

As I have already stated, under section 2 the coroner in his discretion may hold an inquest in any case so long as he satisfies his own conscience that *it has been made to appear* to him, etc., etc., and there is no power to prevent him.

There have been coroners who have abused the discretionary power committed to them by the statute, and it is within the memory of many living people that in days gone by many inquests were held that were generally recognized to have been unnecessary and that the enquiries had been instituted more in reference to fees than to ascertain the causes of death. As the statute gave the coroner the power to hold the enquiries if he in his discretion saw fit, there was no remedy.

To meet cases of this kind the Act last quoted was passed. It does not interfere, as you will observe, with the discretionary power committed to the coroner in regard to the necessity or otherwise of the enquiry. No coroner who recognizes the dignity and responsibility of his office and who desires to discharge his duties honestly with the single purpose contemplated by the Act will find himself at all hampered by the apparent conflict of the two sections I have quoted, but it will be otherwise with the coroner who is out for fees and fees only.

I have not referred to other sections of the Acts relating to coroners that have some bearing upon the two I have quoted, as they are not of sufficient importance to refer to in connection with your editorial.

CORONER.

[We are very grateful to our correspondent for his useful and lucid exposition of the law of inquests. Technically, of course, we were wrong, although not so practically. It is too much to expect a coroner to give up time from his profession to serve the public without being paid for it. Be this, however, as it may, we must reiterate our proposal that in all cases of accidents or of deaths, the causes of which are not certified by a medical man, an inquest should be held, unless a physician will take oath that it is unnecessary. We will now add that in all cases the coroner should be paid.—ED. THE WEEK.]

A CAPTIOUS CRITIC.

SIR,—The attack of your correspondent, "Observatore," on the recent meeting of the Women's National Council reminds one irresistibly of the celebrated indictment of the wolf on the lamb. He has clearly no just ground of offence and in the absence of any possible definite complaint, he satisfies himself with various irrelevant reflections on the shortcomings of modern life, and runs *amuck* on conventions in general. Had he taken the trouble to fulfil one of the first duties, but most neglected of a critic, that of making himself thoroughly acquainted with what he criticises, he would have found his weapons pointless, since he could not have helped acknowledging that the chief objects to which the council directed its attention were the best remedies for the very evils of which he most bitterly complains! The sacredness of home and the duties of motherhood, the proper education and training of children, the instruction of our girls in the needlework and domestic arts which they do not earn by instinct, the better sanitation of our homes, and the preservation of our children from the subtle inroads of moral poison, the care of female offenders and the reform of female inebriates, with the question of preserving our girls from the overwork which undermines their constitutions and unfits them for their natural future as wives and mothers, these were, and such as these, were the subjects to which this assembly of earnest women gave their most careful consideration. His own remarks admit the presence of great evils in all these directions, and who are so well fitted to work in their removal as the intelligent women of our land? Nay, if the women do not, who will? The men, too busy with their commerce and their politics, and perhaps their criticism of other people, usually let matters alone, or, at best, "write to the papers about it." The united action of the Women's Councils has already secured some beneficent measures in the line of remedying the evils referred to by your correspondent. It is clear, then, that if the "advanced woman" is one who scorns the claims and duties of domestic life, she has as yet no place in the Woman's National Council.

Your correspondent seems to think that a woman's field of duty is to be strictly limited to her own household; and

that the idea that she should have any wider interests is a modern heresy. But, not to go further back, he seems to forget, that, from apostolic times, the true ideal of Christian womanhood demanded that "she should have diligently followed every good work." But for women, indeed, where would have been the care of our sick, our orphan children, our aged and helpless poor? Your correspondent, who evidently shuts his eyes to all that he does not wish to see, seems not to be aware that the greater portion of the charities of the Dominion are managed, and well managed by women, who, somehow, manage to be excellent housekeepers and mothers nevertheless. Perhaps they do it by giving to such cares the time which women of a different stamp bestow on dress and frivolity. Every just and generous man will honour such women, instead of endeavouring to disparage and sneer at their efforts to promote the good of their fellow-creatures. And it is the representatives of just such combinations of women, as well as others which aim at the general good, that make up the Woman's National Council, which is not another society, but simply a federation of those which already exist in order to bring them into more effective union for such objects as have been indicated. And if men, and women, too, can go long distances to attend public entertainments, or amusements, why should it fret your correspondent that a comparatively small number of women, most of them noted for their labours of love, should meet together once a year, to take counsel together as to the best means of promoting the well-being of their sex and country? It is to be hoped that your correspondent, when he gives the matter a little fuller consideration, will have the grace to be ashamed of the hasty and irrelevant sneers, which are hardly in keeping with the generally high tone of a journal like *THE WEEK*. However, when the Woman's National Council is thanked and endorsed publicly before large audiences by men who speak in their own proper person in its praise, it can hardly need to trouble itself concerning the prejudiced attack of an anonymous grumbler.

FAIR PLAY.

[Our correspondent mistakes the sex of "Observatore" who is a Canadian lady of high repute.—ED. THE WEEK.]

Churches and Castles of Mediaeval France.*

THERE are few studies more attractive and more enthralling than that of architecture; and there is no country where it could be studied with more advantage than in France. Some one has remarked that, in architecture, as you retire from Paris, you retire from art; and whether we accept this dictum or not, at least we shall find it difficult to select more perfect types of mediæval architecture than those which we find in French churches and chateaux.

The author of the volume before us does not profess to give anything like a complete or systematic description of the buildings which he brings forward in his pages. This, he remarks quite truly, can be got elsewhere. What he professes to do is to give us a record of a traveller's impression of the great monuments of France—he might have said *some* of the great monuments (for a good many are wanting)—and this he does very well. His book is quite pleasant reading, and the illustrations, which are twenty-four in number, are very good.

Sometimes we wonder at the omission of some particular building or the prominence given to another. For example, we cannot quite understand why the west front of Tours is given as the frontispiece. Granting the beauty of the facade, in which, as the author remarks, "the richness of what might be called decorated lines is simply extraordinary," yet its portals are immensely inferior to those of Reims, and its towers to those of Chartres. Then, again, we miss the exquisite Sainte Chapelle of S. Louis, and have but little of Notre Dame of Paris.

We have failed to discover the principle of the arrangement of the volume, which is neither chronological nor geographical, following neither the order of the history of the architecture nor that of the Guide Book; and whilst we are sure that the student or the traveller will receive many useful hints and will have their perceptions quickened by the peru-

* "Churches and Castles of Mediaeval France" By W. C. Larned. Price \$1.50. New York: Scribners. 1895.