

tionary tendencies, or that we could believe in advanced democracy. We still stand up for a reasonable veneration for formality and time-honoured custom, and for a discreet upholding of what has been found useful in the past. But we must also seek to avoid fossilization, and keep away from extremes. There is always room for improvement, and improvement is not inconsistent with a proper regard for existing institutions. Nor is it incompatible to be at once sound and unyielding, for those things which have the sanction of previous experience, and to seek—as times change and men and things meet altering conditions—the modernizing of those things. There are many matters pertinent to the practice of law in Canada where we think a too close adherence to the ancient is pursued, and the generalizing we are indulging in will not, we think, be without application. We refer to the benevolent society in England as indicating the spirit of modernism that obtains in the most civilized country of modern history. We shall have more to say in the same direction as the months pass by; and we are mistaken if the spirit which pervades this, and will pervade future articles on kindred subjects, does not strike a responsive key in the constituency we are addressing. As we cast a few glances over the field that is opened up in the consideration of such a line of questions as are involved, in the

direction spoken of, we anticipate that we will have to turn up some new ground before we are through with it. What may be the event of such action on our part time alone will tell. We believe there are great possibilities in an earnest inquiry into the conditions that obtain in the legal profession of Canada. We will try and do our part, and look forward as a reward to sympathetic support from the profession.

* * *

Sir Walter Besant on Crime.

It has always been noticeable that it is easier to theorize than to carry into effective operation; and men are always mapping out on paper beautiful schemes which will never be materialized in any time. We are forced to regard in this light the views on the extirpation of crime expressed recently by Sir Walter Besant. Yet, coming from a gentleman of his known abilities, as well as from the plausibility they possess, these views are not uninteresting. Taking the cases of five criminals now serving terms, which are anywhere from the third to the eleventh conviction, according to the prisoner, Sir Walter traces out the probable future that such people will lead, showing that under the present system of punishment the only thing ahead for a convict, both from necessity and inclination, on leaving a prison, is a return to his old tricks. A cure for this,