

hour late, and, as nothing can be done till they arrive, we secure our quarters at the "Hop-pole," and stroll down to the cathedral, to which we know the judges will straightway proceed, both their lordships being true sons of the church, and sure to attend the Assize sermon. Half an hour quickly passes in the familiar aisles, and then we hear the blare of trumpets outside, the great doors swing slowly open, the organ peals out the National Anthem, and Her Majesty's judges, in all the pomp and ceremony of State, accompanied by the high sheriff and his crew, pass up the broad nave, enter their stalls in the choir, and morning service begins. After the Te Deum and the anthem we make our escape, having no mind to listen to the string of platitudes which some reverend and rusty canon is about to inflict on his unfortunate audience. We repair to the Shire Hall, and pass the time in badinage with our *confères* already there, till at last the judges come from church, go on the bench and "open the commission," a mystic ceremony performed with much antique solemnity, and supposed to be essential to the validity of all the proceedings at the Assize. No sooner is the commission opened than the minor officials begin business and we are at liberty to enter our cases. After a little delay we get our cause favourably placed on the list, and we have next to deliver briefs. Mr. Matthews, Q.C., whom we have taken the precaution to retain two months ago, lodges as usual in the quiet abode of the widow Dunn (all hotels are, or were, at the time of which we are speaking, tabooed to the barristers on circuit), and there we deposit his bulky brief, with its little indorsement :

" Mr. Matthews, Q.C. ....	50 guas.*
Consult'n .....	5 guas.
	—
	55 guas.

With you.

Mr. Dryasdust,  
Mr. Pepperemwell."

The other briefs vary only in the lesser amount of the fees marked thereon, and are similarly left at the learned gentlemen's respective lodgings, and now we are free for the day. Mr. Matthews is expected down

about six o'clock in the evening, and before the morning he will have to read perhaps a dozen briefs, one or two of which, like our own, may consist of 150 pages of closely written matter, and involve much analysis of dates and facts. To a stranger, the rapidity of apprehension, which the English system of instructing counsel at the last moment produces in the average barrister, seems almost incredible; but there is an equally striking result flowing from the division of the profession into two branches which is not so obvious to outsiders, but must be well known to all, who, as solicitors, have had the task of preparing cases for trial, and have subsequently heard them tried. It is this—that very seldom indeed do counsel present and handle a case in the manner and from the point of view anticipated by the solicitor. The bringing a new mind to bear upon the case almost always results in the case being placed in a fresh light, in the discarding of a host of minor points, and in the battle being lost or won on the real hinges of the matter. The solicitor's careful mind has provided for every contingency, and prepared every detail, and had he to argue his case himself he would be far more prolix, and consequently less forcible than the barrister. This is, we think, the true advantage of the English dual system, and we are bound to say, after some experience of the American plan, that we still give the preference to the old way.

But we must not longer digress. Let us imagine the afternoon and night past, and the day of actual work arrived. Consultation is fixed for half past eight sharp at our leader's chambers, and there accordingly we go and meet Mr. M., and his two juniors. The keen hard lawyer receives us with dignified courtesy. He says little and the consultation does not last ten minutes, but we have had sufficient experience of counsel to know from the little he does say that he has read his brief, a thing by no means to be taken for granted. Mr. Pepperemwell, a pert little dandy with an eye-glass, evidently stayed too late at the county ball last night and has seen nothing of his brief, except the outside, but by the time the case is called he will have picked up enough to vigorously cross-examine one or two weak witnesses on the other side and this

\* Guinea.