

light upon the subject, the importance of which from a medical and medico-legal point of view may be much greater than appears upon the surface.

Dec. 14th.—The child has since been born prematurely, I believe, as the result of the irritation to the mother following marriage. The cord was twice round its neck, it survived a few hours only, and was not examined.

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#### A CASE OF DEATH BY LIGHTNING.

By D. JERMYN, L.R.C.S.I., BALLARAT.

On Monday, the 5th inst., about 2 p.m., I was sent for to see a man who had been just struck with lightning at the Ballarat Orphan Asylum. I saw him within a quarter of an hour from the time of the accident. I found him on my arrival lying on a bed in one of the dormitories; he was still alive, but breathing very feebly and without stertor; his face livid; his pulse was about 70, and weak; the eyes were extremely dull, as if death had taken place some hours previously; the pupil of the right eye was much dilated and insensible to light, the left was about the natural size. On the upper and back part of the skull, a little to the right side, at the junction of the occipital and right parietal bone, there was a small punctured and slightly lacerated wound, which had ceased bleeding. I could not detect fracture. He died in about seven minutes, without a struggle. There were no marks of the electric fluid on any part of his body, nor was the hair singed at the site of the wound, although he had thick black hair. Corresponding to the site of the wound I found a small hole burned through his soft felt hat.

There was no inquest or inquiry.

On the following forenoon I went to see the body; cadaveric rigidity had set in slightly, the dilated pupil had assumed its proper size; the body had been placed in the coffin. I then visited the outhouse where the accident occurred, it contained some potatoes and lumber, there was a small quantity of blood where deceased had fallen, but I could not find anything that could have caused the wound. Deceased when struck was in the erect position. About a foot above his head, and under the flooring of the loft, was a hay-fork, the prongs of which projected a little between the boards; immediately under the fork was a wooden rake with iron prongs pointing downwards. One portion

of the electric fluid which broke through the shingle roof passed downwards through the hay-fork and rake, splitting the wooden portion of the latter; it was evidently this which struck deceased.

The gardener, who was sitting close to the deceased, was struck in the loins, but was not injured, and one of the boys who was sitting on the potatoes was struck on the left shoulder; his arm was paralyzed for a short time. The fluid, without in the slightest degree injuring the boy's clothes, passed down the chest, abdomen and thighs, leaving a bright red, irregular track, which had nearly disappeared by the following day; it was not a burn, nor at all painful, and must have been very superficial.

A young man who had also been in the outhouse for shelter, had at that moment gone outside to unharness his horse, and was also knocked insensible. He complained mostly of much pain in the soles of his feet, and stated next day that he had perspired all night most profusely.

A small quantity of chaff which lay on the floor of the loft, immediately above the hay-fork prongs, was charred quite black. The lightning after entering the loft took three different directions— one directly downwards, one tore the loft door off the hinges, and one portion could be traced in the opposite direction, quite outside the building, to a paling fence which it perforated.

I think it is not usual that a person killed by lightning should live for nearly twenty minutes, as occurred in this case; death is generally instantaneous, or a recovery takes place.

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#### PARTICULARS OF, AND EXTERNAL POST-MORTEM APPEARANCES IN, A CASE OF DEATH BY LIGHTNING.

By CHARLES HENRY SCOTT, M.B. et Ch. B.

A comparatively large number of deaths by lightning having occurred during the last few weeks in Ballarat and surrounding districts, the report of a case which recently came under my notice may prove interesting.

On the 10th December last, I was summoned to attend at the residence of Mr. R. L. B., under the following circumstances:

The gentleman named, accompanied by his wife, had just returned home from Ballarat, and had reached within a few yards of his homestead, when, during the height of a violent