

The systems of law administered by them varied widely. In some provinces, the *droit écrit* prevailed, and the civil law furnished the basis for judicial rules. Other provinces were *pays de coutumes*, where a customary law had grown up, and was administered by the courts. Even in the districts where the *droit écrit* prevailed, some differences in legal rules necessarily became established in the various Parliaments.

Certain edicts, political and financial, were of force throughout the kingdom; but private liabilities, a man's rights and his responsibilities, and the mode of enforcing them, might vary as he passed from one village to another. He could breakfast at Nismes without fear of the terrors of the law, only to find himself, when he reached Arles for dinner, subject to its direst penalties. The French Revolution and its influence were needed to establish a uniform law for Frenchmen of every rank and every locality.

Parliament, in its earlier days, was a body in a condition of continual growth. When it first began to fill the place of the feudal courts, the king assigned persons to sit for a session, and their powers ended with the term for which they were appointed. By 1319, we find it provided that members of the court should receive their wages for life. As late as 1467, however, we find an edict of Louis XI. forbidding the removal of Judges, except for cause; and entire freedom from arbitrary removal was probably not established earlier than that.

The ordinance of 1307 provided that the Parliament itself should choose fit men to fill vacancies as they occurred. But the power of appointment was, for the most part, exercised by the king; and this edict was forgotten or disregarded. His right of choice was at times limited to a number of persons nominated by the Parliament. But, when such places came to be sold, the king's power of appointment was exercised without restraint. That pecuniary questions are the origin of most revolutions is a familiar truth. The French Revolution is no exception, and the silent changes in the French government prior to that great upheaval were equally the results of the same fruitful cause. Pecuniary embarrassment was the chronic condition of the French kings, and no young prodigal relieves present wants by

ruinous post-obits more recklessly than did the French monarchs seek immediate relief at the cost of future burdens. The sale of offices was a source of revenue to which royalty early turned its attention, and the mine was worked to the most ruinous extent. The offices of the members of Parliament afforded a tempting bait. The places were of great dignity, and often of great profit. Under Louis XII., the sale of judicial dignities—often practised before, but never systematically—seems to have become a regular part of the budget. The disastrous reign of Francis I. brought him to the most lamentable financial straits. Among other expedients, he organised a new chamber of Parliament, and created two presidents and eighteen counsellors to administer its affairs. Two thousand scudi were paid for appointments to each of these places. Marino Cavalli tells us that in this reign the judicial offices were bought at prices ranging from three thousand to twenty thousand francs; and that, as the sale was open, there was nothing disgraceful in selling them for as large a sum as could be obtained. The places thus purchased were held for life.

Financial needs led to endeavours to impose a further tax on the income of the office. Such efforts met with the resistance from the members of the Parliament that might be expected from men who felt, with Judge Barnard, of New York, that they had paid for their places, and no further favors could be asked. A measure was found to reconcile such an impost with judicial feelings. In the reign of Henry IV., a tax was devised, which, from its originator, was called the *Paulette*. By the payment of an annual sum, the office of any member of Parliament might become hereditary; and, if not sold by him during his life-time, upon his death it passed to his heirs, to be disposed of by them with his horses and carriages, his houses and lands. One of the sons ordinarily took the place; but it was often sold. Prices naturally increased. In the reign of Louis XIV., the price of one of these offices was a moderate fortune. The office of president *à mortier* of the Parliament of Paris was sold for five hundred thousand francs; that of a counsellor brought one hundred and fifty thousand; and that of the *procureur-général* seven hundred thousand francs. This institution remained in