of a valid marriage between his mother and any man or within 260 days after its dissolution the mother remaining unmarried, shall be conclusive proof that he is the legitimate son of that man, unless it can be shown that the parties to the marriage had no access to each other at any time when he could have been begotten

**SEC. 118 WHO MAY TESTIFY.**—All persons shall be competent to testify unless the Court considers that they are prevented from understanding the questions put to them, or from giving rational answers to those questions, by tender years, extreme old age, disease, whether of body or mind, or any other cause of the same kind

*Explanation*—A lunatic is not incompetent to testify, unless he is prevented by his lunacy from understanding the questions put to him and giving rational answers to them.

**SEC. 119 DUMB WITNESS**—A witness who is unable to speak may give his evidence in any other manner in which he can make it intelligible, as by writing, or by signs, but such writing must be written and the signs made in open Court. Evidence so given shall be deemed to be oral evidence.

**SEC. 124 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION**—No public officer shall be compelled to disclose communications made to him in official confidence, when he considers that the public interests would suffer by the disclosure

**SEC. 126 PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION**—No barrister, attorney, pleader, or vali shall at any time be permitted, unless with his client's express consent to disclose any communication made to him in the course and for the purpose of his employment as such barrister,

The witness may also refer to any such writing made by any other person, and read by the witness within the time aforesaid, if when he read it, he knew it to be correct.

Whenever a witness may refresh his memory by reference to any document, he may, with the permission of the Court, refer to a copy of such document.

Provided the Court be satisfied that there is sufficient reason for the non production of the original.

An expert may refresh his memory by reference to professional treatises.

**SEC 160 TESTIMONY TO FACTS STATED IN DOCUMENT MENTIONED IN SEC 159** —A witness may also testify to facts, mentioned in any such document in section 159 although he has no specific recollection of the facts themselves if he is sure that the facts were correctly recorded in the document.

**SEC 161 RIGHT OF ADVERSE PARTY AS TO WRITING USED TO REFRSH MEMORY** —Any writing referred to under the provisions of the two last preceding sections must be produced and shown to the adverse party if he requires it, such party may, if he pleases, cross-examine the witness thereupon.

**SEC 163 JUDGE'S POWER TO PUT QUESTIONS OR ORDER PRODUCTION** —The Judge may, in order to discover or to obtain proper proof of relevant facts ask any question he pleases, in any form at any time, of any witness, or of the parties about any fact relevant or irrelevant, and may order the production of any document or thing, and neither the parties nor their agents shall be entitled to make any objection to any such question or order, nor without the leave of the Court to cross-examine any witness upon any answer given in reply to any such question.

Provided that the judgment must be based upon facts declared by this Act to be relevant and duly proved.

Provided also that this section shall not authorize any Judge to compel any witness to answer any question, or to produce any document which such witness would be entitled to refuse to answer or produce under sections 121 to 131, both inclusive, if the questions were asked or the documents were called for by the adverse party; nor shall the Judge ask any question which it would be improper for any other person to ask under section 148 or 149, nor shall he dispense with primary evidence of any document, except in the cases hereinbefore excepted.

**SEC 166 POWER OF JURY OR ASSESSORS TO PUT QUESTIONS** —In cases tried by jury or with assessors, the jury or assessors may put any questions to the witnesses through or by leave of the Judge, which the Judge himself might put and which he considers proper.

## APPENDIX III

### THE CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

(ACT V OF 1898) AS AMENDED BY THE CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1923  
(ACT XII OF 1923) AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE AMENDMENT ACT,  
1923 (ACT XVIII OF 1923), AND AS AMENDED UPTO DATE WITH  
THE CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1933.

SEC. 5. (f) "Cognizable offence" means an offence for, and "cognizable case" means a case in which a police-officer, within or without the presidency towns, may, in accordance with the second schedule, or under any law for the time being in force, arrest without warrant.

SEC. 6. CLASSES OF CRIMINAL COURTS.—Besides the High Courts and the Courts constituted under any law other than this Code for the time being in force, there shall be five classes of Criminal Courts in British India, namely:—

I.—Courts of Session.

II.—Presidency Magistrates.

III.—Magistrates of the first class.

IV.—Magistrates of the second class.

V.—Magistrates of the third class.

SEC. 29-A. TRIAL OF EUROPEAN BRITISH SUBJECTS BY SECOND AND THIRD CLASS MAGISTRATES.—No Magistrate of the second or third class shall inquire into or try any offence which is punishable otherwise than with fine not exceeding fifty rupees where the accused is an European British subject who claims to be tried as such.

SEC. 29-B. JURISDICTION IN THE CASE OF JUVENILES.—Any offence other than one punishable with death or transportation for life, committed by any person who at the date when he appears or is brought before the Court is under the age of fifteen years, may be tried by a District Magistrate or a Chief Presidency Magistrate, or by any Magistrate specially employed by the Local Government to exercise the powers conferred by section 8, sub-section (1) of the Reformatory Schools Act, 1807, or, in any area in which the said Act has been wholly or in part repealed by any other law providing for the custody, trial or punishment of youthful offenders, by any Magistrate empowered or under such law to exercise all or any of the powers conferred thereby.

SEC. 31. SENTENCES WHICH HIGH COURTS AND SESSIONS JUDGES MAY PASS.—(1) A High Court may pass any sentence authorized by law.

(2) A Sessions Judge or Additional Sessions Judge may pass any sentence authorized by law; but any sentence of death passed by any such Judge shall be subject to confirmation by the High Court.

(3) An Assistant Sessions Judge may pass any sentence authorized by law, except a sentence of death or of transportation for a term exceeding seven years, or of imprisonment for a term exceeding seven years.

SEC. 32. SENTENCES WHICH MAGISTRATES MAY PASS.—(1) The Courts of Magistrates may pass the following sentences, namely:

(a) Courts of Presidency Magistrates and Magistrates of the first class;

(b) Courts of Magistrates of the second class;

(c) Courts of Magistrates of the third class;

Imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, including such solitary confinement as is authorized by law;  
Fine not exceeding one thousand rupees;  
Whipping.

Imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, including such solitary confinement as is authorized by law;  
Fine not exceeding two hundred rupees.

Imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month;  
Fine not exceeding fifty rupees.

(2) The Court of any Magistrate may pass any lawful sentence, combining any of the sentences which it is authorized by law to pass.

**SEC 33 POWER OF MAGISTRATES TO SENTENCE TO IMPRISONMENT IN DEFAULT OF FINE** —(1) The Court of any Magistrate may award such term of imprisonment in default of payment of fine as is authorized by law in case of such default

Provided that—

(a) the term is not in excess of the Magistrate's powers under this Code,

(b) in any case decided by a Magistrate where imprisonment has been awarded as part of the substantive sentence, the period of imprisonment awarded in default of payment of the fine shall not exceed one fourth of the period of imprisonment which such Magistrate is competent to inflict as punishment for the offence otherwise than as imprisonment in default of payment of the fine.

(2) The imprisonment awarded under this section may be in addition to a substantive sentence of imprisonment for the maximum term awarded by the Magistrate under section 32

**SEC 34 HIGHER POWERS OF CERTAIN DISTRICT MAGISTRATES** —The Court of a Magistrate specially empowered under section 30 may pass any sentence authorized by law except a sentence of death or of transportation for a term exceeding seven years or of imprisonment for a term exceeding seven years

**SEC 34 A SENTENCES WHICH COURTS AND MAGISTRATES MAY PASS UPON EUROPEAN BRITISH SUBJECTS** —Notwithstanding anything contained in sections 31, 32 and 34—

(a) no Court of Sessions shall pass on any European British Subject any sentence other than a sentence of death, penal servitude, or imprisonment with or without fine, or of fine and

(b) no District Magistrate or other Magistrate of the first class shall pass on any European British Subject any sentence other than imprisonment which may extend to two years or fine which may extend to one thousand rupees or both

**SEC. 44. PUBLIC TO GIVE INFORMATION OF CERTAIN OFFENCES.**—(1) Every person, whether within or without the Presidency towns, aware of the commission of, or of the intention of any other person to commit any offence punishable under any of the following sections of the Indian Penal Code (namely), 121, 121-A, 122, 123, 124, 124-A, 125, 126, 126, 143, 143-A, 148, 302, 303, 304, 382, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 402, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439 and 460 shall, in the absence of reasonable excuse, the burden of proving which will lie upon the person so aware, forthwith give information to the nearest magistrate or police-officer of such commission or intention.

(2) For the purpose of this section the term 'offence' includes any act committed at any place out of British India which would constitute an offence if committed in British India.

**Punishment**—Omission to give information under the section is punishable under sections 118, 176 and 202, Indian Penal Code.

**SEC. 45. VILLAGE HEADMEN, ACCOUNTANTS, LANDHOLDERS AND OTHERS BOUND TO REPORT CERTAIN MATTERS.**—(1) Every village headman, village accountant, village watchman, village police-officer, owner or occupier of land, and the agent or any such owner or occupier in charge of the management of that land and every officer employed in the collection of revenue or rent of land on the part of the Crown or the Court of Wards, shall forthwith communicate to the nearest magistrate or to the officer in charge of the nearest police-station, whenever is the nearer, any information which he may possess respecting—

(a) the permanent or temporary residence of any notorious receiver or vendor of stolen property in any village of which he is headman, accountant, watchman, or police-officer, or in which he owns or occupies land, or is agent, or collects revenue or rent;

(b) the resort to any place within, or the passage through, such village of any person whom he knows, or reasonably suspects, to be a thug, robber, escaped convict or proclaimed offender;

(c) the commission of, or intention to commit in or near such village any non-bailable offence or any offence punishable under sections 145, 144, 145, 147, or 148 of the Indian Penal Code;

(d) the occurrence in or near such village of any sudden or unnatural death or of any death under suspicious circumstances or the discovery in or near such village of any corpse or part of a corpse, in circumstances which lead to a reasonable suspicion that a non-bailable offence has been committed in respect of such person;

(e) the commission of, or intention to commit, at any place out of British India near such village any act which, if committed in British India, would be an offence punishable under any of the following sections of the Indian Penal Code, namely, 231, 232, 234, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 242, 301, 382, 397, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 402, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 460, 489-A, 489-B, 489-C and 489-D;

(f) any matter likely to affect the maintenance of order or the prevention of crime or the safety of person or property respecting which the District Magistrate, by general or special order made with the previous sanction of the Local Government, has directed him to communicate information.

(2) In this section—

(i) "Village" includes village lands, and

(ii) the expression "proclaimed offender" includes any person proclaimed as an offender by any Court or authority established or continued by the Central Government or Crown Representative in any part of India, in respect of any act which, if committed in British India, would be punishable under any of the following sections of the Indian Penal Code namely, 302, 304, 382, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 402, 435, 436, 439, 450, 457, 458, 459 and 460.

(3) Subject to rules in this behalf to be made by the Local Government, the District Magistrate or the Sub Divisional Magistrate may from time to time appoint one or more persons with his or their consent to perform the duties of a village-headman under this section whether a village headman has or has not been appointed for that village under any other law.

**SEC. 46. WHEN POLICE MAY ARREST WITHOUT WARRANT.**—(1) Any police-officer may, without an order from a Magistrate and without a warrant, arrest—

*Firstly*, any person who has been concerned in any cognizable offence or against whom a reasonable complaint has been made or credible information has been received, or a reasonable suspicion exists of his having been so concerned;

*Secondly*, any person having in his possession without lawful excuse, the burden of proving which excuse shall lie on such person, any implement of house breaking;

*Thirdly*, any person who has been proclaimed as an offender under this Code or by order of the Local Government;

*Fourthly*, any person in whose possession anything is found which may reasonably be suspected to be stolen property and who may reasonably be suspected of having committed an offence with reference to such thing;

*Fifthly*, any person who obstructs a police officer while in the execution of his duty, or who has escaped, or attempts to escape, from lawful custody;

**SEC. 160 POLICE-OFFICERS' POWER TO REQUIRE ATTENDANCE OF WITNESSES**—Any police officer making an investigation under this Chapter may, by order in writing require the attendance before himself of any person being within the limits of his own or any adjoining station, who, from the information given or otherwise, appears to be acquainted with the circumstances of the case, and such person shall attend as so required.

**SEC. 161. EXAMINATION OF WITNESSES BY POLICE**—(1) Any police-officer making an investigation under this Chapter (power to investigate) or any police-officer not below such rank as the Local Government may, by general or special order, prescribe in this behalf, acting on the requisition of such officer, may examine orally any person supposed to be acquainted with the facts and circumstances of the case.

(2) Such person shall be bound to answer all questions relating to such case put to him by such officer, other than questions the answers to which would have a tendency to expose him to a criminal charge or to a penalty or forfeiture.

**SEC. 164. POWER TO RECORD STATEMENTS AND CONCESSIONS**—(1) Any Presidency Magistrate, any Magistrate of the first class and any Magistrate of the second class specially empowered in this behalf by the Local Government may, if he is not a police-officer, record any statement or confession made to him in the course of an investigation under this Chapter or at any time afterwards before the commencement of the inquiry or trial.

(2) Such statements shall be recorded in such of the manners hereinafter prescribed for recording evidence as is, in his opinion, best fitted for the circumstances of the case. Such confessions shall be recorded and signed in the manner provided in section 14 and such statements or confessions shall then be forwarded to the Magistrate by whom the case is to be inquired into or tried.

(3) A Magistrate shall, before recording any such confession, explain to the person making it that he is not bound to make a confession and that if he does so it may be used as evidence against him and no Magistrate shall record any such confession unless, upon questioning the person making it, if he has reason to believe that it was not made voluntarily and when he records any confession, he shall make a memorandum at the foot of such record to the following effect—

'I have explained to (name) that, he is not bound to make a confession and that if he does so, any confession he may make, may be used as evidence against him and I believe that this confession was voluntarily made. It was taken in my presence and hearing and was read over to the person making it and admitted by him to be correct, and it contains a full and true account of the statement made by him.'

(4) In the Presidencies of Fort St. George and Bombay, investigation under this section may be made by the head of the village, who shall then report the result to the nearest Magistrate authorized to hold inquests.

(5) The following Magistrates are empowered to hold inquests, namely, any District Magistrate, Sub-divisional Magistrate, or Magistrate of the First Class and any Magistrate specially empowered in this behalf by the Local Government or the District Magistrate.

*Scope*—When the body cannot be found or has been buried, there can be no investigation under section 174. This section is intended to apply to cases in which an inquest is necessary, which presupposes that the corpse must be available—*Gul Hasan*, 1908, P. R. 27, 9 Cr L J, 105.

N.B.—1 Whenever information of the sudden or unnatural death of a European is reported at a police station, the officer in charge of the station shall send an urgent immediate information to the District Superintendent and the Inquest Report required by s. 174 of Act X of 1882, shall be taken by a European officer, and unless death has been caused by violence, the marks of which are apparent, no native officer shall have the right of examination of the body. Under no circumstances shall any examination be taken when the deceased is of the female sex. In such case a police-officer, not below the rank of Head Constable, will remain with or accompany the body till receipt of orders from the Magistrate—*Reg. and Ord. N.W.P., S. 10, Art. 156, p. 273*.

2 It appears to the Government of India that it will be better, if inquiries into cases of sudden and unnatural deaths of soldiers are made by Magistrates and not by the police. The police should, however, report all such occurrences to the Magistrate—No. 1398, dated 10th October, 1878.

SEC 173 POWER TO SUMMON PERSONS—(1) A police-officer proceeding under section 174 may, by order in writing, summon two or more persons as aforesaid for the purpose of the said investigation and any other person who appears to be acquainted with the facts of the case. Every person so summoned shall be bound to attend and to answer truly all questions other than questions the answers to which would have a tendency to expose him to a criminal charge, or to a penalty or forfeiture.

(2) If the facts do not disclose a cognizable offence to which section 170 applies, such persons shall not be required by the police-officer to attend a Magistrate's Court.

THE CORONER'S ACT—In the Presidency towns of Bombay and Calcutta the Coroner's Act IV of 1871 is in force. The following are some of the sections of the Act in connection with the investigation—

8 *Jurisdiction to enquire into deaths*—When a Coroner has reason to believe that the death of any person has been caused by accident, homicide, suicide, or suddenly by means unknown or that any person, being a prisoner, has died in prison, and that the body is lying within the place for which the Coroner is so appointed, the Coroner shall enquire into the cause of death. Every such enquiry shall be deemed a judicial proceeding within the meaning of section 193 of

enquire of such circumstances and the cause of death, and if, before or during the inquiry he is informed that any person whether within or without the local limits of his jurisdiction can give evidence or produce any document material thereto may issue a summons requiring him to attend and give evidence or produce such document on the inquest.

Any persons disobeying such summons shall be deemed to have committed an offence under s. 173 or s. 175 of the Indian Penal Code, as the case may be.

For the purpose of causing prisoners to be brought up to give evidence the Coroner shall be deemed a Criminal Court within the meaning of Part IV of the Prisoners' Act, 1900.

**18 Post mortem Examinations Fees to medical witnesses.**—The Coroner may direct the performance of a post mortem examination with or without an analysis of the contents of the stomach or intestines by any medical witness summoned to attend the inquest, and every medical witness other than the Chemical Examiner to Government, shall be entitled to such reasonable remuneration as the Coroner thinks fit.

**19 Evidence to be on oath Evidence on behalf of accused**—All evidence given under this Act shall be on oath and the Coroner shall be bound to receive evidence on behalf of the party (if any) accused of causing the death of the deceased person.

**Questions suggested by jury**—After each witness has been examined the Coroner shall enquire whether the jury wish any further questions to be put to the witness and if the jury wish that any such questions should be put, the Coroner shall put them accordingly.

**20 Coroner to take down evidence in writing**—The Coroner shall commit to writing the material parts of the evidence given to the jury, and shall read or cause to be read over such parts to the witness and then procure his signature thereto.

Any witness refusing so to sign shall be deemed to have committed an offence under s. 180 of the Indian Penal Code. Every such deposition shall be subscribed by the Coroner. For the purpose of s. 180 of the Indian Penal Code, a Coroner shall be deemed to be a Magistrate.

**21 Coroner to sum up to jury**—When all the witnesses have been examined the Coroner shall sum up the evidence to the jury and the jury shall then consider their verdict.

**22 Coroner to draw up inquisition**—When the verdict is delivered the Coroner shall draw up the inquisition according to the finding of the jury, or when the jury is not unanimous, according to the opinion of the majority.

**23 Contents of inquisition**—Every inquisition under this Act shall be signed by the Coroner with his name and style of office and by the jurors and shall set forth—(1) where when and before whom, the inquisition is holden (2) who the deceased is (3) where his body lies (4) the names of the jurors and that they present the inquisition upon oath, (5) where when and by what means the deceased came by his death, and (6) if his death was occasioned by the criminal act of another who is guilty thereof. If the name of the deceased be unknown he may be described as a certain person to the jurors unknown.

The following two sections, viz., 243 and 244 are meant for the trial of summonses cases by Magistrates —

**SEC 243 CONVICTION ON ADMISSION OF TRUTH OR ACCUSATION**—If the accused admits that he has committed the offence of which he is accused, his admission shall be recorded as nearly as possible in the words used by him and, if he shows no sufficient cause why he should not be convicted, the Magistrate may convict him accordingly.

**SEC 244 PROCEDURE WHEN NO SUCH ADMISSION IS MADE**—(1) If the Magistrate does not convict the accused under the preceding section or if the accused does not make such admission the Magistrate shall proceed to hear the complaint (if any) and take all such evidence as may be produced in support of the prosecution and also to hear the accused and take all such evidence as he produces in his defence.

Provided that the Magistrate shall not be bound to hear any person as complainant in any case in which the complaint has been made by a Court.

(2) The Magistrate may, if he thinks fit, on the application of the complainant or accused issue a summons to any witness directing him to attend or produce any document or other thing.

(3) The Magistrate may, before summoning any witness on such application require that his reasonable expenses incurred in attending for the purposes of the trial be deposited in Court.

The following section viz., 247 is meant for the trial of warrant cases by Magistrates —

**SEC 247 PROCESS FOR COMPELLING PRODUCTION OF EVIDENCE AT THE INSTANCE OF ACCUSED**—(1) If the accused after he has entered upon his defence applies to the Magistrate to issue any process for compelling the attendance of any witness for the purpose of examination or cross-examination or the production of any document or other thing, the Magistrate shall issue such process unless he considers that such application should be refused on the ground that it is made for the purpose of vexation or delay or for defeating the ends of justice. Such grounds shall be recorded by him in writing. Provided that when the accused has been examined or had the opportunity of cross examining any witness after the charge is framed, the attendance of such witness shall not be compelled under this section, unless the Magistrate is satisfied that it is necessary for the purposes of justice.

(2) The Magistrate may, before summoning any witness on such application, require that his reasonable expenses incurred in attending for the purposes of the trial be deposited in Court.

**SEC 247 TRIALS BEFORE HIGH COURT TO BE BY JURY**—All trials under this Chapter before a High Court shall be by jury and notwithstanding anything herein contained in all criminal cases transferred to a High Court under this Code or under the Letters Patent of any High Court established under the Indian High Court Act 1861 or the Government of India Act, 1915 or the Government of India Act, 1935 the trial may, if the High Court so directs, be by jury.

who has been found under the provisions of this Code to be an European (other than an European British Subject) or an American, a majority of the jury shall if practicable and if such Indian or American before the first juror is called and accepted so requires, consist of persons who are Europeans or Americans.

N.B. The Indian Dominion Parliament has recently passed an Act to abolish this statutory discrimination.

**SEC 276 JURORS TO BE CHOSEN BY LOT**—The jurors shall be chosen by lot from the persons summoned to act as such, in such manner as the High Court may from time to time by rule direct.

Provided that—

*Firstly*, pending the issue under this section of rules for any Court the practice now prevailing in such Court in respect to the choosing of jurors shall be followed;

*Secondly*, in case of a deficiency of persons summoned the number of jurors required may, with the leave of the Court, be chosen from such other persons as may be present;

*Thirdly*, in a trial before any High Court in the town which is the usual place of sitting of such High Court—

(a) if the accused person is charged with having committed an offence punishable with death or

(b) if in any other case a Judge of the High Court so directs the jurors shall be chosen from the special jury list hereinafter prescribed and

*Fourthly*, in any district for which the Local Government has declared that the trial of certain offences may be by special jury the jurors shall in any case in which the Judge so directs, be chosen from the special jury list prescribed in section 323.

**SI C 280 FOREMAN OF JURY**—(1) When the jurors have been chosen they shall appoint one of their number to be foreman.

(2) The foreman shall preside in the debates of the jury, deliver the verdict of the jury, and ask any information from the Court that is required by the jury or any of the jurors.

(3) If a majority of the jury do not, within such time as the Judge thinks reasonable agree in the appointment of a foreman he shall be appointed by the Court.

**SI C 281 ASSASSORS HOW CHOSEN**—When the trial is to be held with the aid of assessors not less than three and if practicable four shall be chosen from the persons summoned to act as such.

**SI C 282 VERDICT IN HIGH COURT WITH TO PRIVILEGE**—(1) When in a case tried before a High Court the jury are unanimous in their opinion or when as many as six are of one opinion and the Judge agrees with them the Judge shall give judgment in accordance with such opinion.

(2) When in any such case the jury are satisfied that they will not be unanimous, but six of them are of one opinion the foreman shall so inform the Judge.

(1) If the Judge disagrees with the majority he shall at once discharge the jury.

(1) If there are not so many as six who agree in opinion the Judge shall, after the lapse of such time as he thinks reasonable, discharge the jury.

**SI C 283 VERDICT IN COURT OF SESSION WITH TO PRIVILEGE**—(1) When in a case tried before the Court of Session the Judge does not think it necessary to express disagreement with the verdict of the jurors or of a majority of the jurors he shall give judgment accordingly.

(2) If the accused is acquitted, the Judge shall record judgment of acquittal. If the accused is convicted the Judge shall unless he proceeds in accordance with the provisions of section 362 pass sentence on him according to law.

**SI C 287 PROCEDURE WHILE SESSIONS JUDGE DISAGREES WITH VERDICT**—(1) If in any such case the Judge disagrees with the verdict of the jurors or a majority of the jurors on all or any of the charges on which any accused person has been tried and is of the opinion that it is necessary for the ends of justice to submit the case in respect of such accused to the High Court, he shall submit the case accordingly recording the grounds of his opinion and when the verdict is one of acquittal stating the offence which he considers to have been committed and in such case, if the accused is further charged under the provisions of section 110 shall proceed to try him on such charge as if such verdict had been one of conviction.

(2) Whenever the Judge submits a case under this section he shall not record judgment of acquittal or of conviction on any of the charges on which such accused has been tried, but he may either remand such accused to custody or admit him to bail.

(3) In dealing with the case so submitted the High Court may exercise any of the powers which it may exercise on an appeal, and subject thereto it shall, after considering the entire evidence and after giving due weight to the opinion of the Sessions Judge and the jury acquit or convict such accused of any offence of which the jury could have convicted him upon the charge framed against him before it and if it convicts him may pass such sentence as might have been passed by the Court of Session.

**SI C 290 DETERMINATION OF OPINIONS OF ASSASSORS**—(1) When in a case tried with the aid of assessors the case for the defence and the prosecutor (if any) are concluded the Court may sum up the evidence for the prosecution and defence, and shall then require each

of the assessors to state his opinion orally, on all the charges on which the accused has been tried and shall record such opinion and for that purpose may ask the assessors such questions as are necessary to ascertain what their opinions are. All such questions and the answers to them shall be recorded.

(2) The Judge shall then give judgment, but in doing so shall not be bound to conform to the opinions of the assessors.

(3) If the accused is convicted the Judge shall, unless he proceeds in accordance with the provisions of section 362, pass sentence on him according to law.

**SEC 312 NUMBER OF SPECIAL JURORS** —The High Court may prescribe the number of persons whose names shall be entered at any one time in the special jurors' list.

Provided that no definite number of Europeans or Americans or of Indians shall be so prescribed.

**SEC 320 EXEMPTIONS** —The following persons are exempt from liability to serve as jurors or assessors namely —

- (a) officers in civil employ superior in rank to a District Magistrate
- (a 1) members of any Legislature in British India
- (b) salaried Judges
- (c) Commissioners and Collectors of Revenue or Customs,
- (d) police-officers and persons engaged in the Preventive Service in the Customs Department
- (e) persons engaged in the collection of the revenue whom the Collector thinks fit to exempt on the ground of official duty,
- (f) persons actually officiating as priests or ministers of their respective religions
- (g) persons in His Majesty's Army, Navy or Air Force, except when, by any Law in force for the time being, they are specially made liable to serve as jurors or assessors
- (h) surgeons and others who openly and constantly practise the medical profession
- (i) legal practitioners (as defined by the Legal Practitioners' Act 1878) in actual practice,
- (j) persons employed in the Post Office and Telegraph Departments
- (k) persons exempted from personal appearance in Court under the provisions of Civil Procedure Code sections 640 and 641,
- (l) other persons exempted by the Local Government from liability to serve as jurors or assessors

**SEC 343 COMPOUNDING OFFENCES** —(1) The offences punishable under the sections of the Indian Penal Code such as ss 323, 334<sup>1</sup> are compoundable by the person to whom the hurt is caused.

(2) The offences of causing hurt and grievous hurt punishable under section 324, section 325, section 335, section 337 or section 338<sup>2</sup> of the Indian Penal Code may, with the permission of the Court before which any prosecution for such offence is pending, be compounded by the person to whom the hurt has been caused.

(3) When any offence is compoundable under this section the attempt of such offence or an attempt to commit such offence (when such attempt is itself an offence) may be compounded in like manner.

(4) When the person who would otherwise be competent to compound an offence under this section is under the age of eighteen years or is an idiot or a lunatic any person competent to contract on his behalf may, with the permission of the Court, compound such offence.

(5) When the accused has been committed for trial or when he has been convicted and an appeal is pending no composition for the offence shall be allowed without the leave of the Court to which he is committed or as the case may be before which the appeal is to be heard.

(5 A) A High Court acting in the exercise of its powers of revision under section 439 may allow any person to compound any offence which he is competent to compound under this section.

(6) The composition of an offence under this section shall have the effect of an acquittal of the accused with whom the offence has been compounded.

(7) No offence shall be compounded except as provided by this section.

**SEC 374 SENTENCE OF DEATH TO BE SUBMITTED BY COURT OF SESSION** —When the Court of Session passes sentence of death, the proceedings shall be submitted to the High Court and the sentence shall not be executed unless it is confirmed by the High Court.

**SEC 342 POSTPONEMENT OF CAPITAL SENTENCE ON PREGNANT WOMAN** —If a woman sentenced to death is found to be pregnant the High Court shall order the execution of the sentence to be postponed until may, if it thinks fit, commute the sentence to transportation for life.

The pregnancy of a woman shall be certified by a civil surgeon —*Bombay Gazette*, 1879, p 471

<sup>1</sup> For original wording and fuller detail of other sections of the Indian Penal Code see the Criminal Procedure Act 1971.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

the district or such other medical officer as the Local Government directs, and thereupon shall examine such surgeon or other officer as a witness and shall reduce the examination to writing.

(1 A) Pending such examination and inquiry, the Magistrate may deal with the accused in accordance with the provisions of section 466.

(2) If such Magistrate is of opinion that the accused is of unsound mind and consequently incapable of making his defence, he shall record a finding to that effect and shall postpone further proceeding in the case.

**SEC 465 PROCEDURE IN CASE OF PERSON COMMITTED BEFORE COURT OF SESSION OR HIGH COURT BEING LUNATIC**—(1) If any person committed for trial before a Court of Session or a High Court appears to the Court at his trial to be of unsound mind and consequently incapable of making his defence, the jury, or the Court with the aid of assessors shall, in the first instance try the fact of such unsoundness and incapacity and if the Jury or Court, as the case may be, is satisfied of the fact, the Judge shall record a finding to that effect and shall postpone further proceedings in the case and the jury if any, shall be discharged.

(2) The trial of the fact of unsoundness of mind and incapacity of the accused shall be deemed to be part of his trial before the Court.

**SEC 466 RELEASE OF LUNATIC PENDING INVESTIGATION OR TRIAL**—(1) Whenever an accused person is found to be of unsound mind and incapable of making his defence, the Magistrate or Court as the case may be, whether the case is one in which bail may be taken or not may release him on sufficient security being given that he shall be properly taken care of and shall be prevented from doing injury to himself or to any other person, and for his appearance when required before the Magistrate or Court or such officer as the Magistrate or Court appoints in this behalf.

(2) If the case is one in which, in the opinion of the Magistrate or Court, bail should not be taken or if sufficient security is not given the Magistrate or Court, as the case may be, shall order the accused to be detained in safe custody in such place or manner as he or it may think fit and shall report the action taken to the Local Government.

Provided that no order for the detention of the accused in a lunatic asylum shall be made otherwise than in accordance with such rules as the Local Government may have made under the Indian Lunacy Act 1912.

**SEC 467 RESUMPTION OF INQUIRY OR TRIAL**—(1) Whenever an inquiry or a trial is postponed under section 464 or section 465 the Magistrate or Court, as the case may be, may at any time resume the inquiry or trial, and require the accused to appear or be brought before such Magistrate or Court.

(2) When the accused has been released under section 466, and the sureties for his appearance produce him to the officer whom the Magistrate or Court appoints in this behalf, the certificate of such officer that the accused is capable of making his defence shall be receivable in evidence.

**SEC 468 PROCEDURE ON ACCUSED APPEARING BEFORE MAGISTRATE OR COURT**—(1) If, when the accused appears or is again brought before the Magistrate or the Court, as the case may be, the Magistrate or Court considers him capable of making his defence, the inquiry or trial shall proceed.

(2) If the Magistrate or Court considers the accused to be still incapable of making his defence, the Magistrate or Court shall again act according to the provisions of section 464 or section 465 as the case may be, and if the accused is found to be of unsound mind and incapable of making his defence, shall deal with such accused in accordance with the provisions of section 466.

**SEC 469 WHEN ACCUSED APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN INSANE**—When the accused appears to be of sound mind at the time of inquiry or trial and the Magistrate is satisfied from the evidence given before him that there is reason to believe that the accused committed an act which, if he had been of sound mind, would have been an offence, and that he was, at the time when the act was committed, by reason of unsoundness of mind, incapable of knowing the nature of the act, or that it was wrong or contrary to law, the Magistrate shall proceed with the case, and if the accused ought to be committed to the Court of Session or High Court, send him for trial before the Court of Session or High Court, as the case may be.

**SEC. 470 JUDGMENT OF ACQUITTAL ON GROUND OF LUNACY**—Whenever any person is acquitted upon the ground that, at the time at which he is alleged to have committed an offence, he was, by reason of unsoundness of mind, incapable of knowing the nature of the act alleged as constituting the offence, or that it was wrong or contrary to law, the finding shall state specifically whether he committed the act or not.

**SEC. 471 PERSON ACQUITTED ON SUCH GROUND TO BE DETAILED IN SAFE CUSTODY**—(1) Whenever the finding states that the accused person committed the act alleged, the Magistrate or Court before whom or which the trial has been held, shall, if such act would, but for the incapacity found, have constituted an offence, order such person to be detained in safe custody in such place and manner as the Magistrate or Court think fit, and shall report the action taken to the Local Government.

Provided that no order for the detention of the accused in a lunatic asylum shall be made otherwise than in accordance with such rules as the Local Government may have made under the Indian Lunacy Act, 1912.

(2) The Local Government may empower the officer-in-charge of the jail in which a person is confined under the provisions of section 466 or this section to discharge all or any of the functions of the Inspector General of Prisons under section 473 or section 474.

**SEC. 472. LUNATIC PRISONERS TO BE VISITED BY INSPECTOR GENERAL** —  
Repealed by Act IV of 1912. Cf section 50 of Act IV (Lunacy) of 1912.—(1) When any person is confined under the provisions of section 466 or section 471 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898, the Inspector General of Prisons, if such person is confined in a jail or the visitors of the asylum or any two of them, if he is confined in an asylum, may visit him in order to ascertain his state of mind and he shall be visited once at least in every six months by such Inspector General or by two such visitors as aforesaid, and such Inspector General or visitors shall make a special report as to the state of mind of such person to the authority under whose order he is confined.

(2) The Local Government may empower the officer-in-charge of the jail in which such person may be confined to discharge all or any of the functions of the Inspector General under sub section (1).

**SLC 473. PROCEDURE WHERE LUNATIC PRISONER IS REPORTED CAPABLE OF MAKING HIS DEFENCE** —If such person is detained under the provisions of section 466 and in the case of a person detained in a jail, the Inspector-General of Prisons or, in the case of a person detained in a lunatic asylum, the visitors of such asylum or any two of them shall certify that, in his or their opinion, such person is capable of making his defence, he shall be taken before the Magistrate or Court as the case may be, at such time as the Magistrate or Court appoints and the Magistrate or Court shall deal with such person under the provisions of section 468 and the certificate of such Inspector General or visitors as aforesaid shall be receivable as evidence.

**SEC. 474. PROCEDURE WHERE LUNATIC DEFAINED UNDER SECTION 466 OR 471 IS DECLARED FIT TO BE RELEASED** —(1) If such person is detained under the provisions of section 466 or section 471, and such Inspector General or visitors shall certify that, in his or their judgment, he may be released without danger of his doing injury to himself or to any other person, the Local Government may thereupon order him to be released or to be detained in custody, or to be transferred to a public lunatic asylum, if he has not been already sent to such an asylum, and in case it orders him to be transferred to an asylum, may appoint a Commission consisting of a judicial and two medical officers.

(2) Such Commission shall make formal inquiry into the state of mind of such person taking such evidence as is necessary, and shall report to the Local Government, which may order his release or detention as it thinks fit.

**SLC 475. DELIVERY OF LUNATIC TO CARE OF RELATIVE OR FRIEND** —(1) Whenever any relative or friend of any person detained under the provisions of section 466 or section 471 desires that he shall be delivered to his care and custody, the Local Government may, upon the application of such relative or friend and on his giving security to the satisfaction of such Local Government that the person delivered shall—

- (a) be properly taken care of and prevented from doing injury to himself or to any other person, and
- (b) be produced for the inspection of such officer, and at such times and places, as the Local Government may direct, and,
- (c) in the case of a person detained under section 466, be produced when required before such Magistrate or Court,

order such person to be delivered to such relative or friend.

(2) If the person so delivered is accused of any offence the trial of which has been postponed by reason of his being of unsound mind and incapable of making his defence, and the inspecting officer referred to in sub section (1), clause (b) certifies at any time to the Magistrate or Court that such person is capable of making his defence, such Magistrate or Court shall call upon the relative or friend to whom such accused was delivered to produce him before the Magistrate or Court, and, upon such production, the Magistrate or Court shall proceed in accordance with the provisions of section 468, and the certificate of the inspecting officer shall be receivable as evidence.

#### SPECIAL RULES OF EVIDENCE

**SEC. 509. DEPOSITION OF MEDICAL WITNESS** —(1) The deposition of a Civil Surgeon or other medical witness, taken and attested by a Magistrate in the presence of the accused, or taken on Commission under Chapter XL, may be given in evidence in any inquiry, trial or other proceeding under this Code, although the deponent is not called as a witness.

(2) The Court may, if it thinks fit, summon and examine such deponent as to the subject-matter of this deposition.

## APPENDIX IV

### THE INDIAN PENAL CODE

**SEC. 32 WORDS REFERRING TO ACTS INCLUDE ILLEGAL OMISSION**—In every part of this Code, except where a contrary intention appears from the context, words which refer to acts done extend also to illegal omissions (An act includes illegal omissions which must be intentional and conducive to bad or harmful result)

**34 ACT DONE BY SEVERAL PERSONS IN FURTHERANCE OF COMMON INTENTION**—When a criminal act is done by several persons in furtherance of the common intention of all, each of such persons is liable for that act in the same manner, as if it were done by him alone

**44 INJURY**—The word, injury, denotes any harm whatever illegally caused to any person in body, mind, reputation, or property

**51 OATH**—The word "oath" includes a solemn affirmation substituted by law for an oath, and any declaration required or authorized by law to be made before a public servant or to be used for the purpose of proof, whether in a Court of Justice or not

**52 GOOD FAITH**—Nothing is said to be done or believed in good faith which is done or believed without due care and attention

**53 PUNISHMENTS**—The punishments to which offenders are liable under the provisions of this code are—

*First*—Death,

*Secondly*—Transportation,

*Thirdly*—Penal servitude,

*Fourthly*—Imprisonment, which is of two descriptions, namely—

(1) Rigorous, that is with hard labour

(2) Simple

*Fifthly*—Forfeiture of property,

*Sixthly*—Fine,

*Seventhly*—Whipping added by the Whipping Act as in the case of a juvenile offender who is under sixteen years

**80 ACCIDENT IN DOING A LAWFUL ACT**—Nothing is an offence which is done by accident or misfortune and without any criminal intention or knowledge in the doing of a lawful act in a lawful manner by lawful means and with proper care and caution

**81 ACT LIKELY TO CAUSE HARM BUT DONE WITHOUT CRIMINAL INTENT, AND TO PREVENT OTHER HARM**—Nothing is an offence merely by reason of its being done with the knowledge that it is likely to cause harm, if it be done without any criminal intention to cause harm and good faith for the purpose of preventing or avoiding other harm to person or property

shall be punished with whipping, or may require the father or guardian of the minor to execute, within such time as the Court may fix, a bond binding himself, in such penalty as the Court directs, to prevent the minor from being again guilty of those acts or omissions.

(2) The amount of the bond, if forfeited, shall be recoverable by the Court as if it were a fine imposed by itself.

(3) If a father or guardian fails to execute a bond under sub-section (1) within the time fixed by the Court, he shall be punished with fine which may extend to fifty rupees.

**Offences under sections—**

126.—Maliciously wrecking or attempting to wreck a train.

127.—Maliciously hurting or attempting to hurt persons travelling by railway.

128.—Endangering safety of persons travelling by railway by wilful act or omission.

129.—Endangering safety of persons travelling by railway by way of rash or negligent act or omission.

**84. ACT OF A PERSON OF UNSOUND MIND**—Nothing is an offence which is done by a person who, at the time of doing it, by reason of unsoundness of mind, is incapable of knowing the nature of the act, or that he is doing what is either wrong or contrary to law.

**85. ACT OF A PERSON INCAPABLE OF JUDGMENT BY REASON OF INTOXICATION CAUSED AGAINST HIS WILL**.—Nothing is an offence which is done by a person who, at the time of doing it is, by reason of intoxication, incapable of knowing the nature of the act, or that he is doing what is either wrong or contrary to law; provided that the thing which intoxicated him was administered to him without his knowledge or against his will.

**86. OFFENCE REQUIRING A PARTICULAR INTENT COMMITTED BY ONE WHO IS INTOXICATED**—In cases where an act done is not an offence unless done with a particular knowledge or intent, a person who does the act in a state of intoxication shall be liable to be dealt with as if he had the same knowledge as he would have had if he had not been intoxicated, unless the thing which intoxicated him was administered to him without his knowledge or against his will.

**87. ACT NOT INTENDED AND NOT KNOWN TO BE LIKELY TO CAUSE DEATH OR GRIEVOUS HURT, DONE BY CONSENT**.—Nothing which is not intended to cause death or grievous hurt, and which is not known by the doer to be likely to cause death, or grievous hurt, is an offence by reason of any harm which it may cause, or be intended by the doer to cause, to any person, above eighteen years of age, who has given consent, whether express or implied, to suffer that harm; or by reason of any harm which it may be known by the doer to be likely to cause to any such person who has consented to take the risk of that harm.

**88. ACT NOT INTENDED TO CAUSE DEATH, DONE BY CONSENT IN GOOD FAITH FOR PERSON'S BENEFIT**.—Nothing, which is not intended to cause death, is an offence by reason of any harm which it may cause, or be intended by the doer to cause, or be known by the doer to be likely to cause, to any person for whose benefit it is done in good faith, and who has given consent, whether express or implied, to suffer that harm, or to take the risk of that harm.

**91 EXCLUSION OF ACTS WHICH ARE OFFENCES INDEPENDENTLY OF HARM CAUSED** —The exceptions in sections 87, 88 and 89 do not extend to acts which are offences independently of any harm which they may cause or be intended to cause or be known to be likely to cause, to the person giving the consent or on whose behalf the consent is given.

**92 ACT DONE IN GOOD FAITH FOR THE BENEFIT OF A PERSON WITHOUT CONSENT** —Nothing is an offence by reason of any harm which it may cause to a person for whose benefit it is done in good faith even without that person's consent, if the circumstances are such that it is impossible for that person to signify consent, or if that person is incapable of giving consent and has no guardian or other person in lawful charge of him from whom it is impossible to obtain consent in time for the thing to be done with benefit. Provided —

*First* —That this exception shall not extend to the intentional causing of death or the attempting to cause death.

*Secondly* —That this exception shall not extend to the doing of any thing which the person doing it knows to be likely to cause death, for any purpose other than the preventing of death or grievous hurt, or the curing of any grievous disease or infirmity.

*Thirdly* —That this exception shall not extend to the voluntary causing of hurt, or to the attempting to cause hurt, for any purpose other than the preventing of death or hurt.

*Fourthly* —That this exception shall not extend to the abetment of any offence, to the committing of which offence it would not extend.

**176 OMISSION TO GIVE NOTICE OR INFORMATION TO PUBLIC SERVANT BY PERSON LEGALLY BOUND TO GIVE IT** —Whoever, being legally bound to give any notice or to furnish information on any subject to any public servant, as such, intentionally omits to give such notice or to furnish such information in the manner and at the time required by law, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month, or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees, or with both, or,

if the notice or information required to be given respects the commission of an offence, or is required for the purpose of preventing the commission of an offence, or in order to the apprehension of an offender, with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both.

**181 GIVING FALSE EVIDENCE** —Whoever being legally bound by an oath or by any express provision of law to state the truth, or being bound by law to make a declaration upon any subject, makes any statement which is false, and which he either knows or believes to be false, or does not believe to be true, is said to give false evidence.

*Explanation 1* —A statement is within the meaning of this section, whether it is made verbally or otherwise.

*Explanation 2* —A false statement as to the belief of the person attesting is within the meaning of this section and a person may be guilty of giving false evidence by stating that he believes a thing which he does not believe, as well as by stating that he knows a thing which he does not know.

**192 FABRICATING FALSE EVIDENCE** —Whoever causes any circumstance to exist, or makes any false entry in any book or record, or makes any document containing a false statement, intending that such circumstance, false entry or false statement may appear in evidence in a judicial proceeding or in a proceeding taken by law before a public servant as such or before an arbitrator and that such circumstance, false entry, or false statement, so appearing in evidence, may cause any person who in such proceeding is to form an opinion upon the evidence to entertain an erroneous opinion touching any point material to the result of such proceeding, is said to fabricate false evidence.

**193 PUNISHMENT FOR FALSE EVIDENCE** —Whoever intentionally gives false evidence in any stage of a judicial proceeding or fabricates false evidence for the purpose of being used in any stage of a judicial proceeding, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine,

and whoever intentionally gives or fabricates false evidence in any other case, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, and shall also be liable to fine.

*Explanation 1* —A trial before a Court martial is a judicial proceeding.

*Explanation 2* —An investigation directed by law preliminary to a proceeding before a Court of Justice, is a stage of a judicial proceeding though that investigation may not take place before a Court of Justice.

**197 ISSLING OR SIGNING A LIES CERTIFICATE** —Whoever issues or signs any certificate required by law to be given or signed, or relating to any fact of which such certificate is by law admissible in evidence knowing or believing that such certificate is false in any material point, shall be punished in the same manner as if he gave false evidence.

**201 CALLING DISBELIARCE OF EVIDENCE OF OFFENDER, OR GIVING FALSE INFORMATION TO SCRIBE OFFENDER** —Whoever, knowing or having reason to believe that an offence has been committed, causes any evidence of the commission of that

offence to disappear, with the intention of screening the offender from legal punishment or with that intention gives any information respecting the offence which he knows or believes to be false,

shall, if the offence which he knows or believes to have been committed is punishable with death, be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine,

and if the offence is punishable with transportation for life, or with imprisonment which may extend to ten years, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, and shall also be liable to fine,

and if the offence is punishable with imprisonment for any term not extending to ten years shall be punished with imprisonment of the description provided for the offence, for a term which may extend to one tenth part of the longest term of the imprisonment provided for the offence, or with fine or with both

**202 INTENTIONAL OMISSION TO GIVE INFORMATION OF OFFENCE BY PERSON BOUND TO INFORM.**—Whoever, knowing or having reason to believe that an offence has been committed intentionally omits to give any information respecting that offence which he is legally bound to give shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine or with both

**203 NEGLIGENT CONDUCT WITH RESPECT TO POISONOUS SUBSTANCE.**—Whoever does with any poisonous substance, any act in a manner so rash or negligent as to endanger human life or to be likely to cause hurt or injury to any person or knowingly or negligently omits to take such order, with any poisonous substance in his possession as is sufficient to guard against probable danger to human life from such poisonous substance, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both

**204 OBSCENE ACTS AND SONGS.**—Whoever to the annoyance of others, (a) does any obscene act in any public place or (b) sings, recites or utters any obscene song, ballad or words in or near any public place, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three months, or with fine, or with both

causes the death of the person against whom he is exercising such right of defence without pre-meditation, and without any intention of doing more harm than is necessary for the purpose of such defence.

**Exception 3** —Culpable homicide is not murder if the offender being a public servant or acting as a public servant acting for the advancement of public justice, exceeds the powers given to him by law, and causes death by doing an act which he, in good faith, believes to be lawful and necessary for the due discharge of his duty as such public servant and without ill will towards the person whose death is caused.

**Exception 4** —Culpable homicide is not murder if it is committed without premeditation in a sudden fight in the heat of passion upon a sudden quarrel and without the offender having taken undue advantage or acted in a cruel or unusual manner.

**Explanation.**—It is immaterial in such cases which party offers the provocation or commits the first assault.

**Exception 5** —Culpable homicide is not murder when the person whose death is caused, being above the age of eighteen years suffers death or takes the risk of death with his own consent.

**V B** —The law of British India, differing from the law of England, does not regard every case of homicide as *prima facie* murder, it throws on the prosecution the burden of proving a certain intent or knowledge.

**301. CULPABLE HOMICIDE BY CAUSING DEATH OF PERSON OTHER THAN PERSON WHOSE DEATH WAS INTENDED** —If a person, by doing anything which he intends or knows to be likely to cause death, commits culpable homicide by causing the death of any person, whose death he neither intends nor knows himself to be likely to cause, the culpable homicide committed by the offender is of the description of which it would have been if he had caused the death of the person whose death he intended or knew himself to be likely to cause.

**302. PUNISHMENT FOR MURDER** —Whoever commits murder shall be punished with death, or transportation for life, and shall also be liable to fine.

**303. PUNISHMENT FOR MURDER BY LIFE CONVICTION** —Whoever, being under sentence of transportation for life, commits murder, shall be punished with death.

**304. PUNISHMENT FOR CULPABLE HOMICIDE NOT AMOUNTING TO MURDER** —Whoever commits culpable homicide not amounting to murder, shall be punished with transportation for life, or imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine if the act by which the death is caused is done with the intention of causing death, or of causing such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, or with fine, or with both, if the act is done with the knowledge that it is likely to cause death, but without any intention to cause death or to cause such bodily injury as is likely to cause death.

**305 A. CAUSING DEATH BY NEGLIGENCE** —Whoever causes the death of any person by doing any rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.

**305. ABETMENT OF SUICIDE OF CHILD OR INSANE PERSON** —If any person under eighteen years of age, any insane person, any delirious person, any idiot, or any person in a state of intoxication commits suicide, whoever abets the commission of such suicide shall be punished with death, or transportation for life, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**306. ABETMENT OF SUICIDE** —If any person commits suicide, whoever abets the commission of such suicide, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**307. ATTEMPT TO MURDER** —Whoever does any act with such intention or knowledge, and under such circumstances that, if he by that act caused death, he would be guilty of murder, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine, and if hurt is caused to any person by such act the offender shall be liable either to transportation for life, or to such punishment as is hereinbefore mentioned.

When any person offending under this section is under sentence of transportation for life, he may, if hurt is caused, be punished with death.

**308. ATTEMPT TO COMMIT CULPABLE HOMICIDE** —Whoever does any act with such intention or knowledge, and under such circumstances that, if he by that act caused death, he would be guilty of culpable homicide not amounting to murder, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both, and if hurt is caused to any person by such act, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, or with fine, or with both.

**309. ATTEMPT TO COMMIT SUICIDE** —Whoever attempts to commit suicide and does any act towards the commission of such offence, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both.

**312. CAUSING MISCARRIAGE**—Whoever voluntarily causes a woman with child to miscarry, shall, if such miscarriage be not caused in good faith for the purpose of saving the life of the woman, be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both; and, if the woman be quick with child, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.

*Explanation*—A woman, who causes herself to miscarry, is within the meaning of this section.

**NOTE**—‘WITH CHILD’ means pregnant, and it is not necessary to show that quickening—that is, perception by the mother of the movements of the foetus has taken place, or that the embryo has assumed a foetal form. The stage to which pregnancy has advanced and the form which the ovum or embryo may have assumed are immaterial.

‘MISCARRIAGE’ means the premature expulsion of the child or foetus from the mother’s womb at any period of pregnancy, before the term of gestation is completed.

‘QUICK WITH CHILD’—When the woman has felt the child move within her.

**313 CAUSING MISCARRIAGE WITHOUT WOMAN’S CONSENT**.—Whoever commits the offence defined in the last preceding section without the consent of the woman, whether the woman is quick with child or not, shall be punished with transportation for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

*Cf ENGLISH LAW, SEC 58 OF THE OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON ACT, 1861*—Every woman, being with child, who, with intent to procure her own miscarriage, shall unlawfully administer to herself any poison or other noxious thing, or shall unlawfully use any instrument or other means whatsoever, with the like intent, and whosoever, with intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman, whether she be or be not with child, shall unlawfully administer to her, or cause to be taken by her, any poison or other noxious thing, or shall unlawfully use any instrument or other means whatsoever with the like intent, shall be guilty of felony, and being convicted thereof, shall be liable, at the discretion of the court, to be kept in penal servitude for life, or for any term not less than three years, or to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years with or without hard labour, and with or without solitary confinement.

*SEC 59 OF THE OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON ACT, 1861*—Whosoever shall unlawfully supply or procure any poison or other noxious thing, or any instrument or thing whatsoever, knowing that the same is intended to be unlawfully used or employed, with intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman, whether she be or be not with child, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof, shall be liable, at the discretion of the court, to be kept in penal servitude for the term of three years, or to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour.

**314 DEATH CAUSED BY ACT DONE WITH INTENT TO CAUSE MISCARRIAGE**—Whoever, with intent to cause the miscarriage of a woman with child, does any act which causes the death of such woman, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine, and if the act is done without the consent of the woman, shall be punished either with transportation for life, or with the punishment above mentioned.

child under the age of twelve years, or having the care of such child shall expose or leave such child in any place with the intention of wholly abandoning such child, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, or with fine or with both.

*Explanation*—This section is not intended to prevent the trial of the offender for murder or culpable homicide, as the case may be, if the child dies in consequence of the exposure.

318 CONCEALMENT OF BIRTH BY SECRET DISPOSITION OF DEAD BODY.—Whoever, by secretly burying or otherwise disposing of the dead body of a child whether such child die before or after or during its birth, intentionally conceals or endeavours to conceal the birth of such child, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.

319 HURT.—Whoever causes bodily pain, disease, or infirmity to any person is said to cause hurt.

320 GRIEVIOUS HURT.—The following kinds of hurt only are designated as grievous—

*First*—Emasculation

*Secondly*—Permanent privation of the sight of either eye

*Thirdly*—Permanent privation of the hearing of either ear.

*Fourthly*—Privation of any member or joint

*Fifthly*—Destruction of permanent impairing of the powers of any member or joint

*Sixthly*—Permanent disfigurement of the head or face

*Seventhly*—Fracture or dislocation of a bone or tooth

*Eighthly*—Any hurt which endangers life or which causes the sufferer to be during the space of twenty days, in severe bodily pain, or unable to follow his ordinary pursuits.

321 VOLUNTARILY CAUSING HURT.—Whoever does any act with the intention of thereby causing hurt to any person, or with the knowledge that he is likely thereby to cause hurt to any person, and does thereby cause hurt, to any person, is said voluntarily to cause hurt.

322 VOLUNTARILY CAUSING GRIEVIOUS HURT.—Whoever voluntarily causes hurt if the hurt which he intends to cause or knows himself to be likely to cause is grievous hurt, and if the hurt which he causes is grievous hurt is said voluntarily to cause grievous hurt.

*Explanation*—A person is not said voluntarily to cause grievous hurt except when he both causes grievous hurt, and intends or knows himself to be likely to cause grievous hurt. But he is said voluntarily to cause grievous hurt if intending or knowing himself to be likely to cause grievous hurt of one kind, he actually causes grievous hurt of another kind.

323 PUNISHMENT FOR VOLUNTARILY CAUSING HURT.—Whoever, except in the case provided for by section 321, voluntarily causes hurt shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees or with both.

324 VOLUNTARILY CAUSING HURT BY DANGEROUS WEAPONS OR MILLS.—Whoever except in the case provided for by section 324, voluntarily causes hurt by means of any instrument for shooting, stabbing or cutting or any instrument which, used as a weapon of offence, is likely to cause death, or by means of fire or any heated substance, or by means of any poison or any corrosive substance, or by means of any explosive substance, or by means of any substance which it is deleterious to the human body to inhale, to swallow or to receive into the blood, or by means of any animal shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both.

325 PUNISHMENT FOR VOLUNTARILY CAUSING GRIEVIOUS HURT.—Whoever except in the case provided for by section 325, voluntarily causes grievous hurt, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.

326 VOLUNTARILY CAUSING GRIEVIOUS HURT BY DANGEROUS WEAPONS OR MILLS.—Whoever, except in the case provided for by section 325, voluntarily causes grievous hurt by means of any instrument for shooting, stabbing or cutting, or any instrument which, used as a weapon of offence, is likely to cause death, or by means of fire or any heated substance, or by means of any poison or any corrosive substance, or by means of any explosive substance, or by means of any substance which it is deleterious to the body to inhale, to swallow or to receive into the blood, or by means of any animal shall be punished with transportation for life or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine.

327 VOLUNTARILY CAUSING HURT TO EXTORT PROPERTY, OR TO CONSTRAIN TO AN ILLIGAL ACT.—Whoever voluntarily causes hurt for the purpose of extorting from the sufferer, or from any person interested in the sufferer, any property or valuable security or of constraining the sufferer or any person interested in such sufferer to do anything which is illegal or which may facilitate the commission of an offence, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**328 CAUSING HURT BY MEANS OF POISON, ETC., WITH INTENT TO COMMIT AN OFFENCE** —Whoever administers to or causes to be taken by any person any poison or any stupefying, intoxicating, or unwholesome drug, or other thing with intent to cause hurt to such person with intent to commit or to facilitate the commission of an offence, or knowing it to be likely that he will thereby cause hurt, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**329 VOLUNTARILY CAUSING GRIEVOUS HURT TO EXTORT PROPERTY OR TO CONSTRAIN TO AN ILLLEGAL ACT** —Whoever voluntarily causes grievous hurt for the purpose of extorting from the sufferer or from any person interested in the sufferer, any property or valuable security, or of constraining the sufferer or any person interested in such sufferer to do anything that is illegal or which may facilitate the commission of an offence, shall be punished with transportation for life or imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine.

**330 VOLUNTARILY CAUSING HURT TO EXTORT CONFESSION, OR TO COMPEL RESTORATION OF PROPERTY** —Whoever voluntarily causes hurt, for the purpose of extorting from the sufferer or any person interested in the sufferer any confession or any information which may lead to the detection of an offence or misconduct, or for the purpose of constraining the sufferer or any person interested in the sufferer to restore or to cause the restoration of any property or valuable security or to satisfy any claim or demand, or to give information which may lead to the restoration of any property or valuable security, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**331 VOLUNTARILY CAUSING GRIEVOUS HURT TO EXTORT CONFESSION OR TO COMPEL RESTORATION OF PROPERTY** —Whoever voluntarily causes grievous hurt for the purpose of extorting from the sufferer or from any person interested in the sufferer any confession or any information which may lead to the detection of an offence or misconduct, or for the purpose of constraining the sufferer or any person interested in the sufferer to restore or to cause the restoration to any property or valuable security, or to satisfy any claim or demand or to give information which may lead to the restoration of any property or valuable security shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**332 VOLUNTARILY CAUSING HURT TO DETER PUBLIC SERVANT FROM HIS DUTY** —Whoever voluntarily causes hurt to any person being a public servant in the discharge of his duty as such public servant or with intent to prevent or deter that person or any other public servant or in consequence of anything done or attempted to be done by that person in the lawful discharge of his duty as such public servant, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years or with fine, or with both.

**333. CAUSING GRIEVOLS HURT BY ACT ENDANGERING LIFE OR PERSONAL SAFETY OF OTHERS.**—Whoever causes grievous hurt to any person by doing any act so rashly or negligently as to endanger human life, or the personal safety of others, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both.

**334. ASSAULT.—**Whoever makes any gesture, or any preparation, intending or knowing it to be likely that such gesture or preparation will cause any person present to apprehend that he who makes that gesture or preparation is about to use criminal force to that person, is said to commit an assault.

*Explanation.*—Mere words do not amount to an assault. But the words which a person uses may give to his gestures or preparations such a meaning as may make those gestures or preparations amount to an assault.

*Cf. English Law.*—An assault consists in an attempt to offer by a person having present ability, with force, to do any hurt or violence to the person of another. Batter means any least hurt or violence unlawfully and wilfully or culpably done to the person of another. Striking at another with a cane, stick, or fist although the blow misses, drawing a sword or bayonet, or throwing a bottle or glass with intent to wound or strike, presenting a loaded gun at a man within range or any other act indicating an intention to use violence against the person of another, is an assault.

**334. ASSAULT OR CRIMINAL FORCE TO WOMAN WITH INTENT TO OUTRAGE HER MODESTY.—**Whoever assaults or uses criminal force to any woman, intending to outrage or knowing it to be likely that he will thereby outrage her modesty, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.

**335. KIDNAPPING.—**Kidnapping is of two kinds: Kidnapping from British India and kidnapping from lawful guardianship.

**336. KIDNAPPING FROM BRITISH INDIA.—**Whoever conveys any person beyond the limits of British India without the consent of that person or of some person legally authorized to consent on behalf of that person, is said to kidnap that person from British India.

**337. KIDNAPPING FROM LAWFUL GUARDIANSHIP.—**Whoever takes or entices any minor under fourteen years of age, if a male, or under sixteen years of age, if a female,<sup>1</sup> or any person of unsound mind, out of the keeping of the lawful guardian of such minor or person of unsound mind, without the consent of such guardian, is said to kidnap such minor or person from lawful guardianship.

*Explanation.*—The words "lawful guardian" in this section include any person lawfully entrusted with the care or custody of such minor or other person.

*Exception.*—This section does not extend to the act of any person who in good faith believes himself to be the father of an illegitimate child, or who in good faith believes himself to be entitled to the lawful custody of such child, unless such act is committed for an immoral or unlawful purpose.

**338. ABDUCTION.—**Whoever by force compels, or by any deceitful means induces, any person to go from any place, is said to abduct that person.

**339. PUNISHMENT FOR KIDNAPPING.—**Whoever kidnaps any person from British India or from lawful guardianship, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term, which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**340. KIDNAPPING OR ABDUCTING IN ORDER TO MURDER.—**Whoever kidnaps or abducts any person in order that such person may be murdered or may be so disposed of as to be put in danger of being murdered, shall be punished with transportation for life, or imprisonment for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**341. KIDNAPPING OR ABDUCTING WITH INT'LNT SECRETLY AND WRONGFULLY TO CONFIN'L PERSON.—**Whoever kidnaps or abducts any person with intent to cause that person to be secretly and wrongfully confined, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**342. KIDNAPPING OR ABDUCTING WOMAN TO COMPLI HER MARRIAGE, ETC.—**Whoever kidnaps or abducts any woman with intent that she may be compelled or knowing it to be likely that she will be compelled to marry any person, *aunt her son, or in order that she may be forced or induced to illicit intercourse*, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

And whoever, by means of criminal intimation as defined in this Code or of abuse of authority or any other method of compulsion, induces any woman to go from any place with intent that she may be, or knowing that it is likely that she will be, forced or induced to meet intent or come with another person shall also be punishable as aforesaid.

1. On or about the third April 1949 the Indian Dominion Parliament raised the age of a minor boy to 10 years and that of a minor girl to 18 years.

**366 A PROCURATION OF MINOR GIRL**—Whoever by any means whatsoever induces any minor girl under the age of eighteen years to go from any place or to do any act with intent that such girl may be or knowing that it is likely that she will be forced or seduced to illicit intercourse with another person shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine

**366 B IMPORTATION OF GIRL FROM FOREIGN COUNTRY**—Whoever imports into British India from any country outside India any girl under the age of twenty-one years with intent that she may be or knowing it to be likely that she will be forced or seduced to illicit intercourse with any person

and whoever with such intent or knowledge imports into British India from any State in India any such girl who has with the like intent or knowledge been imported into India whether by himself or another person

shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine

**367 KIDNAPPING OR ABDUCTING IN ORDER TO SUBJECT PERSON TO CRUEL VOUS HURT SLAVERY ETC**—Whoever kidnaps or abducts any person in order that such person may be subjected or may be so disposed of as to be put in danger of being subjected to grievous hurt or slavery or to the unnatural lust of any person or knowing it to be likely that such person will be so subjected or disposed of shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine

**368 WRONGFULLY CONCEALING OR KEEPING IN CONFINEMENT KIDNAPPED OR ABDUCTED PERSON**—Whoever knowing that any person has been kidnapped or has been abducted wrongfully conceals or confines such person shall be punished in the same manner as if he had kidnapped or abducted such person with the same intention or knowledge or for the same purpose as that with or for which he conceals or detains such person in confinement

**369 KIDNAPPING OR ABDUCTING CHILD UNDER TEN YEARS WITH INTENT TO STEAL FROM ITS PERSON**—Whoever kidnaps or abducts any child under the age of ten years with the intention of taking dishonestly any moveable property from the person of such child shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years and shall also be liable to fine

**370 SELLING MINOR FOR PURPOSES OF PROSTITUTION 1 TC**—Whoever sells lets to hire or otherwise disposes of any person under the age of eighteen years with intent that such person shall at any age be employed or used for the purpose of prostitution or illicit intercourse with any person or for any unlawful and immoral purpose or knowing it to be likely that such person will at any age be employed or used for any such purpose shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine

*Explanation 1*—When a female under the age of eighteen years is sold let for hire or otherwise disposed of to a prostitute or to any person who keeps or manages a brothel the person so disposing of such female shall until the contrary is proved be presumed to have disposed of her with the intent that she shall be used for the purpose of prostitution

*Explanation 2*—For the purpose of this section illicit intercourse means sexual intercourse between persons not united by marriage or by any union or tie which, though not amounting to a marriage is recognized by the personal law or custom of the community to which they belong or where they belong to different communities of both such communities as constituting between them a quasi marital relation

**371 BUYING MINOR FOR PURPOSES OF PROSTITUTION ETC**—Whoever buys hires or otherwise obtains possession of any person under the age of eighteen years with intent that such person shall at any age be employed or used for the purpose of prostitution or illicit intercourse with any person or for any unlawful and immoral purpose or knowing it to be likely that such person will be employed or used for any such purpose shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine

*Explanation 1*—Any prostitute or any person keeping or managing a brothel who buys hires or otherwise obtains possession of a female under the age of eighteen years shall until the contrary is proved be presumed to have obtained possession of such female with the intent that she shall be used for the purpose of prostitution

*Explanation 2*—Illicit intercourse has the same meaning as in section 372

**372 RAPE**—A man is said to commit rape except in the case hereinafter excepted has sexual intercourse with a woman under circumstances falling under any of the five following descriptions—

*First*—Against her will

*Secondly*—Without her consent

*Thirdly*—With her consent, when her consent has been obtained by putting her in fear of death or of hurt

**Fourthly** —With her consent, when the man knows that he is not her husband, and that her consent is given because she believes that he is another man to whom she is or believes herself to be lawfully married.

**Fifthly** —With or without her consent, when she is under fourteen years of age.<sup>1</sup>

**Explanation** —Penetration is sufficient to constitute the sexual intercourse necessary to the offence of rape.

**Exception** —Sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under thirteen years of age, is not rape.

**376 PUNISHMENT FOR RAPe** —Whoever commits rape shall be punished with transportation for life or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine, unless the woman raped is his own wife and is not under twelve years of age, in which case he shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years or with fine, or with both.

**English Law** —A boy under fourteen years of age cannot be convicted of rape, as at that age he is under a physical incapacity to commit the offence. In India the potency of a person charged with the offence has to be proved by evidence in each case, as unlike English law there is no limit of age laid down under which the law presumes a person physically incapable of committing rape.

**377 UNNATURAL OFFENCES** —Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished with transportation for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**Explanation** —Penetration is sufficient to constitute the carnal intercourse necessary to the offence described in this section.

According to English law if the passive agent is under fourteen it is not felony in him but only in the active agent. If he is to be of the age of discretion i.e. above fourteen years it is felony in both. A married woman who consents to her husband's committing an unnatural offence with her is an accomplice.

**378 VOLUNTARILY CAUSING HURT IN COMMITTING ROBBERY** —If any person in committing or attempting to commit, robbery voluntarily causes hurt to such person and any other person jointly concerned in committing or attempting to commit such robbery, shall be punished with transportation for life or with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**379 DACOITY WITH MURDER** —If any one of five or more persons who are conjointly committing dacoity, commits murder in so committing dacoity, every one of those persons shall be punished with death or transportation for life or rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine.

**380 ROBBERY OR DACOITY WITH ATTEMPT TO CAUSE DEATH OR GRIEVOUS HURT** —If at the time of committing robbery or dacoity, the offender uses any deadly weapon or causes grievous hurt to any person or attempts to cause death or grievous hurt to any person the imprisonment with which such offender shall be punished shall not be less than seven years.

**381 GRIEVOUS HURT CAUSED WHILST COMMITTING LURKING-HOUSE TRESPASS OR HOUSE BREAKING** —Whoever whilst committing lurking house trespass or house breaking causes grievous hurt to any person or attempts to cause death or grievous hurt to any person shall be punished with transportation for life or imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**382 ALL PERSONS JOINTLY CONCERNED IN LURKING-HOUSE TRESPASS OR HOUSE BREAKING BY NIGHT, OR UNSHABLL WHILST DEATH OR GRIEVOUS HURT CAUSED BY ONE OF THEM** —If at the time of the committing of lurking-house trespass or house-breaking by night, any person guilty of such offence shall voluntarily cause or attempt to cause, death or grievous hurt to any person, every person jointly concerned in committing such lurking-house trespass by night or house-breaking by night shall be punished with transportation for life or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

**383 PUNISHMENT FOR ATTEMPTING TO COMMIT OFFENCES PUNISHABLE WITH TRANSPORTATION OR IMPRISONMENT** —Whoever attempts to commit an offence punishable by this Code with transportation or imprisonment, or to cause such an offence to be committed, and in such attempt does any act towards the commission of the offence, shall where no express provision is made by this Code for the punishment of such attempt, be punished with transportation or imprisonment of any description provided for the offence for a term of transportation or imprisonment which may extend to one half of the longest term provided for that offence, or with such fine as is provided for the offence or with both.

<sup>1</sup> On or after the third April, 1940, the Indian Dominion Parliament raised the age of consent to sixteen years.

## APPENDIX V

### FORMS REQUIRED BY THE INDIAN LUNACY ACT, 1912

#### FORM I

##### APPLICATION FOR RECEPTION ORDER

In the matter of A B<sup>1</sup> residing at \_\_\_\_\_, by occupation \_\_\_\_\_, son  
of \_\_\_\_\_, a person alleged to be a lunatic

To \_\_\_\_\_ Presidency Magistrate for \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ District  
Magistrate of \_\_\_\_\_, or Sub Divisional Magistrate of \_\_\_\_\_  
or \_\_\_\_\_ Magistrate especially empowered under Act IV  
of 1912 for \_\_\_\_\_ }

The Petition of C D<sup>1</sup> residing at \_\_\_\_\_ by occupation \_\_\_\_\_, son  
of \_\_\_\_\_, in the town of \_\_\_\_\_ [or Sub Division of \_\_\_\_\_]  
in the district of \_\_\_\_\_ ]

- 1 I am \_\_\_\_\_ years of age<sup>2</sup>
- 2 I desire to obtain an order for the reception of A B as a lunatic in the asylum of \_\_\_\_\_ situated at<sup>3</sup>
- 3 I last saw the said A B at \_\_\_\_\_ on the day<sup>4</sup> of \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 I am the<sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ of the said A B

*Or if the petitioner is not a relative of the patient state as follows*

I am not a relative of the said A B. The reasons why this petition is not presented by a relative are as follows (State them)

The circumstances under which this petition is presented by me are as follows (State them)

5 The persons signing the medical certificates which accompany the petition are<sup>6</sup>

6 A statement of particulars relating to the said A B accompanies this petition

7 (If that is the fact) An application for an inquiry into the mental capacity of the said A B was made to the \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ and a certified copy of the order made on the same petition is annexed hereto (Or if that is the fact)

No application for an inquiry into the mental capacity of the said A B has been made previous to this application

The petitioner therefore prays that a reception order may be made in accordance with the foregoing statement

(Sd) C D

The statements contained or referred to in paragraphs \_\_\_\_\_ are true to my knowledge, the other statements are true to my information and belief

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

(Sd) C D

1 Full name caste and titles

2 Enter the number of complete years. The petitioner must be at least eighteen or twenty one whether is the age of majority under the law to which the petitioner is subject.

3 Insert full description of the name and locality of the asylum (mental hospital) or the name address and description of the person in charge of the asylum (mental hospital)

4 I do so before the date of the presentation of the petition is requisite.

5 Here state the relationship with the patient

6 Here state whether either of the persons signing the medical certificates is a relative partner or assistant of the lunatic or of the petitioner and, if a relative of either, the exact relationship

## STATEMENT OF PARTICULARS

[If any of the particulars in this statement is not known, the fact to be so stated]

The following is the statement of particulars relating to the said A B —

- Name of the patient at length  
 Sex and age.  
 Married or single or widowed  
 Previous occupation  
 Caste and religious belief, as far as known  
 Residence at or immediately previous to the date hereof  
 Names of any near relatives to the patient who are alive  
 Whether this is a first attack of lunacy  
 Age (if known) on first attack  
 When and where previously under care and treatment as a lunatic  
 Duration of existing attack  
 Supposed cause  
 Whether the patient is subject to epilepsy  
 Whether suicidal  
 Whether the patient is known to be suffering from phthisis or any form of tubercular disease  
 Whether dangerous to others, and in what way  
 Whether any near relative (stating the relationship) has been afflicted with insanity  
 Whether the patient is addicted to alcohol or the use of opium and charms bhang, cocaine or other intoxicant

[The statements contained or referred to in paragraphs are true to my knowledge The other statements are true to my information and belief]

[Signature by person making the statement

## FORM 2

## RECEPTION ORDER OR PETITION

(See sections 7, 10)

I, the undersigned J. K., being a Presidency Magistrate of the District Magistrate or the Sub Divisional Magistrate or a Magistrate of the class specially empowered by the Government to perform the functions of a Magistrate under Act IV of 1912 upon the petition of C D of<sup>2</sup> in the matter of A B a lunatic, accompanied by the medical certificates of G H, a medical officer, and of J K, a medical practitioner [or medical officer], under the said Act, hereto annexed, hereby authorize you to receive the said A B at your asylum. And I declare that I have (or have not) personally seen the said A B, before making this order.

To [1]

(Sd) J. K.  
Designation as above

## FORM 3

## MEDICAL CERTIFICATE

(See Sections 18, 19)

In the matter of A B of<sup>1</sup> in the town of [ ] in the district of [ ], an alleged lunatic of the sub-division of [ ]

I, the undersigned C D, do hereby certify as follows —

I am a gazetted medical officer [or a medical practitioner declared by government to be a medical officer under Act IV of 1912] and I am in actual practice of the medical profession.

2 On the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_ at in the to [ ]

<sup>1</sup> Address and description

<sup>2</sup> To be addressed to the officer or person in charge of the asylum.

<sup>3</sup> Insert residence of patient

<sup>4</sup> Insert qualification to practise medicine and surgery registrable in the United Kingdom

[or the sub-division of ] in the district of [separately from any other practitioner],<sup>1</sup> I personally examined the said A B , and came to the conclusion that the said A B , is a lunatic and a proper person to be taken charge of and detained under care and treatment

3 I formed this conclusion on the following grounds, viz —

- (a) Facts indicating insanity observed by myself, viz —
- (b) Other facts (if any) indicating insanity communicated to me by others, viz —

*Here state the information and from whom*

(Sd ) C D

*Detention as above*

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