

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM.

"If I ever invited any man to my house, I would invite you." And then he stopped. In contradistinction to his marvelous knowledge of law, he is reputed to be the best Shakspearean student alive in the three kingdoms. It is said he can repeat the plays verbatim. So that between the novels and the play, the law and his own sweet temper, Jonathan Christian is by no means an ordinary person. Spiteful people say he is mad; but no signs of failure have shown themselves as yet, and he is now well over sixty years of age.

THE HONOR OF A THIEF.—Mr. Serjeant Cox, in his book on the Principles of Punishment, relates the following anecdote: The honor of a thief is not always confined to his fellows: A striking instance of this occurred once to myself. A man had been tried, convicted, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment for larceny. As he was leaving the dock a person spoke to him from the floor of the court, and he broke into a flood of tears. Seeing this, I called him back and inquired what it was that grieved him. "Oh my lord!" he said, "I am told that my poor wife died in childbed last night from sorrow for me, and that I was not there to close her eyes." At once I resolved to trust him. "If you will give me your word that you will come here on the first day of next sessions to receive your punishment you shall go and bury your wife." Those about me were sure I should never see him again. "I put you upon your honor," I repeated, "I trust you." The promise was given. With expressions of extreme gratitude he left the court. At the next sessions great curiosity was felt as to the result of so uncommon, and as some thought unjustifiable experiment. But when the court met the convict appeared as he had promised, in mourning, saying, "I am come, as I promised, to take my sentence." After a moment's reflection I said, "You have behaved well—and so well that I shall not inflict upon you that sentence I had intended. In the hope that you will repent the past and be honest for the future, I will give you a chance to retrieve the character you have lost. You shall go on your own recognizance to come up for judgment when called on." I have been informed that he has profited by the lesson, and has since preserved an excellent character for honesty and industry.—*Etc.*

THE ABOLITION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN MAINE.—The results of a year's experience of the abolition of the death penalty in Maine are not such as to give the opponents of capital

punishment very much ground on which to found an argument in support of their ideas.

A correspondent of the New York *Nation*, writing from that State, gives some facts in relation to the abolishment of hanging which are calculated to strengthen the opinion that the fear of a criminal for his own life is the most deterring influence in preventing his taking the life of another. Maine was admitted into the the Union in 1820, and began its existence as a State with a capital-punishment law. In 1873 this law was amended, so as to leave its execution optional with the governor. The governor very rarely awarded the extreme penalty, and, as a consequence, murders increased to such an extent that "in 1860 Maine had become notorious for its murders." Nevertheless, from 1834 to 1864, a period of thirty years, not an execution took place in that State. "At length," says the writer, "a State-prison convict murdered his warden, and for this act, singularly enough, he was hung by Gov. Corry, as if the slaying of a prisoner's natural enemy were a more atrocious crime than the murdering of a wife or a friend. So illogical an enforcement of the capital law, of course, produced little effect, and murdering went on, until, in 1869, Gov. Chamberlain executed Harris, a negro, for the murder and rape of two old women. But his successor, Gov. Perham, refused to enforce the law, and capital crime soon proceeded more rapidly than ever, until, in 1875, the legislature passed an honest law, restoring the death-penalty without evasion, and in June of that year Wagner and Gordon were hung for the murder of five or six victims—men, women, and children." The effect of the new law and its strict enforcement is very striking. During the entire year following its passage, only one homicide occurred in Maine, and in that case the murderer committed suicide immediately after the commission of his crime. Yet, in the face of this, the legislature of 1876 abolished capital punishment, and the result of one year of the law of 1876 is even more striking than the effect of the passage of the law of 1875. Barely a year has elapsed since the last law was adopted, and, in that time, no less than eleven cruel and unnatural murders have been committed in the State. In addition to this, says the writer, "another alarming result of the abolition of the death-penalty has been a startling increase of high crimes not capital. During the year 1876, the number of our State-prison convicts has risen from 148 to 171, a gain of nearly 16 per cent.; and the last legislature, in February, was obliged to appro-