

The Legal News.

VOL. XII. DECEMBER 7, 1889. No. 49.

The Cronin case is one of the greatest combats which justice has had with crime. Enormous difficulties must have been encountered in securing the attendance of witnesses. In obtaining a jury, nine weeks were consumed, in the course of which time 1,115 talesmen were examined. Then a formidable conspiracy for corrupting the jury was discovered. Judge, counsel, witnesses, all appear to have been threatened with violence or death. In the face of all this, State-Attorney Longenecker's address to the jury is a remarkably bold and fearless utterance, which shows that the bar is not forgetful of its traditions, and gathers strength from the gravity and importance of the circumstances in which it is called to discharge its functions.

In *McAllister v. Detroit Free Press Co.*, Morse, J., of the Michigan Supreme Court, (Oct. 11, 1889), answering the pretention "that a newspaper in this day and age of the world, when people are hungry for the news, and almost every person is a newspaper reader, must be allowed some latitude and more privilege than is ordinarily given under the law of libel as it has heretofore been understood," expressed himself strongly against the acceptance of such doctrine. "In other words," he said, "because the world is thirsting for criminal items, and the libel in a newspaper is more far-reaching and wide-spread than it used to be when tales were only spread by the mouth, or through the medium of books or letters, there should be given greater immunity to gossip in the newspaper, although the harm to the person injured is infinitely greater than it would be if published otherwise. The greater the circulation, the greater the wrong, and the more reason why greater care should be exercised in the publication of personal items. No newspaper has any right to trifle with the reputation of any citizen, or by carelessness or recklessness to injure his good name and fame or business.

And the reporter of a newspaper has no more right to collect the stories on the street, or even to gather information from policemen or magistrates out of court, about a citizen, and to his detriment, and publish such stories and information as facts in a newspaper, than has a person not connected with a newspaper to whisper from ear to ear the gossip and scandal of the street. If true, such publication or such speaking may be privileged, but if false, the newspaper as well as the citizen must be responsible to any one wronged or damaged thereby. It is indignity enough for an honest man to be arrested and put in prison for an offence of which he is innocent, and for which indignity oftentimes he has no redress, without being further subjected to the wrong and outrage of a false publication of the circumstance of such arrest and imprisonment, looking toward his guilt, without remedy. And no sophistry of reasoning, and no excuse of the demand of the public for news, or of the peculiarity and magnitude of newspaper work, can avail to alter the law, except perhaps by positive statute, which is doubtful, so as to leave a party thus injured without any recompense for a wrong which can even now, as the law stands, never be adequately compensated to one who loves his reputation better than money."

Only a few cases with us attain the dignity of existence for twenty years. The litigation arising from the commencement of the St. Joseph Street expropriation was, we believe, one of them. The *Warsaw Courier*, however, refers to a law suit, recently terminated at Warsaw, which has lasted four centuries. The object of litigation was a piece of uncultivated ground of forty acres between the estates of Orlowo and Podlowo, which was claimed by the two proprietors of them. The suit was commenced in 1490, and was after all brought to an end by amicable arbitration.

The office of Chief Justice of Prince Edward Island, which recently became vacant by the death of Chief Justice Palmer, has been filled by the appointment of the Hon. W. W. Sullivan, Q. C., Attorney-General for the province.