

MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE.

DEATH FROM ONE GRAIN OF ACETATE OF MORPHIA.

On the 31st of May an inquest was held at the Bank of England Tavern, Cambridge-place, Paddington, on the body of George Cooper, aged about forty-five. It appeared from the evidence that the deceased had been an out patient at St. Mary's Hospital for pains in the face, caused by carious teeth. On the Wednesday week preceding, he had been ordered by Dr. Sieveking, whom he had visited at his own residence, to take a pill, which he obtained from the assistant-dispenser at the hospital. This was the ordinary pill, kept ready made, containing one grain of acetate of morphia. He took it about 12 o'clock at night, and about 3 o'clock he complained, and expressed regret at having taken it. He shortly afterwards fell asleep, and his wife could not succeed in waking him until 8 o'clock at night, when he appeared very wild, and made a strange noise in his mouth. He was removed to the hospital, and, notwithstanding the remedies used, he died about 4 o'clock P. M. A post-mortem examination was made by Mr. Rogers, who deposed that the urine was made albuminous, and that the kidneys were in a highly diseased state, the morphia acting upon which had been the cause of death. No suspicion had been entertained that the deceased was suffering from diseased Kidneys. The jury returned the following verdict :—"The death had been caused by misadventure, congestion of the brain having been produced by morphia taken as a medicine."—*Dublin Med. Press.*

CASE OF POISONING BY STRYCHNIA.

By WM. TRAVERS, M.R.C.S. Eng.

KATE W——, aged 20, a married woman, a Greek by birth and extraction, was brought to Charing-cross Hospital at half-past eleven p.m. on the 17th of March last, having about an hour previously, in a fit of jealousy, swallowed the entire contents of a packet of Battley's vermin killer. She had been already visited by a surgeon, and an emetic had been administered, without however producing vomiting. Upon admission, the body was perfectly rigid; limbs extended and immoveable; eyes protruding and fixed; teeth firmly clenched; countenance anxious, and of a dusky hue; breathing deep and irregular; pulse very small and quick. The spasm shortly relaxing, she became sensible for a few moments, only again to relapse very speedily into a similar state. Being anxious to remove without delay any of the poison remaining in the stomach, I attempted to use the stomach-pump; but finding on each trial to introduce the tube, or in fact on even touching the patient, that the spasm increased ten fold in violence, I abstained from any further effort, and contented myself with forcing her to drink (though with great difficulty) a powerful emetic dose of sulphate of zinc dissolved in hot water. This fortunately soon took effect, and vomiting was kept up for upwards of half an hour. The tetanic spasms had, however, by this time increased very much in intensity, each attack commencing with a prolonged loud and peculiarly shrill scream; the body then becoming perfectly rigid, the legs widely separated, and opisthotonos occurring to such an extent that the patient appeared to rest almost solely on the occiput and heels. During the fit the dyspnœa became more extreme, the eyes, open to their widest extent, the eyeballs started from their sockets, and the pupils dilated to the utmost. At length, after the lapse of about half a minute, a sudden tremor appeared to seize the entire frame; the limbs became relaxed, the muscles flaccid, the eyes dim, the skin bedewed with a cold clammy perspiration, and the breathing scarcely perceptible; not any pulse was to be felt at the wrist; the patient in fact, was lying as I believed, dead. Ammonia applied to the nostrils and cold water dashed in the face gradually increased the force of the respiration, and the pulse could again be felt. But with the return to conscious-