muscular rigidity (*rigor mortis*) first begins, and first ends, in the neck ; *post-mortem* refrigeration takes place first in the head—these, with many other phenomena, incline me to think that soon or late it will be admitted that death, usually, if not always, begins in the brain, and that the body dies downward along the centre, and then outwardly, notwithstanding all that the illustrious Bichat has said of death beginning in the heart and lungs. The biceps muscle outlives any of the organs called vital.

THERAPEUTIC APPLICATION OF ARSENIC, &c.

By Daniel Holt, M.D., New Haven, Ct.

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THIS article has been long held as a powerful remedial agent, and as it is a violent poison when misapplied, we have every reason to believe it a powerful remedy when well chosen, for a poison and a medicine are but the same thing in different circumstances. Still it is often given with little effect, and sometimes we fear only to do injury. I apprehend it is given too indiscriminately, without definite indications for its use. It is called a tonic, but in many cases of pure debility will have little or no effect, in any dose which it will be safe to continue ; as an alterative it is useless in many cases, or until a quantity is given which makes the effect of the remedy as bad as the disease. But in other cases its effects, either as an alterative or tonic, are speedy and permanent. My opinion has long been that there are particular pathological conditions, in which this article (as is the case with many other remedies) is especially appropriate, and in these conditions, whatever the disease may be, though it will exist in some diseases more than others, it produces its specific effect to the condition, and hence it cures. Dr. Ellsworth (who, by the way, has made some very correct observations) would call it a "specific stimulant" effect. I conceive it acts as a tonic, only by so changing the diseased action of some of the parts concerned in digestion, assimilation, or nutrition, as to make more red blood. It is considered especially valuable in diseases of a periodical character. Still, all periodical diseases are not benefited by it, whether they are neuralgic, marsh intermittent, or remittent, though it is one characteristic of the condition indicating arsenic as a remedy, that it is more effective in a periodical disease, other things being equal, than where all the symptoms are continuous, whatever the disease may be ; but it is an effectual remedy in a great variety of diseases both acute and chronic, and in some cases its effects are speedy, where the conditions of the system are such as to obtain its effects. Arsenic is generally more effectual in diseases of debility, but more especially those attended with a vitiated state of the system, with bad secretions. When some or many of the following symptoms attend a particular disease in which arsenic is used as a remedy, we may, I think, depend upon much more beneficial results than when the opposite obtains :—general debility ; a pale, bloated or earthy countenance, distorted features, with a cold bluish

appearance of the surface, disposed to petechiæ; paroxysms of whatever nature, occurring especially late in the day, attended with general prostration; derangement of the alimentary canal; a white or brown clammy state of the mouth, and the whole tract of the alimentary canal, as it were, indicating a tendency to incipient gangrene; green and dark evacuations, with general disturbance of the stomach and bowels, attended with burning sensation, and vitiated and profuse secretions. Where many of these symptoms are present, in a great variety of diseases, it will be found a valuable remedy, and will often of itself in a short time produce a great change in all the symptoms, and restore the healthy functions; the appetite and strength will improve, as the morbid symptoms disappear. We have often given it in typhus and other fevers; in inflammations, in bowel complaints, acute and chronic; in the various nervous affections, scrofula, cutaneous affections, &c., and where most of the above symptoms were present, indicating a peculiar state of the system, have seen the most decided effects. Whereas, when we have given it in those diseases in which it is commonly recommended, and found it to fail, an opposite state of the system has generally been observed. I have given it in a case of severe cough of two or three weeks standing, where there was great coldness and debility, loss of appetite, nausea, periodical nightly spasmodic cough with free and unhealthy secretion, and all the symptoms were relieved *instantly*, as it were; indeed the patient would scarcely cough after commencing the remedy. So in other diseases, when rightly given.

This, however, is not peculiar to this article; it will hold true with many, and probably most, of our most efficient medicinal agents. It is certainly true of mercury, of iodine and its preparations, of quinine, of nit. silver, of ammonia, &c.; and hence these articles have been classed differently by different writers, and viewed differently by different practitioners. If they are appropriately given, they seem to act as tonics; that is, they remove the unhealthy condition. If they are given improperly, if not directly reducing they become so by allowing the disease to continue. Every medicine has its appropriate condition, in which its effects are manifested to best advantage, but which has been too much overlooked by the medical profession. There are, in my view, few medicines which are specific to particular diseases, but many which are so to particular conditions of the system, and when so applied, cure "*cito certe et jucunde*." The profession in general have been too much upon general principles in the application of remedial agents to the cure of disease, and have neglected the specific application of particular remedial agents to particular morbid or pathological conditions.

INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE, IN WESTERN AFRICA, ON THE MIND.

[THE writer of the following letter, addressed to the Rev. Joseph Tracy, of Boston. Secretary of the Massachusetts Colonization Society, is Dr. Lugeneel, whose name has been frequently brought before the medical