

EXTRAORDINARY TRIAL IN CHINA—THE FRENCH BAR.

the Government in the suppression of crime and violence, and in securing good order, in which they have as deep an interest as any other persons in this Colony.

Reflecting persons may probably be shocked that four innocent men were so near being executed, and will ask what security there is that the irrevocable penalty of death has not often been inflicted in this Colony on innocent persons. I confess that I shuddered when this question forced itself on me; but on careful reflection, I feel satisfied that there is no just reason for alarm.

A Blue Book published in 1866. Report of the Capital Punishment Commission, gives for three years, 1831-63, fifty-two as the number of executions in England, under fifteen judges, while during the same period thirty men were executed under sentences by one judge in this Colony. I have not the English Returns up to this date, but there have been since 1863, thirty-seven executions in this Colony, which I believe is in a ratio to the executions in England much greater than the proportion was in previous years. It appears that executions in this small Colony have been since 1860 more than half, probably two thirds part, in number of all the executions in all England.

With a responsibility greater, I believe, than weighs on any other judge administering English Criminal Law, I have ever followed what the Chief Baron Sir Fitzroy Kelly stated in the same Report to be practiced in all English Courts. I have always exercised a degree of care, and caution in conduct of trials for life and death—vastly superior to that which formerly prevailed. These cases confirm my resolution to exercise the like care and caution as long as I may preside in this Court.

I have obtained from Mr. Douglas, the very intelligent and able Superintendent of the Gaol, a return of all cases, 66 in number, which have ended in an execution, since I came in 1861 to this Colony. I find from Mr. Douglass that in nearly every case since he came to the Colony, the criminal has confessed his crime—indeed in every case where I have presided—and I have no reason to suspect that any one innocent man has been executed on the sentence of any judge in this Colony."

SELECTIONS.

THE FRENCH BAR.*

At a time like the present, when changes are taking place in the administration of the law, and when, as incident thereto, some changes, the extent of which it is not easy to measure, may take place in the organization of the legal profession in both its branches, the appearance of Mr. Young's book is most opportune.

In reading this most interesting and unpretending work, one cannot help being struck with the great differences which exist between the two professions in our own country and in France. Taken broadly, the ambition of the English barrister is to become a judge; he may have to be satisfied with something far short of that exalted dignity, but at the outset of his professional voyage the Bench is his goal, and "very sea-mark of his utmost sail." Political life, purely as such, with very rare exceptions he does not venture upon. The reason for this is partly due to the fact we have stated, and partly due to other causes, and among others to this, that political life in this country is the profession of the highest in station or the wealthiest in purse. The portfolio of the minister, on the other hand, is the ambition of the French advocate. The Bench in France is not recruited from the Bar, nor does it hold in public estimation that almost sacred place that it does with us; and, further, the social position of the judges is not so high as in this country, nor are the emoluments of the French judges upon the same scale. It is therefore to political life that the advocate in France looks, and in that he centres his hopes.

The work before us, within a compass of some 250 pages contains much varied and interesting information. If we may find fault with so admirable a book, we should say that it was somewhat overlaid with dates and detail. But, as the author terms the volume a *Sketch* of the history of the order of advocates, as well as of the biography of many of the illustrious members of the French Bar, perhaps this was unavoidable. The book travels over a great extent of ground, or rather of time, it speaks of events of great interest and importance, and traces dilligently and lovingly down the stream of five hundred years of history, the course of that great profession, the eloquence and ability of whose members have done such splendid service for France.

That the history of an "order as ancient as the magistracy, as noble as virtue, as necessary as justice," should be interesting is but natural. But the history of the French Bar is something more. It is the history of the courage, the devotion, and the patriotism of many

* An Historical Sketch of the French Bar, from its origin to the present day, with Biographical Notices of some of the principal Advocates of the Nineteenth Century. By ARCHIBALD YOUNG (Advocate), Edinburgh. Edmonston & Douglas. 1869.