

## ARREST FOR MURDER.

Jas. Anderson, his wife, and two daughters were arrested last week in Botetourt county and committed to jail in this place under the charge of committing a murder in this county about five years ago. The circumstances are these. A family named Pettigrew, living in the neighborhood, of the House Mountain, consisting of a mother and five children were found dead in the the Winter of 1846. The house in which they resided was burned down and the corpses frozen when found. Marks of violence were found on the mother and the eldest daughter, but on none of the rest.

Those marks consisted of a scar on the side of of the head and the print of fingers on the throat of the mother, and similar marks on the throat of the daughter. A deep snow fell on the night the event is supposed to have happened, but no snow was found on the corpses and no tracks around the place of this occurrence. Several neighbors resided within a half and three quarters of a mile off, to whose residences there existed no obstruction unless it was the snow, on this occasion. Suspicion fell on this Anderson family at the time. They then resided within three quarters of a mile of the place. The matter has slept for five years now and the evidence which led to the arrest of these parties will be developed at their trial at the April term of our monthly Court.

## THE ANDERSON TRIAL.

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The trial of the important case of a charge against Jas. Anderson and his family for the commission of a most melancholy and mysterious murder of a mother and her family, consisting of five children, and the burning of their dwelling house, about five years ago, in this county, was commenced before the examining Court on last Monday. The trial closed on Wednesday and the decision of the Court was to send the prisoners on to await their final trial at the next term of our Circuit court, commencing on the 12th of April.

A case of more unfathomable mystery and melancholy circumstances has seldom occurred in the annals of the jurisprudence of any country. The lapse of time since its occurrence whilst it may, to some extent, allay excitement, yet tends to envelop the occurrence in a suspicion—dark and mysterious. The circumstances would form the matter of a tragedy unparalled almost in the legends of reality or fiction. We refrain from the exposition of any of the testimony until after the final trial, when we will endeavor to lay it before our readers.



## LEXINGTON, VA.

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 1851.

## THE ANDERSON TRIAL.

This mysterious and deeply interesting trial for murder was commenced at the term of our Superior Court, on Wednesday the 16th inst., in which James Anderson and his wife were arraigned for the murder of the Pettigrew family on the night of the 16th of December, 1846. The trial was closed on Tuesday, the 22d inst., and the verdict of the jury rendered, that Jas. Anderson was guilty of murder in the first degree, and his wife acquitted thereof. A new trial was applied for on behalf of the prisoner and granted by the Judge, and the venue changed to the county of Bath.

The testimony proved that the house in which the deceased resided was seen standing Wednesday evening, the 16th of December, 1846, about dark—that a large light was perceptible on the same night, in the direction of the house, between the hours of seven and eight o'clock—that the next morning the chimney of the house was alone discovered remaining, by a witness some distance off.

That it commenced snowing on the evening of the 16th December, 1846, at sundown, and continued until about 10 o'clock the next day, that the snow was about three inches deep between the hours of six and eight o'clock that night, and sixteen inches deep when it ceased the next day.

That the dead bodies of the deceased, six in number, were found in a frigid state on the morning of the ensuing Sabbath. That the ground was entirely clear of snow for twenty-five feet beyond the house in the direction of the dead bodies, and that the location of the bodies was about fifteen feet from the foundation of the house, and about ten feet from the edge of the snow towards the house. But the bodies were not burned. Nor were any tracks to be found either in the snow or where the ground was clear of snow around the burnt house.—The burning of which may have made the ground soft by the melting of the snow. No snow was found upon the bodies or upon any of the articles carried out of the house. Wearing apparel and bed clothes were found there, but the bodies were only partially dressed and entirely unprotected by the bed clothing. Some of them were in a recumbent position and others prostrate. The foot of one of them was sunk in the ground and frozen tight. No marks of violence were found upon any of them except the mother, who had a wound upon her temple and impressions upon the neck similar to those made by pressure from the hand.

The eyes of the oldest child, a daughter about 16, were stretched open, and cast as if looking back. The countenances of the rest indicated no apparent marks of disfiguration. The testimony tended to show that the night was not remarkably cold, particularly in the early part, and that the houses of several neighbors were accessible, some of them within a half mile, and some three quarters of a mile off.

We make the above narration of mysterious circumstances merely in reference to the *corpus delicti*, and with an impartial bearing as to the hypothesis of the guilt or innocence of the prisoner. We have heretofore announced our intention of publishing the proceedings of the trial in full, but inasmuch as the prisoner is to have a new hearing, we are constrained from a sense of justice to refrain from such publication now.

A certain anonymous correspondent, however, of the *Rockingham Register*, has furnished that paper with a garbled report of the testimony purporting to be from the records of the examining court, which is going the rounds of our exchange papers, and which was brought to the notice of the Court publicly, and such an exposition made of it as to leave the Author in a most unenviable position.