

which witnesseth the their guiltiness." Perhaps there was in Clonmel some lingering belief that the conceptions of witchcraft embodied in these passages were still authoritative. It is just as well that the illusion has now been dissipated.—*Law Journal (London)*.

### *PETTY PERJURY.*

The *Law Journal*, in reviewing an article by Judge Chalmers on "Petty Perjury," remarks:—"Everyone who is even superficially acquainted with the ordinary course of proceedings in our Courts is familiar with the lamentable pestilence of false swearing which infects them. It is an evil of the first magnitude, but, so far, our legislators have treated it as being no more amenable to treatment than the blot of original sin. Judge Chalmers makes a practical suggestion. Taking the position that many perjuries are in themselves small affairs, such offences may be properly treated by a small punishment, and he advocates the creation of a class of 'petty perjury' to be dealt with summarily by a magistrate. 'The point I wish seriously to insist on is that, in the case of a crime like perjury, the certainty of punishment is far more important than its severity. The probability of getting fourteen days' hard labour within a week's time at the nearest Police Court would be far more deterrent than the bare possibility of a long sentence at the next assizes.' Whether a moralist would agree to distinguish the guilt of perjuries by the harmfulness of the ends to which they were addressed, and whether even a law-maker, with his rough and practical methods, could safely adopt the criterion suggested, may be doubted; but there can be no question that the judge's other proposal for classifying the offences accords with the general opinion upon the matter. A witness who under pressure blurts out the first lie which occurs to him is less guilty than one who deliberately concocts and repeats a false tale. And 'an unfaithful wife who denies her guilt uses perjury as a weapon of defence,' and she merits far less punishment than 'the hired witness who falsely swears away the reputation of an innocent woman.' The testimony of so experienced an observer as Judge Chalmers, who has been judicially employed not only in the important County-Court district of Birmingham, but in India and at Gibraltar, to the terrible frequency of perjuries, both petty and serious, in the witness-box, is very remarkable, and it merits the grave consideration of Gov-