

Canada Medical Journal.

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A case of a most extraordinary character, resulting in an extraordinary charge of manslaughter returned by a coroner's Court, against a physician of standing in his locality, has recently been disposed of by the grand jury, before the Court of Queen's Bench, held in the town of St. Johns, P.Q., who in our opinion very justly ignored the bill. We give the circumstances as related to us by one of the medical men examined by the Crown, and who was summoned to give testimony, as a skilled witness. Dr. Robert C. Morehead was called to attend a Mrs. Bertrand in her confinement, on the morning of the 13rd November; he remained with his patient and delivered her between four and five o'clock of the afternoon of that day, of a living child. Shortly after her delivery, hæmorrhage set in, and the Doctor proceeded to extract the placenta: on making traction on the cord, it gave way; when he was about to introduce his hand to remove the placenta, he was resisted by his patient, and in this she was supported by her husband, and some female friends in the house. The friends then sent for Dr. Larocque, some miles distant and on his arrival he advised the husband to send for the priest, to administer the last rights of the church, as the woman was dying. No attempt was made by Dr. Larocque to remove the placenta or arrest the hæmorrhage. As might be expected, two hours after the arrival of this sapient adviser, the poor woman died. Dr. Morehead remained with the patient to the last. In this latter particular we think Dr. M. was in error. He had done his duty, he had suggested and attempted to perform what was the only rational means of saving the woman's life and these attempts had been forcibly resisted by the patient, her husband and friends. Having therefore waited until another physician had been summoned, and finding that that individual did not coincide with him as to the propriety of acting, and acting with promptness, he should simply have retired, and thus thrown the full onus and responsibility of the case on Dr. Larocque's shoulders. The next stage in the proceedings was, that Dr. Larocque, with two other medical friends, proceeded to make a post mortem examination of the body before burial, and on their report Dr.