

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM.

priate \$15,000 towards an enlargement of the prison, although sixty-eight convicts had been removed from it to fill gaol workshops, built within the past three or four years, at a cost of over \$60,000, to accommodate prisoners sentenced for not more than three years." Facts like these should be carefully studied by our legislators. They are of more value in the consideration of the advisability of capital punishment than any amount of false sentimentality or dangerous lenity, and point to the conclusion that the gallows cannot be abolished with safety to society.—*The Central Law Journal*.

THE English Council of Law Reporting has issued a report for the past year, which shows results highly satisfactory, especially to the reporters, who get a bonus, in addition to their salaries, amounting to £959. The Digest positively realized the sum of £4,395 13s. The profit on the whole year amounted to £5,768 2s. 2d. The reserve fund for "future contingencies" is now raised to £5,000. *The Law Times* says: "What these contingencies are we do not quite understand; and when the reporters have had a few more bonuses perhaps the council will think of the profession and reduce the annual subscription."—*The New Zealand Jurist* says that the first agreement for partition on record will be found in the 13th chapter of Genesis, where Abraham and Lot, being jointly seized in fee simple of the land round about Bethel, agreed to take certain portions of the country in severalty—Lot going one way and Abraham the other. Supposing that they had taken the land as devisees with a right of survivorship, would it be possible to doubt that they intended to dispose of the contingent interest?

CROWN WINDFALLS.—The following are extracts from a Blue-book (recently issued by a departmental committee of the Government, called the Legal Business Committee) which contains some interesting information on a subject of special moment to a good many people—viz., what becomes of the estates of intestates dying without known next of kin. Mr. F. Hart Dyke, the late Queen's Proctor, whose duties have recently been transferred to the Solicitor of the Treasury, when examined before the committee, deposed as follows:—I take out letters of administration, and get in all the money for the Government in connection with the estates of intestate bastards and *bona vacantia*. . . . I recommend the Lords of the Treasury as to the disposition of the balance of the effects. . . . The Solicitor to the Treasury is appointed ad-

ministrator . . . I am known all over the world, and I correspond with solicitors and the people interested before they come to the Treasury. . . . I ascertain what the effects are either at the Bank of England or with various public bodies. . . . Mr. Stephenson gets in the effects. . . . Sometimes there are large and heavy pedigree cases. . . . In a heavy case, a short time ago, I fancied it was rather a fraudulent case on the part of the party who set up the claim. I got the facts together and took counsel's opinion. . . . I went on and won the case, and a large sum was recovered. . . I have a lot of administrations going in shortly, and among there is one estate worth about 35,000*l*. Occasionally I have much heavier amounts even than that. . . . All these estates are vested in the Crown; they belong to Her Majesty in right of her royal prerogative. . . . There are doubts in some cases as to whether we should oppose a will or not. . . . When bastards die there are always plenty of people only too ready to seize hold of their property and get wills made. Not very long ago I had two cases of this kind, but the law officers advised there was not sufficient evidence to justify proceedings. . . . In one case there was a commission to America. . . . It was an estate worth 70,000*l*, I think. . . . In ordinary cases the course of procedure is this: I receive a letter stating A. B. is dead; that he had such and such property; that he was a bastard, or has left none but illegitimate relatives. Thereupon, I write a letter requesting further facts and particulars as to where the property is situated, what it amounts to, and so forth. . . . I find out who the next of kin are, or the persons to whom the Crown should make grants, and I recommend accordingly. . . . I do not know much about the real estate, because I have nothing to do with it. But, as regards the personal estate, the difficulty is to find out who are the next of kin. . . . In one special case I recommended the Government to sell the estates. . . . There were three or four farms in Hampshire worth 25,000*l*. or 30,000*l*. . . . I have got the money, and the residue will soon be divided. There was a very nice place down in the Isle of Wight. . . . I take out from forty to fifty administrations in a year. . . . Some are large amounts. . . . 120,000*l*. and sums of that sort. . . .

A perusal of the foregoing will show that it is possible for a good many wealthy people to pass out of existence *sans* known relatives. Three recent large 'Crown windfalls' occur to me: 250,000*l*, Mrs. Mangin Brown, Chancery proceedings pending; 140,000*l*, Mrs. Helen Blake, Chancery proceedings also pending; 40,000*l*, Mr. Paterson, of Kilmarnock, as to whose estates a discussion has recently taken place in the House of Commons.—*English Law Journal*.