

The Legal News.

Vol. VII.

MARCH 22, 1884.

No. 12.

JUDGES AND RAILWAY PASSES.

The *American Law Review* is disposed to take exception to our passing reference to the application of Lord Coleridge's entertainers for railway passes in Canada, and appears to find a justification in the fact that the passes were solicited by Mr. Vanderbilt's son-in-law. "He was asking for something which is regarded as a thing of decent custom in the United States." We are ready to make due allowance for that, though many might be inclined to say that asking for something without a *quid pro quo* is rather a thing of 'indecent' custom,—a custom more honour'd in the breach than the observance—more especially by persons of elevated rank or distinguished position. It is the asking or solicitation that we object to. We are perfectly willing to admit that it would have been a graceful compliment on the part of Canadian railway managers to have tendered to his lordship and his hosts the free use of their lines, just as they are now tendering the free use of their roads to the entire British Association which is to visit us this summer. But this is by the way. On the main point our contemporary goes quite as far as we do. "It is difficult to see how any judge, with a proper sense of what becomes his office, and with a proper feeling of self-respect, can sit in judgment between a railway company and a private person with an annual pass of the railway company in his pocket." A pass is, in fact, often a much greater interest in dollars and cents than the interest which a judge has in a suit against a corporation in which he happens to own a few shares; and yet in the latter case he is absolutely disqualified.

A PARALLEL CASE.

The same journal, in another article, affords us that wretched sort of consolation which is to be extracted from the knowledge th t

the condition of others is as bad or, indeed, worse than our own. Quoting our remarks anent the Montreal Court House, the *Law Review* says:—"If Montreal is tired of her Court-house, she can have ours. We have one in St. Louis that we would willingly swap for almost any other that we know of. Its stone floors reek with filth like a hog-pen. Multitudes of filthy tramps sleep in its corridors and under its porticos from early spring till late autumn. We have counted as many as thirty at one time around and behind the pillars facing on Fourth Street. The police commissioners claim that they have no jurisdiction to abate it. Overworked judges going from their chambers at night, stumble over these drunken tramps snoring in the hall-ways. The police of the Court-house building in St. Louis is in the hands of the City Government. Its condition as regards cleanliness would be a standing municipal disgrace, if anything could disgrace as filthy a city as St. Louis. The Court-house watch should have the aid of a fireman's hose, for the double work of clearing out the tramps and washing out the filth." All this is a wretched solace for our own discomfort, though, by the way, we are filled with surprise to learn that such is the condition of things in that favoured land to which all good Canadians betake themselves, and where they prosper. As we anticipated, there has not been a particle of improvement at Montreal, notwithstanding the remarks of Chief Justice Dorion and Mr. Justice Johnson. We cannot imagine what *would* make an impression. We have a sheriff and a deputy-sheriff, and a special deputy-sheriff, and an army of subordinates and care-takers feeding at the public crib. Possibly if some of these gentlemen were sent to gaol for a time there might be a faint ripple on the slough of indifference and apathy.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Notwithstanding the Fraser bequest, Toronto after all has inaugurated her public library in advance of us. On the 6th of March, the fiftieth anniversary of her incorporation as a city, the public free library in Toronto was thrown open. The statistics of growth in the half century are certainly