

## REVIEWS : WOMEN BEFORE THE LAW.

case by collecting an immense mass of information on the subject from the archives of all maritime nations.

The comparative table of the law of general average as it obtains in thirteen different countries, is most elaborate in its detail and of great interest, and we doubt not, of much practical utility.

It is still, we believe, a moot point what position Canada holds in the roll of maritime powers. Whether it is fourth, fifth, sixth, or seventh, it is certain that not the least part of her importance will be as a daughter of the sea-girt Isles. Bounded on the north by Arctic Seas, on the west by the Pacific, on the east by the Atlantic, and partly on the south by great inland seas, of which the world has no equal, and by the mighty St. Lawrence, it is meet that her children should not be unacquainted with the laws which govern perils of the sea, and for this reason, if for none other, we have the more pleasure in renewing our acquaintance with the interesting work before us, and in recommending it to our readers.

It is scarcely possible that there will, in this Province, be any large sale for this book to the profession alone, but apart from the fact that it is a standard authority on the subject treated of, it is a book that may be read with interest by numbers who are not lawyers. To those who "occupy their business in great waters" it is invaluable, and no library of general literature should be without it.

Like all the publications of Messrs. Stevens & Sons, this book is a masterpiece of typographical execution, and complete in all its parts.

**WOMAN BEFORE THE LAW.** By John Proffatt, LL. B., of the New York Bar. J. P. Putnam & Sons, New York, 1874. Pp. 137.

**THE MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY ACT, 1870, AND AMENDMENT ACT, AND THEIR RELATION TO THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATE USE, WITH APPENDIX OF CASES, STATUTES AND FORMS.** By J. R. Griffith, B. A., of Lincoln's Inn, Barrister at Law. Third edition. London: Stevens & Haynes, Law Publishers, Bell Yard, Temple Bar, 1875. Pp. 92; 3rd edition.

"The law of husband and wife," says Mr. Griffith, "cannot as yet be treated in other than a state of transition." He says also, "It is difficult to trace any comprehensive or intelligible principle in the reforms hitherto introduced." Mr. Proffatt, in his very interesting manual, shows historically the truth of the first proposition; and throws light on the second. Mr. Proffatt treats the subject historically, and Mr. Griffith with reference to recent legislation and cases thereon. The two should be read in the order we place them.

Like all American writers Mr. Proffatt "begins at the beginning," and traces the status of married women down to the present time from the earliest period; from the time when a man "took a wife," (*i. e. vi et armis*) to the time when the man submissively took a beating from a "brutal" wife, and then applied for and obtained a divorce on the ground of cruelty: *Bebee v. Bebee*, 10 Iowa, 133. Even in ancient times the status of women was very different in different countries. A learned "pundit" or lawyer of the Hindoos thus writes: "A man both day and night must keep his wife in subjection; that she by no means be mistress of her own actions. If the wife have her own free will, she will behave amiss;" and again, "women have six qualities: first, an inordinate desire for jewels; second, immoderate lust; third, violent anger; fourth, deep resentment, &c., &c." But as a set-off to this abuse, it appears that in Egypt women were treated with favor and consideration, for in their marriage contracts husbands were obliged to promise obedience to their wives; and as to this Mr. Alexander in his history of women sadly remarks—"A thing which in our modern times we are often obliged to perform, though it was our wives entered into the promise." Chrysostom, the Christian, on the other hand, was almost as abusive as the Hindoo, for he says, "woman is a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, and a painted ill." But however this may be, it will scarcely be denied that there was some reform needed from the old laws and customs as to the treatment of women, and Mr. Proffatt is right when he speaks of the law of husband and wife as an inter-