

THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM OF FRANCE—MANSLAUGHTER.

matters relating to the public expenditures, all fiscal matters, claims against government, the administration of poor-houses, hospitals, public charities, &c. It has a first president, three presidents, eighteen counsellors, or masters of account, and eighty referees, divided into two classes, a registrar and deputies and three chambers, each of which has separate duties. The appeal from this court is to the Council of State.

COURT OF CASSATION.

The last and highest of the permanent courts of France, is the Court of Cassation. It is composed of fifty judges, called counsellors, and is divided into three chambers, one of request (matters arising upon petition), one civil, and one criminal and police. It has a first president and three presidents of chambers.

It is the final appellate court from all intermediate tribunals of last resort, such as the Courts of Appeal.

An appeal to it must be brought within three months after the judgment appealed from was rendered.

It does not, as the Courts of Appeal do, review the merits, but as its name imports, breaks the judgment, if the forms of procedure have been violated, or the judgment is founded upon an erroneous interpretation of the law, and sends the case back for another hearing, usually to a different tribunal, but one of the same rank, as the one that first decided it. The court to which it is sent, is not, as our inferior courts are, bound by the interpretation given to the law by the higher tribunal, but may make the same decision as the former tribunal, if it thinks that the decision of the Court of Cassation was erroneous, though, of course, great deference is paid to the opinion of the higher tribunal. Instances have occurred in which three different courts of appeal rendered the same judgment notwithstanding it had been twice declared by the Court of Cassation to be erroneous. Where such is the case, the question is no longer agitated, but the government (the Corps Legislatif), with the sanction of the emperor, makes a decree declaratory of the law, which is binding thereafter upon all judicial tribunals.

The applicant must deposit 250 francs (\$30), which he forfeits to the other party if he fails, and is sentenced in addition to pay 300 francs (\$60), to the state.

No chamber of the Court of Cassation can give judgment unless it is composed of seven judges, including the president.

Each chamber appoints its own president, and five members go out of each chamber every six months, but not until they have finished all the matters heard before them. The Civil Chambers sit every week day except during the months of September and October; the Criminal continuously throughout the year, and the session is four hours a day.

In great or very important cases, the three chambers are called together by the first president of his own motion or upon the request of one of the chambers. The judges are robed in scarlet upon the occasion, and when they come together it is the most imposing and dignified judicial body in the world.

The judges of the Court of Cassation are appointed for life, and are retired in the same manner as the judges of the Courts of Appeal.

HIGH COURTS OF JUSTICE.

The highest court in France is the High Court of Justice, which assembles only when an imperial decree is issued for its convocation for the trial of offences against the life of the sovereign or the safety of the state. It is composed of five judges and five supplementary judges, chosen from the judges of the Court of Cassation, and of a jury of thirty-six chosen from the members of the councils general of the departments. The judges and the jury are appointed annually by the sovereign.

The foregoing is a concise but accurate and full statement of the whole judicial organization of France. It does not however embrace any changes that may have been made during the past ten years, as the writer has not had facilities for ascertaining what laws or decrees have been enacted within that period. It may be added that the civil judicial organization of France is regarded as very perfect, and that the jurists of no country have done more to advance the science of jurisprudence. —C. P. D.—*The American Law Register*.

MANSLAUGHTER.

The Coroner's Inquest upon the body of the Welsh fasting girl, as she has been popularly styled, has ended in the committal of her father upon a charge of manslaughter. It is said the Treasury have taken the matter into their own hands, and as the case is pending we shall abstain from discussing its merits. But there can be no harm in indicating the kind of legal questions which must arise in such a case, and they are of rather a curious kind, bearing somewhat upon that most perplexed subject, the legal doctrines of causation.

The parents of the girl, and apparently the girl herself had long publicly maintained that she lived without food. This representation was naturally received with some incredulity, and at last a sort of vigilance committee was formed to watch the case, with a staff of doctors and nurses acting in concert with them. The vigilance party, with the full consent of the girl's father, took her entirely in charge, and kept a rigid watch and ward over her. They were most willing that she should have any amount of food, provided she or her father asked for it, but she should have none on the sly. The father, and it would seem the girl herself as long as she was in a condition to exercise a choice, were determined not to ask