tions of a Moralist to the Exposition of 1890, in which Jules Lemaitre strenuously maintains that manifold evil results follow these great bazaars—that they are not only demoralizing nuisances in the cities in which they are held but are morally baneful to the country at large. He treats of the degrading effects in various directions, contending that the architecture is of low grade and ephemeral; that the varieties of dance and other side-shows, which form so prominent a feature of these fairs, are a direct incitement to debauchery, and show their effects in the "extraordinary recrudescence of low spectacles in music halls, exhibitions of nude flesh, which are characteristic of the day, with indecent songs," etc. "Every exposition," says Mr. Lemaitre, "is followed by a diminution of public modesty." Diversions that require mental effort are too laborious for the crowds which come together, intent on amusement of the most exciting kind. Expositions are the death of dramatic art. They allow and cover up heavy speculations, "unchain advertisement and puffism, *i.e.*, lying and stealing, and create a universal furore for public pleasures." They draw thousands of poor people together, and at the close, when there is no more work for them, cast them off to swell the ranks of the starving. Every fair is the ruin of thousands of young girls, and has, as a consequence, a considerable development of prostitution. So proceeds the indictment. It is at least well worthy the consideration of the morally thoughtful. Is the total effect to increase or diminish the ascendency of mercenary gambling and other lower propensities, whose supremacy over the higher tastes and pursuits is one of the most discouraging signs of our time? The question is worth further thinking about.

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The Coroner's Inquest.

SOME recent trials have brought before the public mind the importance of the coroner's inquest; and have led to a consideration of the circumstances in which such investigations should be made. In many quarters there is a distinct feeling of uneasiness in regard to the requirements now insisted upon by the law before an inquest can be held, and a fear lest there should be, in very serious cases, a miscarriage of justice. It may be well that we should, at the present moment, draw attention to the state of the law and consider whether some alterations may not properly be introduced.

Our own law is founded upon the law and custom of England, but with certain changes. In the Mother Country an inquest is held in all cases of accident, and in the case of a person dying without medical attendance, or in such a manner that a medical man will not give a certificate of the cause of death. No grave can be dug in England, no corpse can be interred, unless the undertaker can present to the sexton or other person in charge of the graveyard or cemetery a medical certificate of the cause of death.

Apparently such a requirement has seemed too rigorous to our Canadian legislators; and they have modified the demands of the law very largely, and, as many now think, too largely. According to our present law, an inquest is not held unless a medical man declares on oath that it is necessary. Apparently, too, the coroner has a good deal in his own power, since we frequently read of coroners visiting the scene of an accident, and declaring that an inquest is unnecessary.

We have no hesitation in saying that these provisions are unsatisfactory. In the first place, this is no more a matter for a coroner to settle than a case of murder is for a judge. The coroner has a jury, and should act with his jury.

But there is a more serious aspect to the matter. It is necessary, apparently, that a medical man should take an oath that an inquest is necessary before such an investigation can be held. Such a provision is most inconvenient, and tends to put the physician or surgeon in a false position. The relations of such men with families are very intimate and delicate, and sometimes the determination, on the part of the physician, that an inquest must be held, might lead to serious misunderstandings and disputes. No family can wish to have an inquest held upon one of its members. Sometimes such a proceeding might seem likely to cast suspicion upon some other member; and, at any rate, it could never be quite easy for the doctor to insist upon an inquest being held, and to give effect to his conviction by taking oath that it was necessary.

What, then, is the remedy? Shall we go back to the English method and hold an inquest in every case of accident, and whenever there cannot be a medical certificate of the cause of death? If no middle course can be found, we are decidedly of the opinion that the English method is better than our own; and there are cases quite near to us at the present moment which confirm this conviction.

In a case recently tried, if an inquest had been held at the time of the accident, or murder, an immense amount of trouble and doubt would have been saved, and greater certainty would have been reached than perhaps ever can be now attained. In another case at this moment pending, an inquest held after a certain fire would have at once helped either to free innocent people from all suspicion, or else to bring the guilty to justice. It must be abundantly clear to any one who gives attention to the matter that the English system is better, in the interests of justice, than our own.

On the other hand, it certainly seems troublesome and even vexatious that an inquest should be held in every case of death at which a medical man was not in attendance. And therefore we would suggest an intermediate course—not that an inquest should be held in every such case, but in every case in which a medical man would *not* swear that an inquest was *not* necessary.

The importance of the change will be at once apparent. Here there can be no offence. The medical man is not required to take action with the view of invoking the interposition of the law—a somewhat invidious course—he has only to say whether he regards an inquest as necessary. If he does, he is simply passive; if he does not he must be ready to swear to this effect. We believe that this is the only escape from our present difficulty, unless we are willing to return to the English method; and we believe that the course we have here suggested is sufficient.

If we are right in saying that some such change in our law should be made, we are also right in urging that it should not be delayed. We cannot say, at the present moment, whether the matter belongs to the Local Government or to that of the Dominion; but we sincerely trust that the subject may not be lost sight of, and that a bill may be introduced at the earliest possible moment, in order to effect an alteration in the law.

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What the Montreal Gazette Thinks of The Week.

RECENT issues of THE WEEK are entirely worthy of the reputation of this excellent journal, for which we bespeak the support of all Canadians who wish well to Canada. Progress is not all merely economic. The aspirations of the intellectual and spiritual nature must also be satisfied, and in the contributions of Dr. Bourinot, Principal Grant, Archibald Lampman, the Rev. F. G. Scott, Miss Machar ("Fidelis"), Prof. Clark, Prof. Goldwin Smith, Mr. W. D. Lighthall, Mr. W. W. Campbell, and others of our well-known writers, as well as of a number of younger contributors in prose and verse, are well fitted to delight, to instruct, and to elevate. The editorials are carefully and thoughtfully written, though we sometimes meet with an opinion different from our own. The departments—reviews, music, art, etc.,—are ably conducted.—*Montreal Gazette.*