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THE JUDGES OF FRANCE.

A cable despatch from Paris, of date June 13, states that in consequence of the action of the Chamber of Deputies on the previous Saturday in voting the abolition of the irremovability of judges and in favor of the principle of electing judges, M. Humbert, Minister of Justice, tendered his resignation. President Grévy refused to accept it. M. Humbert then asked leave of absence for a month.

The *N. Y. Herald*, in a paragraph referring to this intelligence, gives some information concerning the judiciary of France. It states that hitherto the judicature has been recruited from among the wealthier classes. It was regarded as an honor to be a judge or *procureur* (public prosecutor), and men of property were willing to pay highly for it. No French judge could live on his salary. The highest—that of the President of the Court of Cassation—amounts to \$5,000 only, and out of this the President has to pay his clerk or secretary, and he is expected to keep up a costly establishment in order that he may entertain his brother judges, Cabinet Ministers and other eminent people. In country towns a judge of first instance receives \$460 a year, a president of a court of first instance \$600, and a councillor of a court of appeal \$800. The presidents of the twenty-four courts of appeal are paid more liberally, for they get \$2,800; but they keep up considerable state, for they have to return the hospitalities of prefects, generals of division, mayors and other officials, besides giving dinners to the Bench and Bar of their jurisdiction. There is no evading this obligation, which is imposed by an etiquette which has almost force of law, inasmuch that a man cannot accept the office of president of a court unless he have a good private income. But the councillors of courts of appeal are heavily taxed too. Each in his turn is appointed to preside over the assizes in the large departmental towns, and for doing this he receives a fee of \$100, whether the assizes last one day or twenty. The travelling president with his clerk and servants puts up at

a hotel; he must hire a carriage and pair to pay his official visits, and unless he would pass for a niggard he must give a series of dinners. At the close of the assizes he holds a grand levée, at which all the officials of the town and all who have anything to do with the assizes, even to the forty jurymen summoned for the occasion, pay their respects to him and eat and drink at his expense.

The present bill proposes to abolish all courts of first instance except in the chief towns of departments; to reduce the number of councillors of courts of appeal, and to enlarge the jurisdiction of the *juges de paix*, who would be raised to about the same status as English county court judges, besides having enlarged powers in criminal causes. There is at present one *juge de paix* in each canton—that is 1,620 in the whole of France—and their salaries vary between \$600 and \$1,200. They may adjudicate upon petty offences, such as trespass and minor kinds of poaching, which do not entail more than two days' imprisonment or a fine of more than \$5; and upon civil cases about sums not exceeding \$50. But if they be commissioned to deal with cases of *flagrant délit* involving sentences of three months, and with civil disputes concerning sums of \$200—if, in fact, most of the business of the abolished courts of first instance be thrown upon their hands—their labors will be considerably increased and they will have to be paid more suitably. Hitherto the office of *juge de paix* has not been fraught with any great prestige, and some time must elapse before there is enough change in this respect, owing to the enhanced importance of the post, to attract men of position. On the other hand government will not find men of acquirements sufficient to make good *juges de paix* willing to go and live in *chefs-lieux de cantons* which are often mere villages, and to work very hard all the year round, for \$600. Even if men were found to accept the posts on such terms, they would form a very unsatisfactory class of officials; for unless they were known to have private incomes they would be sure to be suspected of taking bribes. Until now the *juges de paix* have generally been retired country notaries, who accepted the office because the work was easy, gave them a little authority in their cantons, and led after a time to their being decorated with the Legion of