

## GENERAL NOTES.

**ANCIENT BILLS OF EXCHANGE.**—The United States Consul-General at Barcelona, in a recent report, mentions the acquisition by a public institution there of seven old bills of exchange, all made payable in Barcelona. The most ancient is dated at Mallorca (Palma) in 1392, and is thought to be the oldest bill of exchange now in existence. The second is dated 1399; the third drawn in Pisa, is also dated 1399; the next two were drawn in Valencia in 1411 and 1530 respectively; the sixth was drawn at Rosellon, in France, in 1445; and the last at Naples in 1535. A translation of the first reads as follows: 'Sir,—In conformity with this first letter, you will pay within the next two months, counting from the date of this, to the woman Sibila, wife of the deceased Mr. Jaime Castello, xvii. libras x. sueldos (about 35s.) of Barcelona money, which obtain from the rent of the University of Mallorca, on December 11, the payment of which you will require in due time without fail. Dated at Mallorca, October 26, year 1392.—GUILLEM DE MUNTRU, Administrator of the Mint.' It bears the following indorsement: 'To the Honorable Senor and my *Confrère* Lorenzo Luques, Exchange Merchant of Barcelona.'

**SEVERITY OF SENTENCES AT QUARTER SESSIONS.**—Mr. Justice Wills, in sentencing a man named Galton to four months' hard labour for larceny, at the Dorchester assizes, said the record put before him of the man's previous sentences was one of the most awful pieces of reading that had ever come to his notice. The man had been five times convicted at quarter sessions of thefts of nothing worth more than 5s., and yet he had been sentenced to penal servitude for terms which would amount to thirty-five years. It would have been impossible for the Court of Assize to pass such punishment, which was perfectly awful. In 1882 he was sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude for a small theft, and, as there was a portion of the term unexpired, he should communicate with the Home Office to see if it could not be remitted. He advised the prisoner never to do anything which would again bring him before such a tribunal, which, he supposed if he had come before them, would for his present offence have sent him to penal servitude for the rest of his natural life.