

# Canada Medical Journal.

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY, 1865.

## THE RECENT CASE OF ACCIDENTAL POISONING AT QUEBEC.

The somewhat frequent occurrence of cases of poisoning through the mistakes of druggists' assistants both in our own country and in Great Britain, has drawn the attention, not only of the profession, but of the public to the matter, and the question now anxiously enquired is, what can be done to remedy this apparently increasing carelessness, where there should be ever-increasing caution. We had intended in a previous number to have referred to this matter, but were waiting to notice what action the Pharmaceutic Societies of Great Britain would take. The occurrence of the case in Quebec, in the last week in December, calls upon us to delay no longer, especially as Parliament is now in session. The facts of this melancholy case are, in brief, as follows: The day after attending a party three young men entered the drug store of Sturton & Co., and requested the person in charge—who, it appears, was a son of Mr. Sturton—to prepare them a tonic. He prepared for them, as he believed, a draught, consisting of compound tincture of gentian, cardamoms, and cinchona, with a few drops of aromatic spirits of ammonia, and essence of ginger, after taking which they left. They had not proceeded far when they were seized with faintness and great depression of the vital powers. They separated, two going towards Russell's Hotel, where they partook of some brandy; the third wended his way to the office of the Board of Works, where the depression became so great that, being alarmed, he took a sleigh and drove to Russell's Hotel. Convinced that they had been poisoned, medical assistance was summoned, and all was done that science and skill could suggest; fortunately with success in two instances, but without avail in the third. At the inquest, which was held, the medical men believed that tincture of digitalis had been put into the tonic by mistake, and to the extent of half an ounce. Dr. Marsden was especially positive as to its being digitalis, and gave his reasons most clearly; he had taken much pains to examine the condition and position of the bottles in the drug store immediately after the discovery of the mistake.