

of the acid to destroy it—than does one of the same species a little older. This is so curious a fact, that, were there not sufficient evidence to support it, we should feel much inclined to doubt it. Is it to be regarded as another proof of the approximation of the young of the higher species to the adult of the lower?"

Influence of the degree of concentration of the acid.—"The degree of concentration of the acid has no very material influence over its action. The dogs to whom a diluted acid was given were quite as speedily and violently affected as those to whom acid of Scheele's strength was administered. Indeed, I am inclined to think, from observing the action of the concentrated acid, containing twenty-five per cent of real acid, that a moderate degree of dilution renders the action of the acid more speedy, probably from bringing it at the same instant into contact with a larger surface. Certainly the foregoing experiments show, that dilution, to a considerable extent, does not weaken the action, if it does not rather accelerate it."

Relation between the rapidity of the effects of the poison and the quantity taken.—"The action of the acid is not proportionally speedy to the quantity taken. The difference between the rapidity in the effects of a large dose of the acid and one which is so small as to be barely sufficient to destroy life, is certainly well marked, but this is not the case between two doses each of which is capable of destroying life with moderate rapidity: as, for instance, suppose forty minims of Scheel's acid will kill a dog within four minutes, it does not follow that eighty minims or two drachms would do so in two minutes or in one. Hence, when called to a person poisoned by hydrocyanic acid, we cannot, merely from the length of time he has survived, or the evidence of the symptoms, determine any thing with certainty as to the degree of concentration or dilution of the acid, nor, except within wide limits, much as to the absolute quantity taken."

Effects of the acid when applied to mucous membranes.—"The poison acts with almost, if not absolutely, equal rapidity and certainty, when applied upon a mucous membrane, as the conjunctiva, the rectum, or the vagina, as when swallowed. A knowledge of this fact may be of the utmost importance in a medico-legal examination, as it would not be difficult, either by force or cunning, to introduce into the vagina or rectum, or put upon the eye, a sufficient quantity of the acid to quickly destroy life—a mode of administering the poison which a murderer who had sufficient acquaintance with its properties is not unlikely hereafter to adopt. Many experiments prove that the action of the acid upon the lungs, when air impregnated with it is breathed, is not only rapid but certain in its effects, and forms one of the easiest modes of exhibiting it—one which it would be very easy to employ, but most difficult after a few hours to detect, as the odour being so diffusible, is very soon dissipated."

Occurrence of the "death-shriek."—"Much has been said in some recent trials as to the death shriek, as it was then termed, in persons who are suffering under a poisonous dose of hydrocyanic acid. Though it is now generally admitted that the shriek does not uniformly occur in man, it does not appear to be so generally known that this is also the case with animals. The foregoing experiments will, however, show that, so far from the shrieking being characteristic of death by hydrocyanic acid in dogs (and I may also add in other animals, as rabbits, mice, cats), it occurs in only half the number of cases, and in not more than one-third, if quite so many, very loudly; but when it does occur, the cry is of so peculiar a kind, and so indicative of severe distress, as to give an idea of consciousness on the part of the animal of impending death—as though it felt that its condition was such as to render all assistance unavailing; it is different from anything I have heard in any other condition of dogs or other creatures, and is, I think, when present, characteristic of the poison."—*London Medical Gazette.*

Alleged Rape perpetrated on a Female while under the influence of Ether.—That which had been suspected as a probable result, on the introduction of a new narcotizing agent, has, according to the *Gazette Medicale*, actually occurred in Paris. Last week a female went to a dentist to have a tooth extracted. He advised that it should be stopped; and, to avoid the pain of the operation, recommended his patient to inhale the vapour of ether. What passed while the female was under the influence of the vapour may be inferred from the following facts:—The young fe-

male was observed to leave the dentist's house about three hours after she had entered it, in a very disordered state. This attracted the attention of her employer, who could not account for her long absence. The injured party, notwithstanding the stupefying effects of the ether, retained some recollection of what had passed, and, from some words which fell from her, suspicion was immediately excited. She was examined by a physician, who reported that her person had been violated. The dentist has been arrested, and is about to be prosecuted for the offence.—*Med. Examiner.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

Burnett's Disinfecting Fluid.—The Chloride of zinc in solution, it appears from a parliamentary document which has just been issued, has been employed extensively as a disinfectant in dissecting-rooms, the wards of hospitals, and in the Royal navy, and, according to the reports which we have seen, has been eminently successful in effecting the objects for which it is designed. The medical officers at Hasler Hospital state that it has been used in that hospital in the close stools of patients affected with dysentery, in the water-closets and cess-pools, and also in the wards, when the air was tainted by purulent expectoration or discharge from sores, with the effect of immediately removing the disagreeable odours. It has also been used in surgery with good effect, in removing the smell of putrefying animal substances, and the odour of dead bodies under inspection: when employed as a dressing to ulcers, it removes the disagreeable smell of purulent matter, and, in the proportion of one part of the clear solution to eighteen of water, it preserves subjects of natural history from putrefaction, and in a fit state of anatomical inspection, after more than a year has elapsed. A similar testimony in favour of the solution of chloride, is borne by the assistant surgeon of the Marine Hospital at Woolwich, who adds, "the great advantage which the chloride of zinc possesses over other agents employed for a like purpose, is, that it removes the disagreeable effluvia, without leaving one little less offensive in its room, and may therefore be made use of wherever this effect is required—in private as well as public buildings, in the sick bed chamber no less than in the crowded ward. The method adopted at this hospital is to supply each of the wards with a bottle of the diluted solution, which the nurses have directions to use whenever occasion may require, besides sprinkling it over the floors before the morning and evening visits are made."

Its utility in the dissecting-room is confirmed by the statements made by Mr. Bowman, Dr. Sharpley, Mr. Partridge, Dr. Murray, and Dr. V. Pettigrew, who concur in asserting that in a proper degree of dilution its success is complete, and that it appears to preserve the colour and texture of the parts very admirably. It has, further, the very important advantage of not acting on the steel instruments employed, being in this respect equal to alcohol. Dr. Methven especially mentions an instance in which the solution corrected advancing putrescence, and enabled him to dissect during July. He believes, further, it will be the means of saving many valuable lives, which are annually lost by wounds received in the course of dissection, as, while dissecting this putrid body, he cut himself several times, and once received a punctured wound, without any bad consequences arising. Mr. M'Bain, of the "Mastiff," adds his testimony "to the rapid and perfect effects of the chloride of zinc solution upon animal matter in a state of putrefaction. Having frequently opportunities of dissecting or examining large fish, &c., cast on shore, whilst undergoing decomposition, the task has been occasionally any thing but agreeable, for want of a convenient power to destroy the putrefactive process. The chloride in these acts like magic; and as a great practical agent over one of the most important conditions of animal and vegetable matter—namely: putrefaction, it stands unrivalled." Its influence on board ship, in annihilating the offensive smell of bilge water, and in sweetening between decks, is shown by the united evidence of captains, surgeons, and masters in the royal navy. Among other vessels, it was used on board the "Victoria and Albert" royal yacht, to remove a more than ordinary stench of bilge water, and other offensive odours, with the most complete success. The surgeon states that she has remained comparatively sweet ever since, and when a bilge-water smell is occasionally perceptible, a slight application of the fluid