

CURIÆ CANADENSES.

commingling of moral reflection with mathematical statement?

"The unanimous three,

CA and BC and AB,

All are equal, each to his brother,

Preserving the balance of power so true:

Ah! the like would the proud Autocratix* do!

At taxes impending not Britain would tremble,

Nor Prussia struggle her fear to dissemble," etc.

To keep to what concerns ourselves more especially, the purely legal, we know that Lord Coke did not disdain the aid of poetry to make his teachings generally acceptable. The popularity of his reports is said to have been much increased by the publication of a metrical abstract of the points determined, distinguished by the name of the plaintiff in each case. Thus:

"HUBBARD.—

If lord impose excessive fine,

The tenant safely payment may decline.

[4 Rep., 27.]

CAWDRY.—

'Gainst Common Prayer, if parson say

In sermon aught, bishop deprive him may."

[5 Rep., 1.]

The greatest judges, when at a loss for an authority in prose, have referred to an authority in verse in proof of the soundness of their law. Witness the quotation of Lord Mansfield in a libel case:

"Sir Philip well knows

That his innuendoes,

Will serve him no longer

In verse or in prose:

For twelve honest men have decided the cause,

Who are judges of fact, though not judges of laws."

According to Lord Campbell, however, he misquoted the last line.

We seriously commend to the attention of the authors of the new Canadian Digest, the merits of a metrical abstract such as that of Lord Coke's. We do not doubt their competence to give to the profession a poetical digest of the legal principles decided in the cases in conjunction with the prosaic one now issuing from

the press. When such a scheme is carried out, we see for the lawyer of the future a flowery, instead of a thorny, path to the bench, the possibility, without travelling beyond his professional studies, of gaining a reputation in social circles as a sayer of good things and a ready quotor of poetry, and in the courts the pleasure of listening to and taking part in such a feast of reason and a flow of soul as we sad apprentices can only dream of.

One of the best known of the rhyming descriptions of courts of law and their denizens Christopher Anstey's "Pleader's Guide." Though it contains many hard hits at the law and lawyers, it also contains much accurate information as to the cumbrous procedure and technical rules of pleading of the last century. It was Anstey's poem which first suggested to the mind of "Plinius Secundus" to compose the work the name of which heads this article, and which is the occasion of the foregoing remarks. Probably few of our readers are familiar with "Curiae Canadenses." It is spoken of in that valuable curiosity shop, in which are stored so many interesting relics of the past—"Toronto of Old." Through this book we first became aware of the fact that a poetical description of the Canadian law courts, as they were thirty years ago, was in existence. We immediately instituted a quest for this rare work; but search for a long time proved unavailing. Many obliging booksellers offered us Morgan's "Biographies of Celebrated Canadians," as the nearest they could come to it, but we explained gently that "Curiae Canadenses" did not mean "Curious Canadians," and went on our way. By the kindness of the author of "Toronto of Old," we have procured a copy, and propose briefly to notice its contents, as one of the few archaeological records of early legal affairs we have.

Those who hope to find in "Curiae Canadenses" a lively sketch of the lead-

* Empress of Russia.