

CORRESPONDENCE.—FLOTSAM AND JETSAM.

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Cheap Law.

To the Editor of the CANADA LAW JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—There is another infringement on the rights of the legal practitioner to which I beg to call your attention. It may seem a small affair in the eyes of some, but the *smallness* consists in the parties who give rise to the nuisance. I refer to the columns of legal advice in some of our leading journals. One influential newspaper in a neighboring city publishes a regular list of "*queries*" from its numerous readers asking legal advice on the most abstruse matters, and some time ago it was announced in the paper, that this department, and the answers to be given to inquirers therein, would be presided over and attended to by a leading barrister of the city. The rage for cheap law has certainly of late been carried very far, but this last method is to my mind the most contemptible of its class yet known. It may be urged that the advice thus given will after all have to be revised by some legal gentleman after the full facts of the case are known. If this be so, then the newspaper advice is worthless, and on this ground alone should not be given. It is a sort of gentle fraud on its readers and a useless work of legal supererogation. I enclose you an extract from the above journal showing that the omnivorous desire to give advice has broken out in a new spot.

Truly yours,

LEX.

St. Marys, Ont., Aug. 19, 1881.

[We cannot say we feel much exercised about this matter. Legal advice so given cannot be of any practical use, and we doubt whether it is ever acted on. If it is, probably so much the better for the lawyers.—EDS. L. J.]

FLOTSAM & JETSAM.

JUDGE ——— has long worn a black wig. Having lately donned a new one, which looks still darker, and meeting Senator Bayard, of Delaware, the latter accosted him with, "Why. Black, how young you look; you are not as gray as I am, and you must be twenty years older." "Humph," said the judge, "good reason; your hair comes by descent, and I got mine by purchase."

AN outspoken judge had to sentence a prisoner in Danville, Va., to prison for eighteen years, for murder, the jury making a "compromise verdict." The judge informed the defendant that the sentence was due to the "moral cowardice of twelve men." Telling him that he considered him guilty, the judge added, "You should rejoice and praise God that you fell into the hands of, and were tried by, a jury of your peers."

WE notice that Mr. Jonas ap Jones, for many years a solicitor in Toronto, has opened an office in London, for transaction of Canadian law business, particularly taking evidence under commission. The profession will no doubt find it to their advantage to have a careful and responsible solicitor in London, acquainted with the laws of Ontario, and the mode of charging customary here.

THE tone of the lay press in speaking of the law and the lawyers, is generally so recklessly and indiscriminately fault-finding, that the following views from our enterprising Kansas contemporary, *The Commonwealth*, *apropos* of the responsibility of lawyers in the General Assembly for improvident and illegal legislation, is really refreshing. "It is not the fault of the lawyers in the Legislature that so many unconstitutional laws are passed. Almost invariably such acts become laws in the face of protests from lawyers. . . . At every session there have been a lot of members who thought to make themselves popular by denouncing lawyers. Every measure proposed by a lawyer would be opposed by these wiseacres. They would try to make the people believe that lawyers were always trying to get some measure through to rob the people. The result has been, and always will be, that crude, unwise laws have been passed. We mean, always will be, till the people send men to the Legislature who either know something themselves, or know enough to know that they don't know anything, and will follow the advice of those who do know something."—*Central Law Journal*.