

patient study. He is, therefore, but little disposed to listen to the client's confused though impassioned statement of his wrongs. The solicitor, on the other hand, has from his youth been trained to speak with taxing masters in the gate. He knows their foibles, their mode of working, and their hatred of interruption and argument. He knows, too, that the bill through which the taxing master is now wading, striking out an item here and marking for verification a payment there, has been prepared with an eye to this very process, and that he must have been either very careless or very inexperienced if anything like the fatal sixth can be subtracted from what are facetiously called his "profit charges." Hence at the end of the audience, when the litigant is pushed out of the room to make way for those engaged in the new case, he generally finds that he has succeeded in recapturing from his former ally but present foe a very small part of the spoil. And then, when he believes that fate has exhausted her quiver, she pierces him with her sharpest arrow! He learns that as the law has not adjudged his late adviser to disgorge as much as a sixth of the booty, he, the already plundered and tormented client, must pay not only for the copy of the bill on which the taxing master has just operated, not only for the tax that a wise legislature has laid upon taxations (breaking the bruised reed with a vengeance), but also for the time that the persecutor has expended in defending his ill-gotten gains. Can we wonder that he goes down to his house breathing vows of impotent vengeance, and declaring that in future he will submit meekly to any injustice rather than again trust himself to the mercies of the law?

If now we dissect the bill of costs that has caused all this pother, we shall notice that there are some charges which the taxing master has passed as a matter of course, or the amount of which he has rectified without protest from the solicitor whose bill is under taxation. Such are (in the case of an action or other "contentious" proceeding) the instructions to sue and defend, the charges for issuing writs and summonses, the service of notices and other documents, and the invariable "sittings fee," which is supposed to cover the cost of postage and the like. The amount to be charged for each of these items has long ago been decided by Rules of Court, and if any overcharge has been made in any of them, it has certainly been by mistake. These formal charges, however, form but a very small part of any bill of costs, and probably would not afford a decent living to the clerks employed in the conduct of the action out of which they arise. Of the remaining items in the bill, some consist of the numerous payments made out of pocket in the course of the action to counsel and others, and also for court and witnesses' fees. On some, though not on all, of these payments is charged a commission so extraordinary as to afford some ground for the old slander that, when a lawyer puts his hand into his own pocket instead of his client's, he expects to be paid handsomely for his trouble. Thus in London almost invariably, and in the country pretty generally, all the longer documents required to be copied for the use of the court and of counsel are sent to a law stationer. For this the stationer receives 1d. or 1½d. for each folio of seventy-two words. Yet the solicitor is allowed by the taxing master to receive 4d. a folio, or a commission of 300 per cent. for paying the stationer's bill, and the