MEDICAL

JURISPRUDENCE.

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ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON. LECTURER ON MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE IN THAT INSTITUTION.


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Words inflicted through the dress.

Brain was lacerated, and there was great effusion of blood. The second vertebra of the neck was fractured, and the spinal marrow was thrown through. These injuries were quite sufficient to account for death, and had they existed alone, there might have been no reason to charge the husband with the murder. But there was a wound on each temple, partly lacerated and partly bruised, and a trench of the right temporal scull had been divided; the injury having been inflicted, apparently, with a pointed blunt instrument. There were marks of blood on all the top of the scull, and a pointed stone, covered with blood, was found near the body. It was therefore obvious, at the deceased had fallen on the vertex, that the injuries to the two temples latterly, could not have been accidentally produced, for there was no projecting body against which it could have fallen in her descent; and when the force of the fall had been spent on the vertex, her body could not have rolled over, so as to produce lacerated punctures and bruised wounds on both sides of the head. All the force tended to show that a murderous assault had been made upon her by the top of the scull, and that she had afterwards fallen or had been pitched backwards backwards. The wound received by the skull might have stunned her, and might not have sufficed to account for death; but their nature and situation furnished strong proof that they could not have arisen from any cause operating simultaneously, and that they were neither of accidental nor suicidal origin. The signature was contrived and executed. (Mid. Gen. xxilv, 54.)

If several wounds have been inflicted through the dress, an examination of this very important subject to show which was first received. A man, in struggling with an assassin, received three stabs with a knife—two on the left allow, and the third in the back. The latter was about the level of the eighth rib; it was vertical to the chest, and had clean edges. The lower margin was obtuse—the upper acute; hence it was evident that the cutting edge of the weapon had been directed upwards. It had traversed the left lung and the heart, and had caused immediate death. It was obvious, on examination, that this mortal wound had been first received, and the stab at the allow inflicted subsequently. These two stabs, which were slight, had divided the chest coat and shirt, and had only grazed the skin, so that no blood had been effused. But the edges of the cuts in the chest coat and shirt were united with blood, hence it was evident that they must have been produced by a weapon already rendered bloody by a previous wound. The fact was of some importance in the case, and the correctness of the medical opinion was confirmed by the evidence at the judicial inquiry. (See Ann. d'Hypocrity, 1847, i. p. 461.)

CHAPTER XXIV.

Evidence from circumstances—Medical questions—Value of circums- tancial evidence—the position of the body—the weapon—other attestation—Evidence from blood or weapons—marks of blood on the person or the weapon or in the abode—marks of blood on person or in the abode—position of the person when mortally wounded—Evidence from wounds on the deceased—no blood on the assailant—marks of blood on weapon—attestation distinguished from tenuous blood—evidence from the form and direction of spots of blood.

Evidence from circumstances.—In pursuing the examination of the question respecting the homicidal or suicidal origin of wounds, the attention of the reader may be called to the force of evidence which is sometimes derived from
the circumstances under which the body of a person, dead from wounds, is discovered. It may be said that this is a subject wholly foreign to the duties of a medical profession, who, when summoned to aid justice, by their science, in the detection of crimes, do not seek for circumstances which support the medical evidence of crime, do not seek for circumstances which support the medical evidence required of them. A practitioner would certainly be wrong to base his professional opinion exclusively on circumstantial proofs; but it is a general observation, that the more unusual is the appearance of a wound, in a death of unnatural cause, the more circumstantial will be the evidence which has been called to the bar; and, indeed, if observed by another, no advantage could be taken of them without the assistance of a medical man.

Among the questions which present themselves on those occasions are the following:—Is the position of a wounded body that which a criminal could have assumed? Is the distance of the fatal weapon from the body such as to render it improbable that it could have been placed there by the deceased?—In answering these questions, it is necessary to take into consideration the extent of the area of the body; the number of the limbs; the number of the wounds; the nature of the body of the deceased not connected with the body of the blood all connected? Are there any marks of blood on his person, which could not be produced by himself?—These are questions, the answers to which may materially affect the case of an accused person; and the practitioner, in noticing and recording the circumstances involved in them, ought to exercise due caution in his examination and deliberation. "The consideration of the whole is a council, the most profound of which is the birth of the principle in itself the most noble, most deserving at least, not to the existence of civil society, that it should understand, in the course of crime, that every criminal is committed with more impunity to the offender. At the same time it is to be emphatically remarked, that, in no case, and upon no principle, can the policy of preventing crime set off the knowledge of a conviction of the truth of the facts, independently of the nature and extent of the crime, or the extent to which the criminal is committed with more impunity to the offender. At the same time it is to be emphatically remarked, that, in no case, and upon no principle, can the policy of preventing crime set off the knowledge of a conviction of the truth of the facts, independently of the nature and extent of the crime, or the extent to which the criminal is committed with more impunity to the offender. At the same time it is to be emphatically remarked, that, in no case, and upon no principle, can the policy of preventing crime set off the knowledge of a conviction of the truth of the facts, independently of the nature and extent of the crime, or the extent to which the criminal is committed with more impunity to the offender. At the same time it is to be emphatically remarked, that, in no case, and upon no principle, can the policy of preventing crime set off the knowledge of a conviction of the truth of the facts, independently of the nature and extent of the crime, or the extent to which the criminal is committed with more impunity to the offender.
DIRECTIONS.

jus which requires the utmost degree of caution and vigilance in its application; and in acting upon it, the test and humane rule, impressed by Lord Hale, cannot be too often repeated; viz. 'eiusdem præterim præsumpta quæ omne quis parte misericordiam quæ omne parte misericordiam habet.' (Vol. i. p. 480.)

Evidence is direct when a fact is proved by evidence, and circumstantial when the fact is as more proved by circumstances. More commonly the evidence is prescriptive, i.e. founded on an inference from circumstances.

Circumstantial Evidence.—The common rule respecting the admissibility of this kind of evidence applies to circumstances of a medical as well as those which are of a physical or moral kind. Medical circumstances, when properly observed, are often of the highest importance. In order to convict an accused person on circumstantial evidence, the facts proved in the one should square with the hypothesis of his guilt, and be interwoven consistently with his innocence; or, in the language of another learned judge, a certain number of facts should be incontestably proved in the case, which are quite inconsistent with the innocence of the prisoner. These facts should be as strong as to render it impossible, in the hands of a jury, that any one but the prisoner could have committed the murder.

There are many cases on record in which an observation of slight and unsuspected circumstances by medical men, has led to the detection of offenders. In the life of Sir Ashley Cooper, it is mentioned, thus: when called to see Mr. Blight, of Deptford, who had been mortally wounded by a pistol-shot in the year 1800, he inferred from an examination of the locality, that the shot must have been fired by a left-handed man. The only left-handed man near the premises of the case was a Mr. Patel, a particular friend of the deceased, who was not at the least suspected. This man was afterwards tried and acquitted of the crime: and he made a full confession of his guilt before execution.

The rules for investigating a case of poisoning (see ante, p. 28) may be equally observed in many cases of death from violence. Among the circumstances to which a medical witness should specify direct his attention on these occasions are the following:

1. The position of the body.—The body may be found in a position which the deceased could not have assumed on the supposition of his wound or injury having been accidental or suicidal. The position of a dead wounded body is often only compatible with suicidal or homicidal death, either at the time of death, or immediately afterwards. In order to determine the probable time of death, we should always enquire whether there be any warmth about the body,—whether it be rigid, or in a state of decomposition, and to what degree this may have advanced. In the case of a female who was found dead in bed, próximo with her throat cut, in November, 1847, it was ascertained that when first discovered, the body was so warm as to render it highly probable that the crime must have been committed within an hour. This observation tended to prove the innocence of a person who was suspected of the murder, because it was known that he had been absent from the house for some days.

2. The position of the weapon.—If a person has died from an accidental or self-inflicted wound, likely to cause death either immediately or within a few minutes, the weapon is usually found in the body either near the wound or a short distance. If found near it, it is proper to notice on which side of the body it is lying; if at a short distance, we must consider whether it might not have fallen to the spot, or been thrown or placed there by the deceased. If there has been any interference with the body, all evidence from the relative position of it and the weapon will be inadmissible.

In a case which was referred to me some years since, a woman had evidently died from a severe laceration on the throat, which was obviously inflicted; the weapon, a razor, was found under the left shoulder, a most unusual situation, but which, it appeared, had been forced over the body having been turned over before it was seen by the surgeons who was first called.
POSITION OF THE BODY AND THE WEAPON.

We must remember that it is quite compatible with suicide that a weapon may be found at some distance, or in a concealed situation; but it is much more frequent for a person to be found with a weapon in the hand, or lying by the side of the deceased.

In one instance, it is stated the deceased was discovered in bed with his throat cut, and the razor lying close or shot by his side. It appears very improbable, that any person committing suicide, after dividing both of carotids and the jugular veins, should have power to close or shut the razor; and there are no means to suggest interference when the razor is thus found placed.

It is, however, one circumstance in relation to a weapon strongly confirmatory of suicide. If the instrument be found firmly gripped in the hand of the deceased, no better circumstantial evidence of suicide can, perhaps, be offered. It is so common to find knives, razors, and pistols grasped in the hands of suicides, that it is quite unnecessary to produce cases illustrative of this statement. The grasping of a weapon appears to be owing to muscular spasm persisting after death and manifesting itself under the form of what has been called caloric spasm—a condition quite distinct from rigidity, although often running into it. It does not seem possible that any murderer could imitate this state, since the relaxed hand of a dead person cannot be made to grasp or retain a weapon, like the hand which has firmly held it by powerful muscular contraction at the last moment of life. In this respect the case of Rop v. Savilly, Nottingham Summer Assizes, 1844, is of great interest to the medical jurispr. A woman was found dead with her throat cut, and there was a razor close in her hand. There was no blood upon the hand which held the razor, and this, together with the fact of its being quite clean, rendered it certain that it must have been placed there by the prisoner after having cut his wife's throat. The defence may be founded with some other article grasped in the hand. (See case, Ann. d'Iygr., 1829, i. 460.) It may be her own or the prisoner's hair torn off in the struggles for life; and on this point a question of identity may be easily raised. (Rop v. Ellison, Bodmin Summer Assizes, 1845.) In a case which occurred to Dr. Mars, a woman was found assassinated in her house, and the body was discovered, a small scabbard was still held firmly in one hand. This proved that the murder must have taken place very suddenly, and without any resistance on the part of the deceased. (Ann. d'Iygr., 1829, i. 460.)

If the weapon cannot be discovered, or if it be found concealed in a distant place, this is strongly presumptive of homicide, provided the wound be of such a nature as to prove specially fatal. In the case of Lord William, found as weapon could be discovered: and although the wound in the throat bore some of the characters of a suicidal incision, this fact alone was sufficient to show that it must have been the act of a murderer. With respect to the weapon being found at a distance from the body, other circumstances should be taken into consideration before any opinion is expressed. We may decide whether the weapon, if it be a sharp cutting instrument like a razor, has been recently notched; for this might show that a degree of force or violence has been used, not easily reconcilable with the suicidal use of the instrument. The well-known case of the Duke of Beaufort, who was found dead in the Tower, in July, 1805, gave rise to this question. The deceased was discovered with his head cut, and a razor lying near him. This razor was found to be much notched at the edge, while the throat was smoothly and evenly cut, from one side to the other, and to the vertebre column. Some considered this to have been an act of suicide, others of murder. Those medical witnesses who supported the view of suicide, were asked to explain how it was that such an even wound could have been produced by a notched razor. They attempted to account for this by saying that the deceased had probably drawn the razor backwards and for-wards across the neck-bone; forgetting that before this could have been done by the deceased, all the great vessels of the neck must have been divided. Blood on scabbard.—It does not always happen that the weapon with which
is quite compatible with suicide that a weapon may be in a concealed situation; but it is much more in the hands, or being held by the side of the deceased. The deceased was discovered in bed with his throat cut or cut by his side. It appears very improbable to suicide, dividing one of both carotids and the 1 power to close on with the knife; and there are the cutting when the knife was thus inserted. There is, in relation to a weapon strongly confirmatory of cutting being firmly grasped in the hand of the deceased, evidence of suicide can, perhaps, be offered. It is so serious, and possible grasped in the hands of Satan, that it produces cases illustrative of this statement. The same is being to inquire whether grasp following after will the form of has been called cadaverism is a distinct rigidity from ordinarily resting into a state that any suicide could instigate this state, and of person cannot be able to grasp or retain a weapon, firmly held by powerful muscular contraction at the present case of Lee v. Savage, Nottingham is of great interest to the medical point. A woman thrust cut, and there was a thrust mark in her chest, the hand which held the razor, and this, together with the hand, concludes it certain that it must have been there after having cut her wife's throat. The deceased other articles grouped in the hand. (See case, Ant. It may be her own or the prisoner's hair on ant. In this print a question of identity may be easily solved, in the Summer Assizes, 1863.) In a case the weapon was found assassinated in her house, and when a small child was still held steady in one hand, other ideas have taken place very curiously, and without form of the deceased. (Ant. R. and S. v. Rose, 3 Ac. 460.) It cannot be discovered, or if discovered, it is not the weapon, by a distant inspection of homicide, provided the wound be of such credibility face. In the case of Read v. Williams, the weapon was not held; and although the wound in the throat was none other than that which the deceased alone was sufficient to show the act of a murderer. With respect to the weapon to the body, other circumstances should be taken into any opinion is expressed. We may observe whether being introduced like a razor, has been recently purchased or a dagger of form. A dagger of form has been used, with the suicidal use of the instrument. The well-known the knife which was thrown away by the deceased, in July, 1863. This point is a part of the case. The deceased was discovered with his breast near him. This case was found to be much noticed on that morning and evening cut from one side to the other. Some considered this to have been an act on the part of the deceased which was to explain how it was that such an even wound could a not noticed cutter. They attempted to account for this by then had probably cut the razor back and forth; forgetting that this had been done; the great weight of the knife mark have been divided! It does not always happen that the weapon with which a wound has been produced is covered with blood. It has been remarked, that in a case of stab or cut, the knife is frequently without any stains of blood upon it; or there is only a slight film, which, on trying, gives the surface a yellowish-brown colour. The explanation of this appears to be that the weapon, in being withdrawn, is sometimes covered with the edge of the wound in the extremity. When a weapon is bloody, particular attention should be given to the manner in which the blood is diffused over it. In cases of intended wounds, or in the attempted accomplishment of murder, it is not unusual for the criminal to besmirch with blood a knuckle or other weapon which has probably not been used. A case of this kind occurred to the late Dr. Mac. A young man alleged that he had received a cut in the forehead by a blow from a offender, which he produced. It was remarked, that the weapon was smeared with blood on both surfaces; but the laceration was toward the handle than to the point. The wound on the forehead was a clean incision, and on which the complaint was been cut through. It was obvious, therefore, that the blood on the weapon could not have proceeded from this cut: for it would have been wiped, or only left in thin tissue, and more towards the point than the handle, by the act of drawing it through the clothes in producing the wound. There was no doubt that blood had been intentionally applied to the blade. (Ant. R. and S. v. Rose, p. 282.) How on everyone.—In some instances, no blood may exist on the weapon, but a hair may be found adhering to it if the weapon be of a cutting kind. The main question will be, in such a case, whether the hair is that of a human being or an animal. See in reference to this question the case of the Queen v. Trench, Coweswell Summer Assizes, 1861, (Med. Gaz. Tel. and M. R. t. 729.) The importance of examining closely the hair found on weapons, is shown by a case proved by Dr. Lyon, in which a hatching having clotted blood and hair attached to it was produced as evidence against an accused person, under whose bed this weapon had been found. This, with other circumstantial evidence, had served public opinion strongly against the prisoner, when a jurisprudence, who had been present to be in court, examined the weapon with a pocket lens, and pronounced that it was human hair, but belonged to some animal. This circumstance led to a more complete editing of the evidence, and the accused was acquitted. It turned out that he had killed an animal with the hatchet, and had coursed through the weapon under the hatchet. (Appeal for its production, p. 24.) Before the conclusion is removed from a weapon, it should be examined carefully by the microscope. Hair, down, or other material, may be found imbedded in the solidified blood either on the edge of the blade; and evidence of this kind may occasionally be of great importance. In the case of Lee v. Haversack, Inner Main Assizes, 1859, a razor was produced in evidence, with which it was alleged the throat of the deceased had been cut. I examined the edge microscopically, and observed several hair fibres from a coagulating of blood, which under a high magnifying power turned out to be cotton fibres. It was proved at the trial that the razor, in coming into contact of the skin of the deceased, but had not been used to the edges of the cotton nightgown. This was a strong circumstance to show that the razor produced was the weapon with which the fatal wound had been inflicted. Foreign substances in wounds.—In gun-shot wounds, the examination of wounds produced in the body, it has been found, has more than one instance led to the identity of the person who had committed the crime. His hand-writing has been traced on the paper used as wadding, or it has been found to be part of a printed page of which the remailer has been discovered in his possession. Foreign substances may be sometimes discovered in cotton-wool or hospital wound; and these may throw an important light on the circumstances under which the crime was perpetrated. In the case of the Queen v. Hand.
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(Taunton Lest Amicus, 1845.) The body of the deceased was found in a well. When examined, there were on the head several wounds quite insufficient, scores for death. Blood, both on the clothes and hair, and in the blood were striking a quantity of hay-seeds, which led the medical witness to consider that the wound must have been inflicted in a stable or in some place where there was hay. On examining a neighbouring stable, the spot where the murder was committed was evidenced by the discovery of marks of blood.

Evidence from the Situation of Marks of Blood.—The observation of these being equal union peculiar to the time that a dead body is found. They may be so situated as to show that the body has been moved or been interfered with after death, and thus a light upon the question whether the act has been one of homicide or suicide. In the case of Flov. v. Estes (Bucks Lest Am., 1854.) a mark of blood, as from the emulsion of a hand, was traced along the passage of the house in which the body of the deceased was found. The mark was conspicuous on the door-post, part of a back room, which was found looked and bolted on the inside. The crime was thus fixed upon the prisoner; for no one breaking into the house from could have had access to this room. The evidence thus brought against him was derived from his seeing his way with a bloody hand in the darkness after the murder. He was not at the time aware that he was there leaving impressions which would show that no one but himself could have perpetrated the crime. It is a fair subject of medium-legal inquiry on three occasions, whether there are any marks of blood about the apartment, which no one but the assassins could have produced.

Marks of Blood.—It is proper to notice all marks of blood on the person or in the apartments, and to observe the greatest quantity of blood has been placed there; this is primarily found in the spot where the deceased has died. The deceased may have blood in more places than one; if so, it becomes important to notice whether there be any communications in blood between these different places. Blood on distant clothes or furniture will show whether the deceased has moved about, and whether he has struggled much after receiving the wound. Acts of incursion on the part of the wounded person who has died from haemorrhage, are generally indicated by tracks of blood. We must observe likewise, whether, if the wound be in the throat, blood has flowed down in front of the clothes or person; for this will sometimes show whether the wound was inflicted when the individual was sitting, or lying down. If the throat be cut, a person is in dying, it is obvious that the blood will be found chiefly on either side of the neck, and not extending down the front of the body. For if the cut is made in the clothes or person, while a person is lying down, it is evident that the blood will be found chiefly on either side of the neck, and not extending down the front of the body. For if the cut is made in the clothes or person, while a person is lying in bed; the blood was afforded on each side of the neck only. There was also found a wound on the thumb of the right hand of the deceased, which had been inflicted at the time the hand was put to defeat the throat. Recent wounds on the back of one or both hands, were found in presence of an acrid fluid. Other wounds in the throat, are, under peculiarly strongly prescriptive of homicide. There may, however, be no marks of wounds on the back of the hands, if the individual was attacked unexpectedly; if it was interdicted, or rendered powerless, or several had combined to attack him, while he was pinned and held by an accomplice.

If the stomach has been wounded with his clothes on, we should notice whether any part of his dress has or has not been cut or injured over the situation of the wound. When, together with the wound in the throat, we find the crumbs and the shirt, or part of the dress cut through, this is, in all other circum-
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stains being equal, presumptive of poisoning; for it is not unusual that a suicide, unless behaving under continued influence, would allow any mechanical injuries of this kind to remain in the way of a weapon. In one ease of a boundied wound in the thorax, inflicted in the 4th month of pregnancy, the cervix of the deceased had been lanced, and afterwards allowed to drop over the wound in order to conceal it.

The importance of extracting the dress, and comparing it with the masses of blood on the body, has already been pointed out. (See also by Mr. Codd, p. 260.) The nature of the d3st spot of blood on clothing may occasionally serve to connect an accused person with an act of murder. In the case of the Queen v. Steev and others, (Cock Winter Assizes, 1862,) evidence was adduced to show that some spots of blood on the bosom and clother of the prisoner, when examined microscopically, presented identical sialia, and some rare vegetable globules, globules of soap, confirm, and bear from the parts of ground. The spot of a belt close to which the body of the deceased was found, presented the same appearance precisely as the spot on the prisoner’s bosom: and the witness gave this scientific evidence, depose in his opinion the masses were derived from this spot. He had examined the spot of all the other dresses in the locality, and found it to be different. Admitting this opinion to have been correct, this circumstance immediately connected the prisoner with the act; and it was sworn cut by the fact that he had been seen near the spot on the night of the murder.

Masses of blood on the person of the deceased require special observation. Very often the impression of a hand, or of some of the fingers, will be found on the skin in a situation where it could have been impossible or impracticable for the deceased to have produced it, even supposing that one or both of his hands were covered with blood. In one ease of murder, there was found the bloody impression of a left hand upon the left hand of the deceased; in such a position that it was quite impossible the deceased himself could have made the mark. In other cases it may be important to state whether the inside or outside of the hand, or whether one or both hands, were marked with blood. Marks of blood on the dress of the wounded person may often afford important circumstantial evidence. If there be several stains on one or more of the bodies involving the dress, it should be observed whether the edge of one or more of them he stained with blood, and if from the weapon, and whether the stain be on the outside or inside of the article of dress. In the case of murder, the skin in a situation where it could have been impossible or impracticable for the deceased to have produced it, even supposing that one or both of his hands were covered with blood. In one ease of murder, there was found the bloody impression of a left hand upon the left hand of the deceased; in such a position that it was quite impossible the deceased himself could have made the mark.
been for some days oozed, and has fallen upon articles of dress or furniture; but this, in medical-legal position, is not often a subject of much importance, since there are few cases of severe wounds, either in the throat or other parts of the body, in which the two kinds of blood do not escape simultaneously. The most striking and apparent differences between them, when recently escaped, are the colour: the arterial being of a bright scarlet, while the venous is of a dark red hue; but it is well known that the latter, when exposed to air for a short time, acquires a florid red or arterial colour: and the two kinds of blood, when dried, cannot be distinguished chemically by any known criterion. If the coat or other stuff, covered with blood, were of a dark colour, the liquid would be absorbed, and lose its physical characteristics; arterial blood contains more fibrin than venous, and coagulates more firmly. Even the microscope shows no appreciable difference in the blood-corpuscles; and chemistry does not enable us to apply any test so as to make a satisfactory distinction between them. In this deficiency of microscopic and chemical evidence, an attempt has been made to establish a distinction by noticing the physical appearances of the blood-stains. Thus, it is alleged, the arterial blood is indicated by its being sprinkled over surfaces upon which it has fallen, while the venous blood is always poured out in a full stream. In most wounds which prove fatal by haemorrhage, the blood is poured out simultaneously from arteries and veins. The sprinkled appearance of the blood, when it exists, will, certainly, produce a very strong presumption that it was poured out from a living body; for after the heart has ceased to act, the arteries lose the power of throwing out the blood in jets. This mode of distinguishing arterial from venous blood was adduced as evidence in the case of Sollis, who destroyed himself after having attempted to assassinate the Duke of Cumberland. There was the appearance of sprinkled blood on the contuscions of Sollis, and the temporal artery of the Duke had been wounded in the struggle. Sir Bryan Hone's theory inferred that Sollis had attacked the Duke, and wounded the artery, which had led to the sprinkling of the above. (Will's Circ. Ev. 98.) This method of distinguishing the two kinds of blood, therefore, may be occasionally available for practical purposes; but it must be remembered that accident may lead to the sprinkling of blood from a small vein which has been wounded, while blood may be poured out in considerable quantity from an artery, especially if large; and if it fall on one spot at a short distance, it may produce a sprinkled appearance. The sprinkling may be expected only when the wounded artery is small, and the blood is offered at a distance. This is a fact which a medical jurist should ever keep in view, although, for the reasons stated, so great a reliance must not be placed on it. The spots of blood, if thrown out from a living blood-vessel, very quickly consolidate; and the fibrin, with the greater portion of the colouring matter, is found of a deep red colour at the lower part of the spot, the upper portion being of a pale red. The lower and thicker part has sometimes a shining lustre, as if gauded, when the spot is pointed, and when it has been oozed upon a non-absorbent surface. This gauded appearance is probably occasioned by the coagulation of the plasma, and the rapid deposition of the albuminous portions. When the blood falls upon porous articles of clothing, it is absorbed, and produces a dull stain. In dark-coloured articles of dress, it is difficult by day-light to perceive these stains. The part appears suffused, and there is a dull red brown colour, which is more practicable with the aid of the reflection of the light of a candle. Stains of blood or of the juices of certain vegetables, may present somewhat the appearance of those of blood; but it is impossible to distinguish between them; however, he rendered immediately apparent by the application of the microscope and of the chemical processes to be hereafter mentioned. (See Blood-Stains.) In treating to the conglutination of the blood as evidence of its escape from a living vessel, it must be remembered that there are certain diseases, as septic
and has fallen upon articles of dress or furniture: practice, is not often a subject of much importance. In wounds, either in the throat or other parts, in two kinds of blood do not escape simultaneously, apparent difference between them; when recently offered, in being of a bright scarlet, while the venous is of a well known that the latter, when exposed to air for a fresh one upon which it has fallen, while the venous blood a deep crimson. In wounds which grow fast by is poured out simultaneously from arteries and veins of the blood, while it escapes, will, either penetrate, suspicion that it was poured out from a living body; for as to say, the arteries lose the power of throwing off the touch of dissecting arterial from venous blood was the case of Scudia, who destroyed himself after having the Duke of Cumberland. There was the appearance be combustible of Selle, and the temporal artery of the岛屿, and success the clinch of the skull and excreted column by a fall from the top-stair, one branch of the right temporal artery was found divided, and this wound could not have been produced by the fall. It was therefore evident that a murderous assault had been made upon her at the top of the stair; this had led to the spitting of the arterial blood on the brick. This height at which the spots extended, and their appearance, proved that the jet of blood had been from above downwards; thereby rendering it probable that the deceased was standing up, or that her head was aimed at the time the wound was inflicted. Further, as the brick with the spots was on the left bend in the descent, and the wounded man on the right side in the descent, the deceased was fast to be placed with her assailant in the act of ascending the stairs, and that she was killed by being precipitated beneath his feet in the lobby. The position in which the body was found in the cellar corroborated this view. (See Med. Gaz. xxxiv. 412.)

Impression.—In examining a dead body, it is proper that attention should be paid to the state of the mouth and throat. An TLonie who makes their attack during sleep, sometimes endeavour to close the mouth, or to compress the throat, as an instance of the same being given. In an examination of the Duchess of Parmis, there were the marks of fingers-rips around the mouth. In another instance, occluded impressions, as if produced by a band, were found upon the throat of the deceased. The bands of the deceased should always be examined; many errors, confusions, or irotions, found upon them, especially if on the direct surface, will indicate that the deceased has been a mortal struggle with the assailant. In the impression, the examination of the stomach should not be neglected; the presence of a smaller quantity of bile, even of blood, evidence of considerable importance in the elucidation of the case. These, in the stomach of the Duchess of Parmis, a quantity of bloody bile was discovered. This rendered it certain that she had lived sufficiently long to swallow a quantity of saliva mixed with blood, and that probably she had made some attempts to
give an alarm. The fact that several days have elapsed since death, will not prevent the discovery of food in the stomach, provided it has been taken a while one or two hours before death; since the digestion of food does not appear to go on in any perceptible extent after death. I have thus discovered food in the stomach twenty-eight days after interment. This question connected with the digestion or undigested state of the food found in the stomach, very frequently arises in criminal trials.

CHAPTER XXV.

DISTINCTION OF SUICIDAL FROM ACCIDENTAL WOUNDS—IMPORTANT IN CASES OF LIFE-INSURANCE—WOUNDS ON THE THROAT—FACTS INDICATIVE OF SUICIDE, HOMICIDE, OR ACCIDENT—IMPOTENCE OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS—MOTIVES FOR THEIR PRODUCTION—CHARACTERS OF INFLICTED WOUNDS—RULES FOR DETECTING FALSE CHARGES OF MURDER.

Suicidal wounds.—It is not often that any difficulty is experienced in distinguishing a suicidal from an accidental wound. When the wound has really been suicidally inflicted there are generally to be found about it very clear indications of design; and the whole of the circumstances are seldom reconcilable with the supposition of accident. But if the position of the deceased with respect to surrounding objects has been disturbed, if the weapon has been removed, and the body transported to a distance, then it will not always be easy to distinguish a wound suicidally received, from one inflicted by a suicide or a murderer. The evidence of those who find the body may alone clear up the case; and the medical witness may be required to state how far this evidence is consistent with the situation, extent, and direction of the wound by which the deceased has fallen. It is unnecessary to dwell further on this subject, since the observations made in the preceding pages will suggest to the practising surgeon the course which he has to pursue. Conclusiveness of evidence is commonly sufficient to show whether a wound has been accidentally received or not, but no accidental wound may sometimes resemble one of homicidal or suicidal origin, as it follows that it is not always possible for a medical jurist to decide the question by inspection alone; a more inspection of the wound. Homicide is only likely to be concluded with accident in relation to contusions and contused wounds. In other words, the evidence of design will be in general too apparent to allow of any doubts being entertained respecting the real origin of the injury. It would not be difficult to produce many instances in which medical men, in their defence, have alleged that the wounds observed in the bodies of those victims were of accidental origin, and the allegations have been clearly refuted by medical evidence. A witness(284,159),(976,990) must be prepared, therefore, in all cases in which death has taken place in secrecy, and the nature of the wound is such as to render it origin doubtful, to be clearly examined by counsel for a prisoner charged with felonious homicide, as to whether the wound might or might not have been accidental. Our law requires that it should be rendered evident to a jury, both by such a charge be sustained, that the fatal wound could not have been accidental or suicidal. Hence this preliminary question is deserving of serious attention from a medical jurist.

The death of a party from wounds has hitherto been considered as a subject connected with a criminal charge; but an investigation of the circumstances under which death occurs is occasionally rendered necessary when the deceased has effected an insurance upon his life. The policy of life-insurance is in some cases rendered void by the act of self-destruction; and therefore an individual...