

Old principles have been freshly applied—not cast aside. Old methods have been altered and fitted to present uses—not thrown away, with the contempt often shown by zealous innovators who regard everything old as consequently useless. Changes in the constitution of the courts found by experience to be necessary or desirable have kept pace with the changes in their methods of procedure, but no violence has been done to the authority or dignity of the Bench, nor, as yet, has the most ardent reformer ventured to assail the many forms and ceremonies which, valueless perhaps in themselves, are connecting links between the Past and the Present, and evidences of the stability as well as antiquity of our institutions.

Nor has the criminal law, nor methods of procedure in criminal cases, been neglected. Greater leniency in punishment where safely permissible, has been adopted. The interests of the accused are more carefully guarded. The rules of evidence have been modified in his favor. Everything that can be thought of has been done in the direction of mercy that is compatible with the greater aim of attaining the ends of justice. In our treatment of the criminal after condemnation we have sought to reform as well as to punish, and in this direction, at any rate, we have approached the limit that the safety of the community at large will allow.

To the credit of the legal profession be it said that in all these beneficial, and, to them, self-denying labors, they have been foremost. The honor of the profession rather than its emoluments, its usefulness rather than its profits, its reputation for probity and integrity rather than its dignity, have always been kept in view. And, as its reward, the reputation of its members in all these respects has never stood higher than in this year of grace 1897.

To the Bar and to the Bench in all portions of the Empire, whether sitting in the great palace of justice at the seat of Imperial dignity, or settling an account of a few dollars in a small debts court in the backwoods of Ontario—whether deciding great questions of national interest in the Supreme Court at Ottawa, or in appeal therefrom by the Lords of the Privy Council in the highest court of the realm—whether