

sale altogether. It is not easy for bailiffs in such cases to discharge their duties properly, and they are under a cross fire from the plaintiff on the one hand, and the defendant on the other if any slip is made. Officers generally know the places where a difficulty will be experienced in effecting a sale to advantage within the division, or where a sale to good advantage, beneficial alike to plaintiff and defendant, might be made by bringing the property seized to a town, village, or place of public resort in an adjoining division. Under circumstances of this kind we would submit to bailiffs the following practical suggestions: Before making a seizure, see the execution creditor, explain to him the position of things, and get him to sign a writing, authorizing the removal for sale, the execution debtor consenting. Then, when the seizure is made, explain to the party whose goods are seized the benefits to be derived from a sale (if one has to be made) at the particular place out of the division, and get from him also a request in writing to take the goods out of the division to a named place in the county, there to sell the goods under the execution. The instruments taken had better be styled in the cause, and should refer distinctly to the execution held by the bailiff, and in the instrument from the execution debtor the particular property intended to be removed should be specified.

## SELECTION.

### THE RIGHT OF PUBLIC MEETINGS.

We have heard a great deal lately of the "right of public meeting," and it has been put very plainly by Mr. Bright at the recent reform meetings. It has been put boldly and plainly as the right of gathering together hundreds of thousands of men, and marching in procession to a place of assembly, not for the purpose of discussion, but, as he expressly said, for the purpose of "demonstration." That there might be no possible mistake, he went on to explain, that what he meant was, that their numbers might convey an idea of their determination, and what they *might* do if their demands were not acceded to. And in language which approached as nearly as possible to actual incitement of sedition, he hinted that the exertion of popular force might well be excused by the denial of popular rights. And this way of putting it has, at all events, the merit of frankness. Not that it would have been much use to disguise the matter. No man of sense can suppose for an instant that a hundred thousand men were ever got to-

ther for the purpose of *discussion*, or for anything else but *demonstration*. And demonstration of what? Not merely of the physical force of numbers. The mere fact that a hundred thousand men are got together "demonstrates" nothing but their number. But the fact, that they are got together to *display* their numbers for the purpose of enforcing an acquiescence in their demands, is a demonstration indeed. But a demonstration of what? Simply of their readiness for rebellion. For if a hundred thousand men met together to say, as Mr. Bright plainly said on their behalf, "You see our numbers; if you don't grant us what we demand, *beware of our numbers*"—what is that but a *threat of rebellion*? And of what use can the assembling of a hundred thousand men be *but* to convey that threat? The mere desire for a measure could be conveyed far better by petition. That would be the expression of their opinion. Their meeting together in vast numbers can be meant only as a demonstration of their determination, and of their force. But to threaten the Legislature with physical force, in order to compel a change of measures, and, still more, to coerce them to an organic change in the constitution, is more than sedition, and approaches very near to treason. So far from there being any *right* to convene such assemblies for the purpose of "demonstration," it is undoubtedly an indictable offence to do so, even *without* the design thus suggested. There is a right of public meeting for the purpose of *discussion*, provided the matter discussed is lawful, and provided there is no breach of the peace, nor violation of law and order, or the place or manner of meeting. But the right like all others, is only to be exercised so far as it can *lawfully* be exercised. And in the first place, men must meet where they have a right to meet. They have no right to hold meetings anywhere, without the express or implied license of the owner of the soil. For instance, they have no right to meet upon the highways, or in the places and thoroughfares of a town or city. Not on the highways, for it has been held again and again, that no one has a right to use a highway, except for the purpose of ordinary transit. Men have no right to collect in large numbers upon the highway, blocking it up, and obstructing it as they did around Hyde Park, and thus causing public confusion and disturbance. Neither have they a right to gather together in places of public recreation. But waving these minor difficulties, or supposing that they have licence from the owner of the soil to assemble, they by no means render their meeting lawful. That only purges it of *one* species of illegality—the lesser degree of it which consists in the disregard of the right of property. There is a far graver offence involved; it is that of endangering the public peace. No man has a right (as one of the police magistrates said) to assemble together in a mass all the scum and offscouring of a large city under the cover and disguise of a "popular demonstration." No man has a right, in short,