

Previous to that economical arrangement, those offices maintained themselves; the Government was never forced to come to the relief of the Prothonotary, who made his own financial arrangements, carried on properly the duties of his office, and, lastly, realized for himself a very handsome income. Now that is all changed; there is no more necessity for economy—the Government is the general paymaster; nepotism is indulged in, numbers of clerks are engaged, and the office is invaded by the extravagant ideas of a Government Department. That over £6000 a-year is required in order to provide for the necessary expenses of the Prothonotary's and Circuit Court offices at Quebec, is simply ridiculous; the actual expenses might be reduced £2000 per annum, and the public business would be much better performed. But in lieu of attempting to apply the proper remedy, an extravagant tariff of charges is promulgated,—a tax, in fact, is laid on all legal proceedings, doubling, nay, in many instances trebling, the old tariff rates, by which it is expected to make up the deficiency.

Can it be pretended, against the direct evidence of those abstracts, that decentralisation is aught but a mockery, a snare, and a delusion! Productive of no benefit to the inhabitants of the New Districts, it has inflicted grievous wrong upon the profession. Entailing frightful expense upon the country, it has rendered the obtaining of justice more expensive to the suitors; by increasing the numbers of the Judges, it has diminished the respect of the people for the judicial dignity. It has made a seat upon the Bench not the legitimate reward of learning and integrity at the Bar—but the illegitimate price of subserviency and dishonesty in politics.

What more ridiculous idea can there be than that a lawyer fits himself to be a judge by being exclusively a politician. As well urge that a course of politics is necessary to perfect the education of a master-cobbler, or to put the last finishing touch to the qualifications of an aspirant to a bishopric. The pursuit of politics as a profession is, in this country, demoralizing to a degree;—not one in ten of our public men passes safely through the ordeal to which he is exposed. It moreover requires the whole attention, the whole care, of the student; it is a trade, the goddess of which requires an undivided allegiance from all her worshippers. And yet advocates, forsooth, plunge into the sea of politics to seek a seat upon the Bench!

No doubt the country judgeships were created in order, as harmlessly as possible, to satisfy the demands of political supporters. In a District where but ten cases in the Superior Court are instituted yearly, a rusty lawyer, elevated into a judge, could not do much damage. And what mattered it if M——'s mental qualifications were of the smallest proportions: he would have but very little business to get through. No doubt it was an effort of statemanship thus to foist upon the country the duty of providing for decayed politicians; and as Chelsea and Greenwich afford to old, wounded and disabled soldiers and sailors sure harbors of refuge in their declining years,—so we may regard our country judgeships as hospitals, wherein battered politicians may be laid up in ordinary, at the country's expense, for the remainder of their days, when discharged as useless from the ranks of politics.