ial narrowing of its sphere of influence. This was the obvious meaning, though these were not the exact words of the reply. We do not here undertake to show that there was fallacy or self-deception in them. We are not, in fact, attempting to lay down any system of ethics for journalists, but only point out the need for such a code, covering at least some of the more prominent questions, to be accepted and followed by those who claim a place among reputable journalists.

We are by no means of the number of those who think it a comparatively easy matter to determine, having regard solely to the highest moral considerations, just what ought and ought not to be admitted to the columns of a newspaper or other periodical. The questions constantly arising are many and complicated. Merely to instance two or three of the most common, such as those touching the character of the advertisements which should be admitted, whether and to what extent the records of the police courts, the details of evidence given in the criminal courts, in divorce cases in court or Parliament, the descriptions of horrible cases of murder, suicide, etc., must be for the present suffice. On the one hand parents and guardians must instinctively shrink from allowing children to defile their imaginations with such debasing pictures; on the other no thoughtful person can deny that the prompt publication of the ascertainable facts with reference to a crime committed is often a most valuable aid in the detection and apprehension of the criminal. Moreover, it may be said with some force that to suppress the facts in criminal cases, and to forbid the publication of evidence in the courts, would be distinctly dangerous to society, as tending to the re-establishment of secret tribunals and star-chamber procedure. The light of publicity, say these reasoners, is the best and only sure safeguard of the liberties of the people, and of equality in the administration of justice.

One thing may be said with a good deal of confidence. There are certain classes of vicious and demoralizing practices whose success depends altogether upon publicity. For instance, the newspaper report is the very life of the revolting pugilism, which from time to time occupies so large a place in the columns of almost all the dailies, without exception. It is difficult to see what possible good can result from the publication of the disgusting and brutalizing details of such encounters. Probably a great many of the papers, which do thus publish them as a matter of business, would greatly prefer not to do so, could they only be sure that their business rivals would not reap an advantage from their refusal.

All these questions and difficulties go to show the need for some code of ethics to be agreed on by all the reputable papers in a given community. We are glad to know that the Press Association is becoming an influential organization in Canada. These observations have been made largely with a view to suggesting whether it might not be an appropriate and noble work for this Association to discuss some of these more complete questions and seek to reach an agreement which would be binding upon all members of the Association.

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Kingston Election Trial.

THOUGH only a few cases were investigated, at the Kingston election trial, out of some fifty charges, enough was elicited to show that the heathen Chinee is far from standing alone in ways that are dark and tricks that are vain. In one of the cases submitted, the ruling of Mr. Justice Burton seems so extraordinary that I would like to know more of the mind of the profession with regard to its propriety. There is no dispute as to the facts. The Treasurer of the Conservative Central Committee testified to having disbursed $1,087 for old debts, particularly for "volunteer" rigs sent from livery stables. When the election of 1894 was impending the liverymen refused to "volunteer" again, unless the back accounts were settled. Accordingly a subscription was raised, the old claims were paid, and the rigs "volunteered" again.

Mr. Andrew Elder told the story frankly. He said that his firm had volunteered the teams in question for the Metcalfe and Drennan elections. *They had done it this way to get around the law.* They had subsequently pressed for payment of their accounts. No entry had ever been made of the "volunteering" of rigs, nor had any entry of money secured for them been made. Dr. Smythe's friends had applied to the firm for terms for his election. The firm, however, would not have "volunteered" their vehicles had not the back accounts been paid. Finally those accounts were paid, and the teams "volunteered," and sent out to carry voters on election day. Nine rigs in all were put on the road. Nothing had been paid since the election.

Clearly, as Mr. Blake put it, "volunteering" was but a synonym for "hiring." Seeing that hiring is contrary to law and volunteering is not, the livery stable-keepers were induced to call their action voluntary, when it was quite understood that they would be paid for their work, and that if they were not paid they would not act.

The case to the lay mind is perfectly clear, but the judges disagreed, and, consequently, the charge was not sustained. Mr. Justice Oliver had no doubt that it was bribery; but Mr. Justice Burton thought that it might be called blackmail, but not bribery!

If this case stood by itself, there would be no great need of calling attention to it, except as a specimen of "Justices' Justice." But if this ruling is to be accepted, the act against hiring cabs for election purposes is emptied of its meaning. All that Election Committees have to do is to hire cabs for one election, with the understanding that their act is not to be known as hiring, and that the accounts are not to be paid for some time, possibly not till the eve of another election. Everyone knew that something of this sort was done by both parties, but the men who arranged the deal in any case knew that it was shady and dreaded exposure. Now, they can do their dirty work, sheltered by a judicial decision. The effect on the minds of the people, especially on those of the baser sort, who hang on to the skirts of both parties, is deplorable. They are taught that it is legitimate to "get around the law" by hook or by crook, or, at any rate, that the law can be easily evaded, and that success means deliverance from unpleasant consequences for themselves and the party which has the honour of claiming them as agents or supporters.

The election was voided because agent Langdon paid $5 or $6 to bring a voter from Deseronto. In future, agents will be more circumspect. They will pay ten, twenty or fifty times the amount, for a previous election debt. The election will then stand, and the party will be able to claim the seat, as well as "a moral victory."

If there is any better way of bringing law into contempt than decisions like Mr. Justice Burton's, we would like to know it.

CANADENSIS.

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Recent Fiction. *

"IN the Midst of Alarms," by Robert Barr, is got up very prettily, and the inside of the book is worthy of the outside. It is a Canadian story dealing incidentally with the Fenian Raid, hence its title. The story first appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine*, and we read it last year in a steamer chair whilst crossing the Atlantic, and having enjoyed it greatly there were glad to welcome it again in its book form. The two chief characters are Dick Yates, a New York reporter of the front rank, and a Professor Renmark, of Toronto University. Yates and Renmark had been class mates in Toronto, and the former being in danger of a complete break down in health from overwork, has arranged for a camping

* "In the Midst of Alarms," by Robert Barr. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co.

"A Group of Noble Dames," and "Life's Little Ironies," by Thomas Hardy. Macmillan's "Colonial Series." Toronto: Copp, Clark Co. Price 75 cents each.

"The Catch of the County," by Mrs. Edward Kennard. Bell's Indian and Colonial Library. Toronto: Copp, Clark Co.

"The Matchmaker." By L. B. Walford. Longman's Colonial Library. Toronto: Copp, Clark Co. Price, 75 cents.