

The Examiner.—L'Observateur.

No. 1.]

QUEBEC, JANUARY, 1861.

ABSOLUTE liberty is a myth, to be classed in the same category as the philosopher's stone and the fountain of perpetual youth. Society, even amongst the most barbarous people, imposes certain rules which, militating against the free action of the individual members, add to the liberty of the tribe or nation. To live in peace with their fellow-creatures, to enjoy that with which it had pleased Providence to bless them, and to secure to their heirs the quiet possession of the properties of their ancestors, it was necessary that men should frame, respect, and enforce certain rules governing all the members of their respective communities. From these rules, made in the first ages of the world, have sprung the different codes of law recognized as binding in all civilized countries. Culled from the principles of justice which are immutable, the leading features in all those systems may be considered to be alike, varying in the minor details of their operations to suit the prejudices of the times when they were made.

To form a system of law, perfect in itself, which should meet every possible case is clearly an impossibility; the nature of man being imperfect and fallible, it naturally follows that in such a gigantic undertaking traces of imperfection and fallibility should appear, and thus, however perfect as a work of art and science a code of law may be considered by its framers and projectors on its completion, ere a few years have passed over, its operation will disclose faults, errors, and discrepancies, even in its most important and carefully considered articles. Ambiguities of expression will appear, when it is sought to apply its general principles to particular cases; and the lives and properties of their fellow-men will be dependent upon the learning, judgment, and integrity of the interpreters and distributors of justice. Considering the magnitude of the interests confided to their charge, and the responsibility attaching to the performance of their duties, there is no office in any country so honorable, and at the same time so onerous, as that of Judge. Questions involving the rights of widows and orphans, the aged and the poor, present themselves continually before them for decision: their judgments carry joy and hope into the hearts and homes of the depressed and troubled: they strike fear and dismay into the hardened breast of the wrong-doer and oppressor. Death sits upon the steps of their judgment-seats in Criminal Courts, awaiting their bidding; and disgrace, dishonour, and confiscation, follow like slaves their sentences of degradation.

To discharge properly the duties incumbent on his station, a Judge must be a man gifted far beyond his fellows. High talent, great learning, sound judgment, and extreme patience, are four of the great requisites for the office; but to these must be added a blameless life and strict integrity. Natural talent, to enable him