the superior wisdom of the Judicial Committee. As Mr. Marsh well knows, a case is only authority for the actual point decided in it; the general principles which some judges lay down being, for the most part, mere *obiter dicta*, and of no binding authority on any other judge who may happen to take a different view of those principles. What conceivable benefit the Privy Council could confer by "laying down general principles," except so far as immediately necessary for the decision of the point in hand, we fail to see, except it be to furnish Mr. Marsh and some of his brethren of the Bar with material for arguing on any inconsistencies the court might display in sticking to principles thus laid down *obiter* which it might find subsequently impossible or difficult to apply in other cases.

It is not, it appears to us, the primary duty of a court even of first instance, and still less of one of ultimate appeal, to "lay down general principles." Their duty is to decide the case in hand, and, from the decisions from time to time pronounced, it is the business of the Bar to draw out the general principles. Judges of inferior courts, in deciding cases, deduce these general principles from previous decisions in similar cases, if any, as furnishing reasons for their decision in the case before them: but the ultimate Court of Appeal is at liberty to review and revise or reject the general principles laid down by inferior tribunals, or to refuse to apply them to cases where they would operate unreasonably: and instances may be readily called to mind where the courts of appeal have upset principles laid down by inferior tribunals after they have been received as law for many years. Thus the principle laid down in *Godsall* v. *Boldero*, 9 East 72, in 1807, was overturned by the Exchequer Chamber in *Dalby* v. *India and London Life Insurance Company*, 15 C.B. 365, in 1854: and the absurd principle laid down in 1849 in *Thorogood* v. *Bryan*, 8 C.B. 114, was, in 1888, upset by the House of Lords in *Mills* v. *Armstrong*, 13 App. Cas. 1. It is true that the highest court of appeal occasionally feels that an erroneous principle has been too well established to permit it to be overthrown by judicial decision; as, for instance, in *Foakes* v. *Beer*, 9 App. Cas. 605, where the House of Lords declined to overrule the ridiculous principle laid down in *Cumber* v. *Wane*, 1 Str. 426, because it had been recognized as law for 280 years; but, it is safe to say, if that principle had been earlier before such a tribunal as the Judicial Committee, it would have failed to pass muster.