

*Fracture of the Lens: Does it occur in Death from Violent Hanging?*

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In the September number of the *New York Medical Journal*, there will be found a paper by Dr. Ezra Dyer, of Philadelphia, entitled "Fracture of the Lens of one Eye, and of the Anterior Capsules of both Eyes, from Death by violent Hanging." It appears that in the case of Anton Probst, who was executed on the 8th June last, the Doctor made ophthalmoscopic examination of the eyes about thirty-five minutes after the drop fell. This examination was conducted in the most careful and scientific manner; first with the aid of an oil lamp, and subsequently with a powerful electric light from a battery of thirty-six cells. The result of this examination was that in the right eye there existed a line running transversely across the lens a little below its centre; from it, at various angles, ran short and long fine lines, very near together, but not regular; these lines, when illuminated, presented "the appearance of a crack in a cake of clear ice." It was taken to be fracture, involving the capsule, and extending in a horizontal plane backwards into the substance of the lens itself. The left eye presented much the same appearance, only less in extent; the line of fracture had very short lines, running upwards and downwards, very close together, requiring a powerful glass, and, when seen, presented a feathery appearance.

The eyes were carefully removed, and four hours afterwards examined anatomically, when the condition above described was found to exist.

This singular appearance led Dr. Dyer to perform experiments on three dogs, two of which, after being put to death by hanging, exhibited the same peculiar appearance, viz: fracture of the substance of the lens. The other dog died in prolonged convulsions, and in him no lesion of either lens was observed.

It was noticed that the greatest lesion existed on the side opposite to that on which the knot in the rope was placed.

This is perhaps the first time that such a lesion has been observed; and I am at a loss to conjecture how fracture of the lens, as described, can possibly occur.

Dislocation of the lens has been met with, and is described by authors generally as the result of direct violence. Cases are mentioned as occurring from falls; and, in some instances, there has been noticed rupture of the sclerotic coat of the eye, with dislocation of the lens, which passes out through the fissure, and is found beneath the conjunctiva. The lens has also been found dislocated into the anterior chamber. But fracture