from the time the uterus could be felt above the pubis till the end of the pregnancy, the cushions being gradually increased in size. The patient was kept in an easy chair reclined backwards, and forbidden to bend or stoop forwards. These measures were attended with complete success, and the lady was happily delivered of a boy, the head presenting.—_Gaz. Med._, Sept. 22, 1858.

[This interesting case should be placed beside the observation of the elder Nagele, in which the cause of malposition of the fetus was spasm of the uterus. In five successive labours the arm presented from this cause. In the sixth pregnancy these contractions were arrested by opiates, and at the full time a living child was born under a natural presentation.]

MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE AND TOXICOLOGY.

TOULMOUCHE. CASE OF ALLEGED VIOLATION AND OUTRAGE ON A HYSTERICAL GIRL.

On Sunday, the 5th January 1840, about four o'clock in the afternoon, precisely as vespers were concluded, Marie V——, aged 23 years, living at the village of P., was seen to fall down apparently in a faint, near the house of her uncle, the district schoolmaster, at the entrance of a field adjoining a public way. Her hands were found fastened by a cord, her handkerchief was tied over her mouth, her hood (capote) was drawn over the upper part of her face, and fastened by pins in front of the eyes, leaving, however, a sufficient interval for the use of sight: her clothes were soiled with mud at the lower part only, and her camisole was laced.

Carried into her uncle's house, she did not regain consciousness apparently for some hours. She then related that about a mile (kilometre) from the village, four young men, whom she described minutely, with long hair and beards, had assaulted her in a field, and stuffing her mouth with a handkerchief, and fastening her arms with her garters, so as to overcome her resistance, had laid her breast bare, and attempted, unsuccessfully however, to violate her person. They had then inflicted on her face, arms, breast, and other parts of the body, incisions with an instrument having three blades or points. In the struggle, she had struck one of them with a metal crucifix which she carried, and wounded him slightly on the face. At length, alarmed at the sound of the bells and a noise of the cracking of whips, the men, after striking and kicking her about the chest and ribs, arranged her dress, fastened her hood over her eyes, and took to flight. She then, guiding herself across the fields to her uncle's house, had fallen down exhausted at the place where she was observed.

Judicial proceedings were instituted, and M.M. Toulmouche and Guyot were appointed to examine Marie V——. They found as follows:—On the face, the left cheek presented six linear incisions of the skin, very fine and superficial, diverging from the cheekbone to the commissure of the lips: these lines did not intersect; the two external ones were parallel. Three similar incisions on the right cheek; besides three lines parallel to the lower jaw, intersected by five vertical lines; and two nearly vertical lines, with one oblique on the chin; some small superficial excoriations about the nose, chin, and mouth. The length of the superficial incisions varied from one and a half to three centimetres. On the breast were five long superficial incisions, from four up to ten centimetres in extent; and nine or ten small ones. The abdomen presented six of these lines, vertical and parallel; and three transverse ones, of from thirteen to fifteen centimetres; and numerous others on the haunch and hips. About the middle of the back also, two similar linear wounds, crossing obliquely, were noticed. Each arm presented at the bend the cicatrices of a vertical incision, about five mill. in length, one of which was inflamed. Besides this, nine linear incisions on the right hand, and fourteen on the left hand and forearm; and two small transverse excoriations on the right hand. On the right leg, ten of these incisions, more or
less parallel; and twelve on the right leg, of which four above the patella were deeper than the others, and covered by a small crust.

The general appearance of all of these lesions was that of red lines, without surrounding inflammation.

There was no trace of contusion on the genital organs nor thighs: on each side the labia majora were excoriated at the upper and inner part: the mucous membrane of the vulva was of a rose colour. There was no hymen: the finger could be introduced without difficulty into the vagina, which, however, was narrow and coated with white mucus (leucorrhoea).

From the examination, M. Toulmouche concluded that these numerous superficial linear incisions had all been done by the same instrument, such as the point of a knife or scissors: that the instrument had been used very lightly, and without movement on the part of the girl, otherwise the incisions would have been irregular and of unequal depth: that the wounds could not have been made through the clothes without cutting them; and that from their form, situation, number, and remarkable regularity, they must have been inflicted on a naked person, and have required a long time for their execution: and consequently that, in all probability, they had been inflicted by the girl herself.

The examination of her clothes showed no marks of incisions; the cap was not crushed; the neckerchief not torn or cut; the gown muddy at the lower part only, and not on the back; the chemise was entire, slightly soiled with blood at the lower part and left side only, and showed no trace of spermatic fluid.

The girl persisted in her original declaration during repeated investigations before the magistrate. At length, however, from the decided opinion of M. Toulmouche; from the girl being subject to hysterical fits, somnambulism, visions, etc.; from the absence of all contusions, and from the impossibility of discovering the individuals described as having committed the assault, the magistrates were led to doubt the reality of the crime. Moreover, several small objects were found in the girl's pockets, which in a struggle would necessarily have been lost, particularly a penknife and scissors, whose points showed slight traces of blood. The cicatrices at the bend of each arm were traced to a bleeding practised by an old woman on the 31st December. The cord also which bound the hands was found to yield readily at the knot, showing that no great effort had been made to detach it. Pressed by the accumulated evidence, Marie V——, after much hesitation, finally confessed that she had not been the victim of any assault, but that, in a paroxysm of hysteria, without any reason to account for the strange idea which took possession of her mind, she had herself inflicted these wounds with scissors, on the parts of her body which she had been able to reach. The legal proceedings were consequently put a stop to.

This singular case is equally remarkable for the great number of incisions which the girl made on her own person; for the little constitutional or local effect which followed them; and for the peculiar condition of mind, whether mental aberration or desire of publicity, which gave a motive for these injuries, and for the complicated and detailed story which she had invented, and supported by every artifice to ensure probability. It is interesting also from the evidence derived from the attentive medico-legal examination of the wounds.—Gaz. des Hôp., Oct. 30.

DR COMSTOCK ON THE PATHOLOGY OF POISONING, AND COINCIDENCES IN PRACTICE.

Dr Séquard has published some peculiar views respecting his experiments with poisons, reducing animal heat. He says, he has seen death take place in a rabbit after a diminution of its heat of only 22 deg. Fahr. And he never observed any animal live after he had diminished its temperature more than 44 deg. of Fahr. Accordingly as the heat is rapidly diminished, so is death produced in less time.

When by a wound, or poison, the temperature of a man is reduced many degrees, his life is in danger from that very cause. It is thus in cholera and palsy.
In cases of poisoning, it has been found that the temperature of the poisoned person always decreased; and M. Chossut who injected opium into the veins of a dog, found the temperature diminish from 105 deg. to 62 deg. Fahr. M. Séquard believes that many poisons may kill, simply by their action in reducing animal heat. He has found that some poisons, which kill animals when there is no obstacle to prevent the diminution of the body’s temperature, will not destroy life when the temperature is sustained by artificial means to its normal degree.

Equal doses of poison were given to two animals, as much alike as possible. One was left in a room at a temperature of 46 deg. Fahr., the other was kept in a place where the temperature was 75 deg. Fahr. The first was dead after a certain number of hours; the other, that was kept warm, was generally cured very soon.

In cases of poisoning by opium, belladonna, tobacco, camphor, alcohol, acetic, or oxalic acid, and many other poisons, physicians should labour to prevent a diminution of heat by keeping the patient as near as possible to the standard of 100 deg. Fahr.

It is curious, in the history of coincidences, that simultaneous with the above, in the Old World, a method of treatment in the New World was instituted exactly conformable. The bites of rattlesnakes, and other deadly reptiles, have been cured by enormous quantities of diffusible stimuli, instances of which have been given in this journal, and others are almost daily occurring in the newspapers. An account lies before me of a negro who was bitten by a "copper head," and in the course of half an hour drank a quart of whiskey, and recovered. A number of similar cases have been lately recorded.

But perhaps the most curious of all is, that M. Séquard promulgated the theory, that stimulants, previously taken, would prevent the subsequent effects of poison; and that this theory was about the same time confirmed, on this side of the Atlantic, by a person, badly intoxicated, having been bitten by a rattlesnake, without any ill consequences whatever.

Now the history of the bite of mad-dogs shows frequent exemptions from hydrophobia; so frequent that Dr P. S. Physick (whose lectures I attended), stated that nineteen-twentieths of those who were bitten, experienced no ill effects at all. But as to rattlesnake bites, I have never known, heard, or read, of a single exemption, except in the instance above referred to.”—Boston Journal.

DR A. A. HAYES’ INSTANCE OF IMMUNITY FROM THE USUAL POISONOUS EFFECT OF ARSENIOUS ACID.

At a boarding house with numerous inmates in C—Street, the family, cook, and servants, partook of a substantial breakfast, of cooked meats, vegetables, and coffee, on Sunday morning, and some hours after separated and attended service at different places of worship in the vicinity. Before the conclusion of the service, nearly every boarder was ill with a disposition to reject the contents of their stomachs, which in most cases could not be repressed. The master of the house and his wife returned home, and having before resorted to the use of cold infusion of coffee, in slight disturbances, a portion of that, remaining after the morning meal, was freely drunk by both, without the expected curative effect being produced. As the inmates returned, sick and alarmed, the neighbours were called in, and inquiries made, which established the fact, that the children, who had not partaken of the coffee, were in their usual good health. This, with other circumstances, pointed to the coffee as the cause of the sickness. Some of the friends tasted and drank a portion of the infusion, and becoming sick soon after, with the same symptoms, the evidence thus obtained was deemed satisfactory.

The next morning I received the coffee-pot with the remaining contents for chemical analysis. It was sufficiently large to contain two gallons of fluid, and there remained some ten ounes of fluid, besides the grounds and partially
extracted residue of the coffee. The fluid contained arsenious acid, apparently 
in as large proportion as exists in a saturated cold aqueous solution of this 
substance. Mixed with the residue, and subsequently separated from it, were 
490 grains of powdered arsenious acid! As the coffee decoction had been pre-
pared by boiling, and was drunk warm, it is safe to assume that each of the 
24 persons who were rendered sick, had taken about one pint of a saturated 
solution of this poison.

The master and his wife suffered more severely than the other members of 
the family, as they had repeatedly partaken of the poison. In the other cases, 
recovery took place the following day, the mechanics pursuing their labour as 
usual.

I have thought an account of this case worthy of preservation, as it offers 
an illustration of the poisonous effects of organic compounds of arsenious acid, 
formed before that acid entered the stomach. Chemists well know that arse-
nious acid cannot be boiled with roasted coffee, and the decoction be mixed with 
sugar and milk, without the acid forming a more or less definite compound, 
with organic principles present. The slightly poisonous effect of such com-
pounds is here contrasted with the known active and energetic power of a solu-
tion of arsenious acid in water. The latter can destroy the structure of the 
organs with which it is in contact, and form poisonous compounds with their 
principles, and such compounds may continue to act when the parts of the 
stomach have been deprived of all power of resistance.—Boston Journal.

[We do not profess to understand the theory involved in the last sentence. 
Nor do we see here any evidence of the peculiar effects of "organic compounds 
of arsenious acid," but simply an illustration of the well-known fact, that arsenious 
acid is much less soluble in such fluids as coffee than in pure water. The various 
patients probably swallowed much smaller quantities of the poison than the 
author supposes.]

BESSIERES. POISONING WITH DECOCTION OF HENBANE, FOLLOWED BY TEMPORAR-
MENTAL ALIENATION.

A lady, affected with organic disease of the uterus, was in the habit of using 
vasal injections composed of a decoction of the leaves of the white henbane. 
Believing, however, that lavements would be more effectual, the decoction was 
administered by the rectum; and the first lavement being immediately rejected, 
a second quantity was injected and retained. Almost instantaneously most 
formidable symptoms appeared: vertigo, dimness of vision (éblouissement), in-
coherence of ideas; the face became animated, the strength failed, the patient 
sank into a chair and seemed ready to expire.

Injections of vinegar and water, with common salt, were employed as quickly 
as possible; but the patient remained in a state of great agitation, in terror of 
instant death. Purgatives, decoction of coffee, mustard blisters, acidulated 
drinks, and leeches to the anus, were the means put in practice. The patient 
was saved; but she remained for six months in a state of chronic monomania, 
occaisioned by the dread of death. From this state she slowly recovered by 
means of moral rather than physical treatment, change of scene, careful man-
agement, etc. The patient still retained a great degree of nervous suscepti-
bility, which had not been habitual to her previously.

In this case the rapidity of absorption by the rectal mucous membrane is 
especially remarkable. Physicians still differ very much as to the relative 
efficacy of medicines (e. g. opium) administered by the rectum, or the stomach, 
and particularly as to the doses which are equivalent in the two methods. 
French practitioners consider that opium, henbane, and many other substances, 
act with greater promptitude and energy in the rectum than in the stomach; 
while in British practice the dose of narcotics is always larger when used in
POISONING BYaconite.

Considerable excitement has been created in Bristol, by a case of poisoning of a somewhat extraordinary description. It appears that some time since, Mr Joseph Russell, a wine-merchant at Bristol, died, bequeathing, among other legacies, one to a distant relative, named also Joseph Russell, a bookseller, residing at Chard, Somersetshire, and who, during the past week came to Bristol respecting it. On Sunday last he dined with one of his brothers, a coachmaker, resident in Bristol, and he partook of some roast beef, he at the time being in excellent health. He remarked that roast beef was nothing without horseradish, and his brother's wife stated that there were some horseradish roots in the garden, and the servant was sent to dig up one. The root was scraped in the usual manner, dressed with vinegar, and placed on the table; both his brother and the deceased partook of it, but said at the time it must be very bad horseradish, as it did not possess the usual flavour. Mrs William Russell, disliking horseradish, did not partake of it. Soon after dinner, Joseph Russell complained of a peculiar tingling sensation in his hands and arms, and this feeling rapidly increased till he said he felt it creeping round his neck. His brother replied, "Oh, perhaps the dinner has disagreed with you; but let us take a walk and you will be better." They accordingly went towards Hillgrove Street, where the third brother resided, and on the way the brother William complained of a similar sensation, though in a slighter degree. The symptoms in Joseph became more alarming, and on reaching his brother's house he sank into a chair, exclaiming, "I am poisoned, for I feel one side of me dead already." Brandy was given him, and medical aid instantly procured, but he rapidly sank, and died in about an hour afterwards. The other brother, who had taken much less of the supposed horseradish, was much affected, but is now recovering. On an examination, it was found that the root was the aconitum napellus, wolfs-bane or monkshood, which, particularly at this season of the year, strongly resembles horseradish, but which is a strong narcotic poison. An inquest has since been held upon the body of the deceased, and a verdict was returned of "Died of strong narcotic poison, aconitum napellus, taken in mistake for horseradish." We believe we are right in stating that this is only the second case known of a person having been thus poisoned. The other and first case is recorded by Dr Pereira. ---Times.

Poisoning with monkshood-root is far from being so uncommon an occurrence as the writer of this notice in the "Times" would have us imagine; neither was Dr Pereira the first to notice such a case as that now published. Every work on toxicology makes mention of numerous cases of the kind. It is extraordinary that such a mistake should be committed as the substitution of monkshood-root for horse-radish. The latter has a pungent taste, developed with great rapidity and "passing off" quickly. The former has no pungency at any time, and for a little time no remarkable taste at all; but ere long a singular and persistent sensation arrives, consisting of a sense of numbness and prickling at one and the same time. This impression on the organs of taste is so peculiar, that it may be resorted to as the best, indeed the only good, criterion of poisoning with aconite in doubtful cases. Some years ago, Dr Geoghegan resorted to it as a test of aconite in the contents of the stomach in a case of criminal poisoning; and the guilty party was condemned and executed on this and other evidence. No other substance is yet known which produces the same impression.
The case recorded by Dr. Pereira,\(^1\) occurred in December 1837; a man ate a quantity of the root of theaconitum napellus, and died four hours after dinner. His wife and child, who had also partaken of it, though sparingly, recovered. Another case is mentioned by Dr. Taylor,\(^2\) where a lady was poisoned by eating this root in mistake for horseradish. She died in three hours. The case of a boy has also been recorded, who died from eating a quantity of the leaves by mistake for parsley.

\(^1\) Materia Medica, 2d Ed. Vol. I. p. 1806.
\(^2\) On Poisons, p. 763.