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COMMON BARRATRY.

A remarkable instance of prosecution for common barratry occurred recently in Maryland. One Wagner was charged with having brought innumerable actions against at least fifty different persons in the county, upon purely fictitious causes of action. For example, it was said that on a single day he had instituted nearly one thousand suits, of which 126 were against one person, 121 against another, and 120 against a third. The objection, however, was taken at an early stage, that all these suits were brought by Wagner in his own name, and that the offence of common barratry consists in inciting others to bring suits. The Court decided the point in Wagner's favor, and he was discharged.

THE BRADLAUGH CASE.

The election of Mr. Bradlaugh to the House of Commons raised a somewhat important question of form. The oath of allegiance required of members is in the following words: "I do solemnly swear to be faithful, and true allegiance bear to Queen Victoria and her heirs and successors according to law. So help me God." Quakers are permitted simply to affirm. Mr. Bradlaugh is not a Quaker, but a professed unbeliever in any religious creed. No doubt, others who were unable to accept the truth of the Christian faith have sat in Parliament—the late John Stuart Mill furnishes a notable illustration, and probably some atheists have also been elected. But Mr. Bradlaugh, apparently, is the first who has scrupled to take the oath. A committee having been appointed to search for precedents, the opinion of the committee was equally divided as to the propriety of dispensing with the oath, and the chairman gave his casting vote in the negative. Mr. Bradlaugh finally offered to take the oath under protest, his protest, we presume, amounting to this, that he regards the oath as an unmeaning form, but that he complies with the rule in order to save trouble. This proposal, however, was strenuously resisted, and a motion that Mr. Bradlaugh be not allowed to take the oath was, after long debate, lost only by 289 to 214. The matter was then referred to a new select committee, as suggested by Mr. Gladstone.

SUNDAY WORK.

A case of some interest, *Leslie* v. *Mackie*, has occurred in Scotland, concerning the work which a master may lawfully require his servant to do on a Sunday. The defendant, in a suit for wages, was a medical man practising in a country district, and late one Saturday night he returned home with a gig borrowed from a friend while his own was being repaired. He directed the pursuer (or plaintiff), a lad of about 17 in his service, to wash the gig on Sunday morning, as he had to go out early on professional duty. This order was given on Saturday night. The lad refused to do the work on Sunday, on the ground that it was not a work of necessity or mercy, but he offered to wash the gig immediately. His father supported him in his refusal, and the defendant declining to retain him in his service unless he obeyed orders, an action was brought in the Sheriff Court for wages. The question to be decided was whether the defendant's order to his servant to clean the gig on Sunday was justifiable. The Court admitted fully that in Scotland handiwork which is not done of necessity nor for mercy's sake, is when done on Sunday a breach of the law; but a distinction had to be drawn between the case of a workman ordered to work at his craft or to serve in a shop for the sake of making gain for his master, and the case of a domestic servant ordered to perform an ordinary menial office *intra parietes* of a private house, with which the public has no concern, and which is only for the master's convenience, and is incidental to the necessary domestic work and household arrangements. "It is further essential to bear in mind," observed the Judge, "that in determining what is work of necessity in a domestic establishment a great deal must be left to the discretion of the master. Life would be intolerable in a house in which the servants were to refuse to do a certain piece of ordinary work on a Sunday which their employer thought necessary, on the ground that they were of a different opinion. The main