

regret, for which no pecuniary damages can compensate. The case of Mr. Joseph is peculiarly sad, and that of Mr. Monahan is in some respects worse, as he leaves a family dependent upon him. We trust there will be no more collisions from one train overtaking another. They rank among the preventible accidents, and ought to be prevented. The fact that the snow plough is liable to leave the track makes it necessary that no train should be attached to it to share its untoward fate. These lessons are only for the future, and the future ought to benefit by them to the fullest possible extent.

It would appear, from an enquiry made in the House of Commons, that at the time of Sir John Thompson's death, no conclusion had been reached between him and the British Government on the copyright question. If the statement is not made in direct terms, it seems fairly to bear this interpretation. The terms in which the enquiry was made are such as to displace the true question. The real question is, on what terms are British authors, not resident in Canada, to be permitted to secure copyright in this country? The United States requires, for instance, as a condition of the extension of British copyright to that country that the work be printed in the Republic. Canada contends that under her constitutional authority to legislate on copyright, she is at liberty to make a similar condition. In the analogous right of patent, she rests entirely upon her own legislation. What is the extent of the power to legislate on copyright which the British North American Act confers upon Canada? The assumption of British authors that British copyright extends to the greatest of the self-governing colonies, as a part of the Empire, and therefore to Canada merely because it is part of the Empire, is not tenable. If it were merely a question of the interpretation of the North American Act, the obvious course to pursue would be a reference to the Privy Council; but above and beyond any question of interpretation, there is the right of autonomy which Canada is not likely to surrender.

UNITED STATES FINANCE.

When President Cleveland appealed to Congress to authorize a new issue of three per cent. bonds, he felt a doubt whether the authority asked would be granted, and soon after he took the precaution of making preparations for an issue of four per cent. bonds under an existing law. The amount named is \$62,400,000. Now that Congress has refused facilities for issuing three per cent. bonds, the preparation for a four per cent. issue will be pursued to the end. The new bonds will bring rather more than \$65,000,000 in gold, which will bring up the reserve in the treasury to a little over the legal minimum of \$100,000,000. The actual rate of interest will be $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., a marked advance in the rate since the November loan. This depreciation of the credit of the Government is due almost entirely to the refusal of Congress to grant the facilities for which the President asked. At least half of the \$65,000,000 of gold to be procured from this loan will come from abroad. The bonds are to be "payable in coin," which may mean silver. The nearer the free silver men are to getting the upper hand, the greater the danger; and they showed themselves, on Tuesday, strong enough to get something suspiciously near to a free silver declaration from the Senate. That bonds "payable in coin" are regarded by investors with more or less suspicion is clear from the statement of the President that three per cent. bonds, payable in gold, would effect a saving of \$599,159 a year, as compared with the contemplated issue. The silver men even now do not propose that the new dollars which they wish to coin should contain

a dollar's worth of silver. Their desire is, in fact, to palm off a dollar worth less than sixty cents in gold.

"THE LAW'S DELAY" ILLUSTRATED.

We in Ontario sometimes criticise as cumbersome or out of date certain of the methods taken by our lawyers and law courts to arrive at justice. And just now there is a cry for reform of procedure among us. Not without reason, perhaps. But our legal procedure is as a trolley car to an ox cart compared with that of the province adjoining, as an example will serve to demonstrate. At Beauharnois, Que., a trial was held in December and January, which, as a specimen of judicial processes, may well be described as antique. A firm named Boyd & Somerville had had dealings with two banks, and had made certain statement of their financial position. After an examination before a magistrate, which occupied nearly two weeks, the partners in the firm were brought to trial at the Queen's Bench for obtaining money under false pretences.

The jury was half French and half English. The questions had to be propounded to witnesses in both languages—first one, then the other. And the answers were taken down laboriously in long-hand, the earnest cry and prayer of one of the counsel for the services of a stenographer being of no avail. The presiding judge, like Artemus Ward on a certain occasion, "did not think it would be correct," and did not permit the innovation. The case being a reserved one, the judge took notes, and being a man well up in years did not take them very quickly. Nor was it his custom to make long sittings. Four or four and a half hours was his idea of the length of a working day, but he sometimes extended his labors to five hours. If he visited Toronto he would be astounded to find that even the judges of the land pay some attention to the convenience of litigants, and sit, not four or five, but eight or ten hours a day if necessary, and even sit at night to get their docket clear. They regard themselves as the honorable servants of the body politic, not its arrogant masters. The tedium of the mode de Beauharnois may be imagined, but fancy could hardly surpass the reality. Witnesses were many and the evidence was voluminous. The questioning, translating, re-questioning, transcribing, condensing, went on from day to day, until a trial which would in Ontario or Manitoba have been disposed of in a week at most, spun out from the middle of one month to the end of another, when the jury rendered a verdict of guilty, with a strong recommendation to mercy.

The trial began in December, and had proceeded for fifteen days when a juryman took ill and various adjournments were made. A day or two after Christmas this man died, and the whole proceedings were begun *de novo*. The conclusion of this labored farce, as we have said, was not reached till 30th January. Judge Belanger, very possibly an honorable man according to his light, seemed a portion of the system which does not mind wasting the money of litigants and the public in thus occupying some forty days in doing what in Ontario would be done in six. The Crown attorney was apparently satisfied with his steady job and did not see any impropriety in it. And the jury, who were locked up last time for twenty-four days, and who are said to have pocketed \$106 or \$108 apiece for their service and board, probably thought it was a god-send at a dull season of the year.

Such a survival of mediæval customs on the verge of the twentieth century can only be described as a travesty upon judicial proceedings. Fault was found by certain big-wigs with a great writer, who, forty years ago, satirized