been compared to that of the sun. I fear that in the present case the comparison to that of the electric light would be more appropriate; through it, as you must have noticed, there often shoot long beams of darkness, forming a violent contrast to the brilliancy which envelops them. It must be some such beam, perhaps a survival from the dark ages, that has been resting on the legal profession, while the people of the province at large have proved that they are sensible of the light, as shown by the vote of their representatives in the Legislative Assembly last session, when the majority in favor of the universities was so large. The action of the Council unfortunately rendered this valueless. Still progress has been made. The result is, that for the present year at least, if any of you purpose going to the Quebec Bar, you will have to pass an examination which is not necessarily a test of education, but only of information, perhaps hastily acquired, and as hastily dropped, like a lawyer's knowledge of the facts of a client's case of which he disburdens his mind when the need for them has passed.

A JURY OF MATRONS.

In 1778 Bathsheba Spooner, together with three men, was tried, convicted, and hanged for the murder of her husband (2 Chandler's Criminal Trials, pp. 1–58). No case in Massachusetts attracted greater attention in its day. All elements of interest united to make it a tale of romance.

It was only a few months after Burgoyne's surrender that a young American officer caught the attention of Mrs. Spooner, won her love and confidence. He was one of those that were hanged at Worcester. Hon. Timothy Ruggles, of Hardwick, was the father of Mrs. Spooner. He was a large landowner, a real lord of the manor, who kept extensive game parks and a stable of thirty or more saddle-horses; a lawyer, judge, politician, soldier, president of the first Continental Congress, and already in 1778 an emigrated Tory. Hence the strong political feeling against Mrs. Spooner.

But there is a point of great legal interest connected with the trial. While under sentence of hanging, Mrs. Spooner petitioned the governor and council for a respite on account of her pregnancy. The council issued to the sheriff a writ *de ventre inspiciendo*, ordering him to summon a jury of "two men midwives and twelve discreet and lawful matrons" to ascertain the truth of her plea. "The verdict of the above matrons is that the said Bathsheba Spooner is not quick with child." Accordingly Mrs. Spooner was executed. But a *post-mortem* examination proved that her assertion had been true.

In Massachusetts there has been found no subsequent case in which a jury of matrons has been summoned, although there seems to be no evidence that such a jury is not still a part of the machinery of the courts of the State. It was hardly likely that the jury of matrons would be summoned again so long as Mrs. Spooner's case was fresh in mind. Moreover, the progress of the science of medicine has been so great during the past century that every year has seen it less expedient to resort to such clumsy means, when doctors can be had. It is not strange that the *Albany Law Journal* jeers at the Pennsylvania papers for suggesting that such a jury be summoned; "it is antiquated," is the taunt. It is possible, even by an examination of the later cases, to discover a tendency to put questions of alleged pregnancy to doctors for decision. The writ in Mrs. Spooner's case, for example, added two "men midwives" to the twelve matrons—a departure from common-law practice not entirely happy, however, if we judge by the result. The jury of women in *Anne Wycherley's Case*, 8 C. & P. 262, asked for and got the assistance of a surgeon. In New York the request for a jury of matrons was refused, but the circumstances of the case warranted the refusal without any reflection on the merit of the jury itself. In view of all these facts it seems quite likely that a question of pregnancy arising to-day would be referred for decision directly to doctors.—*Harvard Law Review.*

How Jurymen Spell.—The Portsmouth *Times* publishes the following copies of the ballot slips used by a jury which tried a man for grand larceny in a New Hampshire court; Gilty, geilty, guilty, not gealty, gillty, geilty, not guilty, gildty, guildy, guilty, gilltey, gealty. What of it? Ability to spell properly is a great acquirement, but men who can't do it, often have good common sense.—*Cambridge Daily.*