

Rigour mortis or cadaveric rigidity is first to be sought for, and its presence or absence, amount and locality noted with the view of determining approximately the length of time since the death. The onset and disappearance of this sign varies under certain conditions which will be described hereafter ; as well as the putrefactive changes which should next be examined into ; in this further inquiry similar note should be taken as to its position. The appearance of the fingers and the progress of decomposition in one or another part of the body may help in the ultimate decision.

*Injuries.*—The question as to injuries of all kinds found on the corpse is a most important one, which requires the greatest care and attention. They may be superficial marks of red, yellow, blue, green or black colour varying in size and shape, without destruction of the cuticle. It is the extravasation of blood into the skin and subcutaneous tissues which gives rise to these three appearances, viz., *eribices* or *petechiæ*, or spots resembling those by a flea bite, and the larger kind known as *ecchymosis* or bruise. Valuable information may be gained from these marks ; for instance, the bruise caused by the grip of the hand on a limb would give a different impression from that made by a blunt weapon or clenched fist, or the extravasations due to scurvy, the latter hemorrhages being generally in the flexures of the joints or in the post aural region of the neck ; and again the *petechiæ* seen in typhus, purpura or rheumatism differ in position, size and appearance from those caused by lice or other parasites.

The distinction between *post-mortem* lividity or hypostasis, and bruising or ecchymosis sometimes must be made, and this can be done by making a simple incision into the mark ; the ecchymosis caused by the extravasation into the tissues does not yield fluid blood, for the blood which flowed from the capillaries and smaller vessels of the skin and subcutaneous tissues has coagulated in these tissues, and is seen as a dark purple and black mass or lines ; but a hypostasis will yield fluid blood on incision, as the blood comes from the veins still full of black blood.

The colour differs materially, as the hypostatic colour is