my admiration and command my eulogy, I say it does make me sick to see such noble efforts thrown away on such a rascal as this."

Here a certain irreverence in our manner and a disposition to laugh attracted the notice of an official of the Court, who was eating an apple with a pocket-knife, which had evidently cut a good deal of tobacco. We thought it well to retire before we had compromised our character by laughing in the face of justice, and make it necessary for her myrmidon to expel us from her presence. We left highly gratified with our entertainment, and reproduce the incident for the information of an admiring profession in this benighted Northern clime, vouching for its strict accuracy in every particular. *

SELECTIONS.

IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT IN COUNTY COURTS.

Mr. Bass' Bill for abolishing imprisonment for debt in the County Courts has been defeated by an overwhelming majority, but there is sufficient strength of opinion in support of its principle to justify the expectation that imprisonment as a punishment for not paying debts will be abolished altogether at no distant date. When we find converts such as Sir Henry James, who was on a committee which took evidence on the subject, there must be some very strong and cogent objections to the present system. If we fail to appreciate them the fault must be ours. But whatever they are, and whatever their force, we consider that a mistake is made in mixing up with the simple issue "grave social and economical questions," which, according to Sir Henry James, are involved. We look through his speech to discover such questions, and what do we find? First, that the power to enforce payment by imprisonment fosters an unhealthy system of credit. Secondly, that the opportunity of obtaining credit for necessaries induces the working man to get in debt to the draper and grocer whilst he spends his cash at the publican's, who cannot now recover for beer scores. Again, he says that men sent to prison are brought into contact with the worst characters. These, we suppose, are the grave social and economical questions, and we are free to admit that opinions may differ as to their gravity. We have heard them urged before, and they are supported by the testimony of one or two of the most eminent of our County Court Judges. Perhaps the difference of opinion prevailing among County Court Judges is the most remarkable circumstance in the history of the agitation. Mr. George Russell and Mr. J. A. Russell are gentlemen held in high esteem, and would not be likely to give opinions of a vague or ill-founded character. Forming their opinions upon their experience, they conclude that many of the small debts for which commitment orders are now made would never have been incurred if the power to enforce payment by imprisonment had not existed. That is to say, that if imprisonment for debt were abolished, the credit system as available to the working classes would collapse. And this they consider expedient. Many Judges, on the other hand, take a diametrically opposite view; they see no objection to the credit system properly regulated, or to the commitment of debtors with whose knowledge debts have been contracted, and who have the means to pay. Perhaps Mr. Commissioner Kerr has had as large experience of the credit system as any Judge, and the operation of imprisonment for debt has been constantly before him for many years. It is only necessary to sit in his court for a few hours to hear his opinion of the expediency of abolishing the power of imprisonment for non-payment of debts. The view which he takes is probably

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We think our correspondent must have fallen on a bad specimen of the courts in Ohio. However that may be, the courts in Pennsylvania, Maryland and the Northern Atlantic States are certainly not conducted in the way our correspondent describes. We have at various times been in the courts in most of these States and found the business conducted not only with ability, but with dignity and decorum.

In some of the States in the Union the judges still retain the gown—and in the highest court in the land, the Supreme Court, the judges never appear in court without it.—Eds. L. J.