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## Original Communications.

### MEDICAL EVIDENCE.

*A Paper read by ROBERT MARK, M.D., F.R.C.P.S.K., Coroner, Ottawa, before the Rideau and Bath-hurst Medical Association.*

Mr. President and Members of the Rideau and Bath-hurst Medical Association :

In response to an invitation from our esteemed Secretary, I beg to submit a short paper on Medical Evidence.

The giving of *evidence* dates from a very early period in the world's history, when by legal enactment individuals were disallowed to take the law into their own hands, but were required to bring their case before a judge; where the accuser, the accused and the witnesses met face to face, and the judge passed sentence according to the evidence.

Since June 15, 1215, when King John gave to his people the great Magna Charta, trial by jury has been the privilege of all

under British rule, under which arrangement the *judge* is obligated by oath to pass sentence according to the verdict of the jury; and the jury are sworn to bring in a verdict, without fear or favor, according to the evidence; and the *witness* in the solemn presence of Almighty God, pressing the book of Holy Writ to his lips, swears he will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

*Ordinary witnesses* are only required to state facts of which they have a personal knowledge, but upon *skilled and scientific witnesses waightier responsibilities rest*; their opinions are often *demandated* to elucidate matters that are obscure to the ordinary mind.

The medical witness enters upon his work of investigation, realizing the solemn responsibilities that rest upon him not only to present naked facts, that would impress the mind of the most casual observer, but to unearth hidden facts essential to a right understanding of the case, and place them in an understandable form before the public mind.