

DIARY FOR MARCH.

- 1 Tuesday St. David.
- 6 SUNDAY..... 4th Sunday in Lent.
- 7 Monday Recorder's Court sits.
- 8 Tuesday Quarter Sessions and County Court Sittings in each County.
- 10 Thursday Sittings Court of Error and Appeal.
- 13 SUNDAY 5th Sunday in Lent.
- 14 Monday Last day for service York and Peel.
- 17 Thursday St. Patrick.
- 20 SUNDAY 6th Sunday in Lent.
- 24 Thursday Declare for York and Peel.
- 25 Friday Good Friday. Annun V. M. LADY DAY.
- 27 SUNDAY Easter Day.

BUSINESS NOTICE.

Persons indebted to the Proprietors of this Journal are requested to remember that all our past due accounts have been placed in the hands of Messrs. Atwagh & Arlugh, Attorneys, Barrie, for collection, and that only a prompt remittance to them will save costs.

It is with great reluctance that the Proprietors have adopted this course; but they have been compelled to do so in order to enable them to meet the current expenses which are very heavy.

Now that the usefulness of the Journal is so generally admitted, it would not be unreasonable to expect that the Profession and Officers of the Courts would accord it a liberal support, instead of allowing themselves to be sued for their subscriptions.

The Upper Canada Law Journal.

MARCH, 1864.

THE CORONER NUISANCE.

We do not assert that all coroners are nuisances; but we do assert that the existence of a legion of hungry coroners, especially in our cities and towns, is a public nuisance.

If a stranger to our country were to judge of the number of violent deaths that take place in our midst from the number of coroners that exist among us, he would in all probability come to the conclusion that about one half of the inhabitants of Canada are murderers, and the remaining half intending suicides.

But at present we are not so much concerned with our appearance in the eyes of the world, as with the evil itself which we look upon as a social nuisance, and for the removal or abatement of which some remedy must before long be applied.

If there is one thing more than another that a statesman ought to see enforced, it is respect for the law and its administration. Bring the law or its administration into contempt, and you weaken if not destroy the bonds of society. Now, we know of nothing which has such a tendency to bring the administration of law into contempt, as the prevailing system of appointing coroners, and the conduct of the men who receive the appointments.

A coroner is a judge. He should therefore possess the cardinal qualities of a judge—learning, wisdom, and dignity. Can it be said that the coroners of the present day in Canada possess these qualities? Do the successive

governments that from time to time make these appointments, ever look to the ability or capacity of the man, before giving him the office of coroner? We fear not. If we judge the tree by its fruits, we should say not. Who receive the appointments in our cities and towns? Generally medical men, with little or no practice, whose only aim is to make money out of the office. Men of this class are not the most likely to be fitted to discharge, with satisfaction to the public, the important duties of this important office. And how do they discharge the duties? A man is found dead. Suspicion of death by unnatural means exists. The fact of the death becomes known. Forthwith a batch of coroners, like so many vultures, make for the carrion. When they reach the place where the body is laid out, a wrangle for priority ensues, which not merely disgraces the office, but shocks our feelings of common humanity. Why is this? It is because of the shameless desire of "Her Majesty's coroners" to make money out of their honorable office, and the determination at all hazards to do so. The picture is revolting. Is it founded on fact? We need not cast back in our memory for cases that unfortunately are too numerous within the memory of us all. Let us take the last one.

Greenwood, a prisoner under sentence of death in the common gaol at Toronto, on the night preceding the day appointed for his execution, put an end to his life by his own hands. He did so shortly before midnight. Coroner Scott is the first in "at the death." He reaches the gaol shortly after the death, and some time before the physician of the gaol. He is, however, *chasséd*. Though apparently quite acceptable to the gaoler, he is not accepted by the sheriff. The sheriff called upon Dr. Hallowell, and requested him to hold the inquest. He, early in the morning (about 2 o'clock) proceeded to one of the police stations; and while making out his warrant for the summoning of a jury, Dr. Riddell, who was neither acceptable to the gaoler nor accepted by the sheriff, handed in his warrant. The rivals thereupon, in the police station, had a wrangle, which ended in a wrangle (without more), probably owing to the presence of the police. Dr. Hallowell discovered some flaw in Dr. Riddell's warrant, and therefore affected to treat it as a nullity; but Dr. Riddell, notwithstanding, bright and early proceeded to the gaol to see the body, and was denied access to it. After some altercation with the gaol officials, he left. Next we have Dr. Hallowell holding the inquest, and Dr. Riddell, for some reason or other, present also at the inquest. What took place afterwards may be gathered from the report of the *Globe*:

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At this stage of the proceedings, some of the jurymen expressed a wish to have Coroner Riddell placed in the witness-box, as it was