

of Mr. Van Vorst to the City of New York. Soon after this he was associated with Samuel G. Courtney, a son-in-law of Daniel S. Dickinson, and for several years United States District Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

In 1857 he formed a copartnership with those brilliant lawyers, Clark B. Cochrane and John H. Reynolds. This was one of the strongest legal firms that ever existed in Albany.

During this connection Mr. Cochrane and Mr. Reynolds both became Members of Congress. The copartnership ended with Mr. Cochrane's death in 1867, but Mr. Harris and Mr. Reynolds continued their association till the latter's death in 1875.

Mr. Harris has now associated with him in the practice of his profession his son, Frederick Harris, and William P. Rudd.

In the autumn of 1853 he was nominated and elected District Attorney of Albany County, serving until January 1, 1857. Mr. Harris' administration of this important office is remembered as largely enhancing his reputation and advantageous to the public. During his administration he conducted several of the most important and stubbornly contested prosecutions for murder ever tried at the Albany Bar; indeed, we know of few more important cases in legal history.

Among these was the trial of the People *vs.* Hendrickson, indicted for the murder of his wife by poison, in 1853, and the several trials of McCann for the murder of his wife in 1856.

Mr. Harris entered upon his duties as District Attorney of Albany County on the first day of January, 1854. Hendrickson had been tried and convicted of murder in the first degree, but the prisoner, through his counsel—Hon. John K. Porter—had brought error to the Court of Appeals, and it had not been argued when Mr. Harris entered upon his duties, and the duty of conducting it in the Appellate Court fell upon him.

Mrs. Hendrickson died suddenly at Bethlehem on the morning of March 7, 1853. She was discovered by her husband dead in bed, at about two o'clock in the morning. He aroused the family, who saw by her appearance that she had been dead but a few moments. In the evening of that day, at the Coroner's inquest, Hendrickson stated under oath the circumstances of her death. He said he went to church with her in the afternoon of the day previous, returning in the evening; his wife complained of ill-health, retiring about eleven o'clock. He awoke at about two in the morning by a noise in the barn. On speaking to his wife, he found her motionless, and her face cold; thinking her dead, he alarmed the family.

When asked as to his having been in Albany, he said: "I was there two weeks ago last Saturday." "Have you been there since?" After pretending to reflect, he said: "Oh, yes, I think I was there one week ago last Saturday." "Have you not been there since?" He replied: "I was there last Saturday." When asked what he went for, he said he took a load of timber to the mills there; his brother was with him; he then gave the names of the different places he visited with his brother.

He did not remember going to Springstead's drug store, nor any other drug store. When the question was again directly put to him, "Were you not in some drug store in Albany?" he was in a somewhat reclining position in his chair, as if grieving; the question seemed to startle him, and, after some hesitation, he finally replied: "I do not remember." On the trial, the People offered to prove the statements of Hendrickson before the coroner. The evidence was objected to as inadmissible, but the Court admitted it under an exception. The People offered to prove, as a motive for the act, that Lawrence Van Duzen, the father of Mrs. Hendrickson, by his last will, gave all his property to his wife for life, with a remainder over, one-half to his only son, the other half to be equally divided between Mrs. Hendrickson and her sister. This evidence was objected to, but admitted under an exception. This case required in the counsel for the People, not only great legal learning, but a thorough acquaintance with medical jurisprudence, particularly in the science of toxicology, as it was insisted that the victim died from the effects of strychnine. Hendrickson was convicted, as before stated, and sentenced to be hanged.

*June 5 May 1854*  
The duty of conducting this case in the Appellate Court placed Mr. Harris in a most responsible position, involving much labor and learning. The counsel for the defense relied upon their exceptions to the admission of the evidence we have referred to as involving sufficient error to give them a new trial.

The exhaustive and admirably prepared brief of Mr. Harris, and its logical reference to authorities, on which was founded a very able argument, fully sustained the rulings of the Judge at the trial, and in due time the decision of the Court was handed down, affirming the conviction of Hendrickson. The case was reported in 10 N. Y. Reports, 13.

The trials of McCann, for the murder of his wife, which took place July 8, 1856, was another great case. On the morning following her death, the dead body of Mrs. McCann, the wife of the prisoner, was found on the floor of one of the rooms in the house occupied by him and his wife, with a ghastly wound over the right eye, which fractured the skull and opened the brains. There were eight wounds on her head, disfiguring her to such an extent that those who knew her best could hardly recognize her. Suspicion at once fell upon McCann. There were several strong motives proven that induced him to commit the murder, and it was evidently done with deliberation—as the law has it, "with malice prepense." He was indicted and brought to trial at a Court of Oyer and Terminer, in November, 1856. Mr. Harris as District Attorney appeared for the People; Hon. Lyman Tremain, Hon. Rufus W. Peckham and J. M. Kimball, Esq., conducted the defense, which was insanity. It was insisted by the defense that McCann killed his wife while suffering from delirium tremens, under the delusion that he was resisting the attack of persons determined to kill him. There were several circumstances proved