

DR. WILLIS F. WESTMORELAND, sworn for the Defendant.

DIRECT EXAMINATION.

A practicing physician for twenty eight years, general practice and surgery. A professor of surgery for twenty years, and formerly president of the State Board of Health. If the body of a girl between thirteen and fourteen years old was embalmed about ten hours after death, after taking out a gallon of fluid and putting in a gallon of embalming fluid, of which 8 per cent. is formaldehyde and the body was buried and nine or ten days after upon a post mortem examination a cut an inch and a half long cutting through to the skull in some places was found by the ear, and the skull was opened and on the inside of the skull no actual break of the skull was found, but a little hemorrhage under the skull corresponding to this point where the blow had been delivered and no pressure on the brain was caused, and no injury to the brain occurred it would be impossible to tell whether or not that would have produced unconsciousness before death. Skull may be fractured without producing unconsciousness. Death may be produced by a blow on the head that leaves very little outward signs. From looking at such a wound without any knowledge of the amount of blood lost, one could not tell whether it was inflicted before or after death. One could not tell from looking at a wound of that sort from which direction it was inflicted. [In answer to question as to whether he had any personal feeling against Dr. Harris, witness answered "No," but that he had preferred charges with State Board of Health charging Dr. Harris with professional dishonesty.] A blunt surface can produce a wound that would look like a cut. If in the case of the same patient the stomach was taken out and in it was found wheat bread and cabbage, some of the cabbage looking like that, (State's Exhibit G), and thirty-two degrees of combined hydrochloric acid and substantially nothing in the small intestine, and feces some five feet away, it would be impossible to form a reliable opinion that cabbage and bread had been in that stomach before death, on that data or any other data, that could be found by looking at the stomach nine or ten days after death. Many things retard digestion. Much depends upon the particular stomach, and its affinity for particular foods. There is a cycle of acidity and in the progress of digestion that increases, and then later it goes down. Food that is not thoroughly emulsified will remain in the stomach indefinitely. Cabbage like that (State's Exhibit G) and wheat bread might remain in the stomach until the process of digestion is complete, which ordinarily would be from three and a half to four hours. They might pass through the body undigested. A formaldehyde embalming preparation would destroy the pancreatic juices, and also the pepsin in the stomach. The probability is that some of the hydrochloric acid and maltose found upon an examination of the stomach in such a case would in no way determine how long food has been in the stomach. If upon the post-mortem above described, it was found that the epithelium had been so effected that it had been removed from the wall of the vagina in several places, and upon a micro-