

## POISON VENDING.

A number of the chemists and druggists of the city of Toronto have been charged, at the instance of the notorious George Albert Mason, with selling poison contrary to law. The case of J O Wood of King St. West, the first on the list, was investigated before the Police Magistrate, and after much delay and repeated postponements, judgment was given against the defendant, and he was fined \$20 and costs.

The following is the Clause of Chap 93 of the Consolidated Statutes, which refers to the charge —

"No apothecary, chemist, druggist, vendor of medicine, or other person shall sell or deliver any arsenic, corrosive sublimate, strychnine or other poison, mineral or vegetable, simple or composite commonly known as a deadly poison, (or which being incautiously or secretly administered may cause immediate death), to any person who does not then produce and deliver a certificate or note from some person duly licensed to practice as a physician or surgeon, or some priest or minister of religion, resident in the locality, addressed to such druggist, &c., and mentioning the name, calling or profession of the person requiring such poison, and stating the purpose for which it is required, and that it ought to be sold to the person requiring the same; and such certificate or note shall be kept by the person selling or delivering such poison as his justification for so doing."

Mason and his associate—John Gale—visited the various drug stores in the city and purchased small quantities of laudanum. The purchases were made by Gale while Mason, who subsequently received the medicine, remained outside. A good deal of caution was exhibited by many of the druggists, and a few refused to sell because the purchaser was a stranger, but no written authority was demanded.

The counsel for the defence contended that laudanum was not a deadly poison, and therefore not within the scope or meaning of the statute, and a number of witnesses were adduced to prove this position. The evidence of Dr Lazars and Dr Stiddel, which was in some respects nearly similar, went to show that laudanum did not cause immediate death and was not therefore a deadly poison. It was also shown that some people were in the habit of using it in large quantities without any deadly effect. Prof Croft also gave evidence to the effect that laudanum did not cause immediate death. In his evidence he also