## ANTON PROBST.

THE POST-MORTEM EXAMINATION

Medico-Legal Lecture by Dr. Wm. H. Pancoast.

On Saturday afternoon the post-mortem examination, of Anton Probst was held at the Jefferson Medical Conege, in the presence of the Coroner and quite a large number of the medi. cal fraculty. The account which we append hereno was prepared by Dr. Edward R. Hutchings, who assisted Dr. Pancoast in the autopsy. br. Hutchirgs is one of our most promising young physicians, and occupies the important position of clinical assistant at the Jefferson, He was present during the whole of the dissection, and his facid and very full account of the affair will be found especially interesting to scientific race of the medical profession. We need scarcely say that all the statements may be relied on as being strictly correct, as they are prepared with extreme care by Dr. Hutchings.

The appelling crime which resulted in the murder of eight impocent beings, and which alled the sountry with horror and indignation, has at last ended in the hanging of the guilty culprit. Through the courtery of those in authority at the prison, the body of Anton Probst was turned over to the Faculty of the Jefferson Medical College for experiments in search of medical and medico-legal gain. There was a Medical Comcaission appointed to examine the body immediately after the hanging. This commission consisted of Professors S. H. Dickson, B. How-ard Rand, John B. Biddle, and Drs. William H. Pancoust, Demonstrator of Anatomy, and Dyer, the latter of whom is an opthalmic surgeon of note in this city. It was known at a late hour on Friday that on the following day an autopsy would be made in the College, and on Saturday at 4 o'clock P. M. the large amphitheatre of the institution was filled to its utmost. Men of every profession and vocation were gathered there. Many were drawn thither by a desire for scientific gain, while many others came from surjosity, to gaze for the last time upon the bady of him whose name has terrified the whole country. A few moments after the hour of four had struck, the body, neatly and entirely revered in black, was brought in and laid in the centre of the amphitheatre, upon a revolving oak table. There was no superfluous show, no, theatrical display; but there the murderer and the hanged lay, a just victim to the law. Among the many present we observed Judge Leidlow and Mr. Wolbert (who was counsel for Auton Probst), representing the legal profession, and among the many distinguished medical gentlemen present were Drs. Nebinger, H. Y. Smith (who was the prisoner's physician), Dr. Shaplaigh (the Coroner's physician), Drs. Jewell, S. W. Gross, Levis, Dr. Hunt, Lecturer to the Pannsylvania Hospital; Dr. Eckard, of the Mester Lectureship of the College of Physi-cians; Drs. 13t. Clair Ash, Coad, Maury, and Cohen. The examination was conducted by Dr. William H. Pancoast, assisted by his anatomical staff, Dr. James Taylor, Dr. E. R. Hutchings, and Dr. T. Andrews.

Before displaying the face to view Dr. Paucoast made some most interesting and valuable remarks, which are substantially here given. Upon soom mencing he reminded the medical class and the "guests of the institution" that they were assembled together for no idle curresity, but for purely and wholly scientific interest. It was to discuss a question of paramount value in a medical and a medice-legal point.
What was the cause of the death of the individual before him? He was hanged, and hanged

until he was dead, as testined to by gentlemen witnesses of unquestionable authority. But what was the direct and immediate result of that hanging, and therefore of that death? He remarked that death from hanging may take place from suffocation or exclusion of air from the lungs. Or again, from a laceration of the trachea or windpipe, or a luxation or tracture of the cervical vertebra, or from a rupture of the ligaments of the neck. Or still again, it may result from the compression of the ner ves of the neck; and in connection with this last supposition, he cited the experiment of Mr. Brodic, who passed a ligature under the traches of a Guinea-pig, and tied it tight on the back of the neck with a knob; the autmal was restless, moving about. At the expiration of fifteen minutes the ligature was removed; the animal moved about, apparently not materially injurez, but on the following morning was found dead. Dr. Pancoast then proceeded to give an account of the results of the examination by the Medical Commission at the prison. He said the demeanor of Probst before his execution was markedly calm and cheerful, and as he went to the fatal scaffold, he seemed ready to go in expiation of the following processor Lickson, upon examination of the fatal scaffold, he seemed ready to go in expiation of the fatal scaffold, he seemed ready to go in expiation of the fatal scaffold, he seemed ready to go in expiation of the fatal scaffold. his foul deed. Professor Dickson, upon examining his pulse one hour and a half before the execution, found it small and not strong, beating seventy-eight times per minute. He also found the radial artery to be contracted, and the blood vessels of the conjunctive slightly injected; the pupils slightly dilated, and the face flushed The murderer had suffered evidently but little in the execution, and Dr. Pancoast cited several interesting instances where persons had been hung, but were afterwards resuscitated, and had testised to their experiencing no pain, after the drop louing entire consciousness. He said there was but little spasmodic action of the muscles, and but slight distortion of the face after the fatal drop. The cord was five-eighths of an inch in diameter, and five feet six inches in length. The length of the fall was three feet. The physique of Probst was very fine, his bones being covered by dense and large muscles. His weight on the day of the sentence was 1624 pounds. On the day of execution he had increased to 1744 pounds in weight. The murderer had evidently died very rapidly, and after hanging twenty minutes his body was cut down and taken to the doad house of the prison. and placed in a chair. Under the direction of Prof. Rand the most powerful electric battery ever used upon such an occasion was brought into use. On applying the poles of the battery properly the muscles of the face and timbs moved freely. The legs and arms were tossed wildly about to and fro; the face assumed now and the late of the face assumed now appears on now of sorrow, again of hate, and now a ghastly arin. On applying the poles to the various muscles of the face they each and all moved in select obelience. The electric light was now used in examining the eye, and subsequently the powerfully brilliant voltaic spark, whose brilliancy perhaps is only excelled by the sun. The lecturer, in conjunction with Dr. Dyer, examined the eye with the opthalmoscope, far the purpose of ascertaining the probable truth or fallacy of the prevailing populace idea, recoully promulgated, that there remains an impression of the object last seen on the an impression of the object last seen on the retina. The experiment disproved anything of the sort. The pupil was not at all contracted upon exposure to the brilliant spark. There transverse fissure of both capsule and The suffurion of the conjunctive was far less than it was two hours before the execution. There was a slight abrasion of the cuticle under the left eye. The face was livid. All muscular irritation ceased at 1½ 2, M. Dr. Pancoast now called the attention of the audience to the physiognomy of Probst, stating that he did not bear the semblance of such a fond as he had shown himself to have been. On the contrary, the lower part of his face was rather well formed than otherwise. He now quietly removed the lower part of his face was rather well formed than otherwise. He now quietly removed the cloth from the subject's face, and there was exposed to view the face of Probst, whose name will live black in history. Prior to the exhibition of the body before the class, a dissection of the neck had been made, to order to ascertain the result of the application of the rope upon the subjacent parts. Dr. Pancosat now called the attention of those present to this part of the examination. The furrow made by the rope was plainly visible, externally, deep red, and shrunk, somewhat resembling parchiment. This track smbraced the entire neck, excepting a space of

where no mark was apparent, and over which had been placed the knot. Immediately beneath this furrow the tissue was dry and compressed, and of a glistening appearance; this was in the form of a band, of one-eighth of an inch in breadth. The posterior and lateral portions of the body, the arms and shoulders, the neck and

three-fourths of an inch just beneath the left ear,

face were censiderably discolored, due merely to post-mortem changes. The jugular vein and carotid artery of both sides were congested, but not injured. On cutting down the cervical region the sternocleide mastoid muscle of the right side bulged an available a learning of the right side bulged an available a learning of the right side bulged an available a learning of the right side bulged an available as learning of the right side bulged an available as learning of the right side bulged an available as the right side bulged and research as the right side and research as region the sternocleide mastoid muscle of the right side bulged up, revealing a laceration of the lower part of the muscle. The cornus, or horn of both sides of the hyold, or tongue bone, were fractured, the body of the bone remaining intact. No injury was sustained by the cartilages of the larynx and trachea, or windpipe; no luxation or fracture of the cervical vertebrie and no rupture of the connecting ligaments. The odontoid process of the axis, or second cervical vertebra, was intact, and the check and tranverse ligaments were not ruptured. Dr. Pancoast now called attention to the brain. Upon dissecting off the scalp, the vessels going to its supply were found congested, and on re-

moving the caivarium, or top of the skull, the coverings of the brain proper were not abnormal. In examining the brain substance, contrary to the expectation of the medical gentlemen, it was found to be not congested, and upon making a section of the cerebral mass, the ventricular cavities were found entirely free from fluid of any kind. According to the carefully prepared tables of Reid, the average weight of the human brain is three pounds two cunces. The brain of Probst, upon weighing it, was found to weigh two pounds four ounces. In the case of Green, the celebrated Malden murderer, his brain was weighed, and found to weigh two pounds eight ounces. Probst's brain had a healthy look, and firmness. The spinal cord was intact. On open-ing the cavity of the chest, the lungs were found orepitant, not congested, and persectly healthy. On opening the sac containing the heart, the letter was found empty. This was another feature generally unexpected among the medical tlemen, and is one of peculiar interest, for study

and discussion. The vena cava, ascending and descending, were also empty. The weight of the heart was about the average weight of the human heart, it being nine ounces and six drachms. At this point, Dr. Pancoast seeing Mr. Perkins, the Keeper at the Prison, among the audience, asked him at what hour Probst partook of his breakfast on the morning of the execution, and what that breakfast consisted of? replied, that at quarter past 8 o'clock, on the morning in question, the prisoner had eaten two soft-boiled eggs, three pieces of bread, and drank a targe cupful of coffee. Here was an exceedingly interesting leature in the case; for upon opening the stomach it was found empty, and the food having perfectly and entirely been digested. Two hours and a half before his execution he had eaten heartily. The mental agony of those two hours and a half, and the dreadful suspense selt then, cannot be imagined; and yet here was the stomach before our eyes, showing not the slightest impairment of digestion. And still turther, upon cutting open the small intestine chylification was found to have taken place pertectly. The liver was in a normal condition The spleen was much enlarged and congested intensely, which may, perhaps, in small degree account for the want of congestion in the brain, heart, and lungs. Its weight was ten ownces and five drachms, the normal weight of the healthy spleen being seven ounces. The kidneys were also found congested, especially that of the left side. The weight of the right kidney was five ounces three drachms and two scruples; while that of the left was six ounces two drachms and two scruples. Bladder normal, containing only about three ounces of urine. This ended the exa mination of the various organs and regions of the body of the murderer, Anton Probst. Dr. Pan-coast in closing, offered as his belief, that the murderer had died from nervous shock, inflicted by the pressure or tension of the rope upon the pneumogastric and phrenic nerves, which nerves are so essential to the greatfuncturi of respiration. This view which he had adopted was agreed to, and fully coincided with by Drs. Nebinger, Jewell, Hunt, S. W. Gross, Packard, and other medical gentlemen present.

This examination, Dr. Pancoast reminded his hearers, has shown conclusively that death from place without of the brain, with no change in the lungs or heart, with no laceration of the spinal cord, and no dislocation or fracture of the cervical vertebrie, and with no laceration of the trackes or larynx. This will always be a prominent case in medical jurisprudence, for here lies the body of one who presents none of these features; but who shows us simply a rupture of a muscle of the neck and a fracture of a tiny bone, to which is attached the tongue; but whose death from hanging is not only proven by the facts before us, but by the undeniable evidence of the witnesses to the execution.

Dr. Pancoast thus closed an able and welldelivered lecture-a lecture which has thrown out many valuable points for study, and many features of interest to the medical and legal profession, and, indeed, to all who may have read the accounts of the learful crime.

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50c. 56 Fine White Figue.

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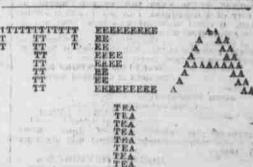
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