

Canada Medical Journal.

MONTREAL, MAY, 1871.

A REVIEW OF THE TRIAL OF ANDREW HILL FOR MURDER.

We have received a pamphlet with the above title, which is a defence on the part of Dr. Worthington, of Sherbrooke, against a most unjustifiable attack of the presiding Judge, the Honorable Mr. Justice Short, on the evidence given before him by Dr. Worthington, at the trial of Andrew Hill for the murder of his wife, at the term of the Court of Queen's Bench, held in the town of Sherbrooke, in March, 1871.

At the inquest Drs. Austin and Worthington ascertained the cause of death to be hæmorrhage. On careful examination of the body two wounds were found situated on the right side of the vagina; these presented the appearance as of having been produced by some blunt instrument; the fatal wound led upwards by the side of the descending ramus of the pubis on the right side, stripping the bone of its periosteal covering, and passing into the pelvis. The fact of the woman having fallen against the side of a bench and thence on to the floor, was brought out in evidence; but the nature of the wounds was such, as to induce the medical men who examined the body to declare on oath that they could not reconcile their appearance as of accidental origin.

With regard to the cause of the wounds in question, we must confess our utter incapacity at arriving at a satisfactory decision. We have read over the evidence with care, and cannot but feel that the whole case is wrapt in mystery. We are at a loss to account for two distinct wounds within the orifice of the vagina, one of superficial extent, the other deep, and showing that considerable force must have been used at the time to produce it. We say that we are at a loss to account for this extensive injury on any other hypothesis than that of direct violence. With regard to accident, or intention, the former could only occur under peculiar and unusual circumstances. The latter, of course, is feasible enough, but we should imagine could alone be undertaken, either by the woman being a consenting party, as when a person unacquainted with the anatomy of the parts, thrusts some foreign body into the vagina, purposely to procure abortion, or, on the other hand, if murder was the intention, the murderer being aided and abetted by a third party. These are the only conditions under which an injury similar to the one described, could have occurred.

In defence, the prisoner produced the evidence of two medical men who propounded the astonishing theory of the bursting of a varix. They had made no inspection of the parts, but appear to have rested their