

The Forum.

A CAUSERIE OF THE LAW.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES MORSE.

Those who read Mr. G. C. Speranza's article on the "Decline of Criminal Jurisprudence in America," in the *Popular Science Monthly* for February, no doubt found in it a good deal of food for reflection. What he says of the attitude of the profession in the United States towards criminal business is equally true of Canada. Beyond a doubt to-day, the young Canadian lawyer who stands upon the threshold of practice feels that he must eschew the criminal courts if he would attain the good reputation that must be his who ultimately holds the highest rewards of his profession. Consequently, the practice of the most important branch of the law from the view-point of ethics and sociology—a branch of the law wherein hitherto many of the giants of the English Bar have made their paramount fame—is nowadays, in this country, relegated to the shysters and "brilliant-failure" men, with a few notable exceptions which only serve to emphasize the general correctness of our statement. There exists, then, a crying need for reform. But where shall it begin? Mr. Speranza seems to be of the opinion that the initial step might be taken by the law-schools in the direction of a radical scientific reinforcement of their curricula touching the subject; but, while this would undoubtedly be helpful, we think a more thorough amelioration might be achieved if the Legislature would do a prompt something towards bringing the criminal law itself into touch with the scientific advancement of the times, and so make it a province in which only the thoroughly equipped specialist might find emolument and renown. It seems to us that then, and not till then, will the odium populi concerning the criminal lawyer become effaced, and the lawyer who is a 'criminologist' win the respect of an enlightened community.

* * * We know it is the fashion for politicians to minimize the ability of Parliament to make men good citizens; they say its part is only to make it disadvantageous for us to be bad citizens. That is their philosophy of the criminal law; and the pity of it is not so much that it is stupid and ignorant, but that so many wise and