

The Forum.

A CAUSERIE OF THE LAW.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES MORNE.

Reaching our hands so shortly after the conclusion of the famous Dreyfus trial, M. Alfred Giron's article in the last number of the *Revue de Droit International et de Législation Comparée* entitled "De la Condition Juridique des Juifs," is most timely reading. Here we have traced for us in a clear and impartial way the sad legal condition of the Jew in most European countries after the spread of Christianity. The unconverted Hebrew was by customary law regarded as the serf and slave of king or seigneur. He was debarred from holding land. He was denied the meanest privileges of citizenship. As a premium upon his embracing the Christian religion, his master was entitled in such event to confiscate his personal belongings. We know this "coutume bizarre" to be a fact in France, says M. Giron, by the law which abrogated it, viz., the Royal edict of April 4th, 1393. The position of the Jews in England was no whit better, and Matthew of Paris is quoted in reference to the stupendous exactions from them of that pusillanimous thief, King John. Passing in review the Jewish persecutions and massacres in Spain, Germany and elsewhere, well known to students of history, M. Giron arrives at the eighteenth century, when, he says, the ancient severity of the laws against this long-suffering race began to be relaxed. In 1715 Abraham Aaron was admitted to the rights of a burgess in the City of Antwerp, and a similar privilege was accorded to one Jacob Cantor. In 1758, however, the Belgian Jews received a set-back in their social progression by the decree that profession of the Catholic faith was to be a condition of admission to the rank of burgess. This restriction was removed by the Austrian Government in 1769. M. Giron further points out that while so late as the year 1753 when George II. proposed to Parliament a measure for the naturalization of the Jews, the low-class Londoner met the proposal with the dual cry: "No Popery! No Jews!" yet they obtained the rights of the burgess in London in the year 1830, and the full privileges of English citizenship in 1858, thanks to the efforts of that distinguished scion of their race, Lord Beaconsfield. In France the Jew secured a recognition of his claim to complete citizenship at the hands of