

EDITORIAL NOTES.

an annual return of all such, but we have not noticed whether these returns have ever been ordered by the House to be printed.

THE *Legal News*, in speaking of proposed legislation in the Dominion Parliament, characterizes Mr. Charlton's Bill to provide for the punishment of adultery, seduction and such like offences as "Charlatanism." We are not prepared to say whether the details of the proposed measure are the best, but he must be either a very ignorant person or a very heartless libertine who could pooh-pooh in such an airy manner one of the crying evils of the day. The subject is, of course a most difficult one, but there is one monstrous wrong in the present state of things—the disproportion of punishment. Let us suppose for a moment a case of seduction, and that both parties are equally guilty, though not a fact in the immense majority of cases. The man practically goes unpunished; he is scarcely tabooed in society; in fact, his companions think him rather a fine fellow, instead of denouncing him as a cowardly blackguard; while the unfortunate woman bears the whole burden, becomes an outcast, is driven from home, disgraced and ruined, to bear her trial alone, over-whelmed by an agony of shame, that too often ends in some hideous crime or piteous suicide. We are not going to argue as to who is most to blame, but what we insist on is, that *if* seduction is an offence, there should be some equality of punishment, and for this simple reason, that without some fear of adequate or proportionate punishment there is with the majority of men no way of compelling them to pause before being parties to a terrible wrong. If some of our legislators and those who assume to direct public thought even from a legal stand-point, were to spend a few hours in some of our reformatories and havens for fallen women, infants' homes, Magdalen asylums, police cells, or city morgues, they would not talk or write

as they do. Some of our judges, viewing the subject only from the stand point of seduction cases brought before them by those, who, as a rule, are *not* the class that require protection, have, by their remarks in Court, helped to lead astray public thought on this matter. Men who attempt to gain their ends by force are very properly given a dose of the "cat;" let some of those who succeed in gratifying their selfish passion by heartless lies and seductive arts (reduced by some to a system) be touched up by the same implement, and we venture to predict an enforced virtue which will vastly mitigate the present aggregate of human misery. Lust in the heart is said to be a transgression of the Divine law; lust put into action and the purpose accomplished by force is a crime. Fraud and deceit are, under certain circumstances, recognised by the law as criminal. Surely, therefore, lust put into action and the purpose accomplished by fraud or deceit, should also be a crime, and especially so when there is a consequent grievous personal injury to the injured party. There is of course difficulty in this matter, as in others, difficulties as to evidence and danger of black-mailing, nor are we advocates for the impossible task of making men good by Act of Parliament and others besides, but all this does not affect the principal involved. The present state of the law of seduction in England and Canada is not only a disgrace to humanity, but causes a financial burden to the country and to charitable citizens. We trust good may result from the move made by Mr. Charlton.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN
BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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In our last article on this subject we referred to the points that arose in the *Thrasher Case*. After very full argument the Judges' on the 10th February, delivered three separate,