

Not guilty.  
Acquitted.  
Convicted.

Table IV. should deal with convicts, and it is in their previous life and punishment social science is interested. With regard to them every available fact that leads to a safe conclusion is of importance. The report before us seems to be adequate, so far as regards extent, but it is totally insufficient as to its figures. For example, we have 3,030 convictions in Ontario under Class I. Of these we learn that 695 make a moderate use of liquor, and 609 an immoderate use; but what are the habits of the remaining 1,726? Are they absolute abstainers? The other figures are equally inconclusive. Education only accounts for 1,316. Age leaves 1,730 unaccounted for. Nationality only accounts for 2,656. Again, we have been unable to discover on what data the report is founded for previous convictions.

Three of these tables would not exceed in width the full sheet of a blue book in the form used. This is an advantage not altogether to be despised in statistical returns. Another small improvement might be made with little expense—that is not mixing the two languages. It is a poor device to use them alternately, as is sometimes done. The proper mode is to have two editions.

Without undue exultation the people of Quebec may compare with satisfaction the record of crime in their province with that of Ontario:

CONVICTIONS.		
	Ontario.	Quebec.
Class I.....	3,030	907
“ II.....	85	65
“ III.....	1,414	686
“ IV.....	474	94
“ V.....	30	3
“ VI.....	13,278	4,111
	18,311	5,866

This is more than in proportion to the representation of Ontario, in every class but No. II., and in that class, it seems, that 34 are committed for trial and not disposed of in Ontario, while all are disposed of in Quebec.

B.

### LIBEL.

Mr. Irvine has introduced a bill into the legislature at Quebec to amend the law respecting the civil remedy for libel. The object of the measure is to admit the libeller sued in damages, to plead that the facts are true and that it was for the public benefit that the said matters should be published. There is abroad in the world at the present moment a great desire to bring the libeller into repute. It is rather up-hill work to get men to view the professional slanderer with other feelings than those of disgust, and therefore delusive arguments are made use of to overcome the natural repugnance. To those who cannot be induced to think that slander is a virtue, it is said: this bill will only give the same answer to the civil remedy that may now be given to the criminal charge,—to those who can be wheedled by sophistry, it is suggested that there can be no harm in saying what is true, if it be for the public good.

There was a paramount reason for passing the Statute of 1874, because it was anomalous to have the criminal law different in the various provinces. There is no kind of reason for saying that the civil remedy shall be similar in them all. Notoriously it is not in many cases besides libel. We are therefore perfectly free in the Province of Quebec to approach the consideration of Mr. Irvine's bill unfettered, and to accept or reject it on its intrinsic merits.

The argument alluded to as being used in its favour is full of false assumptions. Whether there is harm in saying what is true for the public good, depends greatly on the amount of mischief to the person of whom it is said, and the degree of good that will accrue to the public from saying it. Again, as the law now stands, no one is precluded from saying what is true for the public good. What the law prohibits is the raking up of injurious stories against your neighbour, even though true, to gratify malice. Recently, it has been held in Montreal, probably correctly, that the malice of the publisher did not affect the question; and it is not improbable that in practice it will come to be considered that exaggeration does not impair the truth. Such a law is anti-Christian; but though we have plenty of ecclesiastical squabbles, this reason does not count nowadays. Robbing a church is more