CURRENT EVENTS.

ENGLAND.

LAW REFORM IN ENGLAND.—The *London Law Journal* reviews the Session of 1878, and finds it barren in regard to law reform, but takes comfort in the promise of the criminal code bill. It says:—"The session of 1878 has done nothing whatever in the way of law amendment; but by this time law reformers ought not to be surprised or discouraged by a blank year. There are several reasons for the slow progress of law reform. Though the public grumble about the law and laugh at the comic abuse of lawyers, yet they hold the law to be, on the whole, excellent, and have full faith in our profession. The instincts of the nation—we do not, of course, now speak in a political sense—are fundamentally conservative, and there is a very natural disinclination to change the laws. The laws are not so faulty as to be oppressive, and the English people do not get enthusiastic about a grievance that does not pinch them. Parliament, reflecting the views and disposition of the nation, always closely examines any law bill; and the House of Commons conscientiously and firmly refuses to delegate its authority, in respect to law bills, to the experts—that is, the lawyers—in the House. Then the judicature acts were a large dose of law reform; and, for a time, it has appeared to exhaust the law-amending energy of Parliament. We are not discomfited by a session that is barren of law reform, for we know that if reform were urgent, it would not be delayed. Let it not be supposed that we have adopted the doctrine of finality, which is not, never has been, and never can be, applicable to the law. Society is not made for the law, but the law for society; and, since society is constantly changing, the law requires to be changed. The law reformer will never have to complain that his occupation has gone. But at present there is no such discrepancy between the provisions of the law and the requirements of society as to make law reform a burning question. The Criminal Code Bill, which we are very fully reviewing in our columns, is in every respect a truly grand measure. It has been referred to a Royal commission, and Parliament will not delegate its authority or compromise its dignity by accepting, so far as codification of the existing law is concerned, the decisions of the eminent jurists who constitute the commission. If so, we may hope that the session of 1879 will be distinguished as the Criminal Code Session. On the whole, there is not much reason for law reformers lamenting the barrenness of the past session, whilst they have reason to hope that the next session will be fruitful."

UNITED STATES.

LIABILITY OF CITY.—In *City of Joliet* v. *Harwood*, 86 Ill. 110, it is held that if a city employs a person to do work which is intrinsically dangerous, such as the blasting of a rock in a street for a sewer, and the contractor uses all due care, and inquiry results to a person from a stone thrown by the blasting, the city will be liable to respond in damages for the injury. The general rule is that where a person lets work, to be done by another by contract, which is innocent and lawful in itself, but which may, if carelessly or negligently done, result in injury to another, he is not charged with liability if such work is in fact carelessly and negligently performed; but he is liable, when the work to be done necessarily creates a nuisance. The blasting of rocks by the use of gunpowder or other explosives in the vicinity of another's dwelling-house, or in the vicinity of a highway, is a nuisance, and the person doing the act, or causing it to be done, is liable for all injuries that result therefrom. *Hay* v. *Cohoes Co.*, 2 N. Y. 159; *Reg.* v. *Mutter Leigh's Cases*, 491. But see *McCafferty* v. *Spuyten Duyvil, etc, R. R. Co.*, 61 N. Y. 178; 19 Am. Rep. 267. In that case, a railroad company let by contract the entire work of constructing its road. The contractor sublet a portion of the work. Through the negligence of men employed by the sub-contractor in performing the work, stones and rocks were thrown by a blast upon plaintiff's adjoining property, injuring it, and it was held that the railroad company was not responsible. The court says that this is not a case where the defendant contracted for work to be done which would necessarily produce the injuries complained of, but such injuries were caused by the negligent and unskillful manner of doing it. The cases of *Pack* v. *Mayor of New York*, 8 N. Y. 222; *Kelly* v. *Mayor of New York*, 11 id. 432, and *Storrs* v. *City of Utica*, 17 id. 103, are cited as authority; and it is said that *Hay* v. *Cohoes Co.*, *supra*, is not an authority upon the questions involved in *McCafferty* v. *Spuyten D. R. R. Co.* See, also, *Butler* v. *Hunter*, 7 H. & N. 826; *Reedie* v. *London, etc., Ry. Co.*, L. R., 4 Exch. 244.