

The Legal News.

VOL. VI. OCTOBER 27, 1883. No. 43.

A STRANGE PORTRAIT.

Once upon a time extraordinary presentations of Canada and Canadian affairs were not uncommon in American journals, but we were under the impression that they were becoming things of the past. Facility of intercommunication is rapidly effecting a wonderful change in the notions which the people of different countries formerly entertained of one another. But the *American Law Review* treats us to some surprising information about ourselves written after the old fashion. The article has reference to Lord Coleridge's change of programme as respects Canada. Our witty contemporary the *Albany Law Journal* referred to this as follows:—"Our brethren on the Thames and on the St. Lawrence should remember that Lord Coleridge is not so young as he once was, and that we, as his hosts, feel bound not to endanger his health by any such hyperborean journeys as the Canadians would gladly tempt him into. There is no telling where these Canadians would stop. They might persuade his lordship into an arctic exploring expedition." We relish this fun as much as any of our neighbours, but what is a jest in the columns of our *Albany contemporary* is proclaimed in sober earnest at St. Louis. The British provinces, we are told, "are the tail end of an Empire; they are destitute of distinction in arts, in literature, in agriculture, in manufactures, and in mechanical inventions."... "They have a vice-regal Court, with its dudism and low-necked dresses. They also have a few hereditary titles. Their courts are modelled in close imitation of the present English system, and they have justices who would regard it almost a contempt of court to have an American law book read to them. They regard us as a sort of a *koom posh* people, whose judges, legislators, and public men are universally corrupt, and who are going to the dogs as fast as possible. . . . They are trying to build a transcontinental railway along the margin of the frozen

"zone—not because it is called for by a single demand of commerce, but because it will promote a visionary dream of empire. There is really no hope for their young men; for every good place in their vast mercantile houses, and in their educational and civil service, is filled by young nincompoops imported from England; and from all the provinces, east and west, they are making to the States in great numbers. Canada is like a breeding ground of migratory arctic birds."

This would be very amusing as an after dinner sally by Mark Twain, but "there is no hope for" the man who seriously believes such ludicrous nonsense. At any rate it would be out of place in a legal journal to try to enlighten a writer, whose law may be very good, but who is so wofully astray in his facts. We do not think it right to devote our space to showing, for instance, that many of the States have been beaten by this "tail end of an empire" in growth of population; that as to agriculture, notwithstanding protective duties, the people of the States are generally willing to pay us our own prices for our butter, our apples, our potatoes, hay, and other products; that our literary men, however "destitute of distinction," are, at any rate, known so well that our neighbours have drawn several of their most brilliant preachers from their ranks: that the transcontinental railway, far from being the prompting of a visionary dream, has gradually gained over to its praise those who, like the *London Times*, most bitterly opposed it a few years ago; that our leading universities have at their head Canadians born, instead of "nincompoops from England;" that the most important offices everywhere, including the judicial bench, are filled by Canadians; that many of those who are "making to the States" are leaving their country for their country's good. All this is outside of our functions as conductors of a legal journal, but we may properly point out the curious blunder of our *St. Louis contemporary* with regard to the citation of American law books. So far from being considered a contempt of court, we venture to think that the leading writers of the United States—Story, Kent, Parsons, Bishop, Redfield, Cooley and others, as well as the principal State reports, are as much read and as often cited in our courts, and received with as much respect where they are applica-