

## DIGESTS AND DIGEST-MAKING.

of cross-references which has been adopted in this work. Thus, he who in quest of authorities resorts to titles expressive of what is formal, or accidental, or of secondary importance in the subject-matter of his inquiries, will find that the editors have anticipated such intellectual deficiencies on the part of their weaker brethren, and provided an adequate remedy therefor by a reference to the proper title. In this connection, mention should be made of the analytical table of contents which is prefixed to every important title, by means of which a sort of bird's-eye view is obtained of the whole law bearing upon the subject. The advantages of this arrangement are so great and so obvious, and are so fully exemplified in the works of Harrison and Fisher already referred to, that we must confess our surprise that the editor of so recent and important a Digest as that of the English Law Reports has completely neglected to avail himself of it. And here we may remark that of all the bad legal work we know, nothing has exceeded the badness of the digests to the Law Reports. If, for example, the title "Contract" in the last-named publications is referred to, the inquirer will find that no attempt has been made to classify the cases according to the various topics and relations connected with contracts, but must content himself with ranging over a myriad of sub-heads, whose only connection with each other is an alphabetical one. The alphabetical system must necessarily be adopted in arranging the titles of a Digest or an Index, but the attempt to carry out that system in the details of each particular title is one which we should have expected to originate in a Chinese rather than in an English intellect.

If, on the other hand, this title or any other important one is referred to in "Robinson and Joseph," the reader finds what may be called an analytical sub-digest of the head of Law in question, occupying in some cases two, three or four columns, in which the leading topics are arranged in their natural order and displayed in capital letters, so as

to catch the eye at once, while the minor divisions coming under each of these topics with their sub-heads, if any, are indicated by the use of italic type, indented lines and numeral and literal references. The result is that case-hunting in this Digest is relieved in great measure from the irksomeness and uncertainty which many associate with that not too fascinating pursuit. It will, we think, occur to many that the analysis of the authors is so correct and exhaustive that it might well be applied to serve a purpose quite unconnected with its primary design, and that the young student or practitioner at all events might derive material benefit from perusing the cases in connection with such analysis almost in the same way as he would a treatise.

It is no part of our design in this article, nor have we the requisite space, to enter into any criticism of the details of this work. It seems, moreover, almost superfluous to single out any particular titles for comment, when the treatment of all is so similar in its principle and so uniform in its success. Reference may, however, be made to the titles, Evidence, Mortgage, Railways, and Municipal Corporations, as models of lucid arrangement and accurate analysis. In the preparation of the last-mentioned title, Mr. Joseph probably derived great benefit from the experience acquired in the preparation of his excellent edition of the late Chief Justice Harrison's Municipal Manual. Municipal law, as administered in Ontario, is of such vast and constantly increasing importance, and its distinctive peculiarities are so marked, that we think the authors deserve special credit for the world of pains they have evidently taken in the collection and arrangement of the cases bearing on this difficult subject.

We must not omit to mention the references to Statutes, and concise summaries of their effect, which are introduced here and there throughout the work—they are so good and useful that one is tempted to wish there were more of them. Nor will the possessor of this work fail to