

required that hay time and harvest be not interfered with, and for this purpose the long vacation between midsummer and Michaelmas was first instituted. (*Blackstone quoting Spelman of the Terms, and Rymer's Feodera.*) This arrangement was "established by a canon of the Church A. D. 517, and was fortified by an imperial edict of the younger Theodosius," and these prohibitions seems to have been kept in view in all subsequent statutes; e. g., in the time of Edward the Confessor, "no secular plea could be held and no man sworn on the Evangelists' during Advent, Lent, Pentecost, harvest and vintage," but later (*Stat. West. I., 3 Edw. I. c. 51*) under special circumstances certain business was allowed to be gone on with in Advent, Septuagesima and Lent, "by the assent of all the prelates," and that "at the special request of the King to the bishops." In this way arose the four vacations or periods of no work for the lawyers, at that time imposed upon the profession from without and no doubt whether they liked it or not; it is a curious change in circumstances to contemplate—the vacations at one time *imposed* in the interests of the Church, harvest and vintage, are now regarded by the profession as a right, a time for recreation, a time *far niente*, when the voice of the court crier is dumb and the twelve "honest men and true" are devoting their entire attention to the cultivation of their tubers, and "toiling in the grain." The influence which agriculture—at that early time almost the one absorbing employment, had in determining the allotment of the parts of the year may be gathered from the following quaint words taken from Coke on Littleton ("The First Part of the Institutes of the Law of England or a Commentary upon Littleton, not the name of the author only but of the law itself,") (*page 185, ch. 11*)—"As to Trinity tearme it sometimes had seven days of return and was as long as Michaelmasse tearme is now; but for avoyding of infection in that hot time of the yeare and that men might not be letted to gather in harvest three returnes * * * become dies non juridice." Corresponding to the four vacations were the four terms, Hilary, Easter, Trinity and Michaelmas, the