

Thus, in addition to a possibility which cannot be altogether ignored that the bodies affirmed to be spermatozoa were not so in reality, we have the serious drawback that the expert can only feel perfectly certain that the stain is non-seminal after making protracted and laborious observations; these, if omitted, may leave a crime unpunished in the case of a genuine stain not received in good condition.

The difficulties mentioned do not imply by any means that the spermatozoa test is not a good one, but simply that it is not adequate for the task it has had to fulfil of being the sole and only recognized test for semen. What is evidently wanted is some simple, prompt, preliminary test, by which one could decide in a few minutes whether a given stain is likely to repay a search microscopically for spermatozoa, or not. At the same time such a test would evidently be still more useful if it was sufficiently accurate and distinctive to afford good corroborative evidence of the presence of semen, and so to guard against the possibility of the expert being led to regard as spermatozoa some entirely extraneous substances.

A test which appears in great part to fill those conditions has recently been announced by A. Florence, of Lyons, whose monograph entitled "*Du Sperme et des Taches de Sperme en Médecine Légale*,"² contains much besides that is of interest.³

Florence recommends the use of a reagent not infrequently employed for testing alkaloids, known as the ter-iodide or tri-iodide, of potassium. This reagent is a solution of iodine and potassium iodide, in proportions which correspond to the formula KI_3 , but which is not a definite chemical combination. The formula recommended is as follows:

Iodide of potassium C. P. . . .	1.65 grammes
Iodine	2.54 grammes
Distilled water	30 c. c.

Good results can also be obtained by one-half the amount of iodine (1.27 grammes equivalent to KI_3), but the iodine must be in excess. The well-known Gram's solution is not suitable for the reaction. The solution keeps perfectly well in glass-stoppered bottles. It should be used cold, as warmth interferes with the reaction.

When a drop of the liquid obtained by moistening a seminal stain is placed alongside a drop of the above solution on a glass slide or watchglass, so that the edges of the drops come in contact, there appear almost immediately large numbers of peculiar, brownish-red, pointed crystals. These are rhomboidal, and resemble so closely in form, size and color the hemin crystals that they could readily be mistaken for them, though a careful examination shows points of difference. This comparison to hemin crystals will convey a better idea of their appearance than could be given by the most elaborate description, and will enable them to be distinguished from the crystals which are met with in seminal fluids. They also form small turnstile groups or crosses, in the manner which characterizes the hemin crystals.

² Archives d'Anthropologie Criminelle, January, February and March, 1896.

³ It has also been published separately by Storek, Lyons.

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