

THE TERCENTENARY, ETC.—IOWA AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

States should not alone clothe her judges in official robes, nor the bar of St. Louis alone wear turned gowns. A custom universally practiced among the enlightened and intellectual nations of Europe should not be ignored by Americans, especially when there is added to the influence of example a noble and correct national sense of the propriety and desirableness of that custom. And with a bench possessing learning, gravity and authority, and clad in impressive robes, with a bar educated, honourable, and industrious, and clothed in the dignified gown, the legal sense of the nation will no longer be pained by the spectacle of a profession striving, under many weights, to preserve its great name, its honourable reputation, and its respectable authority among men.—*Albany Law Journal*.

The Tercentenary Commemoration of the Middle Temple Hall is worth more than a passing notice in the newspapers. It is a really great event in the history of the Society to which it belongs. Apart from the associations connected with the Hall, others than Templars will be ready to admit that there are few finer specimens of the kind of Elizabethan architecture which it represents. The historical associations, however, are of a singularly rare character. To say nothing of the tradition about the wood from the Spanish Armada, which modern scepticism has cast its evil eye upon, there is the apparently better founded tradition, that "Midsummer Night's Dream" was read here by Shakespeare, in presence of Queen Elizabeth. There are the wainscoted panels on the walls containing the arms and names of the readers, from Richard Swaine, reader, in 1597, down to the present year. There is the old oak screen, evidently not much younger, though not coeval with the building. There are the suits of armour probably of great antiquity; and the colours of the Inns of Court Volunteers, of 1808. The windows contain nearly a hundred and fifty of the armorial bearings of persons of rank, who have been members of the Middle Temple, the latest being that of the Prince of Wales, who was made senior bencher in 1861. Above the desks at the western end is placed a full-length equestrian portrait of King Charles I., by Vandyck, one of four replica copies of the same picture, of which the other three are at Windsor Castle, Warwick Castle, and Chatsworth respectively. There are also fine portraits of Charles II., James, Duke of York, William III., Queen Anne, and George II., besides marble busts of the present Prince of Wales, of the brothers Lords Eldon and Stowell, and of Plowden. The associations, too, are not peculiar to any period since its erection. The members have entertained many kings and queens from Elizabeth, and a generation later, Henrietta, the wife of Charles I., and, still later, Peter the Great, and William III., down to the

Prince of Wales. The names of those eminent lawyers who have belonged to the Society and who were therefore familiar with the Hall, are scattered thickly about the pages of English history during the last three hundred years. Besides these names, the roll of the Society contains those of several poets and dramatists who are known to fame, amongst others, Sir John Davis, Knight, John Forde, Nicholas Rowe, William Congreve, Thomas Shadwell, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and Thomas Moore.

To these, and other historical associations, the treasurer, Sir Thomas Chambers, to whom every member of the Inn is under deep obligations for the way in which the commemoration was celebrated, contrived to add features of a peculiarly interesting character. It was an excellent idea to discontinue the interesting passage about Sir Francis Drake's visit to the Hall, and to crown the reading of the passage by bringing forward a real live Sir Francis Drake, to respond to the toast of "The Descendants of the Ancient Members of the Middle Temple." It was equally interesting to have, in Earl Onslow, a representative of Mr. Speaker Onslow.—*Law Magazine*.

Iowa has added herself to the list of States which have abolished capital punishment. In that State all crimes heretofore punishable with death shall, hereafter, be punished by imprisonment for life at hard labor in the State penitentiary, and the governor shall grant no pardons, except on recommendation of the general assembly.

The tendency of modern philanthropy is to make punishment for crime as easy as possible, in a physical point of view. Granting everything that may be said, in a general way, in favor of improved modes of punishing crimes we think that the danger is upon us of making the doom of criminals too easy, physically.

Death is the severest physical injury that can befall a human being, and it is only in the extreme cases that such a punishment should be inflicted at all. But we have been able to find no adequate reason for abandoning the custom of ages of putting one to death who wilfully and deliberately kills another. In such a case, at least, we believe in the strict *lex talionis*, the doctrine of "an eye for an eye," "a tooth for a tooth," a "life for a life," not to exact retribution (for that cannot be), but for the safety of society. Self-preservation is the first and strongest law of nature; and the professional criminal, at least, will run more chances of being imprisoned for life, than of being hung immediately on conviction. The laws specifying what crimes shall be punished by death, and regulating the execution of criminals condemned to death, may and ought to be, modified in many instances, but the total abolition of capital punishment is a dangerous experiment.—*Albany Law Journal*.